

Drs. Turner, Parks & Hughes  
DENTISTS.  
Mary Street, Union City  
Telephone 144.

# THE COMMERCIAL

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## UNION CITY AND VICINITY

[In condensed form by Judge J. L. Palmer.]

In writing a history of this kind, it will be interesting to the reader to know something of the primitive condition of the present locality and surrounding country, before Union City was dreamed of.

In the year 1839, the first days of December, Jacob Palmer, originally from North Carolina, came to Obion county and settled on the present site of Union City. Having secured an option on two hundred acres of land, on the 16th day of December, 1839, he commenced to build a hewed log house of two rooms, each 18 feet square with a passage between, a stick and clay chimney at each end. This house was erected on the very spot where now stands the High School building.

There were many obstacles then in the way of securing building material, no saw mills being accessible, the nearest fifteen miles through slush and mud.

The only way of getting lumber was by hand sawing, with a whip saw.

Many of these pioneer houses were built of rude round logs. All log houses were daubed with clay between the logs, and with the immense fire places then in use, made them very comfortable.

Mr. Palmer having a large family of ten stalwart sons—each one had a sister—we will give this problem to the young reader who may chance to peruse these lines for solution. How many in the family? Before their sturdy strokes, the place was soon made quite livable.

A dense forest encompassed this settlement for miles around. The finest timber in the State, walnut, white oak, hickory, ash, poplar and other varieties not so plentiful as these. Some of the poplars measured ten feet in diameter, oaks four to seven. The forest abounded with game; deer, swamp rabbits (this is larger than the common hare), wild turkeys, geese, ducks and quail. It was also infested by ferocious animals and reptiles: wolves, wild cats, rattlesnakes, copperhead, adler and cotton mouth.

The forest has given away to the hand of improvement, the game to a great extent, the wild animals and reptiles to the march of civilization.

The country was very sparsely settled, owing perhaps to large bodies of land owned and controlled by a few individuals, and the swamps and mud, the inevitable chills and fever, were not specially inviting to the faint-hearted new comer.

There was twenty-one hundred acres owned by Gen. Gibbs; Union City is now located upon a part of this. On the east of this, thirteen hundred acres belonged to Wilson Cage, Sr.; on the south and east, two large plots, owned by heirs of Cullenall, who lived in the State of Pennsylvania, and Coonrod, of North Carolina.

On the Gibbs land was settled, George W. Gibbs, a noted land lawyer and politician, John White, William Scott, Ezekiel Hareison, Elisha Parker. These were our nearest neighbors, and were living there prior to 1839.

About the year 1850 the large

surveys of land above mentioned, were divided and thrown upon the market. The choice tracts were sold for four dollars per acre; this was land now owned by John Fletcher, Archie White and Sol. Ward.

Eleven hundred acres of this body of land sold for fifty cents per acre to John Maupin. This included Rives station.

The Gibbs' land had some of it sold from four to five dollars per acre prior to 1850. It will perhaps be interesting to know that the Robert Ury and F. W. Matthews addition to Union City, including the Dr. T. J. Edwards farm, was at one time sold to George Dowdy, of Fulton county, Kentucky, for three dollars per acre, was abandoned by the purchaser, thinking the price too high.

Afterwards a part of this three hundred acres was sold to Clevis Swift for eight dollars per acre. The Public School building now stands on a part of the Swift land. Swift transferred the land to McPage, McPage to Robert Ury, Robert Ury to C. N. Gibbs, and C. N. Gibbs donated the ground for the Public School building.

The ten thousand acres belonging to the Cullenall heirs, portions of it were purchased by Littleton Ward, Monroe Ward, John Thomas, John C. Grizzard. Some of the present owners of choice parts of this land have been mentioned.

The Coonrod tract lying in Hauser Creek Bottom, was bought by Uncle Billy Bell, Hugh Catron, Ira O. Bradford, Capt. James Turner, Sam Wade, Sr., Rev. E. Osborne, Thomas Batte and others.

In the year 1848, a preliminary survey of the Mobile & Ohio R. R. was made. In locating the road in 1851 few changes were made from the original survey. At the time the location was made, every one owning land on the line had a particular spot of ground, suitable as they thought for depot purposes.

In about 1852 the pioneer settlers began to revolve in their minds the building of a town.

In the year 1851 or '52, a charter was granted by the State Legislature to a company to build the Nashville & Northwestern R. R. (now called the N. C. & St. L. R. R.), the terminus to be at Madrid Bend or Tiptonville.

Gen. Gibbs being a man of foresight, went to Nashville during the sitting of the Legislature and had the charter so amended that the terminus would be at the future unnamed town instead of Tiptonville.

Gen. Gibbs returned home, organized a company to continue the road to Hickman, Ky., called Hickman and Obion R. R., he becoming president of the company.

The Mobile & Ohio R. R. having been located at this place, and the plan consummated bringing the Nashville & Northwestern R. R. to the same place, and the continuation of the Hickman & Obion R. R., this necessarily brought about a crossing at this point.

Gen. Gibbs employed James M. Daniel, a civil engineer, of Rich-



J. W. TEMPLE.

One of Union City's well known and esteemed citizens, Joseph William Temple, quietly breathed his last at home in this city last Saturday morning, June 29, at 9 o'clock.

Mr. Temple had been afflicted for several months, suffering with Bright's disease, which was complicated with dropsy and weak heart action. His last illness was aggravated with flux and the end was not far away.

The following extract published in the Cumberland Telephone Journal on March 15, 1906, gives a brief outline of Mr. Temple's life:

The gentleman whose name heads this article was born and reared on a farm in Madison County, Tenn. When the Civil War broke out he joined the Confederacy, enlisting as a volunteer in the Sixth Tennessee May 22, 1861, the day he was twenty years of age. On the battlefield of Shiloh he was disabled from a wound received in the face, and being left among the dead was captured and made a prisoner of war and transferred to a Federal hospital in St. Louis. There he was tenderly cared for by the enemy and exchanged at Vicksburg, October 20,

mond, Va., to survey and locate the road to Hickman. Mr. Daniel returned to the crossing point after the survey had been made, placed his instrument near a large white oak tree, about three feet in diameter, blazed the bark off so it could be written on, with red chalk, wrote the name Union City, Gen. Gibbs giving the name, so the town was born and christened.

Could these early settlers wake from their long sleep and behold the busy city, handsome churches, school buildings, commodious and lovely homes, they would doubtless acknowledge their fondest hopes had been outstripped.

In the year 1854, the author of these sketches being a farmer, had little idea of becoming a railroad man, but in the year 1854, 18th day of May, was called to the engineering department of the M. & O. R. R. by Capt. J. J. Williams and Capt. John G. Mann. Remained in this capacity until the road was completed, then took the station agency at Union City, being the first station agent at the place.

The first depot was built on the same spot where the present one now stands. This first depot was burned by Gen. Forrest during the Civil War, on the 24th December, 1862.

1862, but was never again able to take up arms.

Mr. Temple was married twice, at Henderson. His first wife was Miss Hattie Wells, with whom he was married Dec. 24, 1862. Of this union there were three daughters: Mrs. Garland, of Texas; Mrs. Orr, of Paris, Tenn.; Mrs. Wheeler, of Jackson, Tenn. The mother died May 2, 1884. His second wife was Miss Margaret Garland, who survives, and to them were given a daughter and son, Miss Mamie and Joe, Jr. The latter marriage took place Mar. 1, 1887. His daughter, now Mrs. Mamie Wheeler, was for many years chief operator of the local exchange at Union City, and assisted him largely in the management and success of the company's interests here.

The Cumberland Telephone and Telegraph Company established an exchange in Union City in the early eighties. The first toll line reached Troy soon afterwards. The management was then in the hands of L. D. Cardwell. Mr. Cardwell secured a number of subscribers, probably fifty or sixty.

Mr. Temple then succeeded to the management, retiring in 1900 to enter the timber business. In September, 1892, he returned again to the telephone service. He assumed the responsibility of manager this time with thirteen subscribers and no toll lines, except a grounded circuit to Troy, which was then the county seat. This was thirteen years ago on the 13th day of the month. On February 1, 1906, he had thirteen operators, 511 subscribers, besides two branch exchanges, at Troy and Rives. The company has recently purchased and handsomely fitted up its own exchange and office building, with antique oak furnishings and complete up-to-date switchboard apparatus, which supplies a metallic circuit to each subscriber.

Mr. Temple, while successful in this undertaking, is also a thoroughgoing reliable citizen of Union City, a gentleman of well known character and integrity, and it is a matter of congratulation, not only to himself, but but to the citizens of this city and county, that the company has reached the high standard which will prevail when the new office and connections are complete and in working order.

Mr. Temple was familiarly known as Uncle Joe, and few men enjoyed the confidence and esteem of a greater number of friends. Out of the fullness of an honest heart he returned this confidence. He was always faithful and true to every trust. He was a gallant soldier and an honored civilian.

Mr. Temple was a member of the Methodist Church, services being held at his late residence Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock, conducted by the pastor, Rev. H. B. Johnston.

The remains were escorted to East View for interment, and the last sad tribute paid to the dead in floral offerings.