



COFFEE CO. HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Inc.

**101 W. Fort St., Box 2
Manchester, TN 37355
931-728-0145**

cchs1969@att.net

Web: www.cctnhs.org

Check our Facebook page

June 2019

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In the military, **D-Day** is the day on which a combat attack or operation is to be initiated. The best known D-Day is during World War II, on June 6, 1944—the day of the Normandy landings—initiating the Western Allied effort to liberate mainland Europe from Nazi Germany. It was launched on June 6, 1944 with the simultaneous landing of U.S., British, and Canadian forces on five separate beachheads in Normandy, France. The success of the landings would play a key role in the defeat of the Third Reich. Also known as **Operation Overlord** and code-named **Operation Neptune**, it was the largest seaborne invasion in history. The operation laid the foundations of the Allied victory on the Western Front.

Planning for the operation began in 1943. In the months leading up to the invasion, the Allies conducted a substantial military deception codenamed **Operation Bodyguard** to mislead the Germans as to the date and location of the main Allied landings. The weather on D-Day (General Eisenhower, Allied Command leader, originally selected June 5) was far from ideal, and the operation had to be delayed 24 hours. A further postponement would have meant a delay of at least two weeks, as the invasion planners had requirements for the phase of the moon, the tides, and the time of day that meant only a few days each month were suitable. Adolf Hitler placed German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in command of German forces and of developing fortifications along the Atlantic Wall in anticipation of an Allied invasion.

The amphibious landings were preceded by extensive aerial and naval bombardment and an airborne assault—the landing of 24,000 US, British, and Canadian airborne troops shortly after midnight. Allied infantry and armored divisions began landing on the coast of France at 06:30. The target 50-mile stretch of the Normandy coast was divided into five sectors: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. Strong winds blew the landing craft east of their intended positions, particularly at Utah and Omaha. The men landed under heavy fire from gun emplacements overlooking the beaches, and the shore was mined and covered with obstacles, making the work of the beach-clearing teams difficult and dangerous. Casualties were heaviest at Omaha, with its high cliffs.

The Allies failed to achieve any of their goals on the first day; however, the operation gained a foothold that the Allies gradually expanded over the coming months. German casualties on D-Day have been estimated at 4,000 to 9,000 men. Allied casualties were at least 10,000, with 4,414 confirmed dead. Museums, memorials, and war cemeteries in the area now host many visitors each year and remaining soldiers who participated in D-Day are honored greatly for their service.

MUSEUM HOURS

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, Friday,
Saturday

Joanna Lewis Museum of Coffee County

GRAND OPENING and
RIBBON CUTTING

Thursday, July 4
4:00 p.m.

In addition, an
ICE CREAM SOCIAL
is being held around the square,
sponsored by the Downtown
Manchester Movement.
Funds raised by this event will be
used to support the museum and
courthouse restoration.

Be sure to attend this exciting new
development in our Coffee County
Historical Society goal to bring
more county history to our
members and citizens.

Treasurer's Report May 31

Savings
\$2,162.85

Fundraising
Acct.
\$5,890.00

Checking
\$5,790.45

TOTAL
\$13,843.30

Welcome new member

Nancy Bergvall

New life member

J. Stanley Rogers

CCHS MEMBERSHIP
134

Electronic 23, Regular 61,
Comp. 3, Exchange 6,
Life 41

Newsletter only 160

Coffee County's Belgian Colony

by Jimmie Lou Bryan (1997)

In January of 1915, eight Belgian families with a total of twenty-five people arrive here to make their homes. The Tennessee Property Company of Nashville purchased 2500 acres of land near Tullahoma for the purpose of forming a colony of Belgians.

A representative of the company had been in Europe several months trying to interest immigrants in settling in Tennessee. The company was selling the land on the installment plan with twenty acres being allowed for each family and ten years to pay. The company would furnish them supplies for the first two years.

The Belgians developed a thriving community about eight miles south of Manchester on the land they purchased. Their prospects were bright. The N.C. & St. Louis Railroad made the community a flag stop and according to a 1919 Railroad Schedule, it was called New Antwerp.

The Belgians in their homeland had 652 people to the square mile, so by nature they were intensive farmers. One of the first to arrive was a teacher in an agricultural college in Belgium.

The Belgians were Roman Catholics and planned to build a church, but never got it established.

When the first immigrants left Europe, they were unable to speak a word of English, but during their journey, they applied themselves to learning the language of their adopted land. So they were able to converse very in English.

As evidence of their industry, they immediately set to work on arrival clearing the ground where they were to make their future home. One newspaper reported: "It is an auspicious event for Tennessee to secure such a colony of high class immigrants and it is to be hoped that their coming will induce others to follow their example."

The first wedding in the Belgian colony was solemnized on Friday, May 28, 1915, between Miss Matilda Van REET and Hubert MUYLLE. The ceremony was performed by Esq. T.R.BEAN of Tullahoma.

There was a rumor heard in 1915 that the N.C. & St. Louis railroad would build a branch line from New Antwerp, the new station south of Manchester, to Estill Springs, a distance of about eight miles. The line would run through the Belgian settlement, to be completed by 1918. Needless to say, this didn't come about.

Mr. W. C. INGRAM OF Hawkersmith Road, Tullahoma, remembers the Belgians from his childhood. They built wood frame houses and painted them white and had everything very neat. He remembered that the railroad switch at New Antwerp was about where the metal recycling company is now - only across the highway. He said there was a field there where railroad cars were loaded with crossties and dyewood that people cut to sell. Also, the railroad would deliver fertilizer to New Antwerp from dealers in Manchester, by the carload, because it was hard for people to come into town to pick it up.

Mr. INGRAM said he thought most of the land that the Belgian colony had was bought by the government and is part of the AEDC reservation.

COFFEE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Annual Picnic

Saturday, July 20, 2019, 4:00 p.m.
The Church at 117

CCHS will furnish meat and drinks.

Please bring a covered dish.

Program: to be announced

Don't miss it! It's a lot of fun!

SOUTHERN MIDDLE TENNESSEE GENEALOGY GROUP

**June 11 and 25 at 6:30 p.m. at Forest Mill Church of Christ in the
brick building adjacent to the parking lot.**

For more information:

Contact Lori Amos - lamos43@earthlink.net 931-212-4081

**St. Barnabas Episcopal Church History and Stained Glass Windows
to be Subject of Historic Society Program**

The Historic Preservation Society of Tullahoma will meet Tuesday, June 25 at 6 pm at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Tullahoma to learn more about the church's history. Presentations will be given by two long-time church members, John C. Duncan and Marjorie Collier .Duncan is a graduate of MTSU with a degree in Mathematics and after two years serving with the US Army, spent most of his career at Arnold Center working with computers supporting various tests. He has written a new history telling about Harvey Judd, the priest-in-training, who inaugurated Episcopal services in Tullahoma shortly after the Civil War. Marjorie Collier, a retired mechanical engineer who served at Arnold Center during her career, has compiled a guide to the various stained-glass windows now at St. Barnabas and will tell about their history. Members and interested friends are invited to attend.

A FEW MUSINGS ABOUT LIFE IN COFFEE COUNTY

By the late Miss Musa Cunnyngnam

(condensed from Coffee County Historical Quarterly XIX, Nos. 3-4, p. 80)

Miss Musa Cunnyngnam, daughter of John Henry & Fannie (Willis) Cunnyngnam and granddaughter of James F. & Caroline (Dunn) Cunnyngnam, died at 98 on 19 April 1984 in Denton, Texas. For three years prior she had talked or written occasionally to a nephew, our member John H. Cunnyngnam, who provided copies of her letters. It is very hard today to interpret many of her bits and pieces of memories of her life here since she left the Hillsboro area for Texas with her family in 1900 when she was only 14. A few of her “musings” are quoted here:

We lived at the font, or about two miles, from Cumberland Mountain and my best friend lived even closer... Dad ran cows on the pastureland on the slopes of Cumberland Mountain, and when Alton *{her brother}* was a little boy of 6 to 8, he rode a horse with dad to round up the cows from there. This all happened in the spring of the year. One time they brought me some wild honeysuckle from the mountain because I liked flowers so much when I was little (it is still a beautiful shrub.)

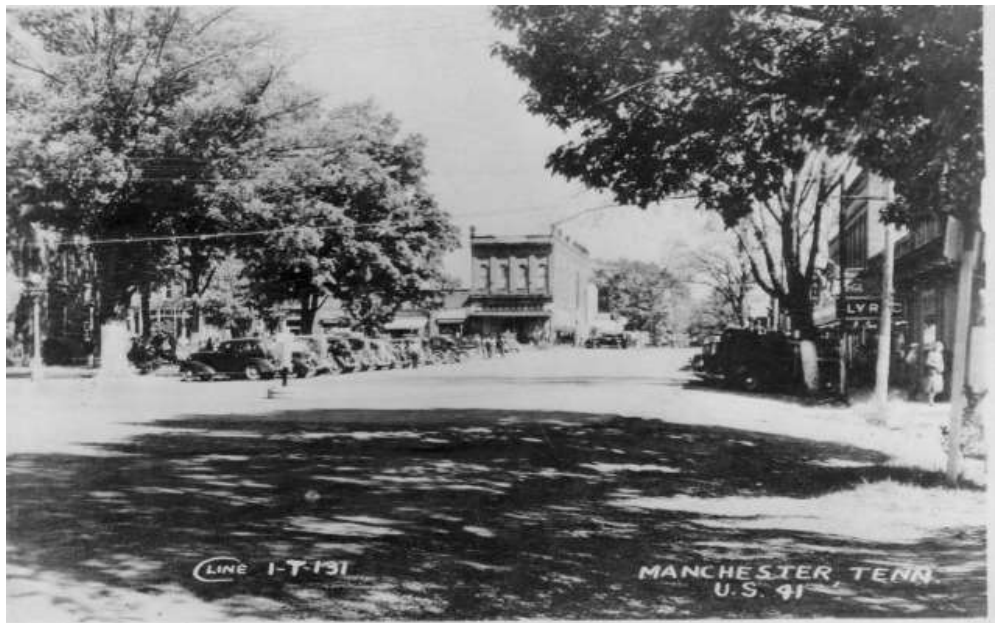
{About Lusk Cove}. It is spelled L-U-S-K, I think, after the people who lived there. . . We had a lot of fun there. There were nice trees, a creek, wildflowers, and such a pleasant place for picnics and walks. The young people went there all the time . . . Our family started there. Mother and Dad Cunnyngnam went there when they were young and loved the place *{really, her great-grandparents}*.

{About soap-making} The old ash hopped stood in the North East corner of the yard not far from the well. I don't know who built it, I would guess my Grandfather – it was just one of the things that were there when I started remembering. It was nicely built with a roof and a little trough at the bottom through which the lye would run into an iron pot. Our log house had two rock fireplaces, one in each end. There was always lots of good hardwood to burn such a hickory and oak; it made good strong ashes and they were emptied all winter in that ash hopper. When Spring came, it was time to make soap. They would start putting so many buckets of water on the ashes each day until lye started to run; it was the color of strong coffee. Then they would gather up all the meat trimmings from the half dozen or so hogs that had been killed and then the soap making would begin. When it was finished and cooled, they would it out in blocks and put it on planks (or shelves) in the smokehouse to dry.

And this Stephenson . . . he was Aunt Harriet's husband. He was in a wheelchair when I knew him. H was an old-time country doctor, the kind that would tell his patients, “You are not very sick today, but you will be tomorrow,” and the stuff he gave them, it's a wonder they were alive . . . I remember the Stephenson graveyard; it was near where Grandpa Jimmie lived – there was a school house and a store called Warren's store. I remember the preacher A. D. Oakley. When I knew him, he was an old man; he was at our house one Sunday and he preached at the little log school house where I first started to school, and you won't believe this, but I remember is text . . . I am so sorry that I never knew the first names of my ancestors . . . Away back in my mind I can see a small man with a goatee and white hair. And I can barely recall being at their house when my great grandmother was dying with cancer- on her nose – they said caused from wearing brass-rimmed speckticles and cooking at the fire place . . . It was Dad's grandmother who died of cancer. I remember seeing several around the bed and the old man with the goatee.

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## PICTURES FROM OUR PAST



Manchester street scene before the 4-lane went through

1940s



*Manchester's first service station - Jones Texaco on E. Main Street*