

# Democratic Women's Club and Committee Host First Estill Democratic Reunion



Over 100 attended the Estill County Democratic Reunion potluck dinner at the Fair Barn on Nov. 10 to kick off the 2018 election season. Sheriff Gary Freeman, at left, spoke to the crowd and thanked Estill County for allowing him to serve as sheriff for five consecutive terms. Freeman will not be seeking a 6th term. (Photo Credit: Clinton Morris)

The 2018 election is officially underway with candidates starting to file for elected positions. To kick off the election season, on Nov. 10 the Estill County Democratic Executive Committee and Democratic Women's Club hosted the first Estill County Democratic Reunion at the Fair Barn to reconnect through communion, fellowship and food.

Sheriff Gary Freeman received a standing ovation recognizing his service for five consecutive terms. Freeman said he will not be seeking a sixth term for sheriff.

He thanked Estill County for allowing him to serve and said everyone should be treated with respect regardless of race, religion, gender, or politics.

"Remember, there will be a vacancy in the county judge's office. This office has an effect on every other office in the courthouse and the entire county," Freeman said. "Promises are easy to make but getting results will take a lot of work and willingness to look at all sides of the issues and choose wisely."

The reunion was an opportunity for Democrats

who are running for office to learn about what is important to people in Estill County. Sixth Congressional District candidates, Sen. Reggie Thomas and Geoff Young, attended. Retired Marine Lt. Col. Amy McGrath could not attend due to Veterans Day commitments, but John Mays and Gage Abel attended to represent her campaign.

Cluster Howard, who served as state representative for District 91 from 2014-2016, attended to talk with Estill County Democrats about his plans to take the

seat back in 2018. Terry Carroll, Teddy Hunt, and Chris Flynn were recognized for running for Estill County Sheriff. Jeff Hix said he will seek another term for PVA and Janice Bush said she will seek another term for Irvine City Council.

Rhonda Childers, executive committee member, emceed the evening and introduced speakers. Victoria Stevens, Estill County Democratic Executive Committee chair said, "It is our responsibility to stand up, speak up, and participate to make our democracy healthy again. It

is our job, every one of us, to reach all the thousands of Democrats in our county to make sure their voices are represented."

Margaret Wood, Estill County Women's Club president, shared how grateful she is to see increased enthusiasm from county Democrats and described why she is proud to be president for the first Democratic Women's Club in Estill County.

"I believe that through the Young Democrats, the executive committee, and the Democratic Women's Club we can all learn to talk to

each other, to educate each other on issues, and learn to speak to those who don't agree with you on hot button topics," said Lindsey Rogers, who is organizing a new Young Democrats Club.

Clinton Morris, Fayette County Executive Committee Chair, spoke last and shared how impressed he was with the turnout of the event and the progress the county has made in a short time. He predicted great things will happen for Estill County because of strong enthusiasm among local Democrats.

Submitted by ECDEC

# ESTILL COUNTY'S CEDAR GROVE - A Kentucky Community and Its People

The following is the 16th in a series of articles about the community of Cedar Grove and the west-central part of Estill County that have been compiled by Jerry G. Rose and are from information included in his book, "ESTILL COUNTY'S CEDAR GROVE - A Kentucky Community and Its People" by JERRY G. ROSE

## Cedar Grove Families Wilcox Family

This Family's name was initially Wilcoxson until it was shortened to Wilcox sometime in the early 1800s. The first Wilcox to live in Cedar Grove was James Franklin Wilcox.

He was born in 1827 in Clark County and died in 1886 in Estill County. He married Ann Elizabeth Finney in 1847. He purchased land from his Father-in-Law Squire Finney in 1874. They had eleven children.

\*Benjamin (Ben) F. Wilcox, b. 1848, d. 1921

- June Wilcox, b. ~ 1850
- Thomas Wilcox, b. ~ 1850
- \*Allen Wilcox, b. 1852, d. 1905
- Betty (Wilcox) White, b. 1855
- James H. Wilcox, b. 1858
- John W. Wilcox, b. 1862
- Eliza (Wilcox) Witt, b. 1867
- Willy, b. 1869
- Seldon, b. 1871
- \*George, b. 1872, d. 1946

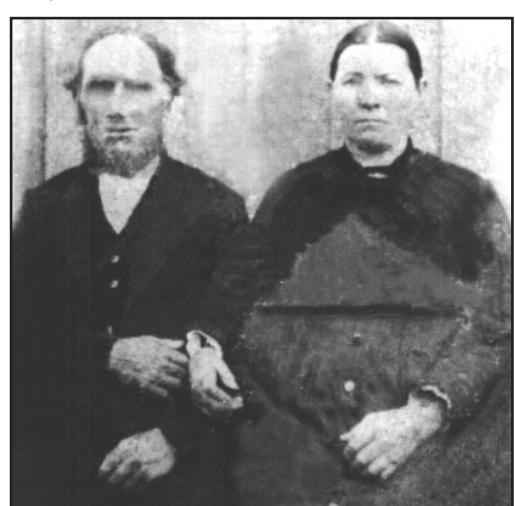
Three of their children - Ben, Allen, and George - would play prominent roles in the Cedar Grove community during the late 1800s to early 1900s.



James Franklin and Ann Elizabeth (Finney) Wilcox.

### Benjamin (Ben) Wilcox

Ben (1848-1921) married Hester Jane Witt in 1876. She died in 1877 soon after giving birth to a son Robert James Wilcox. Ben married for the second time to Rhoda Boian in 1885. He lived in a Wilcox original house on the farm across from the church. Robert James was his only child.



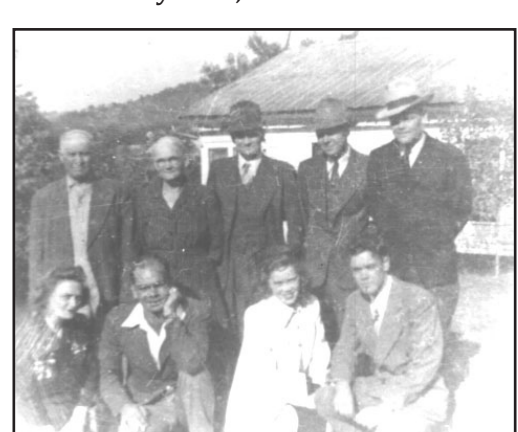
James and Lovinia Jane (Dunaway) Witt raised Ben's son Robert James since his mother died giving birth to James. James Witt was a Methodist Minister.

Ben was considered to be one of the most influential citizens of Cedar Grove from about 1870 until his death in 1921, as noted in the following quotes from his obituary. "His life and character were without reproach and if ever a man loved his fellowman surely he did. The whole life was characterized by acts of generosity and kindness and for and wide his kindness was felt particularly by those who suffered loss and were otherwise in distress. He was probably the county's most progressive farmer seizing on every progressive idea and always seeking improvement and he left a beautiful farm built up from most unfavorable conditions. His home was headquarters for all his family and a stopping place for all of his friends. He was a member of the Methodist Church and died in confident of salvation."

Ben and Hester's son Robert James (1877 to 1947) lived most of his 70 years

in the Lower Bend area of Sand Hill while maintaining contact with Cedar Grove before moving to Cedar Grove later in life. He married Rosa Lee Hall (1882 to 1948) in 1899. They had nine children.

- \*Henry Ben, b. 1900
- Virginia M. (Wilson), b. 1914
- Bessie Mae (Williams), b. 1905
- James (Jiggs) Wilburn, b. 1917
- Clarence, b. 1907
- Mildred E. (Ladd), b. 1921
- Russell Wayne, b. 1908
- David Calvin, b. 1925
- Robert Lyndon, b. 1911



The Robert James Wilcox Family about 1947 in Cedar Grove with Elmer Hardy house in background. Left to Right - Standing, Robert James, Rosa Lee, Henry Ben, Clarence, Lyndon - Sitting, Virginia, Wildon (Jiggs), Mildred, David.

Henry Ben was the only child to remain in the general area. He married Cecil Lunsford in 1925. They had two sons - Henry Ben (Junior) and Billy.



David Calvin Wilcox (lt), son of Robert James Wilcox, and his nephew Billy Eugene Wilcox at the Cedar Grove Methodist Church Homecoming, September 24, 2014. David represented the last of the Wilcox's born and raised in the area. David passed away a year later at age 90. Billy, son of David's brother Henry Ben, grew up in close-by West Irvine. Although living in Lexington his adult life, he has maintained contact with the community and the Methodist Church and represents the last of the Wilcox Family with ties to Cedar Grove.

### Allen Wilcox

Allen (1852-1905) married Ann Eliza Stacy in 1876. They had nine children. Everett, Bert, Pearl, Ella G., James, Robert, \*Mary (Cain), Nannie (Powell), \*Lula (Witt)

Mary and Lula were the only children to remain in Cedar Grove. Mary (1900 to 1980) married Grover Cain and Lula (1897 to 1990) married Robert Witt. Mary did not have any children, one died at birth and Lula had two children - Robert (Junior) and Margaret.



Three of Allen and Ann Eliza's Children, circa 1970. Mary Cain, left; Nannie Powell, center; and Lula Witt, right in front of the original Wilcox House behind the Church.

Allen and his wife Ann Eliza were very prominent during the early years of the Methodist Church. Two of their children, Mary Cain and Lula Witt, lived nearby and continued the tradition throughout their lives. Mary was the Sunday School Superintendent and directed many other church activities including the annual Christmas program. Mary lived in the original Wilcox house on farm land behind the church. Her father Allen passed away in 1905.

### George Wilcox

George (1872 to 1946) also lived in Cedar Grove. He was never married. In later life George lived in the Ben Wilcox house across from the church. Allen had passed away in 1905 and Ben in 1921. George gradually sold parcels of land for house sites and mini-farms along the highway. This was necessary for him to sustain himself. Within a few years the Wilcox land had passed to other people.

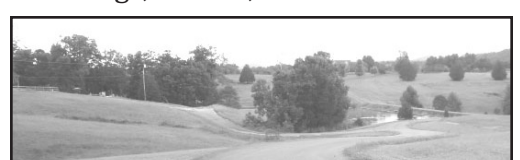


George Wilcox.

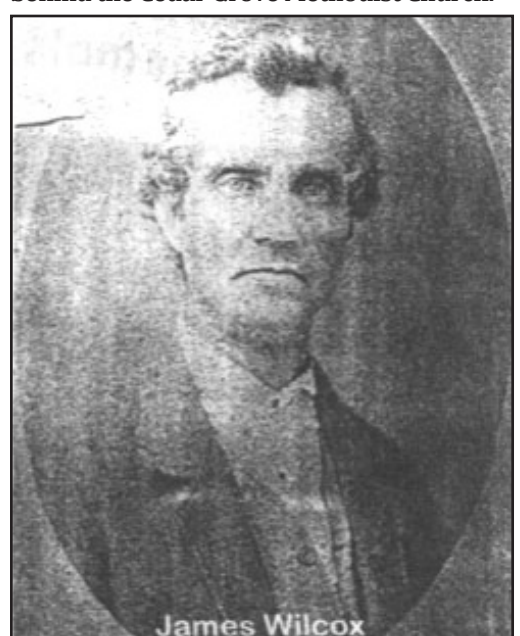
### Epilog

With the passing of Lula Witt in 1990, her sister Mary had died ten years earlier, the presence of the Wilcox Family in Cedar Grove came to an end. The family had been a major land owner in Cedar Grove for well over a century and was a major influence on the early development of the Cedar Grove Community and the Methodist Church. James Franklin and Ann Elizabeth, Allen and Ann Eliza, Benjamin, and George, are all buried nearby at the Finney/Wilcox Cemetery on Sand Hill.

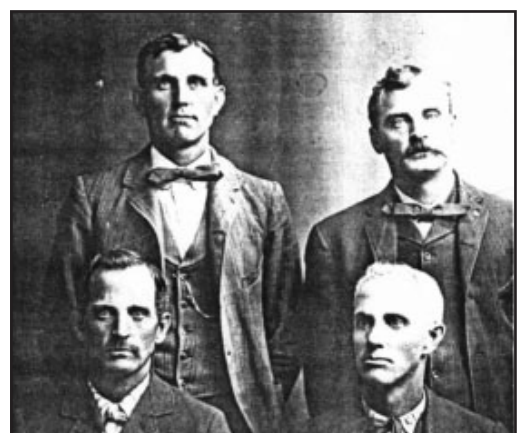
The author is indebted to David Wilcox and Billy Wilcox for their assistance with the Wilcox history. A substantial portion of the historical material was assembled and provided to the family several years ago by the late Mildred (Wilcox) Ladd.



Site of original Wilcox Family farm and home, behind the Cedar Grove Methodist Church.



James Franklin Wilcox He was considered to be the first Wilcox to settle in the Cedar Grove area and later in the early 1880s donated the land for the Methodist Church.



Four of his sons (next); from top left clockwise -- George, Benjamin (Ben), Allen and Thomas.