

*Correction: Hopefully, readers of last week's column realized that the dates given as 1941 should have been 1841. I apologize for the error - JW*

## **The settling of the Ford's Mountain area**

In early 1824, Daniel Ford, his wife Elizabeth Smith and children moved from South Carolina to Georgia then to territory that was soon to become Fayette County, Alabama. They settled on a plateau at the base of the mountain that still bears his name. A few months later in that year, John Hollingsworth and his wife Matilda White move from Georgia to the same area. Newman McCollum with his wife Elizabeth, his mother Ann, and three of his four grown children and their families also arrived in the area in 1824. Their stories follow:

### **Daniel Ford Family:**

Daniel was a farmer by trade and, judging by his hand written, 50-page will, a very prosperous one. Daniel and his wife Elizabeth had ten or perhaps eleven children, eight girls and two or three boys. The birth dates and marriages of all the children are documented with the exception of John L Ford who is mentioned in Daniel's will and was known to have lived in Arkansas at the time of Daniel's death.

When the Fords left Georgia on their arduous journey to their new home, they already had five children that ranged from one year to ten years of age. A sixth child was born en route. The children of Daniel and Elizabeth Ford all married locally and reared their children in Fayette County except one daughter, Keziah, who married Elijah Sparks and moved to Texas. Two daughters married sons of John Daniel and Elizabeth Fowler, another of Fayette County's pioneers for whom Fowler's Crossroads is named.

James Ford, the fourth child and oldest son, married Elizabeth West. In 1859, James applied for a permit to build a toll bridge across the Sipsey River on Jasper Road (located at the site of Ford's Bridge on Highway 102). The tolls for passage were: each horse and wagon – four bits, each two-horse wagon – two bits, man and horse – one dime, man on foot – five cents. (A bit was a small coin that equaled 12 and ½ cents)

Daughter Melinda married Adlai Harris, Fayette County's Representative in the General Assembly (Legislature), 1843-1844, and Fayette County Treasurer in 1849. Daughter Martha married Jephtha Hollingsworth, son of John and Matilda Hollingsworth.

Daniel Newton "Newt" Ford married Jane Hollingsworth, daughter of John and his second wife Zilpha. Newt was 35 years old when he enlisted with the Confederacy after the outbreak of the Civil War. He was the first one killed at the battle of Fort Donaldson in Tennessee. His nephew, and grandson of Daniel and Elizabeth Ford, (John Berry Ford) was the second person to fall in that battle. At the end of the war, Jane, then 35 years of age, took her 9 children, ages 3 to 16 years, and moved to Texas to join her sister, Keziah. She never remarried.

Daughters Mary, married James Washington Hallmark, and Eliza, married Jedediah Smith. Both men fought in the Civil War on the side of the Union. Jedediah was also killed in the war. Like many other families of that time, the Ford family was ravaged by the war and was also a house divided between the loyalties of sons and son-in-laws.

Daniel and Elizabeth Ford were faithful members of the Old Brand, now New River Church. Church records show their children and their families as also having been dedicated members. However, records also show that a year before his death, Daniel was summoned to come before the church to face unrecorded charges against him. He refused, and the church excluded him from its membership.

Elizabeth died in 1849. She and Daniel had been married 38 years. Daniel later remarried a lady named Dolly. No records have been found giving Dolly's last name.

Daniel died in 1859. James was named as the executor of Daniel's estate and John Hollingsworth was named as an appraiser.

### **John Hollingsworth Family:**

John Hollingsworth was a direct descendant of Valentine Hollingsworth, a Quaker who sailed from Ireland on the ship *Welcome* with William Penn, the Quaker, who in 1682 established the colony of Pennsylvania for religious freedom. Valentine settled on approximately 1,000 acres in Brandywine Hundred near what is now Wilmington, Delaware, then a part of Pennsylvania. Valentine died at age 79 and had fathered 5 sons and a daughter.

His descendants were noted for their enterprise and industry. Many were engaged in the manufacture of flour and owned many mills on the Elk River in Maryland. Levi Hollingsworth, a member of a distinguished Maryland ship building company built a copper rolling mill on the Gunpowder River near Baltimore in 1809. His copper was used to cover the dome of the U.S. Capitol Building. He sold the mill to Paul Revere and it became the Copper and Brass Company.

Several Hollingsworth families migrated first to the Carolinas, then further south into Georgia and later to Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas.

When John and Matilda arrived in Fayette County in 1824 they brought with them 5 young children. Their sixth child, also named Matilda, was born in 1825 and mother Matilda died unexpectedly that same year, perhaps from complications of childbirth. Young Matilda is the only child of John and Matilda who did not live to adulthood. She died at age six.

After Matilda's death, John was left with 6 young children. John began courting and in 1827 married eighteen year-old Zilpha Galloway. He was thirty-five. She immediately became the mother of six and she and John had 15 additional children, three dying in infancy. John was a successful farmer and became one of the largest landowners in Fayette County.

John Hollingsworth lost 2 sons and 2 son-in-laws in the Civil War. However, this was not the only tragedy suffered by the Hollingsworth family. Thomas Hollingsworth, son of John and Matilda, married Margaret Fowler and sired 9 children. Only two children survived to adulthood, dying at ages of 5 –17 years. Phoebe Hollingsworth McCaleb, daughter of John and Matilda, also had nine children. Only one survived to reach adulthood. The other children died at ages one through seven. No record has been found on the causes of death of these young children.

The Hollingsworth children married mostly Fords, McCollums, Fowlers, McCalebs and Whiteheads. They were most likely one of the largest families in Fayette County and the

majority of their descendents stayed in the Fayette/Marion County area. Several of the descendents still live on land owned by John and Zilpha.

John Hollingsworth died in 1880 at 88 years of age. Zilpha lived until 1894 and died at age 85. John, Matilda, Zilpha, many of their children and the children who died in childhood are buried at the now overgrown Old Hollingsworth Cemetery at the base of Ford's Mountain.

Daniel Ford and John Hollingsworth were friends, neighbors and community leaders and both men had a tremendous impact on their community and on Fayette County.

Next week's article will continue with anecdotes of the McCollum family.

*Information from this article was derived from the writings of Larry E. Whitehead and from the publication, Soldiers, Statesmen & Scalawags of Fayette County, Alabama.*