

INTRODUCTION TO THE LINK GRAVEYARD
Link Hills Country Club, East Allens Bridge Road



Ephraim and Catherine Link with youngest child, Robert

This prominent family from Augusta County, Virginia, arrived in Greene County between 1830 and 1840. John Link is found in the 1836 Civil Districts List of Greene County living in District 10, the Town of Greeneville. Ephraim's parents were John and Barbara Hansbarger Link. John Link had been a Captain of the Virginia Rifle Militia, serving in Colonel Coleman's Regiment during the War of 1812. John - and later his Widow - were awarded 160 acres of Bounty Land for his military service, and when John died on July 31, 1851, his widow, Barbara, was awarded a Widow Pension of \$8 a month after the Act of 1871 for Widows was passed. It is not known where Captain John Link is buried.

Ephraim was born near Staunton, Virginia, on March 14, 1812. He was the second born child of nine children, seven boys and two daughters. His father, John Link, died at Ephraim's home. Where he is buried is not known. Ephraim's mother continued to live with Ephraim's family until the disruptions of the Civil War era, when she moved to Rush County, Indiana to live with Ephraim's older brother, Thomas Newton Link.

The legacy of the Link Family lives on in Greeneville because of the beautiful mansion, Meadow Hall, built by Ephraim Link in 1852 on the Link farm. This property is now the Link Hills Country Club.

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, Ephraim returned to Greene County when on June 15, 1840, Thomas Link sold the 240 acre Link farm on Richland Creek to his brother, Ephraim. Ephraim married Caroline Hoss in Washington County on November 18, 1844. Ephraim's brother, Thomas Newton Link (1810-1903), and their mother, Barbara Harnsbarger Link (1784-1875) are buried in East Hill Cemetery in Rushville, Indiana.

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 part 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). It is probable these slaves were those of his parents and had been with the Link Family for years. In 1860, Ephraim's slaves consisted of one family, an elderly woman (age 65), one young male (age 35), a young woman (age 17), and three children. According to the 1860 census, Ephraim's large farm had only one slave dwelling.

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 who married James Broyles Brown (both buried in Oak Grove Cemetery in Greeneville) and Mary Link who 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, now located on the grounds of the Country Club that carries the name of the Link Family.

The last surviving member of the Link 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 acreage 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. No tombstone has ever marked his grave. Robert's survivors consisted of only 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 and renovated. It stands anchored in time as the sentinel of 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

War of 1812 Pension and Bounty Land Applications

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, “Efrain” Link

Greene County, TN, Death Certificates

Obituary of Robert “Bob” Lee Link, Greeneville Sun, November 11, 1957

Meadow Hall, Christmas 2011

