

OUTLINE OF THE HODGE HOUSE AND PROPERTY OWNERS

Robert Northern, October, 2010

Preface

Middle Tennessee was a hunting ground for several Indian tribes, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek and other tribes. They fought among themselves for the abundant game attracted by the salt licks near the Cumberland River on land now in Davidson County. As settlers moved westward over the Appalachians, states were pressured to officially provide land for the migration. This was accomplished by grants for military service in the Revolutionary War and preemption grants to persons living in the area with the intention of cultivating and improving the land. Many of the grants were for one square mile (640 acres).

Sequence of Owners

19 Jun 1785 The NORTH CAROLINA ASSEMBLY grants warrant number 665 for a 640 acre tract in Davidson County located on the north waters of the Little Harpeth River. The south boundary extends 1.25 miles on a straight line along now Old Hickory Boulevard. A trail identified as “the left hand trace from Johnson’s Lick” runs north-south through the tract. (This “trace” was also known locally as an old north-south trail and is today known as Chickering Road. Johnson’s Lick was located on the present site of St. Thomas Hospital.) About one third of the tract is east of the “trace”. From the original deed information, with boundary distances given in chains and links, the actual area is about 735 acres.

JOHN MULHERIN comes into possession of the tract early and is likely the original grantee. He seems to default on the tract, returning it to the state.

23 Feb 1793 JAMES ROBERTSON receives permanent assignment of the tract from North Carolina for the “sum of ten pounds”.

1795 PHILIP KISER buys the tract from James Robertson for \$500.

1797 JAMES HODGE buys the tract from Philip Kiser for \$1600.

ca 1810 FRANCIS HODGE buys the “eastern half” of the tract from his son, James Hodge. Francis sells his original 640 acre preemption grants. (Francis was signatory to the Cumberland Compact.)

ca 1810 GEORGE HODGE receives the southern part of the property his father has just bought; i.e., in the southeastern quadrant of the original tract. George builds his house (the HODGE HOUSE) on it facing the old trail. (1)

1814 The old trail (the “left hand trace”) is enlarged into a county road.

12 Jun 1820 MARY BECTON (POLLY) HODGE, daughter of James Hodge, marries Samuel Northern, a silversmith from Columbia, TN. They begin buying property.

1833 GEORGE HODGE dies with no children leaving the dower estate for his widow, Elizabeth. On her death the property will go to a nephew, also named George, with the provision that he pay \$700 to the estate.

1833-1848 After ELIZABETH HODGE’s death the younger George Hodge moves to

Arkansas and later dies there.

3Nov1848 SAMUEL NORTHERN pays the \$700 to the younger George's father, John, and takes possession of the property. He now owns all of the original preemption tract.

Dec1871 SAMUEL NORTHERN passes away. By now the original tract has changed slightly in shape and increased to about 827 acres. Before his death he has designated specific sections of the land to each of his children. One hundred and eighty acres are set aside as dower interest for his wife, Mary Becton (Polly) Hodge.

Feb 1872 VIRGINIA ELIZABETH NORTHERN CARTWRIGHT receives 49 acres and the house on it (THE HODGE HOUSE) along with another plot of 51 acres in trust as her bequest from her father, Samuel Northern.

Samuel's will specifies that Virginia's husband, John Cartwright, cannot control or profit in any way from the bequest to Virginia. Through Virginia the property, still in trust, will go to her children - daughters Mary Ophelia and Leonora Josephine. If they have no increase it will go back to Samuel's children to be distributed *per stirpes*.

5Jun1897 The daughters put the two tracts up for auction. (They had to have had agreement from their cousins.) The tracts are bought by Elisha Dotson Sawyer for \$2263.

1916 ELISHA DOTSON SAWYER leaves the house and land on which it lay to his son, Eugene Dotson Sawyer.

1927 EUGENE DOTSON SAWYER sells the HODGE HOUSE and 49 acres to the City for part of Percy Warner Park.

Sources

Paul Clements, author of A PAST REMEMBERED

James Morgan

Lula Fain Major

HODGE AND OTHER PIONEERS OF WARNER PARKS by Gale Wilkes Ford

North Carolina deed to James Robertson for 640 acres, June 17, 1793

George Hodge's will 1833

1848 Davidson County deed transfer

Samuel Northern's will Dec 1871

- (1) James Hodge built his house soon after buying the tract in 1797. While the house he built may have been the "Hodge House", evidence leads to a rise in the southwestern corner of the tract as the location of James' house. It was the first house built on the original tract. George, then, built the "Hodge House" on his land facing the "old trail" in 1810/1811. It was added to in ca 1865, when Virginia Northern married John Cartwright, with timbers and framing from James', by then abandoned, 1797 house.