## HISTORY of WASHINGTON COUNTY

**ARKANSAS** 

Public Library

APR 18 1990

Dallas, Texas

Shiloh Museum Springdale, Arkansas 1989 not been built. It was a twelve hour trip by car from El Dorado over mostly gravel roads. South of Mountainburg, the road went down the east side of the hill by means of many hair-pin turns. None of this was paved and the trip was very dusty in dry weather.

The rectory was located at 119 East Lafayette, now the Safeway parking lot. It was a comfortable two story house built in the very early 1920s. Here the University young people met every Sunday evening.

In 1940, Mr. Rainey accepted a call to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Orange, Texas, where he died in 1943. He was buried

in Calvert, Texas.

By: Mrs. George V. Harris

## John Berry Rainwater

John Berry Rainwater was born July 18, 1820 in North Carolina and was thought to be a descendant of Governor John White of the Berrys of the Lost Colony of early settlers on Roanoke Island, North Carolina, 1857. He was the son of Mary Rainwater and John Berry, and it is said he took his mother's maiden name for his last name, an old English custom. He lived in Sevierville, Tennessee in 1840, and married Mary "Polly" Gordon Keifer, who was born 21 February 1820 at Greenville, Tennessee, daughter of Jacob and Susan (Welty) Keifer. John and Polly moved to Fayetteville, Arkansas in 1846.



Sarah (Rainwater) Chryst, daughter of John Berry Rainwater.

Before the Civil War, John had a lumber yard in Fayetteville, and a 900 acre farm north of town (known in more recent years as the Joe Steele farm). Lumber customers sometimes lacked cash and would pay with crops or livestock which he took to his farm. He would occasionally butcher a fat calf or hog and sell those to a meat shop in town. His family then lived in an antebellum home on College Avenue, and ran the farm with the help of slaves, which was customary for that period of time. Two of the five slaves pictured in the local area, titled The Old South, at one time belonged to this family.

During the Civil War, John Berry Rainwater went to Dallas, Texas, taking his slaves and those of some of his neighbors, the Stearns, Applebys, Freyschlags, and Bill Ann Vernon. While there he had a heat stroke. His wife Polly set out to join him, taking the children and a colored nursemaid. They went in a

covered wagon pulled by mules, with a cow tied on behind for fresh milk, food for themselves and livestock, and a tar bucket to grease the wagon wheels. In Oklahoma, they camped for the night beside a spring, where the grazing was good, and prepared supper. A band of Indians came along and ate the food, while the terrified women and children wondered what would happen next. The Indians begged Polly to give little Sarah with long braided hair, to them and the mother bravely told them no. The Indians did not molest them, and left. But Polly was afraid they might return in the night and take Sarah, so they quickly hitched up the mules and drove all night. Although the children had no supper and cried when they stirred in the night, it was not until they came to a house, that the mother felt it was safe to eat and sleep.

A Texas doctor advised John to go to a higher altitude, so after the war, they returned to Fayetteville, and some of the former slaves chose to come along. Their home and lumberyard was destroyed in the war, so they lived on their farm. John Berry Rainwater built the first school for black children in Washington or Madison County, on his farm. The cost was \$1.00 a month if they had it, and if not, they could attend anyway. As John's children married, he gave each one a hundred acres. hoping they would live nearby. John became a mule buyer to Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri and shipped carloads of them north. When the University of Arkansas was established at Fayetteville, John had the contract to haul all the limestone for Old Main, including the four columns at the entrance, from a Madison County quarry. Shod oxen teams were used to haul it to a hard surfaced road, where a sixteen mule team, lead by a lead mule, took over for the long haul to Fayetteville. People from miles around gathered to watch the procession arrive in town.

Little Sarah grew up, and taught English and History at that University. Sarah's daughter, Mary Bradford, maintains an interest in the University, and has donated a number of Rainwater family articles to its museum. Mr. Rainwater was Washington County Treasurer in 1848, a State Representative in 1880, Chief Justice 1867-1868, and helped organize the first Masonic Lodge in Arkansas, Far West Chapter #1, at Fayetteville, with Archibald Yell. He became a member of the First Christian Church at Fayetteville, in August of 1850, under Reverend Robert Graham.

Children of John and Polly Rainwater were: William Lafayette Rainwater born May 8, 1842 in Tennessee and married Margaret Lee; Nancy Smith born 16 January 1848 in Arkansas and married Harold Porter Jankins and lived in the Zion community; Sarah Jane "Sallie" born 22 December 1849 and married James Henry Chryst, an architect; Harve Sterman Rainwater born January 25, 1852 and married Nancy Hewett; Melvina Bell 1853-1861; Kate Stermen born February 29, 1856 and married Frank White; Paralee born 18 March 1858 and married John Calvin George; Tempa 1860-1961; Susan Clementine born June 27, 1862 and married Lynn Cline; and Minnie born June 10, 1863 who married first John Arnold and second Charlie Swartz.

By: Mary Kay Bradford

## **David Rakes**

The Rakes family is rather large and it is unknown to this writer which Rakes were the first to live in this county. We do, however, have information on one Rakes, a resident of Lincoln, formerly of Prairie Grove, Benton County, Illinois and North Carolina. This particular Rakes is named after forebears, to wit, his paternal grandmother, whose maiden name (Matney) was given to him as a middle name, and for many another Rakes and Raikes of generations preceeding whose first names were David.

David Matney Rakes came to Washington County in a small, American made station wagon not his own. His first home was in a house, extant still, on Thurman Street in Prairie Grove, belonging to John B. Snapp, a retired lawyer (Yale '46 or so) known to many Washington Countians. From the grove on the prairie, Rakes moved to the hill on which the town of Lincoln is situated. He claims to have an excellent view from the southward facing patio door in his living room, said room being a part of a