

# TENNESSEE DESPARADO: JOE RITCHEY IN LEGENDS, NEWSPAPERS, AND A FEDERAL PENSION FILE

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The American Civil War produced a society a wash in the most lethal small arms of the age and with millions of men trained to kill. Federal veteran John McElroy would write that it also became a means for growing gangs of southern bandits from the "seeds" of legendary outlaws of the South such as the Murrell gang. Consequently, personal violence continued for many years extending to vendettas and robberies. The most famous of these events became legends of the Old West that gave notoriety to such men as William "Wild Bill" Hickock, Jesse James and William "Billy the Kid" Bonney. As with so much else that has been regarded as only western occurrences, this phenomenon also occurred in the eastern states as well, but the violence became especially common in areas that had known Civil War partisan activities such as in Tennessee.<sup>i</sup> Joe Ritchey of Hamilton County became Tennessee's most notable post war product of the violence that ended only gradually and years after the Appomattox surrender. His legendary exploits faded from public memory with accounts of his life preserved only in old newspapers and some oral traditions. Biographers of the many western gunman of his time missed the story of this easterner in their popular novels that famously passed off fiction as fact.

James Eblen Tallant (born September 9, 1860) did remember tales of Ritchey and preserved them on paper in 1932. He related that when the war began in 1860-1861, Joe Ritchey's father left his wife and his only child, eleven year old Joe Ritchey before disappearing. The senior Ritchey either abandoned his family, died in the war, or became a victim of a Confederate home guard. Captain Snow and his Hamilton County guerillas paid a visit to the Ritchey "hut," within sight of the Snow's Snow Hill plantation, with the intention of robbing even a family that desperately poor. In the melee that followed, the fourteen year old Joe took two guns from his attic. He shot a robber through a knot hole before blasting his way through the line of men and into the woods. Snow received a wound from the boy that resulted in the captain's death a few years later. Two other men and Ritchey's mother also died in the fight. The guerillas burned the home. The teenage Joe subsequently lived in the woods on whatever he could find and with the help of pro Union families. He survived to grow into a gunman who hunted down and reportedly eventually killed seventeen of the twenty-six of Snow's men who had so egregiously harmed him. While conducting this vendetta, Ritchey would escape to Georgia to evade Tennessee authorities and vice versa. When authorities near his home placed him in the local jail in Harrison, Tennessee, he escaped and swam a raging swollen river while his guards had been diverted by helping their neighbors threatened by the flood. Tallant claimed that the young vigilante's rampage ended when three law enforcement officers in Georgia shot him from a horse. The next day they found him three miles away, with a broken leg and having bled to death almost within the site of a house of a friend he tried to reach.<sup>ii</sup>

That notorious men like Joe Ritchey, Jesse James, and William Bonney escaped prosecution for so long came from a lack of law enforcement that extended beyond state or even county lines. Until the rise in responsibilities by the Treasury Department in the early Twentieth Century only one significant government investigative agency existed in the United States and it lacked any authority or interest in

pursuing thieves or killers. It did, for reasons having little to do with any crime, however, uncover the facts behind the life of Joe Ritchey and tens of thousands of other people who led colorful lives beyond anything recorded in public records.

The War Department and, after 1889, the Pension Bureau carried out the pension laws passed by Congress for the benefit of veterans and their dependents so generous that just in 1902 thirty per cent of money spent by the federal government went to paying pensions and distributing pensions to almost one million persons. Overall the United States government received more than three million claims filed for the service of some 4.1 million soldiers and sailors who served in the Union army and navy during the Civil War. Democrats representing constituencies that paid the taxes that went towards the pensions but who served in the Confederate forces, and therefore failed to qualify for these pensions, and other critics of the system contended that the benefits too often served as political patronage to the powerful veterans organization the Grand Army of the Republic and based upon fraudulent claims of service. Investigators found that through the well organized efforts of private pension attorneys, as many as forty per cent of the applications proved fraudulent.<sup>iii</sup>

The Pension Bureau conducted extensive investigations of questionable claims in order to pay out only legally justified benefits. Investigator William H. Stovall, for example, rode through the most rural areas of the Ozarks in a wagon with a one armed Civil War veteran and sword swallower for a guide to make inquiries. He wrote that the bureau quickly became the United States government to most Americans as the agency closest to them. The work of such men documented lives that at least matched the most incredulous tales of the Old West while unintentionally finding untold numbers of missing persons. The investigators resolved more "cold cases" than any government body to date.<sup>iv</sup> This agency interviewed hundreds of witnesses over whether a man called Daniel Benton by some and "Crazy Jack" by others could have been amnesia victim William Newby, a soldier presumed killed twenty-nine years earlier.<sup>v</sup> In a nationally celebrated case, a Frederick Guscetti who already drew a pension for his own service also filed simultaneous false claims as Jacques Roellier and as the father of the same "deceased" soldier while a woman filed a claim for a pension as Roellier's widow. The fraud became known only by the coincidence of two of the honest private pension attorneys comparing notes. (Although a deserter, the real Roellier received a pension under the false name that he had used to reenlist.)<sup>vi</sup> The investigation of the Nalley brothers of Pickens County, Georgia, committing a revenge killing on members of a Confederate home guard company after the war had echoes of the Ritchey case. The brothers had to explain why they fled and changed their names after the war.<sup>vii</sup> In an especially broad investigation, the Pension Office exposed a national scam to swindle former slaves into hiring attorneys to claim pensions for slaves, benefits Congress never authorized.<sup>viii</sup>

The Pension Office began examining the life of Joe Ritchey in 1902 when Adeline Ritchey of Harrison, Hamilton County, Tennessee, applied for a widow's pension based upon his service.<sup>ix</sup> Depositions created by the resulting extensive investigation in two states, when combined with census reports and other contemporary federal records, tell a very different tale from what the then teenager Tallant remembered and relate almost sixty years later. Joseph G. Ritchey, born around 1839, saw the coming of the Civil War as a young man rather than as an eleven year old boy. As he had a sister Narcissa Jane Ritchey (born South Carolina March 24, 1814) and he gave his place of birth as Hamilton County, Tennessee, ca. 1839-1840, he had to have been the last or one of the last children of Mary Ann Ritchey (born ca. 1790-1800), shown as a head of household in the 1840 census of Hamilton County.<sup>x</sup>

Joseph G. Ritchey certainly descended from John Ritchie, an Irishman who immigrated to South Carolina in 1772. Although John and his relations would take the Patriot cause, for which he would much later draw a pension as a soldier of the American Revolution, his immediate neighbors on Raeburn Creek in what became Laurens District included some of the strongest supporters of the king's cause. Joseph G. Ritchey, likely named for an uncle Joseph Graves, could well have appreciated the dangers of living in such a dangerously divided community in time of civil war.<sup>xi</sup> Several John Ritchey's descendants, likely from Abbeville or Pendleton Districts, South Carolina, settled in Marion County, near Hamilton County, Tennessee, by 1830. Ten years later, the previously mentioned Mary Ann lived near her son (?) Sandford (born South Carolina, ca. 1815). He had settled in Hamilton County by 1836. This family, at that time but only at that time, lived within sight of Snow Hill, the mansion of William Snow.<sup>xii</sup>

Mary Ann, with Joe and some of her children, soon after 1840, moved nearby to the area of Walker County, Georgia that became Catoosa County in 1853, and where census takers would miss them and their neighbors in 1850 and 1870. They belonged to the poor to middle class farmers with few if any slaves who lived as "clay eaters" and "crackers" in the cane bottoms of upcountry South Carolina or

“hillbillies” in the mountains of East Tennessee. They made up the majority of white southerners, of soldiers in the Confederate army (voluntarily and involuntarily), and the largest part of the southerners who opposed the coming Civil War and would even join the federal military to oppose it. Mary Ann Ritchey moved to Newton County, Arkansas, after the war to live with her wealthy son-in-law and daughter Isaac and Narcissa Jane Ritchey Cooper. She died there in the 1870s rather than in a guerilla attack in Tennessee in 1864.<sup>xiii</sup>

Joe would have a confrontation with Confederate partisan Captain William Snow but by a very different set of circumstances. Just before the Civil War, Joseph G. Ritchey eloped with fourteen year old Susan Jones, daughter of Tapley Jones, near Ringgold in Catoosa County, Georgia. He then moved back to Hamilton County, Tennessee, the beginning of the problems that would earn him his notoriety. The couple’s children died either in birth or infancy. Susan left him for Confederate soldier Jim Hollis. Later, on May 8, 1862, Ritchey joined--and learned how to kill--in Company D of the Fourth Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, United States Army, where he eventually became a lieutenant. His regiment saw some of the hardest fighting and riding of the war. At one point, he left a federal hospital as a deserter to return home in civilian clothes in a clandestine mission to recruit men for his unit.<sup>xiv</sup>

The surrender of the Confederate armies in the spring of 1865 replaced military violence with civilian vigilantism across the South but especially in areas where the local population had been politically divided by the war, including in Joe Ritchey’s community. (Tennessee, but especially the eastern mountain counties, had the highest percentage of persons who refugee north to escape the war and who enlisted in the United States military to fight the Confederacy of any state that seceded.) A Georgia newspaper reported the situation at just that moment in East Tennessee:

Daily accounts from East Tennessee show a perfect reign of terror in that section. Lynch law in its most revolting phases reigns supreme. Lynch law, not excusable as personifying irrepressible outbursts of an indignant community, maddened by outrages which the “strongest arm of the law” fails to redress or avert, but of lawless violence engendered by anarchy and confusion. Proscription of the most intolerant kind is carried with so high a hand, that murderous revenge and barbarous outrages are daily perpetrated with the utmost impunity.<sup>xv</sup>

In or just prior to August 1865, Captain Snow and his Confederate guerillas spat on Joseph G. Ritchey at his home and burned all of his property. The Union veteran responded with gun fire. He killed Joe Pritchett and wounded both Snow and another man.<sup>xvi</sup>

For a man who subsequently committed a string of killings in three states out of vendetta, an Appalachian feud, or some form of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, Joseph Ritchey appears in the civil records of Hamilton County as leading a relatively normal life in the Chattanooga area. Ritchey married Adeline Rayl on August 24, 1865. The couple eventually had two sons, Spell Morgan and John C. “Jack” Ritchey. Hamilton County’s circuit court only mentions Joseph as the successful plaintiff in an 1866 civil suit that netted him all of five cents. No record of the governors of Tennessee issuing a proclamation for or even receiving a request for offering a reward for Ritchey’s arrest survives.<sup>xvii</sup>

Modern research of violent histories, as represented from Ritchey, Billy the Kid, and the Hatfield-McCoy Feud, began as people denied justice and forced to act as vigilantes rather than as the psychotic killers portrayed in popular myth and publications.<sup>xviii</sup> The post war demise of so many notoriously violent characters, or at least rumors of their deaths, must have encouraged the stories that Ritchey had extracted revenge again and again, for himself and for neighbors in Hamilton County and Catoosa County who wanted and needed the emotional satisfaction of believing that retribution had been administered upon their former oppressors. They likely felt more than a past need for revenge. As late as September 1868, the situation in Tennessee Governor W. G. Brownlow proclaimed that:

There exists in this State lawless bands of desperadoes, who are setting defiance [of] civil laws, and by threats and acts of violence and forcing many of our citizens to leave their houses and in certain localities it is entirely impossible for the civil officials of the State to enforce the laws.<sup>xix</sup>

Shortly afterwards, Ritchey did find himself in the jail in Harrison, reasons unknown. Reportedly he tried to commit suicide by cutting his throat. Instead, he escaped with the help of a woman and, according to Adeline, he set out for Pickens County, Georgia, to find an “old Dr. Shirley.”<sup>xx</sup>

Reports reprinted in contemporary newspapers from across the country detailed that phase of career the Joe or “Joel” Ritchey. The regional press in late January 1869 reported his escape from presumably the Harrison jail two months earlier but referred to him as a celebrated horse thief rather than as a notorious killer. On January 15, he visited the home of George Terry in upper Murray County, Georgia, near Chattanooga, and there he traded the mule he rode for a small bay horse before moving south towards the town of Jasper in nearby Pickens County. Two men, one of the rightful owner of the mule, showed up shortly afterwards and, with Terry, set out after Ritchey. They arrived in Jasper at 11 AM on January 17 and enlisted the aid of J. M. McCleaird, the local sheriff. The latter persuaded them to stay behind, as Ritchey would recognize them, while he and his citizen deputy Warren Brown approached the thief. They found the wanted man in a house, four miles from the town, shaving. The sheriff placed his hand on Joe Ritchey’s shoulder and pronounced him as under arrest. The desperado asked to be allowed to finish shaving and, when the sheriff agreed, the desperado reached down as if to strop the razor on his boot. Instead, he pulled out a gun that he held against the sheriff’s breast and fired. The lawman died instantly and when Brown rushed in, Ritchey mortally wounded him with two shots before fleeing in the direction of North Carolina on the horse of J. A. Nelson of Murray County, the same steed that the sheriff had ridden to the house.<sup>xxi</sup> The horse thief had now committed a crime serious enough and far enough from a community of sympathizers that Rufus Bullock, the Reconstruction governor of Georgia received a report of it and offered a award of \$1,000 for the capture of Joe “Stillboy” Ritchey.<sup>xxii</sup> With such a substantial reward for his arrest, Ritchey could find himself pursued by private posses of bounty hunters like those ran by professional manhunter Walter Webster Findley.<sup>xxiii</sup> One month later the press announced that the wanted man died fighting beside his kinsmen at White Oak Cove near Chattanooga. Ritchey reportedly promised the men who followed him that they would fight to the death. He reportedly killed two of the attacking posse. The newspapers soon published a retraction in that the desperado had escaped again.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Joe Ritchey went West, abandoning his little family. John W. Watkins swore that he left in 1869 or 1870 because he had reportedly committed several murders including the sheriff and deputy in Pickens County. False rumors spread that he had numerous indictments against him, that the governor of Georgia had offered \$5,000 for his arrest, and that the governor of Tennessee had also offered a reward. Conceivably, he may have killed six rather than more than seventeen men credited to him in his whole life. He once did send Adeline some money and a photograph; a rumor spread that he came back to find Susan his first wife; and Alexander McNabb received a letter from him sent from Denton County, Texas. In 1872, a newspaper story appeared that he had been in Red Clay, Georgia, near Chattanooga, threatening to kill some six more men.<sup>xxv</sup>

By July 1870, however, Adeline, with her children and younger siblings, had moved in with Joseph B. Watkins. Needing support for herself and her two children, she would eventually have sexual relations with John W. Watkins, a married man by whom she had three more children. He helped her to raise all of her offspring although she gave his daughter and two sons the surname of Ritchey.<sup>xxvi</sup> Decades and a new century later, the Pension Office turned down Adeline’s request for a pension because her marriage had been illegal and of provisions in the pension act against persons reportedly of immoral character, having had with several men what the law deemed as improper sexual relations. (Ritchey two wives, Susan and Adeline, in Tennessee who still lived and he reportedly failed to obtain any formal legal divorce from any of the women he married; his rural southern culture had a tradition of a form of common law “self divorce” made famous by a political scandal involving Andrew Jackson and his wife Rachel Donelson, especially where adultery or spousal abuse had occurred.)<sup>xxvii</sup>

Exactly where and why Joe Ritchey went remains a mystery. What survives of the records of Tennessee’s Reconstruction era governors of the period exclude any mention of him or his crimes. In 1874, however, Joseph G. Ritchey lived on Limestone Creek, in Newton County, Arkansas, at least near his mother and his sister Narcissa. The desperado had brought with him a woman named Hetty whom he introduced as his wife. A year later, while likely using the alias Joe G. Still, he moved on to Texas and sent Hetty back to her family. While in this new locale, the horse thief killed a man who stole a horse that belonged to an elderly friend named Phillips. After giving himself up to the local authorities, Ritchey considered that he might be extradited to Georgia or Tennessee and chose to again escape. He found trouble that he failed to explain on the way back to Arkansas. By the spring of 1876, he found himself

back on Limestone Creek but he left soon after for Missouri and returned, six months later, with a petite girl named Lizzie Heaton whom he introduced as his new wife. She soon after left him and married another man in Boone County.<sup>xxviii</sup>

While Ritchey again worked on Marion Carleton farm in May 1876, an assassin shot and killed him at the spring on Limestone Creek. The investigator from the Pension Office interviewed Carlton and other people who had arrived at the scene within a few minutes but he failed to find anyone with information on the identity of the assassin. Thomas C. Bethall, as local justice of the peace, claimed that he conducted an inquest although any records of it had disappeared by the time of the 1903 investigation. Marion Carlton reported that local officials ignored the matter as Ritchey had been an overbearing bully who openly bragged about his killings.<sup>xxix</sup>

Contemporary records, memory, and oral history had now come together to meet in the account of the demise of Tennessee's serial killer. V. N. Phillips recorded an oral history of Joe Ritchey's last days that had been handed down from the late Russell Crider. It included admissions that the persons in deposed in Arkansas avoided making. Like Billy the Kid, Joe Ritchey boasted of his bloody accomplishments to his neighbors. The desperado also threatened them and even pulled a gun on Carlton over an unpaid debt. During those years, farm workers black and white often found collecting their due more problematic than their work. A man named [Franklin?] Davis interceded in that incident, pointing out that Carlton needed to live in order to pay up what he owed. Eventually the people of the community collected \$100 with which they paid a man named Warren to kill the gunfighter Joseph G. Ritchey.<sup>xxx</sup>

The fate of the desperado had ironies beyond his being a murderer finally felled by a hired assassin. James Cooper Wallace, the sixteen year old war orphan of Ritchey's sister Narcissa, arrived at the body of the slain man almost immediately. Wallace would grow up to spend his life as a law man and as one of the deputy marshals of the famous Judge Isaac C. Parker of Fort Smith, Arkansas, would ride the Indian Territory including as part of the famous Heck Thomas' posse. Thomas's band, however, had been responsible for killing Wallace's kinsman, the infamous Bill Doolin.<sup>xxxi</sup> Marion Carlton, later the Newton County sheriff and likely responsible for Ritchey's death, shaved and prepared for burial the body of the deceased gunfighter whose use of a razor had played such a role in his life. Joe Ritchey today lies beside his mother in Steele Creek Cemetery where only his wealthy brother-in-law Isaac Cooper and his sister Narcissa have marked graves. Most of the people of Newton County had, like Ritchey, been southerners who supported the Union and had suffered the same sort of abuse from guerillas as he had. Oral history identifies three of the graves in the Steele Creek Cemetery, Union Township, as those of local supporters of the Union hanged by Confederates in 1863, men whose fate Ritchey could have appreciated. Such people harbored the gunfighter in Tennessee but killed him in Arkansas.<sup>xxxii</sup> Captain William "Billy" Snow, the guerilla leader whose Snow's Scouts had committed the atrocities on persons and property that had started Ritchey on his path of violence had left Hamilton County, Tennessee, immediately after the war from fear of retribution from the persons and families he had harmed. He died in Tiptonville, Tennessee, allegedly from the wounds given to him by Ritchey in their encounter in 1865, although Snow out lived the desperado by a few months and passed away on December 1, 1876. In his will, Snow actually asked his heirs to peruse legal action for damage done to his property by the federal government during the war.<sup>xxxiii</sup> At almost that same time, Tallant, then sixteen years old and in Hamilton County, actually witnessed one part of the Joe Ritchey saga that he would relate almost sixty years later. He saw his mother crying on the news of Ritchey's death and repeating over and over again that "Joe Ritchey was a good boy."<sup>xxxiv</sup>

The final history of Joe Ritchey resembles that of men like Billy the Kid and Jesse James in almost every regard except for lasting notoriety. They all received credit for far more killings than they likely achieved and they had romantic motives ascribed to them, respectively that raise questions when compared to known facts. Ritchey and Boney also shared that their legends came from real men in situations without rule of law that compelled them to kill much as usually occurred in real instances of vigilante violence that became legend. That violence begat ever widening anti societal spirals of living outside of any restraint with regards to violence, sex, and robbery in an age of expanding injustice that extended from the many kinds of atrocities committed during the Civil War, and in the years immediately afterwards, to the contemporaneous "era of good stealings" where corporations blatantly robbed the public and used privately financed violence to maintain their power and profits. Even in such a world with only limited law enforcement capabilities and honest rule of law, the actions of men like Joe Ritchey and Billy the Kid had to come to violent ends as they became victims of their self promotion and actions with little in the way of options for escape. Their notoriety finally contributed to their deaths so that, in the end,

the legends survive and grow after the real persons failed to escape from the negative consequences of their notoriety.

1. John McElroy, *Andersonville: a Story of a Rebel Prison* (Washington: National Tribune, 1899), 35. So many guns became available after the war that Robert Riley Berry witnessed a rural blacksmith shop in rural Georgia melting them down as scrap metal. Robert S. Davis, "Post Civil War Northwest Georgia: The Epic Poem of Robert Riley Berry," *Chattanooga Regional Historical Journal* 5 (2) (December 2002): 105. For information on the Civil War partisan warfare in Georgia and Tennessee see Sean Michael O'Brien, *Mountain Partisans: Guerrilla Warfare in the Southern Appalachian, 1861-1866* (Westport, Ct.: Praeger, 1999) and for the Western gunfighters see For the career of William "Billy the Kid" Bonney and other gunfighters see Jay Robert Nash, *Encyclopedia of Western Lawmen and Outlaws* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994).

2. William J. Tallant, *History of the Tallant Family Including the autobiography of Rev. J. E. Tallant, A. M.* (Harrisburg, N. C.: The author, 1990), 24-26; John Wilson, *Hamilton County Pioneers* (Chelsea, Mi.: BookCrafters, 1998), 280. Tallant would have been too young to have really known Ritchey although his family lived near the later desperado in 1860. William Snow, however, lived in another district. Hamilton County, Tennessee, pp. 54, 101, 106, *Eighth Census of the United States (1860)* (National Archives microfilm M653, roll 1253), Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group (hereafter RG) 29, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington (hereafter NARA).

3. John William Oliver, *History of the Civil War Military Pensions, 1861-1885* (Madison, Wi.: University of Wisconsin, 1917), 40-43, 72-73; Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: the Story of the G. A. R.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 149, 199, 331, 437-38, 471; William H. Glasson, *Federal Military Pensions in the United States*, ed. David Kinley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1918), 266, 270-274.

4. William H. Stovall, *Strange Stories Behind Pension Claims* (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Co., 1935), 136-39, 162.

5. Stuart McConnell, "The William Newby Case and the Legacy of the Civil War," *Prologue: The Quarterly of the National Archives* 30 (winter 1998): 247-56.

6. Robert S. Davis, *Ghosts and Shadows of Andersonville: Essays on the Secret Social Histories of America's Deadliest Prison* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2006), 122-24.

7. Robert S. Davis, "The Shooting at Scarecorn Campground," *North Georgia Journal* 15 (3) (summer 1998): 12-16.

8. Robert S. Davis, "Some Former Slaves and Their Masters," *Heritage Quest* no. 69 (May/June 1997): 85-87.

9. Civil War pension claim of Joseph G. Ritchey/widow Adeline, application number 730,406, General Records of the Department of the Interior, RG 48, NARA. The Ritchey claim is hereinafter cited as "Ritchey claim."

10. Deposition of Lucinda Cooper Houston, September 15, 1903, Ritchey claim; Walter F. Lackey, *History of Newton County, Arkansas* (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Print, 1950), 26; compiled service record of Joseph G. Ritchey, *Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers who served in Organizations from the State of Tennessee* (National Archives microfilm M395, roll 37), Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 94, NARA; Hamilton County, Tennessee, pp. 178-79, *Sixth Census of the United States (1840)* (National Archives microfilm M704, roll 525), Hamilton County, Tennessee, p. 101, *Eighth Census of the United States (1860)* (National Archives microfilm M653, roll 1253), and Newton County, Arkansas, p. 193, *Ninth Census of the United States (1870)* (National Archives microfilm M539, reel 59), RG 29, NARA.

11. Brent H. Holcomb, *Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Journals* (7 vols., Columbia, S. C.: SCMAR, 1999), 7: 192-94; Revolutionary War pension claim of John Ritchie, SC W5707, M805 roll 692; Frances Ingmire, *Laurens County, South Carolina Will Book D & E 1810-1825* (n.p., n. d.), 82-83. For the politics of the Raeburn Creek community during the American Revolution see Robert S. Davis, "Lessons from Kettle Creek: Patriotism and Loyalism at Askance on the Southern Frontier," *Journal of Backcountry Studies* 1 (1) (May 2006), n. p. (online journal): <http://www.uncc.edu/~rmcalhoo/jbs/>

12. Byron Sistler, comp., *1830 Census East Tennessee* (Evanston, Il.: The Author, 1969), 121; Historical Records Project, "Tennessee Records of Hamilton County Entry Taker's Book 1824-1897," (1937) unpublished manuscript, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library; James L. Douthat, *Hamilton County, Tennessee 1836 Tennessee Civil Districts and Tax Lists* (Signal Mountain, Tn.: the Author, 1993), 194.

13. Delma E. Presley, "The Crackers of Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 60 (summer 1976): 102-16; Census Committee, *1860 U. S. Census-Catoosa County, Ga.* (Ringold, Ga.: Catoosa County Historical Society, 1994), 111; Newton County, Arkansas, p. 193, *Ninth Census of the United States (1870)* (National Archives microfilm M539, reel 59), RG 29, NARA; deposition of Thos. C. Bethell, September 14, 1903, Ritchey claim.

14. Depositions of J. C. Heaton, January 6, 1903, and Paulee Ware, January 30, 1903, Ritchey claim; compiled service record of Joseph G. Ritchey; Frederick H. Dyer, comp., *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (2 vols., 1908; rep. ed., Wilmington, N. C.: Broadfoot, 1998), 2: 1638. His service record contains a description of Ritchey as a farmer, five feet nine inches tall, fair complexion, blue eyes, and light hair. L. B. Jones described him as a small man of 135 to 140 pounds. Deposition of J. B. Jones, January 10, 1903, Ritchey Claim.

15. Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, "Chattanooga under Military Occupation, 1863-1865," *Journal of Southern History* 17 (February 1951): 25-47; Elsie M. Janow, *Soddy, Tennessee* (Chattanooga, Tn.: Voice Publishing Company, 1989), 36-41; "Reign of Terror in East Tennessee," *Macon (Georgia) Daily Telegraph*, September 19, 1865,

16. Depositions of Adeline Ritchey, January 3, 1903, Ritchey claim.

17. Tennessee Historical Records Survey, *Transcription of the County Archives of Tennessee: Hamilton County Civil Record A Law Court of Chattanooga 1860-1867* (Nashville, Tn.: April 1942), 505, 623, 674; Dennis C. Wilson, comp., *Marriage Records of Hamilton County, Tennessee 1857-1888* (n. p., 2003), n. p.

18. Altina L. Waller, *Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 2-12.

19. Governors Proclamation Book (1865-1870), p. 116, Box 1, RG 264, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

20. Depositions of Adeline Ritchey, January 3, 1903, Thomas C. Bethall, September 14, 1903, and Marion Carleton, July 28, 1903, Ritchey claim. Dr. Shirley would likely have been later physician James Brown Shirley, formerly of Chattanooga. Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., and John C. Wilson, *Confederate Soldiers of Hamilton County, Tennessee* (Signal Mountain, Tn.: Mountain

Press, 2001), 149. An Andrew J. Shirley lived in Dawson County, near Pickens County, in 1870. Dawson County, Georgia, p. 532, *Ninth Census of the United States (1870)* (National Archives microfilm M593, roll 146), RG 29, NARA.

21. "A Desperado Murders a Sheriff and Deputy Sheriff," *Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Daily Sentinel*, February 11, 1869; "The Sheriff of Pickens County Murdered and His Deputy Seriously Wounded," *Weekly Georgia Telegraph* (Macon, Georgia), January 29, 1869. Very little information has been found on Sheriff J. E. McCleaird and nothing on deputized citizen Warren Brown. McCleaird may have been the John M. McCleaird of neighboring Dawson County who deserted from the Sixth Georgia Confederate Cavalry Regiment in the Spring of 1864. He certainly went behind federal lines to Kentucky during the war. His widow Martha and three children lived in poverty in Pickens County in 1870. Mimi Jo Butler, "The Town of Jasper—The 1860s War Years Part 2," undated newspaper clipping from the *Pickens County (Georgia) Progress*; Pickens County, Georgia, p. 65, *Ninth Census of the United States (1870)* (National Archives microfilm M593, roll 169), RG 29, and compiled service record of John M. McCleaird/McCleaird, *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers who served in organizations from the state of Georgia* (National Archives microfilm M266, roll 34), RG 109 War Department Collection of Confederate Records, NARA.

22. Deposition of L. B. Jones, January 10, 1903, Ritchey Claim; Executive Minutes, July 10, 1866-December 23, 1870, p. 286, microfilm roll 50/55, Georgia Archives, Morrow.

23. Findley worked simultaneously as a bounty hunter, deputy federal marshal, and deputy county sheriff. Robert S. Davis, "Early Mountain Feud: Gunfight at Doublehead Gap," *North Georgia Journal* 8 (3) (1991): 61-64; Faye S. Poss, comp., *Jackson County, Georgia Newspaper Clippings, The Forest News June 1875 to January 1881* (Athens, Ga.: The Author, 2005), 48, 98.

24. [no title], *Daily Columbus (Georgia) Enquirer*, February 21 and 24, 1869; [no title], *North American and United States Gazette* (Philadelphia, Pa.), February 24, 1869.

25. Depositions of Alexander McNabb, January 17, 1903, Adeline Ritchey, January 3, 1903, Paulee Ware, January 30, 1903, L. B. Jones, January 10, 1903, and John W. Watkins, January 5, 1903, Ritchey claim; [no title], *Atlanta (Georgia) Daily Sun*, February 25, 1872.

26. Depositions of Adeline Ritchey, January 3, 1903, J. C. Ritchey, January 3, 1903, John W. Watkins, January 5, 1903, and L. B. Jones, January 10, 1903, Ritchey claim; Hamilton County, Tennessee, p. 562B, *Ninth Census of the United States (1870)* (National Archives microfilm M593, roll 1532), RG 29, NARA; James L. Douthat, *Hamilton County, TN Marriage Book 2 1864-1874* (Signal Mountain, Tn.: The author, 1989), 7.

27. Depositions of Clinton Miller, July 3, 1902, John W. Watkins, January 3, 1903, and J. C. Coleman, January 5, 1903, Thomas R. Hardwick to Commissioner of Pensions, January 3, 1903, Ritchey Claim; Marylynn Salmon, *Women and the Law of Property in Early America* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 58-59. Susan Jones (Mrs. Joseph Ritchey) apparently remarried at least once by 1881. She died in the 1890s. Peggy Anderson, comp., *Marriages, Coosa County, Georgia Book A 1858-1887* (Ennis, Tx.: Books 'N Books, 1991), 34, 38; Deposition of Paulee Ware, January 30, 1903, Ritchey Claim.

28. Depositions of Marion Carleton, July 28, 1903, and Thomas C. Bethall, September 14, 1903, Ritchey Claim.

29. Depositions of Alexander McNabb, January 17, 1903, Marion Carleton, July 28, 1903, and Thomas C. Bethall, September 14, 1903, Ritchey Claim.

30. V. N. Phillips, *The New Ozark Cousins* (Jasper, Ar.: the author, 1984), 176; Phillips to author, November 14, 2007, in the author's possession.

31.

32. Lackey, *History of Newton County, Arkansas*, 128.

33. Hughes and Wilson, *Confederate Soldiers of Hamilton County*, 156.

34. Tallant, *History of the Tallant Family*, 26. For the career of William "Billy the Kid" Bonney and other gun fighters of the period see Nash, *Encyclopedia of Western Lawmen and Outlaws* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), 38-45.

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<sup>i</sup> John McElroy, *Andersonville: a Story of a Rebel Prison* (Washington: National Tribune, 1899), 35. So many guns became available after the war that Robert Riley Berry witnessed a rural blacksmith shop in rural Georgia melting them down as scrap metal. Robert S. Davis, "Post Civil War Northwest Georgia: The Epic Poem of Robert Riley Berry," *Chattanooga Regional Historical Journal* 5 (2) (December 2002): 105. For information on the Civil War partisan warfare in Georgia and Tennessee see Sean Michael O'Brien, *Mountain Partisans: Guerrilla Warfare in the Southern Appalachian. 1861-1866* (Westport, Ct.: Praeger, 1999) and for the Western gunfighters see For the career of William "Billy the Kid" Bonney and other gunfighters see Jay Robert Nash, *Encyclopedia of Western Lawmen and Outlaws* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994).

<sup>ii</sup> William J. Tallant, *History of the Tallant Family Including the autobiography of Rev. J. E. Tallant, A. M.* (Harrisburg, N. C.: The author, 1990), 24-26; John Wilson, *Hamilton County Pioneers* (Chelsea, Mi.: BookCrafters, 1998), 280. Tallant would have been too young to have really known Ritchey although his family lived near the later desperado in 1860. William Snow, however, lived in another district. Hamilton County, Tennessee, pp. 54, 101, 106, *Eighth Census of the United States (1860)* (National Archives microfilm M653, roll 1253), Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group (hereafter RG) 29, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington (hereafter NARA).

<sup>iii</sup> John William Oliver, *History of the Civil War Military Pensions, 1861-1885* (Madison, Wi.: University of Wisconsin, 1917), 40-43, 72-73; Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: the Story of the G. A. R.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 149, 199, 331, 437-38, 471; William H. Glasson, *Federal Military Pensions in the United States*, ed. David Kinley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1918), 266, 270-274.

<sup>iv</sup> William H. Stovall, *Strange Stories Behind Pension Claims* (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Co., 1935), 136-39, 162.

<sup>v</sup> Stuart McConnell, "The William Newby Case and the Legacy of the Civil War," *Prologue: The Quarterly of the National Archives* 30 (winter 1998): 247-56.

<sup>vi</sup> Robert S. Davis, *Ghosts and Shadows of Andersonville: Essays on the Secret Social Histories of America's Deadliest Prison* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2006), 122-24.

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- <sup>vii</sup> Robert S. Davis, "The Shooting at Scarecorn Campground," *North Georgia Journal* 15 (3) (summer 1998): 12-16.
- <sup>viii</sup> Robert S. Davis, "Some Former Slaves and Their Masters," *Heritage Quest* no. 69 (May/June 1997): 85-87.
- <sup>ix</sup> Civil War pension claim of Joseph G. Ritchey/widow Adeline, application number 730,406, General Records of the Department of the Interior, RG 48, NARA. The Ritchey claim is hereinafter cited as "Ritchey claim."
- <sup>x</sup> Deposition of Lucinda Cooper Houston, September 15, 1903, Ritchey claim; Walter F. Lackey, *History of Newton County, Arkansas* (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Print, 1950), 26; compiled service record of Joseph G. Ritchey, *Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers who served in Organizations from the State of Tennessee* (National Archives microfilm M395, roll 37), Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 94, NARA; Hamilton County, Tennessee, pp. 178-79, *Sixth Census of the United States (1840)* (National Archives microfilm M704, roll 525), Hamilton County, Tennessee, p. 101, *Eighth Census of the United States (1860)* (National Archives microfilm M653, roll 1253), and Newton County, Arkansas, p. 193, *Ninth Census of the United States (1870)* (National Archives microfilm M539, reel 59), RG 29, NARA.
- <sup>xi</sup> Brent H. Holcomb, *Petitions for Land from the South Carolina Journals* (7 vols., Columbia, S. C.: SCMAR, 1999), 7: 192-94; Revolutionary War pension claim of John Ritchie, SC W5707, M805 roll 692; Frances Ingmire, *Laurens County, South Carolina Will Book D & E 1810-1825* (n.p., n. d.), 82-83. For the politics of the Raeburn Creek community during the American Revolution see Robert S. Davis, "Lessons from Kettle Creek: Patriotism and Loyalism at Askeance on the Southern Frontier," *Journal of Backcountry Studies* 1 (1) (May 2006), n. p. (online journal): <http://www.uncg.edu/~rmcalhoo/jbs/>
- <sup>xii</sup> Byron Sistler, comp., *1830 Census East Tennessee* (Evanston, Ill.: The Author, 1969), 121; Historical Records Project, "Tennessee Records of Hamilton County Entry Taker's Book 1824-1897," (1937) unpublished manuscript, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library; James L. Douthat, *Hamilton County, Tennessee 1836 Tennessee Civil Districts and Tax Lists* (Signal Mountain, Tn.: the Author, 1993), 194.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Delma E. Presley, "The Crackers of Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 60 (summer 1976): 102-16; Census Committee, *1860 U. S. Census-Catoosa County, Ga.* (Ringold, Ga.: Catoosa County Historical Society, 1994), 111; Newton County, Arkansas, p. 193, *Ninth Census of the United States (1870)* (National Archives microfilm M539, reel 59), RG 29, NARA; deposition of Thos. C. Bethell, September 14, 1903, Ritchey claim.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Depositions of J. C. Heaton, January 6, 1903, and Paulee Ware, January 30, 1903, Ritchey claim; compiled service record of Joseph G. Ritchey; Frederick H. Dyer, comp., *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (2 vols., 1908; rep. ed., Wilmington, N. C.: Broadfoot, 1998), 2: 1638. His service record contains a description of Ritchey as a farmer, five feet nine inches tall, fair complexion, blue eyes, and light hair. L. B. Jones described him as a small man of 135 to 140 pounds. Deposition of J. B. Jones, January 10, 1903, Ritchey Claim.
- <sup>xv</sup> Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, "Chattanooga under Military Occupation, 1863-1865," *Journal of Southern History* 17 (February 1951): 25-47; Elsie M. Janow, *Soddy, Tennessee* (Chattanooga, Tn.: Voice Publishing Company, 1989), 36-41; "Reign of Terror in East Tennessee," *Macon (Georgia) Daily Telegraph*, September 19, 1865,
- <sup>xvi</sup> Depositions of Adeline Ritchey, January 3, 1903, Ritchey claim.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Tennessee Historical Records Survey, *Transcription of the County Archives of Tennessee: Hamilton County Civil Record A Law Court of Chattanooga 1860-1867* (Nashville, Tn.: April 1942), 505, 623, 674; Dennis C. Wilson, comp., *Marriage Records of Hamilton County, Tennessee 1857-1888* (n. p., 2003), n. p.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Altina L. Waller, *Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 2-12.
- <sup>xix</sup> Governors Proclamation Book (1865-1870), p. 116, Box 1, RG 264, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.
- <sup>xx</sup> Depositions of Adeline Ritchey, January 3, 1903, Thomas C. Bethall, September 14, 1903, and Marion Carleton, July 28, 1903, Ritchey claim. Dr. Shirley would likely have been later physician James Brown Shirley, formerly of Chattanooga. Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., and John C. Wilson, *Confederate Soldiers of Hamilton County, Tennessee* (Signal Mountain, Tn.: Mountain Press, 2001), 149. An Andrew J. Shirley lived in Dawson County, near Pickens County, in 1870. Dawson County, Georgia, p. 532, *Ninth Census of the United States (1870)* (National Archives microfilm M593, roll 146), RG 29, NARA.
- <sup>xxi</sup> "A Desperado Murders a Sheriff and Deputy Sheriff," *Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Daily Sentinel*, February 11, 1869; "The Sheriff of Pickens County Murdered and His Deputy Seriously Wounded," *Weekly Georgia Telegraph* (Macon, Georgia), January 29, 1869. Very little information has been found on Sheriff J. E. McCleaird and nothing on deputized citizen Warren Brown. McCleaird may have been the John M. McCleaird of neighboring Dawson County who deserted from the Sixth Georgia Confederate Cavalry Regiment in the Spring of 1864. He certainly went behind federal lines to Kentucky during the war. His widow Martha and three children lived in poverty in Pickens County in 1870. Mimi Jo Butler, "The Town of Jasper—The 1860s War Years Part 2," undated newspaper clipping from the *Pickens County (Georgia) Progress*; Pickens County, Georgia, p. 65, *Ninth Census of the United States (1870)* (National Archives microfilm M593, roll 169), RG 29, and compiled service record of John M. McCleaird/McCleaird,



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*Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers who served in organizations from the state of Georgia* (National Archives microfilm M266, roll 34), RG 109 War Department Collection of Confederate Records, NARA.

<sup>xxii</sup> Deposition of L. B. Jones, January 10, 1903, Ritchey Claim; Executive Minutes, July 10, 1866-December 23, 1870, p. 286, microfilm roll 50/55, Georgia Archives, Morrow.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Findley worked simultaneously as a bounty hunter, deputy federal marshal, and deputy county sheriff. Robert S. Davis, "Early Mountain Feud: Gunfight at Doublehead Gap," *North Georgia Journal* 8 (3) (1991): 61-64; Faye S. Poss, comp., *Jackson County, Georgia Newspaper Clippings, The Forest News June 1875 to January 1881* (Athens, Ga.: The Author, 2005), 48, 98.

<sup>xxiv</sup> [no title], *Daily Columbus (Georgia) Enquirer*, February 21 and 24, 1869; [no title], *North American and United States Gazette* (Philadelphia, Pa.), February 24, 1869.

<sup>xxv</sup> Depositions of Alexander McNabb, January 17, 1903, Adeline Ritchey, January 3, 1903, Paulee Ware, January 30, 1903, L. B. Jones, January 10, 1903, and John W. Watkins, January 5, 1903, Ritchey claim; [no title], *Atlanta (Georgia) Daily Sun*, February 25, 1872.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Depositions of Adeline Ritchey, January 3, 1903, J. C. Ritchey, January 3, 1903, John W. Watkins, January 5, 1903, and L. B. Jones, January 10, 1903, Ritchey claim; Hamilton County, Tennessee, p. 562B, *Ninth Census of the United States (1870)* (National Archives microfilm M593, roll 1532), RG 29, NARA; James L. Douthat, *Hamilton County, TN Marriage Book 2 1864-1874* (Signal Mountain, Tn.: The author, 1989), 7.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Depositions of Clinton Miller, July 3, 1902, John W. Watkins, January 3, 1903, and J. C. Coleman, January 5, 1903, Thomas R. Hardwick to Commissioner of Pensions, January 3, 1903, Ritchey Claim; Marylynn Salmon, *Women and the Law of Property in Early America* (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 58-59. Susan Jones (Mrs. Joseph Ritchey) apparently remarried at least once by 1881. She died in the 1890s. Peggy Anderson, comp., *Marriages, Coosa County, Georgia Book A 1858-1887* (Ennis, Tx.: Books 'N Books, 1991), 34, 38; Deposition of Paulee Ware, January 30, 1903, Ritchey Claim.

<sup>xxviii</sup> Depositions of Marion Carleton, July 28, 1903, and Thomas C. Bethall, September 14, 1903, Ritchey Claim.

<sup>xxix</sup> Depositions of Alexander McNabb, January 17, 1903, Marion Carleton, July 28, 1903, and Thomas C. Bethall, September 14, 1903, Ritchey Claim.

<sup>xxx</sup> V. N. Phillips, *The New Ozark Cousins* (Jasper, Ar.: the author, 1984), 176; Phillips to author, November 14, 2007, in the author's possession.

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<sup>xxxii</sup> Lackey, *History of Newton County, Arkansas*, 128.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Hughes and Wilson, *Confederate Soldiers of Hamilton County*, 156.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Tallant, *History of the Tallant Family*, 26. For the career of William "Billy the Kid" Bonney and other gun fighters of the period see Nash, *Encyclopedia of Western Lawmen and Outlaws* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), 38-45.

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