

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE LINK GRAVEYARD**

### **East Allens Bridge Road**

There once was a very prominent family in Greene County who originated from Augusta County, Virginia. This was the Link Family, whose legacy lives on in Greeneville with their mansion, Meadow Hall, built in 1852 on their farm, now the Link Hills Country Club.

John Ephraim Link was born near Staunton, Virginia, on March 14, 1812, a son of Captain John Link who led a Company of militia men in the War of 1812, and Barbara Harnsbarger Link who married in Rockingham County on June 6, 1809. The family left Virginia about 1818 and first settled in Washington County, Tennessee, later moving to Greene County about 1834. John Link is found in the 1836 Civil Districts List of Greene County living in District 10, the Town of Greeneville. It is said Captain John Link died here on July 31, 1851. His burial place is not known.

Ephraim Link was the only member of his family to remain in Greene County, although both he and his brother, Thomas Newton Link, bought land in Rush County, Indiana, on June 5, 1837. Thomas Newton Link (1810-1903) and their mother, Barbara Harnsbarger Link (1784-1875) are buried in East Hill Cemetery in Rushville, Indiana.

Thomas Link sold his 240 acre farm on Richland Creek in Greene County, Tennessee, on June 15, 1840, to his brother, Ephraim, and Ephraim returned to Tennessee where he married Caroline Hoss in Washington County on November 18, 1844.

Ephraim later sold the farm he had purchased from his brother, and he acquired a nearby tract of 405 acres in 1852. This land became the home of the Ephraim and Caroline Hoss Link family for the next one hundred years. They built their stately home on the Old Stage Road (now East Allens Bridge Road) and named it "Meadow Hall".

Although consistently shown as a "farmer" in census records, Ephraim Link was an entrepreneur, holding franchise rights to a garment cutting machine and developing a new wheat drill. He was quite wealthy and well respected in Greeneville. Ephraim was on the Committee to select the site for the new Cumberland Presbyterian Church on Main Street in Greeneville, and he was a trustee of Tusculum College.

Although a slave owner and a staunch supporter of the Confederacy (actually spending the duration of the War in a Union prison), the large, 405 acre Link farm was not worked by slaves. In 1850, Ephraim Link owned only two slaves, a very elderly male (age 81) and a female (age 60). In 1860, his slaves consisted of one family, an elderly woman (age 65), one young male (age 35), a young woman (age 17), and three children. Ephraim's large farm had only one slave dwelling according to the 1860 census record.

Ephraim and Caroline Hoss Link had eight children, five daughters and three sons. One of the sons died in childhood. Of these children, only two married, both of whom were daughters (Clomanthe Jane Link married James Broyles Brown, both buried in Oak

Grove Cemetery in Greeneville, and Mary Link married Charles Thomas Garrett and lived in North Carolina). All of the other children lived in the family home, Meadow Hall, and all are buried in the family Graveyard.

The last surviving member of the family was Robert “Bob” Lee Link. A few years before his death, Bob sold the 405 acre Link farm in 1953 to a temporary holding company, Country Estates, which was organized to develop a new Country Club for Greeneville. The Link Hills Country Club opened its doors in September 1954. Current property tax records show the Link Hills Country Club holds 156 acres of land. The remainder of the farm was auctioned off and is now largely residential.

Robert “Bob” Lee Link, the youngest child of Ephraim and Caroline Hoss Link, died in Greeneville on November 11, 1957. He was the last of his Family to be interred in the family Graveyard. Robert’s survivors consisted of two nephews, Albert LeRoy Brown (1870-1965, buried Oak Grove Cemetery) and Will Garrett of Knoxville; and one niece, Mrs. Kate Haubner.

Meadow Hall remains a grand residence and has been completely restored. It stands anchored in time as the sentinel to the entryway to Link Hills Country Club. The Country Club has fenced and maintains the old graveyard, and a large granite Link marker has been placed. Only one original tombstone remains – that of Edwin Hoss Link who died in 1853 at the age of six months and thirteen days.

References:

- Historic Greene County and Its People, pages 37 and 206
- Greeneville One Hundred Year Portrait, by Richard Harrison Doughty, pages 132, 180, 293, and 294
- History of Link Hill Country Club
- Annals of Augusta County, Virginia, by Jos. A. Waddell, page 395
- U. S. Census Records
- Application for Presidential Pardons, 1865-1867, “Efraim” Link
- Greene County, TN, Death Certificates
- Obituary of Robert “Bob” Lee Link, Greeneville Sun, November 11, 1957

# Meadow Hall, Christmas 2011

