



Brown County Journal

August 15, 2014

Events:

Brown County Historical
Society Dinner Meeting
September 1

Brown County
Genealogical Society
September 9

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Franklin P. Taggart Left His Mark

Franklin P. Taggart indeed left his mark on Brown County as well as left his works in the building of Nashville. If nothing else is known of the man his buildings in Nashville are remnants of his hard work and devotion to his town. From his beautiful home on Jefferson Street which now houses Bright & Williamson to the historic building now housing the Hobnob Restaurant. He even put some sweat on the stones that are now the foundation of our Courthouse. Frank P. Taggart is how he was commonly known. The P. in his middle name most say stood for Patterson, but he had a brother by that name also. More than likely it stood for Peterson. As was the custom in those days one of the children were often given the name of their mother's maiden name or in this instance grandmother, Rachel Peterson who married his grandfather, James Taggart.

The following excerpt is from a Biographical Record of Bartholomew and Brown Counties 1904. This gives an insight into the life of Mr. Taggart. "The subject of this review is accorded the distinction of being the oldest businessman in Nashville, as well as one of the best known and most popular citizens of Brown county. A gallant soldier in one of the greatest wars, he demonstrated his loyalty to his country on a number of battlefields, and resuming the quiet pursuits of civil life after the din of conflict had subsided, exerting a strong and beneficial influence upon all with whom he comes in contact. Frank P. Taggart is a creditable representative of one of the oldest pioneer families of Brown county, his father, Captain James, and his grandfather, James Taggart, both natives of east Tennessee, moving to this part of the state in the early thirties and settling on public land in Hamblin township, for which they received patents from the government.



Decoration Day Parade ca. 1900 - west end Main Street, the Oddfellows building (square white building), right is the Taggart and the Tilton houses.

Captain James Taggart married in the state of his nativity Miss Jane Weddell and was the father of several children when he became a resident of Brown county. He was a fine specimen of the hardy backwoodsman, developed by the times in which he lived, Mr. Taggart was a man of great energy and in every respect a praiseworthy citizen. When the war with Mexico was declared he helped recruit Company E of the Third Infantry, later was commissioned Captain of the same and in that capacity joined the army under General Taylor and participated from the beginning of the conflict at Palo Alto until killed while bravely leading his men in the battle of Buena Vista.

Captain James and Jane Taggart reared a family of eleven children, the subject of this sketch being ninth in order of birth, six of the number surviving and doing well in their respective spheres of life. The birth of Frank P. Taggart occurred in the old family homestead in Washington township December 16, 1839. He was reared to habits of industry on the farm in his youth and attended during a few months of each winter season such schools as the country at that time afforded. After remaining with his mother until fifteen years of age, he severed home ties and started out to make his own way, choosing for his vocation the blacksmith's trade to which he devoted his attention until the breaking out of the great Civil war. Shortly after the beginning of hostilities Mr. Taggart enlisted as a musician in the Twenty-second Indiana regimental band, in which capacity he served one year. During that time he experienced a great deal of active duty, principally in the states of Missouri and Arkansas, Pea Ridge and Corinth being among the hard-fought battles. At the expiration of the



L to R, front to back: Franklin, Martha Ellen, Walter Alexander, Ira Wilbur, Estella, and Patterson Edgar Taggart

period Mr. Taggart re-entered the service as Lieutenant of Company K, One Hundred and Forty-fifth Indiana Volunteer Infantry, and as such continued at the front until the end of the war. Lieutenant Taggart was for some months, provost marshal of Early County, Georgia, having been appointed to the position in August 1865 and so acted until being mustered out of the service February 17, 1866. Mr. Taggart thus gave some of the best years of his life to the service of his country. Mr. Taggart comes of an intensely loyal and patriotic family, his father and one brother, James W., having borne gallant parts in the war with Mexico, while four of his brothers served with distinction during the conflict between the northern states and the southern confederacy.

After his return from the army Lieutenant Taggart engaged in farming in Brown county and continued the same with varied success until the year 1870, when he disposed of his agricultural interests and established himself in the mercantile business at Nashville. From that time to the present he has devoted his attention closely to general merchandising, building up a large and lucrative patronage

and, as already indicated, his establishment is now the oldest of the kind in the city. Financially Mr. Taggart has met with success owning, in addition to his large store, valuable property, both real estate and personal, among which may be noted the elegant modern residence he now occupies, one of the finest and best appointed private dwellings in Nashville.

On May 13, 1860, Mr. Taggart and Miss Martha E. Sipe, of Ohio, daughter of Joseph and Maribah C. (Satterthwaite) Sipe, were united in the bonds of holy wedlock. Mrs. Taggart's mother died when she was a child of nine, and being given to her grandparents, Thomas and Elizabeth (McMullen) Satterthwaite, she accompanied them to Bartholomew County, Indiana, where her



Mart & Estella Hopper

in Nashville. During the Civil War the church had dissolved because the question of slavery had split the opinions of the churchgoers. Martha Taggart with others was instrumental in getting a new church built and pulling the Methodist church back together in Nashville.

“Originally Mr. Frank P. Taggart was a Democrat in politics, but since the organization of the Prohibition party, in which movement he was an active and influential factor, he has given it his earnest and uncompromising support. Since the year 1884, when

grandfather died, and some years later she came with her grandmother to Brown county. To Mr. and Mrs. Taggart four children have been born, the oldest, a son by the name of Walter A., being a resident of Decatur County, Indiana, and a family man with a family; Patterson E., the second in order of birth, is a successful undertaker of Nashville; Ira W., the third of the subject’s children, is interested with his father in the store and has the reputation of being one of the most enterprising young business men of Nashville; Estella, the youngest of the family, is the wife of Martin E. Hopper, her husband also being connected with Mr. Taggart’s mercantile establishment.”

In 1872 the town of Nashville was established as the county seat and was incorporated. The first trustees were John Genolin, Frank P. Taggart, and Charles Gibson. They had dreams for a thriving town and center of business. They sat down and formed by-laws and ordinances which they adopted for the town government. Mrs. Taggart was also quite involved. She helped to restart the Methodist Church



Frank P. Taggart, daughter Estella Hopper, and wife Martha - in front of their home



Martin Hopper Band - Mart on far left

friend of education and an advocate of the public school system, which forms the basis of our state and national prosperity. The best advantages in this direction obtainable were provided for his children, all of whom are intelligent, well informed and highly esteemed by their friends and associates. A decided taste for music appears to be characteristic of the family, the father and all of the children being much more than ordinarily proficient in the art.” (from Biographical Record of Bartholomew and Brown Counties 1904)

Decidedly Frank Taggart and his family were

prohibition first took organized form in Indiana, he has been one of its most pronounced adherents, and as such his influence has done much to strengthen the party, not only in Brown County but throughout the state. A lifelong temperance man and an unyielding enemy of the liquor traffic, he believes the saloon to be the great moral ulcer on the body politic.

Mr. Taggart has always been a



Hopper Family Orchestra, ca. 1910-1917

L to R: Rex Hopper, Mart Hopper, James Kennedy, Iris Hopper, Ira William. Hopper, Myron Hopper, Harry Bitters (bass), Estella Hopper (piano), Etta Hopper, Frank Hopper.
Northeast parlor of the Mart Hopper - Frank P. Taggart home.



Miller Drug

The southwest corner of Main and Van Buren streets was built about 1870-1876. It was built of native yellow poplar. The original oak planks can still be seen on the floors. Thompson C. Mobley brought his family to Nashville from Bloomington in 1873. According to his son, Bummer Mobley, his father accepted a contract in 1875 to weatherboard and finish work on the building. Martin E. Hopper, Frank's son-in-law, helped run the store and continued to do so after Frank's death in 1907.

In 1919 Charles Genolin bought the store and turned it into a drugstore. This was actually the second drugstore of Charles Genolin, his original store was a little farther east on Main Street across from the courthouse. The upstairs of the Taggart building was used for a while as the Red Man's Lodge. After the death of Charles Genolin, his

musically gifted. His daughter, Estella and her husband Mart Hopper gathered musicians to form a band which was unusual for those times. Much of their band was made up of family members of which both the Taggarts and Hoppers were musically talented.

Frank P. Taggart's Legacy

As for Frank P. Taggart's legacy we can still see the once magnificence of his home on Jefferson Street and the Taggart store on Main Street. When he decided to turn to merchandising Frank decided he needed a proper store.

The two-story frame building on the



widow Ola ran the drugstore for a few more years. Ola married again to the artist Will Vawter. Herbert J. Miller bought her out in 1925 and continued it as a drugstore. His son, Maurice "Pods" Miller took over the business in 1947. A new roof was installed after a fire in 1968. That was the only major change that has been done to the building aside from the small addition in the back. The building was sold in 1972 to Hooks Drugs. The F. P. Taggart Store was put on the Register of Historic Places in 1983. Marilyn Rudd is now the owner, a Miller descendent.

The house that was built for the Taggart family is located on Jefferson Street just north of Main Street. It is a two-story frame house of Italiante design. From a letter by Etta Hopper, the daughter of Mart and Estella (Taggart)

Hopper, she wrote about her mother's family, the Frank P. Taggarts. "The old house was built about 1878. Mother [Estella] was about 4 years old when they moved into the new house. Grandfather had operated a furniture and undertaking business diagonal



Frank P. Taggart house (left), James Tilton house (right)

from the house" before the store was built." The Hoppers had originally lived next door to the Taggart home. The Hoppers lived in the house after the Taggarts had passed on until Martin Hopper decided to move his family to Indianapolis. At one time Brown County artists, Fred and Jeanette Rigley owned the house in the 1950s. The house is now owned by Robert Gredy and now houses the Bright and Williamson Insurance Agency. The house is registered with the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.

(Photos from the Brown Co. Historical Society Archives and the William M. Jones Collection.)