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Tishomingo County Archives & History Museum
203 East Quitman Street
Iuka, MS 38852
Phone: 662-423-3500
E-mail: tisohomingohistory@yahoo.com
URL: <http://www.tishomingohistory.com>



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Boone Family

Old Tishomingo County boasted of many notable and illustrious families, prominent among them was the Boones. Being the first white family to settle in this portion of the Chickasaw cession, the descendants of revolutionary ancestors, brave, honorable and patriotic, they have had much to do with the development and progress of Northeast Mississippi. For seventy years the history of this section is inseparably linked with the names of the Boones, and the future will be but a repetition of the past.

Reuben H. Boone was born in South Carolina in 1791, his father, Benjamin Boone, being a native of North Carolina and son of John Boone, whose father George Boone, emigrated from England to Maryland over one hundred and fifty years ago. Reuben H., after serving in the revolutionary war, anticipated the advice of Horace Greeley, "Go West, Young Man, and grow up with the country," and emigrated to Lincoln County, Tennessee, after having reached his majority, where he took part in the numerous Indian wars of that period. There he met and married on the 2nd day of January, 1817, Miss Fineta Reece, a native of Bedford County, Virginia, who with her parents had emigrated to Tennessee some years previous. Mr. Boone was educated in South Carolina, and then took up the study of law, being admitted to the bar before leaving his native State. In Lincoln County, Tenn., where he resided seventeen years

after his marriage, he engaged in merchandising and farming, meeting with considerable success and accumulating quite a lot of property. While living in Lincoln County, Tennessee seven children were born to Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Boone, as follows: Mary L., born December 19, 1817; W. H. H., born November 19, 1819; John D., born January 9, 1825; Jordan R., born May 5, 1827; Benj. F., born May 19, 1829; and B. B., born April 6, 1831. Selling his holdings in Lincoln County in 1834, Mr. Boone and family removed to the Chickasaw cession and settled near the location of old Rienzi, his being the first white family to settle in what was, in 1836, organized into Tishomingo County. In 1835 and 1836 quite a number of immigrant families located in the vicinity of Mr. Boone's, and in the Congressional election in July, 1837, 50 votes were polled at his residence, which was made one of the regular polling places of the county. He took an active part in the organization of the county, assisting in many ways to improve the surroundings of those who had followed him into the new territory. He was one of the five commissioners appointed to represent the county in the building of the Jacinto and Rienzi turnpike in 1842, and was county school commissioner for the third district for the year 1846 and 1847. His name appears on the official bonds of a number of Tishomingo's first officials and he assisted in every way possible those of his friends whose inclinations were of a political tendency. He was a member of Rienzi Lodge No. 172, Free and Accepted Masons, and helped to organize and was a charter member of Rienzi Division No. 146, Sons of Temperance, and was one of the first to advocate the cause of prohibition in the county. Mrs. Fineta Boone died in 1855, and Rueben H. on October 17, 1857, and both were sincerely mourned by the entire community, having been considered the most prominent and respected couple in the county.

Mary L., the only daughter of Reuben H. and Fineta Boone, became the wife of C. Wesley Williams, in June, 1836, and shortly thereafter settled in Rienzi. Mr. Williams was born in Marshall County, Tennessee, in 1813. He was educated in the common schools of that county and later took a civil engineering course in which vocation he became very proficient. After the cession of North Mississippi to the United States government in 1832 by the Chickasaw Indians, Congress passed an act authorizing one survey of the new territory, and Mr. Williams was one of the engineers to perform the work. His father, William Williams, a native of North Carolina, married Miss. Elizabeth

Allison in Granville County, North Carolina, and immigrated to Tennessee in 1798. Wesley Williams was appointed postmaster of Rienzi, when the office was established in 1839, by President Van Buren; was county surveyor of Tishomingo County for several terms, and later engaged in merchandising and farming. He was a contractor in the building of the Mobile & Ohio railroad, and served one term in the State legislature. Four children were born to C. W. and Mary L. Williams, as follows: William L., C. W., Jr., Reuben B., and Walter. Mrs. Williams died in December, 1859, and Mr. Williams in ----.

William H. H. Boone, second child of R. H. and Fineta Boone, was born in Lincoln County, Tennessee on November 19, 1819. He came to Tishomingo County in 1834 with his parents, and followed the life of a planter. He was married to Miss Elizabeth Wade on the 5th day of November, 1840. At the beginning of the civil war he enlisted as a private and served through out that memorable period. William Boone died in 1900.

Francis Marion Boone, whose portrait is herewith presented, the second son of R. H. and Fineta Boone, was born in Lincoln County, Tennessee, January 19, 1822, his parents moving to old Tishomingo County when he was in his twelfth year. He attended the common schools in his native county, also in Tishomingo County, and finished his education at the Rienzi Academy. He was married on the 21st day of July, 1841, to Miss Ursula Patton, daughter of W. H. Patton, one of the founders of the Rienzi Academy—the leading educational institution of the county at that time, incorporated by act of the States legislature approved February 15, 1840. Francis Marion Boone owned a large plantation near Rienzi which he cultivated with much success until the breaking out of the war. He represented Tishomingo County in the State legislature in 1858 and 1859 and together with his father and brother-in-law, C. W. Williams, built twenty miles of roadbed for the Mobile & Ohio railroad, from between Corinth and Rienzi to a short distance south of Booneville. The now flourishing town of Booneville was named for him, he being the founder. In 1861 he assisted Arthur E. Reynolds in raising the 26th Mississippi Regiment of Infantry, and was elected lieutenant colonel. His regiment opened the battle at Fort Donelson, and having his horse killed under him, he, owing to the inability of Colonel Reynolds to keep up with the regiment, weighting as he did over three hundred pounds,

led that noble band of heroes afoot, and after a terrible and bloody hand-to-hand struggle succeeded in turning the right wing of Grant's army, achieving, possibly, the most notable victory accredited to the Southern arms on that occasion. After the surrender of the boys in gray, Lt. Col. Boone was imprisoned for nearly a year at Fort Warren in Boston Harbor, when he was exchanged. At the reorganization of his regiment at Jackson, Mississippi, in the spring of 1863, he resumed his position and led the 26th at the battle of Champion Hill, Colonel Reynolds on this occasion commanding General Joe Davis' brigade during the absence of the latter. After participating in the various engagements between Jackson and Vicksburg, and after the withdrawal of the Federal troops from that portion of Mississippi, the 26th wintered near Macon. In the spring of 1864 Colonel Reynolds, with a small squad of men, went into North Mississippi in search of recruits, leaving Lieutenant Colonel Boone in command of the regiment. At this time the regiment was ordered to report in Virginia on the shortest possible notice, and in the absence of Colonel Reynolds, Lieutenant Colonel Boone broke camp and hurried his troops forward, reaching Virginia in April. On the morning of the 4th of May, 1864, the Army of the Potomac started for the fourth time to invade the capital of the Confederacy, and Grant crossed 140,000 men over the Rapidan and entered the Wilderness, a country heavily timbered with oaks and thickets, west of Chancellorsville, where he was confronted by Gen. Lee and his brave Confederates. After fighting incessantly for three days, May 5, 6, and 7, and although 37,000 Federals and 11,400 Confederates were killed and wounded, the results of the battle were indecisive. During this engagement many brave and noble sons of old Tishomingo gave up their lives as a sacrifice on the altar of patriotic duty, among them being Lieutenant Colonel Boone. Having rejoined Gen. Davis' brigade, on this occasion commanded by Colonel J. M. Stone, the 26th was in the thickest of the battle. The regiment on the afternoon of May 6th was fighting in double formation, the contending armies being only about 100 yards apart, the men lying flat on the ground. Lieutenant Colonel Boone was stationed behind the rear of the line, and moving to one side for an instant, to get an unobstructed view of the field, was shot in the center of the forehead by a Federal sharpshooter, dying instantly. His body was carried to the rear by J. H. Busby, and that night buried beside the blank road leading northwest from Richmond. Although the grave was marked, a searching party after the

close of the war was unable to locate it; and it thus happens that one of the most worthy officers in the Confederate army sleeps in an unmarked grave, while the survivors of those who so gallantly followed him for two years would consider it the happiest moment of their lives to be enabled to erect a suitable monument at his grave. But it does not require a shaft of marble nor a statue of bronze to commemorate the memory of Lieutenant Colonel Boone. He was loved by his brother officers and worshipped by his men, and while a single survivor of the illustrious 26th remains above the grave, his praise will continue to be sung, and when the Angel of Death has called the last of that Spartan band to a higher and better life, their children and children's children will repeat the oft told tale of how Lieutenant Colonel Boone, in manhood's early morn, with his face to the foe, gave up his life in defense of right, justice and honor, and died the death of a hero. Four children were born to Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Boone, as follows: Fenite, Mary, Julia, and F. M., Jr. The second daughter, Mrs. Mary Curlee, is a resident of Corinth; F. M. Boone resides in Clarksdale, the two remaining children are dead.

The fourth child of R. H. and Fineta Boone, John D., was born on the 9th day of January, 1825, and was married to Miss Mary E. Patton, of Tishomingo County, on the 22nd day of September, 1846. The next, Jordan R., was born on May 5, 1827.

Benjamin F. Boone, whose likeness appears herewith, was the next child. He was born in Lincoln County, Tennessee, on the 19th day of May, 1829, and was five years old when his parents settled in old Tishomingo County. He was educated in the schools of the county, followed by life of a planter, and was a model and worthy citizen. He was married to Miss Mary Mitchell, a native of Tennessee, and daughter of Hezekiah and Mary B. Mitchell, on the 13th day of February, 1851. Mrs. Boone's father and mother (Miss Mary Houston) were natives of Tennessee and moved to the Chickasaw cession in 1835, and at the organization of Tishomingo County the following year, Mr. Mitchell was elected probate judge, being the first judge to be elected in the county. Mary was the youngest of eight children, only one of whom is now alive, L. B. Mitchell, of Alcorn County. At the breaking out of the war, Mr. Boone joined Company A, 2nd Mississippi Regiment of Infantry, and was elected fourth sergeant. The first battle participated in by the regiment was that of Bull Run, or first Manassas, being a part of Gen. B. E. Bee's brigade of Gen. J. E. Johnston's command. At this battle Gen. Beauregard was attacked

by Gen. Irwin McDowell, and after a short engagement the Confederates were forced to retreat, but Gen. Johnston, with 6,000 fresh troops, coming to the rescue, turned the tide, and the Federals were completely routed, falling back within the defenses of Washington. In this battle three of Company A were killed, Sergeant Boone being one. He was carried to the rear by Private A. R. Robinson, and was buried with military honors by his comrades. Being one of the first to give up his life in defense of the Stars and Bars, Sergeant Boone's name occupies a place near the head of the list of those who answered the first call to defend the land of their birth from invasion by an army and hostile foe, and when an impartial history of the civil war is written, the name of Benjamin F. Boone will ornament the roll of honor, and future generations will do justice to his memory. Mrs. Boone died in 1861. Five children were born to Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Boone, of whom two are living, Miss Laura Boone, of Booneville, Mississippi; and Hon. Jordan M. Boone of the law firm of Boone & Curlee, Corinth, Mississippi.

B. B. Boone, the seventh and youngest child, was born in Lincoln County, Tennessee, on the 6th day of April, 1851. When he was three years of age his parents moved to Mississippi, and he grew to manhood in and near Rienzi. He was well educated, and choosing the profession of law for his life work, was admitted to the bar in 1857. He first began practice in Tishomingo County, being a member of the law firm of Reynolds, Boone & Reynolds, of Jacinto, for a number of years. He was elected to the State legislature in 1857 and again in 1865, and in 1866 was appointed judge of the Ninth Judicial District. He was a member of the constitutional convention of 1890. He enlisted at the breaking out of the civil war, but owing to ill-health was forced to return home, and served as clerk of the circuit and chancery courts during the war. He settled near Booneville in 1870, where he now resides, and is one of Prentiss County's most estimable citizens. He was married to Miss Lou M. Petty on December 30, 1856, who died in May, 1861. Mr. Boone was married a second time to Miss Margaret Petty.