

PLOWSHARES

AND

SWORDS

Tennessee Farm Families Tell Civil War Stories

by

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J. M Bailiff Farm

DeKalb County

Typical of the many young men and women who chose to return to their pre-war rural lifestyle were the Bailiffs of DeKalb County. James Monroe Bailiff and his brother, Columbus, supported the Confederacy and joined Col. R.D.

Allison's Cavalry Squadron in February 1863. Allison's three companies actively patrolled DeKalb County and took part in the Battle of Snow's Hill on April 2, 1863, which occurred about a mile from the farm that Monroe Bailiff would purchase after the war.

Allison's squadron fought in a number of battles and was attached to different commands, including those of Generals Joseph Wheeler, Nathan Bedford

Forrest, and Frank Armstrong, as well as Lt. Gen. Wade Hampton's Cavalry Corps at the end of the war. It was, however, during the Battle of Chickamauga in Georgia in September 1863 that Monroe Bailiff was wounded and Columbus Bailiff fell ill with typhoid fever. A local

family took them in and nursed them as their unit retreated southward. Soon Federal troops captured both wounded men and sent them to prison in Louisville, Kentucky. In ill health and unable to perform additional military service, the brothers were released in the spring of 1864 and made their way back to DeKalb County. Having survived imprisonment and his wounds, the nineteen-year-old Monroe Bailiff wanted nothing more than to make a living and raise a family. He married Eliza Foster from the nearby community of Wolf Creek in October 1865. It would be another decade, however, before the couple could purchase a 52-acre wooded hillside property in Possum Hollow in the Dry Creek community.

With three small children, the Bailiffs completed a partially built log house and cleared the land of trees with a team of oxen. During the next ten years, following their land purchase in 1875, the oxen were sold and replaced with mules, which were better suited to hillside farming. Bailiff and his sons worked long hours to produce corn and wheat crops. They also raised poultry, bees, hogs, and cattle. Bailiff was an experienced third-generation blacksmith. He was also skilled in leather work and repaired shoes for members of the community. The family, which eventually included nine children, made steady progress to secure the land and a future for the succeeding generations who would live on the farm. ☺



James Monroe and Eliza Bailiff worked hard to save money to purchase their farm in 1875.