

The Wendel Family of Murfreesboro, Tennessee

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The progenitor of the Wendell family of Murfreesboro was David Wendel, who arrived in Murfreesboro in 1811. He was a merchant, and had an active role in the establishing of the local government of the city. Shortly after David Wendel's arrival in Murfreesboro, the town was incorporated. An election was held and a Mayor and Alderman type of government was established. The first Mayor was Joshua Haskell who served for less than a year and was succeeded by David Wendel. In 1817, David Wendel was elected Postmaster and served in that capacity for 22 years.

According to a short Memoir written by David Wendel, at the request of his son, he began his career on his own account as assistant in a store at Cheeks Cross Roads, near Morristown, in the year 1801. The owner of the store was Major W. Conway. David Wendel's uncle, David Deaderick was a partner. After several years David Wendel stated that the business fell into his hands and he continued to run the store until his marriage in 1806. His bride was Sarah Hale Neilson, daughter of one of the early settlers in upper East Tennessee. Her grandfather, Hugh Neilson, had migrated from Glasgow, Scotland and settled in the county of Washington.

Four of the couples' children were born at Cheeks' Cross Roads; Susan Juliet, John Franklin, Matilda Caroline and David Deaderick Wendel. After moving to Murfreesboro, David and Sarah Wendel added; James Edwy, Thomas Neilson, William Haney, Sarah Jane, Robert Searcy, Samuel Pitt, Benjamin Franklin, and Margaretta Deaderick Wendel to their family. This large family was to live and take an active part in the affairs of the city.

David Wendel expanded, what was originally a two room log cabin, into a large home for his family that was located on the west side of Spring Street midway between Main and College Streets. The original two rooms were built of hewn red cedar logs and the house was added to in subsequent years. When the house was razed in 1915, the cedar logs were purchased and reused to build another home in Murfreesboro. During the period of time Murfreesboro was capital of Tennessee, the legislature held some of its meetings in, what later became, the parlor of this house.

David Wendel's obituary published in the Murfreesboro newspaper shortly after his death stated that David Wendel was a model of industry, method neatness, and punctuality, and a man of sound, highly cultivated judgment, and his honesty was above all suspicion. In the discharge of every duty, public and private, he was strictly conscientious, and was satisfied with the respect which this won, without seeking to form intimate friendships. David Wendel had accumulated an elegant library, and his leisure hours, surrounded by his family, were passed among his books. He endeavored from the

earliest possible period, and unremittingly, to inspire his children with his own great love for reading.

David and Sarah Neilson Wendel are buried in the family plot in Evergreen Cemetery. This cemetery, founded before the Civil War is the resting place of many notables of Murfreesboro; Carter Harrison, General Joseph B. Palmer, Congressman Charles Ready, Jr. Doctor J. B. Murfrees and Mary Noilles Murfree.

Susan Juliet Wendel, the oldest daughter of David and Sarah Wendel married Dr. Lunsford P. Yandell about 1828. They moved to Nashville, where they resided for several years before moving to Louisville, Kentucky where he accepted a position in the Medical College in that city. They had three sons; David Wendel, Lunsford P., William; and one daughter, Sarah Yandell

Matilda C. Wendel, second daughter of David and Susan Wendel married Evander McIvor in 1827. Evander McIvor died shortly after their marriage, and Matilda Wendel subsequently married David Fentress, a lawyer of Bolivar, Tennessee. He had served as a member of the Legislature of Tennessee. They had: James, Jr.; James; Francis; Sallie Wendel Fentress; and another daughter, name unknown.

David Deaderick Wendel, first son of David and Sarah Neilson Wendel, married Sarah Jane Keeble in 1837. He was a merchant in Lexington, Tennessee for several years after graduating from the University of Nashville in 1831. He returned to Murfreesboro and engaged in farming until 1846 when he became Circuit Court Clerk, later Clerk of the Chancery Court. At the time of his death, he was cashier of the Stones River National Bank. For 32 years he was a ruling elder of the Murfreesboro Presbyterian Church. A tribute to David D. Wendel states that he and his wife, Sarah, were most estimable people, respected and beloved by all they intercourse with in society. They were true Christians of the Presbyterian faith. His character was unblemished, pure and upright, an honest man. David Deaderick and Sarah Keeble Wendel had seven children: Walter K Wendel who served in the Confederate Army as a Lieutenant in Company A, 2nd Regiment, Tennessee Volunteers, and was killed at the Battle of Richmond, Kentucky, 1862; David Wendel; William Wendel; John Watson Wendel; Sally Hudson Wendel; Susan Amanda Wendel; and Hattie Wendel.

James Edwy Wendel, second son of David and Sarah Neilson Wendel, married Jane C. Eakin in 1868. Dr. James Edwy Wendel was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Medical College and practiced medicine in Murfreesboro for more than 50 years. It was said that he refused to serve in the Confederate Army because he felt that the people of Murfreesboro needed his services. Dr. James Edwy and Jane Eakin Wendel had one daughter, Janie Ewing Wendel, who died at the age of 13.

Thomas Neilson Wendel, third son of David and Sarah Neilson Wendel, married Mary Ann Hancock in 1836. Thomas Neilson Wendel was Treasurer and Paymaster of the Mississippi Central Railroad. He was described as a very popular man, particularly with the employees of the railroad. At his death, his remains were carried to Oxford,

Mississippi where he was interred, by special train. Thomas Neilson and Mary Hancock Wendel had a daughter, Hattie.

William Haney Deaderick Wendel, fourth son of David and Sarah Neilson Wendel, married Jane Elizabeth Brown in 1845. They moved to Memphis, Tennessee where William Haney died during a severe yellow fever epidemic. William and Jane Brown Wendel had three children: James Brown Wendel; William David Wendel, killed in the battle of Bretton Lane, Madison County, Tennessee, in 1861; and Edwin J. Wendel. Sarah Jane Wendel, third daughter of David and Sarah Neilson Wendel, died at the age of 11 months. She is buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Murfreesboro.

Robert Searcy Wendel, fifth son of David and Sarah Neilson Wendel, married Emma Claiborne James in 1852. Dr. Wendel received his professional education at the Louisville Institute in Louisville, Kentucky, where he was awarded degrees in 1841, 1842 and 1843. He practiced medicine in Murfreesboro and he and his brother, James Edwy, were charter members of the Rutherford County Medical Society.

Dr. Robert Wendel saw service, as a surgeon, in the Confederate Army. Official records show that he was appointed surgeon on 30 May 1862 to take rank 25 Nov 1862. He served in hospitals in Dalton, Georgia, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Forsythe, Georgia, and Columbus, Mississippi, in that order. He was serving at Forsythe, Georgia when his wife, Emma, and her children were given safe passage to join him. Colonel James A. Garfield, shortly to become Brigadier General Garfield arrived in Murfreesboro to serve on the staff of USA General Rosecrank and requested the home of the Wendels on the corner of Spring and Main streets for his headquarters. Emma James Wendel proceeded to Forsythe, Georgia and later to Columbus, Mississippi where her daughter, Roberta Lee, was born. Following the surrender of Lt. General R. Taylor, CSA to the USA forces, Robert Searcy was paroled, 16 May 1865 to return home to Murfreesboro. Robert and Emma James Wendel had 12 children; James, David, Sally, Mary, Emma, Currer Bell, Virginia James, and Annie Wendel

James Wendel, oldest son of Dr. Robert Searcy and Emma Wendel, died August, 1864 in Columbus, Mississippi where the family had sought refuge from the Civil War. The letter informing Dr. Robert Wendel of the death of his son gives a glimpse into the trials of the times. James Wendel is buried in Mississippi.

David Wendel, second son of Dr. Robert Searcy and Emma Wendel, died August, 1862, at an early age. He is buried in Murfreesboro.

Sally Wendel, oldest daughter of Dr. Robert Searcy and Emma Wendel, married Lafayette Burrus. They had ten children: Emma, Virginia Wendel, Ophelia, Harriet, David, James, Wendel, Robert, Elizabeth, and another daughter, name unknown.

Mary Emma Wendel, second daughter of Dr. Robert Searcy and Emma Wendel, never married.

Currer Bell Wendel, third daughter of Dr. Robert Searcy and Emma Wendel, never married and she and her sister, lived all of their lives in the Robert Searcy Wendel home on the corner of College and Spring Streets.

Virginia James Wendel, fourth daughter of Dr. Robert Searcy and Emma Wendel, became a highly respected educator and taught in several southern women's schools including Ward-Belmont, in Nashville, Shorter, in Rome, Georgia, and Wesleyan College at Macon, Georgia. It was at Wesleyan College she was to teach the Chinese Soong sisters, Ai-ling, Ching-ling, and May-ling daughters of Han Choa-Shun (Christianized, Charlie Soong). May-ling Soong married Chiang Kai-Shek, and Ching-ling married Sun Yat-Sen. Rose medallion china brought by the Soong sisters to present to their teachers is still in the Wendel family.

Annie Wendel, fifth daughter of Dr. Robert Searcy and Emma Wendel, married Dr. Howard Stiles. They lived in Altoona, Pennsylvania, where Dr. Stiles was minister of the Second Presbyterian Church for more than three decades. They had one daughter, Eunice Wendel Stiles.

Ellen Wendel, sixth daughter of Dr. Robert Searcy and Emma Wendel, married Henry Hadaway. They had three children: Margaret Wendel Hadaway; Henry Howard Hadaway; and Robert Howard Hadaway.

Roberta Lee Wendel, seventh daughter of Dr. Robert Searcy and Emma Wendel, became the second wife of Harry Douglas Nichol of Donelson, Tennessee. They had three children; Wendel, Roberta; and Eleanor Ryburn Nichol.

Margaret Wendel, eighth daughter of Dr. Robert Searcy and Emma Wendel married Robert Lamont Hay. They had no children.

Susan Yandell Wendel, ninth daughter of Dr. Robert Searcy and Emma Wendel married Eugene Taylor Barry. They lived in New Orleans, Louisiana where he was an executive of a marine insurance company. Susan Wendel Barry was a well-known artist. They had three children; Elizabeth Wendel, Eugenia, and Susan Barry.

Samuel Pitt Wendel, sixth son of David and Sarah Nielson Wendel, died at the age of 10 months. He is buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Murfreesboro.

Benjamin Franklin Wendel, seventh son of David and Sarah Neilson Wendel, never married. He died of yellow fever at Harbor Island, Bahamas, in 1852.

Margaretta Deaderick Wendel, third daughter of David and Sarah Nielson Wendel, married Joseph Spence, in 1853. They lived in Austin, Texas and had six children; Joseph, Wendel, Robert, Lizzie, David and Harry.

The lineage of the Wendel family can be traced to Phillip Wendel who married Ann Unk in Framersheim, Germany, c1630.