

John Henry
A FIRST FAMILIES OF TENNESSEE MEMBER

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John Henry was one of the early settlers of White County, Tennessee.¹ He and his wife, Susanna, made their home and raised a large family on the headwaters of the Calfkiller river. The area where John and Susanna lived became a part of Putnam when Putnam County was established in 1854.²

John Henry is on the first White County Tax List, which was taken in 1811.³ He was taxed for thirty acres "...including where he lives."⁴

A registered indenture in the White County Deed Book, dated the 13th of January, 1817, states that John Henry's property included "... a tract of ten acres on the headwaters of the Calfkiller fork of the Caney Fork River, beginning on the Cumberland Mountain."⁵ His first house was described as "... a log pen thatched with cane, which grew everywhere in profusion."⁶

A family legend claims that the Henrys moved to White County from Cocke County in east Tennessee. Evidence shows that John Henry grew up in the Parrottsville area of Greene County, in the district that became a part of Cocke County in 1799.⁷

Several facts prove that the Fine and the Netherton families of Cocke County were connected with the Henrys.⁸ For example, one of John Henry's sons, Ledgard Fine Henry, was named for the Cocke County militia officer, Ledgard Fine, who married a Netherton 1 May, 1797. Also, documents link the Henrys with members of the Fine, Netherton, McNabb, Huff, and Holland families of early Greene and Cocke counties.⁹ Evidence includes marriage records, military records, early tax records both for Greene and for White counties, Henry family given names, Church records, old newspaper articles about Cocke County at the beginning of the nineteenth century, deeds, wills, and jury lists.¹⁰

John Henry is on White County census records for 1820, 1830, 1840, and 1850, and on Putnam County census records for 1860.¹¹ According to these records, John was born in 1788 in Tennessee.¹²

His wife, Susanna, is named with him on the 1850 and 1860 census records.¹³ Both John and Susanna passed away prior to the taking of the 1870 census.

Records show that John Henry lived along the Calfkiller river throughout his adult life.¹⁴ According to several family sources, John and Swanna are buried side by side in the Henry Cemetery, which is on a part of the land that once was John Henry's homeplace.¹⁵ Only fieldstone markers remain for John and Susanna Henry today. However one descendant remembered when their monument was i...a house ..huilt over their graves."¹⁶

John Henry was a pioneer settler in the Upper Cumberland, a husband, a father and grandfather, a farmer, a road builder, a landowner and businessman, a gristmill owner, and a slaveowner.¹⁷ The strength of his life and character is verified by the fact that he is survived by hundreds of descendants.