



BASS PLACE

Bass Place

THE Bass Place, on the Charlotte Pike, six miles west of Nashville, formerly known as the old Watkins homestead, was originally owned by W. E. Watkins, one of the noted men of his day.

The original tract was about one thousand acres, running along the Charlotte Pike from the Cockrill place to the old Davison homestead, and backing on the Cumberland River.

The old house of some fifteen rooms was built of brick and stone, the brick being molded and burned and the stone quarried and hauled by the slaves. The floors of this old house were hand dressed and of ash; the sleepers and rafters were cut out by hatchet and adz and are as good to-day as when put into the house. The shingles were of cedar and hand made and some of them are on the house to-day, though this building was completed about 1850.

The only daughter of W. E. Watkins married Dr. William Bass. Of this union there were five sons. Those living are Major W. J. Bass of Chattanooga, and O. E. Bass of West Nashville, both of whom now own a greater part of the old tract.

During the Civil War a great many important events took place on this property.

Dr. William Bass left home to cast his lot with General Forrest; was commissioned captain and ordered to Nashville to recruit a troop of cavalry.

After Captain Bass had recruited a troop of cavalry he came in close to Nashville and passed one night at General Harding's, on the Harding Pike, known as "Belle Meade." Some of the negroes informed the Federals of his whereabouts, but he got away in time not to be captured. A night or so after this, Captain Bass, with a few select men, went into camp on the Cumberland River, near the Charlotte Pike, and alone went to see his wife and children at the old Watkins place, leaving orders for his troop of cavalry to come for him at three o'clock in the

morning in order that they might attack the Federal pickets stationed on the Barrow hill, near Nashville. Some of the darkies on the place learned of Captain Bass' arrival at home and immediately reported to the Federals at Nashville. The Thirty-third Michigan Regiment was ordered out (and it is not stated definitely who was commander, whether Rosecrans or Alger). This regiment reached the old place about two o'clock in the morning, surrounded the house, and called upon Captain Bass to come out. He came to the front door, thinking the call was from his own men, and without a word of warning he was shot down by this Federal regiment, and left in the front yard. Hardly a part of his body escaped the bullets. The old home was ransacked and almost torn to pieces. Captain Bass' wife, with five little children, was left on the place alone, every negro being ordered away. W. E. Watkins, then nearly seventy years of age, was also taken prisoner to the city. This young mother, with her five children was left to care for as best she could the murdered husband, and it was several days before proper burial arrangements could be perfected, the Federals refusing to allow anyone to pass through the lines and declining to permit any help whatever.

Several days after this, Forrest came into this section and had his revenge. Several gunboats were captured on the river and burned. Before these gunboats were captured, an attempt was made to destroy the old house, and several cannon balls were shot through it.

On the river banks, high in the hills, there are many graves where the dead are buried, with no marks to distinguish them.

The writer of this article recalls, as a child, standing by and seeing four or five soldiers buried in a trench, in their uniforms, the Federals in one place and Confederates in another.

Much more could be written of the same history, but what is the use of recalling to this generation the bloody deeds and cruelty of a generation that is past.



"WESTOVER"



A Bird's-eye View of Part of "Westover" Plantation

"Westover"

THE home of Mr. and Mrs. N. Baxter, Jr., is one of the oldest houses in the county, and is situated near the center of the plantation which consists of 2,400 acres of excellent land, located in Robertson's Bend on the Cumberland River, in Davidson County. The farm occupies the whole of Robertson's Bend, and is in the shape almost exactly of a horseshoe, there being no outside fencing except a stone wall extending across the front of the place, east and west from the river on one side to the river on the other. The land in the bend of the river was granted in 1784 by the State of North Carolina to General James Robertson, who led the first colony making a permanent settlement at Nashville. The house was built by Josiah Robertson, a son of James Robertson, about 110 years ago. A daughter of Josiah Robertson married Leonard Cheatham, who was Postmaster at Nashville about 1840, and at this place he reared a large family, among them General Frank

Cheatham of Confederate fame, Felix R. Cheatham, Mrs. Riggs of Washington, Mrs. Thayer of New York, and Mrs. Blackie of Nashville. Leonard Cheatham sold the place in 1850 to Mark R. Cockrill, who was perhaps the most successful and distinguished farmer in Tennessee of his day. It was here that Mr. Cockrill succeeded so well with sheep, having produced a flock of Merino sheep which became famous the world over. He secured at the World's Fair in London in 1856 the gold medal awarded for the finest wool produced in the world. After Mr. Cockrill's death the farm became the property of his son, Mr. James Cockrill, who afterwards sold it to Dr. William Morrow. In 1902 it passed into the hands of the present owner.

The topography of the place is unique and picturesque, and the lands very rich and well adapted to the production of crops usually grown in this section.



The garden at "Westover" looking towards the hills "When a soft and purple mist, Like a vaporous amethyst," broods over all



*"Through all the long mid-summer day
The meadow sides are sweet with hay."*

Mr. and Mrs. Baxter have taken great pleasure in improving the houses and grounds, until now there is perhaps no other large farm in the State in a higher state of cultivation than this. The place contains 1,800 acres of cultivated land, about 1,000 acres of which is in beautiful meadows of timothy, alfalfa and clover, and the lawns and woodlands are set in blue grass. The remainder of the land is cultivated in corn, barley, oats, etc.

The country on the opposite side of the river from Westover, extending the whole distance around the place is a chain of large hills, making a beautiful

background and adding much to the beauty and attractiveness of the farm.

The house stands upon an imposing eminence about the centre of the farm, and the spacious verandas afford a commanding view of many acres of splendid land in the highest state of cultivation. From one point eight hundred acres of green meadows of timothy and alfalfa make a beautiful outlook.



*"The cattle graze, while warm and still
Slope the broad pastures."*