

The  
TANNEHILL  
Family



*As Written By*  
OCTAVIA ZOLLICOFFER BOND

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Not until the order of Free Masons becomes extinct will the name of Wilkins Tannehill cease to be revered in Tennessee.

Almost with the first hand-to-hand greeting of a Masonic brother with Mr. Tannehill on his arrival in Nashville in 1808, began the beneficent influence he wielded over the members of Cumberland Lodge No. 8 (formerly 60 of North Carolina) until his death in 1858. It was but a short while thereafter before he became the first Master Mason of the lodge.

The brightness of his vision of the mystical meaning of Masonry, united to the practical views he held as to the means by which the order might be made of greater benefit to humanity, made him at the outset a ruling spirit in council. His election in 1817, and six times successively afterward as Grand Master of Masons, was but the outward form of acknowledgment of his undisputed supremacy. The additional honors of Knight Templar in 1813 and of Eminent Commander of Nashville Commandery from its organization in 1846 to 1850, and of Grand High Priest in 1829 were conferred upon him less as promotion than as a portion of his dues. There was in all the lodges no member more blameless than he in reputation, none better fitted to preside over the meeting, none so learned as he in the intricacies of a ritual which was at that period much confused on account of the introduction into it of both Scotch and French rites, through foreign elements of American population.

During the above years Mr. Tannehill perfected and published "Tannehill's Free Mason's Manual," which at once took its place as a standard work on Masonry for the enlightenment and guidance of the fraternity. The influence he acquired among the brethren was founded substantially upon his acute, penetrating intellect, highly trained by a superior education. Hon. H. H. Brackenridge, Judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, himself an author, pronounced Mr. Tannehill "one of the most finished scholars of the West." And throughout Tennessee he has been hailed as the genius of Masonry, since through his manual he purified the ritual and restored the ancient York rite, at the same time he led the order from speculative into active Masonry. During his association with the Masons of Nashville he was on all occasions put forward to speak for them in public. He was their eloquent orator when, with solemn ceremonial, they laid the cornerstone of the State Capitol in 1845, and his memorable speech in the Grand Lodge room when the guest of the order, Gen. Lafayette, was elected a member, has never been surpassed. In 1819 he greeted President Monroe at the head of the Masonic procession that went out as far as College Hill to meet the visiting President and his host, Gen. Jackson, on their way to the town, and made a masterly address on behalf of the Nashville lodges.

The business motive which induced Wilkins Tannehill to move to Nashville, far away from centers of culture, was that he might serve the interests of his uncle, Hon. William Wilkins, who owned the large "Saline" salt works in Southern Illinois. Being too busy a man in his several capacities of United States Senator (in 1831-34), Secretary of War (in 1844-45), and Minister to Russia to look after the output of the salt works. Hon. William Wilkins desired his young nephew to market the product for him from a warehouse he directed him to open in Nashville.

It was to his maternal uncle, Senator William Wilkins (for whom he was named) that Wilkins Tannehill was indebted for the completion of his education, after his father, Josiah Tannehill, had given him all the advantages afforded by the college in Pittsburgh, Pa., where the Tannehill family lived when he was a boy. Inspired, no doubt, by affection and gratitude, he applied himself to the management of the warehouse in Nashville to such good purpose that it yielded handsome returns. A large source of profit in the business was in the contract he secured to furnish the United States Government with saltpetre from the warehouse for use in the war of 1812, a contract which he was able to carry out to advantage by purchasing the commodity in large quantities direct from the numerous limestone caves of Tennessee, in which it was manufactured. On his own account Wilkins Tannehill later went into mercantile business by opening a grocery store in Nashville, with a branch house in Pulaski, which proved to be a moderate success. A political paper he had earlier edited in Louisville, Ky., was a financial failure, as was also the old Nashville Bank, of which he was President. At one time Mr. Tannehill was Mayor of Nashville, and was Alderman in 1813. He gave further expression to his profound interest in all matters pertaining to government by becoming the editor of an independent newspaper called the "Ortheopolitan," in which his views were freely expressed. He was frank and manly in argument with opponents, but so earnest in convictions that it was a grief to the heart when men or measures he advocated were not sustained by the vote of the people. He was an ardent Whig and for a while edited the Nashville "Whig" and then the Herald, the first Henry Clay organ in Tennessee.

Henry Clay represented his ideal of statesmanship and when he went down in defeat before James K. Polk Mr. Tannehill shut himself in his room at home and would not be seen until after several days, when he had regained control of his feelings.

But deeply as he was interested in questions of State, his most eager pursuit was in another field of thought. His ruling passion was for literature, to which he finally turned with a singleness of purpose that almost unfitted him for business or other occupations. Had Mr. Wilkins Tannehill's literary endeavors been made in the East instead

of in the small Southwestern town of Nashville in which the sharp struggle for existence left little time to any but a very few to enjoy or patronize literature, his books would have held a place in every well-chosen library among the classic and standard works of our times.

A remarkable book of which he was the author, entitled "Sketches of the History of Literature from the Earliest Period to the Revival of Letters in the Fifteenth Century," is noted in the American Historical Magazine as one which "would even now do credit to Boston." It is doubtful if there is any other book in existence which quite fills its place in supplying the student with ready arranged versions of the literature included in the long period covered by the title, stated in Addisonian English, so clearly and forcibly that it is readily appropriated and easily remembered by the reader. The book was printed in 1827 by John Simpson in Nashville and well done, too, albeit on old-style Franklin presses with type which had each passed separately through the printer's fingers and had been inked with bottle-shaped inkers covered with shammy skin. Another book of great merit written by Wilkins Tannehill was "The History of Roman Literature."

About the year 1844 Mr. Tannehill began to issue a monthly journal called the "Portfolio," devoted to Masonry and to general literature, in which the editorials were models of composition. The numbers were all extremely interesting from the amount of valuable information contained in them and from the attractive style in which they were written. An enlarged edition, in manuscript, of the "Sketches of the History of Literature" was deposited in the Historical Society of Tennessee, which will probably some day see the light, after being lost to view for more than half a century. In the preface of the printed book the author modestly speaks of the work as "an attempt of a backwoodsman, prepared during the intervals of leisure from the duties of an employment little congenial with literary pursuits and without any opportunity for consulting extensive libraries." The drawbacks to literary research under those circumstances was certainly great, although Mr. Tannehill's private library was said to be the largest west of the Alleghanies.

In all that he did or said or wrote Mr. Tannehill labored for the moral and intellectual elevation of society, and there is no doubt that the uprightness, honesty, kindness and modesty of a man of his high order of intellect and broad culture was a largely contributing cause of the public standard of mental and moral excellence which produced a race of "giants in those days" before the Civil War.

Before moving to Nashville Wilkins Tannehill married, in Louisville, Ky., Eliza Dewees, of Lexington. Their only son, Wilkins Farmer Tannehill, began business life in Nashville in the printing

business with his brother-in-law, William ~~S.~~<sup>T</sup> Berry, but afterward made Memphis his home until his death and left descendants. One of his daughters now lives in Washington City.

Three daughters of Wilkins Tannehill and his wife, Eliza Dewees Tannehill, with their families, became essential elements of yester Nashville life, without whom the events of those times would have been less interesting then and the memories of the old days less sweet now.

Eliza Jane Tannehill married Albert Gleaves.

Mary Tannehill married William T. Berry.

Anne Tannehill married William B. Bayless.

His three daughters, Mrs. Berry, Mrs. Bayless and Mrs. Gleaves, lived out their quiet, happy lives in sisterly association in the same community, while their husbands were engaged together in the business of buying and selling books under one roof and one firm name in common.

The fourth daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wilkins Tannehill was Samuella Dewees Tannehill, who married Burwell Abernathy. Her son, Dr. Thomas Edwards Abernathy, is a prominent physician in Chattanooga, and with him lives his aunt, Miss Helen Tannehill, the last remaining member of the family who bears the name. The fifth daughter of Wilkins Tannehill and his wife, Eliza Dewees Tannehill, Miss Helen Tannehill, inherited a gift for expression through the pen and has contributed frequently in the past to *The Sunny South* and other Southern periodicals.

Wilkins Tannehill's sister, Rachel Tannehill, married Francis Wheatly, of Hopkinsville, Ky., and his sister, Nancy Tannehill, married Dr. Augustine Webber, of the same place. His sister, Catherine Tannehill, married S. V. D. Stout. From the family record compiled by their son, S. H. Stout, M. D. (nephew of Wilkins Tannehill) has been learned much of the genealogical data here made use of. Dr. Stout served as Surgeon General in the Confederate army and was made Director of Hospitals of the Department of Tennessee. Having been a graduate of the University of Tennessee, he was honored with the degree of LL.D. by his alma mater.

In the marriage of Wilkins Tannehill's father, Josiah Tannehill, to his mother, Margaret Wilkins, there was the union of two fine strains of Revolutionary and colonial blood, through the Wilkins family of Welsh ancestry and the Tannehills of Scotch descent. Five Tannehills served in the war for independence, among whom were Wilkins Tannehill's father, Capt. Josiah Tannehill; also Josiah's brother, John Tannehill, and his brother, Capt. Adamson Tannehill, who was afterward a member of Congress from Pittsburgh. Josiah

Tannehill was paymaster of the Ninth Virginia Regiment in 1779. After the close of the war he received land grants on account of military service. It is recorded of him in family notes that he was "a gentleman of considerable literary acquirements and had handsome property." It is also stated that he owned the finest library in the country around Pittsburgh. His brother, William Tannehill, was a civil engineer in Virginia.

Josiah Tannehill's wife, Margaret Wilkins Tannehill, the mother of Wilkins Tannehill, was the daughter of Gen. John Wilkins, of Pittsburgh, who commanded a brigade of militia in the "Whisky Rebellion" of the western counties of Pennsylvania, and was Quartermaster General in the Revolutionary War. Her grandfather, Capt. John Wilkins, raised and equipped and maintained a company of which he was Captain in the Revolutionary army in Spencer's Virginia Regiment of the continental line, having previously been an active advocate of independence in the convention of 1776, representing Bedford County. He served through the war and was in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown. In 1783 he moved to Pittsburgh and was soon afterward appointed Associate Justice of Pennsylvania. In 1790 he was Chief Burgess of the Borough of Pittsburgh and Commissioner of Public Highways, as well as County Treasurer. As early as 1719 an ancestor of Mrs. Josiah Tannehill entered a land grant in Pennsylvania. Her brother, United States Senator William Wilkins, was a very distinguished citizen. Their grandfather, John Wilkins, was the first Presbyterian elder in Alleghany County, Pennsylvania. Senator Wilkins married Miss Dallas, daughter of the Secretary of the Treasury.

This splendid line of united Tannehill and Wilkins ancestry is worthily represented in Nashville through the descendants of Wilkins Tannehill's daughters. Mrs. Berry, the eldest, married William Tyler Berry, a citizen who was very important to the literary life of Nashville. The bookstore, of which he was senior partner, was the resort of all the intellectual men of those days, of profoundly learned statesmen and professional men. It was the meeting place of the great, the clubhouse of the most highly cultured leaders of thought in Tennessee. Among the frequenters of the bookstore none had more reputation for discerning taste in literature than Mr. Berry. He kept pace with the advance line of literary achievement and imported from Edinburgh and London all the best books that were new, many books that were old and numerous volumes de luxe in quaint or sumptuous bindings. The most fastidious book collector would find what he called for at Berry, Bayless & Gleaves bookstore. And the greatest thinkers in Tennessee were wary of his power to overthrow them in discussions, requiring able reasoning powers to cope with him on any topic from literature to questions of State. Though serene and mild in temper, Mr. Berry was a formidable adversary in argument, and his convictions were un-

alterable. Thus it fell out that after a certain day in May, 1861, when Gov. Harris appointed Gus A. Henry, A. W. O. Totten and Washington Barrow to negotiate a "Military League with the Confederacy," and on June 4 following announced by proclamation that the tie that bound Tennessee to the Union was dissolved, Mr. Berry found himself left almost alone in maintaining Union sentiments, while nearly every one of his cherished friends had become gradually convinced by the logic of events that it was useless to cry "Peace, peace, when there was no peace." Yet, separated as he was from them by difference of opinion, Mr. Berry's innate gentleness did not allow him to forget the old ties of friendship. He condemned the cause but esteemed the individual. Abhorring as he did the idea of secession, he looked on those who fought for it as matricides. And hard would be the most ardent Confederate heart which could not feel for his grief when the Confederate ranks absorbed his favorite son, Ferdinand Berry, "the boy who made dear his mother's home." Within two years death claimed the young soldier "in whose deep blue eyes men read the welfare of times to come." Ferdinand ~~of~~ Berry went out with that choice band of Nashville chivalry known as the Rock City Guards, and saw service on Romney and other fields before he sickened and died in Knoxville at the home of Robert Curry in the 20th year of his age.

The children of William Tyler Berry and his wife, Mary Tannehill Berry are:

Catherine Berry, who married Hardy Bryan, a nephew of United States Senator Bailey, of Clarksville.

Mary Berry, who married Edward Knoble, of Lexington, Ky.

Wilkins Tannehill Berry, who married Harriet McPherson Dorsey, of Maryland, and who was a graduate of Yale College.

Coburn Dewees Berry, a graduate of Yale College and a prominent Chancery lawyer of Nashville, married Catherine Kirkman.

Eliza Berry married R. <sup>Wizena</sup> L. Kirkpatrick, a valuable member of the Board of Trade when he resided in Nashville.

Samuella Dewees Berry married Van Leer Kirkman.

J. Trimble Berry married Harriet Fielding of Michigan.

Albert Gleaves Berry married Lillian Merriman, of Washington City, daughter of Judge Merriman, of Virginia.

When a mere youth, Albert Gleaves Berry was appointed cadet to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis by President Andrew Johnson for the county at large. Early in his naval career he attracted the favorable attention of the commander of the flagship New York, who took occasion to commend him for heroically entering the shell room to prevent disaster by fire when the danger to himself was imminent. Through successive promotions he became commander of the newly-built cruiser named for his beloved native State, and wrote with enthusiasm of her appearance back to his friends in Tennessee:

"I wish we could put her on wheels and take her to Tennessee to let all the people at home see her."

His pride in his ship was heightened when she swung at anchor in Hampton Roads and awaited the coming of a hundred or more of his old home friends, who brought to the namesake of the State a handsome gift of silver from the Ladies' Hermitage Association of Nashville. He has rounded out his quarter century of actual sea service in the United States Navy with the recently acquired title of Rear Admiral, and is now the highest ranking officer from Tennessee.

Anna Tannehill, daughter of Wilkins Tannehill and Eliza Dewees Tannehill, married W. B. Bayless, whose literary taste and calling agreed with her own liking for books and talent for writing, which was only developed so far as was permitted by the cares of a large family. Mr. and Mrs. Bayless were "Confederate" in sentiment and sympathies, and their son, William Bayless, so nearly gave his life to the cause that he was listed with the mortally wounded at the battle of Perryville, though he subsequently recovered, and after the war was over became associated with Maj. Campbell Brown in the management of Ewell Farm at Spring Hill. Later still, he was Secretary for Bradstreet's agency in Nashville, and founder and Secretary of the Hermitage Insurance Company, whose risks he supervised, pronounced by E. D. Hicks' expert testimony to be the most conservative he had ever seen, and the conduct of the business highly creditable to its officers, William Berry Bayless was known for his courteous manner and distinguished appearance, which won him many friends. He was instrumental in organizing the National Guard, of which he became the Colonel and bore the title of Colonel also as a member of Gov. Taylor's staff. Col. Berry Bayless was appointed Assistant Adjutant General by Gov. McMillin. He married Adele Buford, of Giles County, daughter of Albert Buford, who, with his brother, the first President of the road, was among the original Directors of the Nashville & Decatur Railway.

Mary Bayless, daughter of Wm. Bayless and Rebecca Thompson Bayless, is the wife of Mr. Lee Ashcraft of Florence, Ala. His sister, Annie Bayless, is Mrs. Richards, of Chicago, and her sister, Helen Bayless, one of Nashville's beauties in her youth, is Mrs. Brown of St. Louis. Fanny Bayless, their eldest sister, who married Maj. Willette, of the United States Army, an architect of national repute living in Chicago. Her inherited literary ability has manifested itself in a slight degree in a brochure on tapestry painting, an art in which she excels with her busy brush. While she is the wife of a wealthy man, she indulges in but few idle hours, and finds her greatest pleasure in expending the earnings of her accomplishment on any and all objects which pull ever so gently on her heartstrings. Her habitual costume of gray, made in a style that calls for slight change to adapt it to the varying fashions is her beautiful and unselfish expedient for economy



of time that may be used for the benefit of others.

Albert Bayless, the son of William Berry Bayless and Adele Buford Bayless, was early filled with a military spirit. When a mere lad he made a study of tactics and drilled a company of boys of his own age in Nashville who afterwards largely formed Company C of local interest, who had their baptism of fire at Coal Creek under Gen. Kellar Anderson. At 17 years of age Albert Bayless was at work under Col. Barlow, United States engineers in charge of locking and daming the Cumberland River. He was afterwards detailed to Col. Goethels in dredging the Muscle Shoals of Tennessee River. After the brief campaign of Coal Creek Albert Bayless connected himself with Brennan's Military School as Commandant and filled the same position in the school of the lamented Capt. Garrett.

Upon the breaking out of the Spanish-American War, Albert Bayless, still quite a young man (although already married to Miss Gertrude Grant, daughter of Dr. Tolliver Grant, of Pulaski), volunteered for service and was chosen Major in the First Tennessee Regiment. The close of the war found him in the Philippines with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and the offer of office in the regular army. But the tempting prospect was heroically put aside when domestic obligations called him home and he returned to Nashville to find himself without an occupation and with little else on which to support his family. There seemed to be no vacancies in business which a man of his parts would naturally aspire to fill. He applied in vain for positions which inferior men could have occupied acceptably. Every effort failing, he took heart to adapt himself to the situation. His subsequent career is a lesson for the boy who will not work unless he finds an easy job. It is an illustration from life of the course that would be best for the young man who is idly waiting for the pull by influential friends that is to lift him at a bound into a position near the top. Lieut. Col. Bayless, not being able to penetrate to the room that is said to be always at the top, and considering that there certainly is always room at the bottom for a willing worker, sought and obtained employment among the day laborers in the yards of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. One could imagine the unpleasant details of work as unsuited to a gentleman born and bred as that in the heat and cold and dirt and jarring noise of the railroad yards must be, but none would dream without being told, that Col. Bayless added to the labors of each day self-imposed tasks by which he acquainted himself with the workings and the principles of every branch of the business that come under his observation. By diligent study he learned all he could about telegraphy, air brakes, signals and every other thing important or trifling which might in the future prove useful, since he knew not by what road opportunity might come to meet him. By dint of close attention to business and faithful performance of duty Col. Bayless has since risen step by step to his present responsible

office of Superintendent of Division from Atlanta to Knoxville of the Louisville & Nashville system. He took the Scottish Rite in Masonry.

Miss Samuella Bayless, the unmarried daughter of W. B. Bayless and Anne Tannehill Bayless, teaches in the Masonic Home in Nashville. Eliza Jane Tannehill, sister of Mrs. W. T. Berry and Mrs. W. B. Bayless and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wilkins Tannehill, married Albert Gleaves. Mrs. Gleaves displayed the literary taste of the family in a marked degree. The scrapbook in which she pasted clippings and noted family events is enriched with many original bits of verse breathing the spirit of serene poise from out her closed life of peace and domestic quiet into our busy world of the "new woman's making. Mrs. Gleaves furnished at least two beauties to Nashville society in her daughters, Emma Gleaves, who married Charles T. Grier, a prominent St. Louis merchant who now lives in New York City, and Corinne Gleaves, who married Elbridge Eastman.

Her daughter, <sup>Corinne</sup> ~~Emma~~ Gleaves, also a type of lovely womanhood, is gifted with a musical voice which she freely lends in aid of religious services in the church of her husband, Rev. E. P. Anderson, of the M. E. Church, South, and elsewhere.

Lieut. Henry H. Eastman is the son of Mrs. Elbridge Eastman. He served as Lieutenant in the Spanish-American War in the First Tennessee Regiment, seeing arduous service in the Philippines. Lieut. Eastman married Adelaide Higgins, of Oakland, Cal. Lieut. Henry Eastman met Miss Adelaide Higgins at the Presidio, and they were married when he returned from the Philippines. Lieut. Eastman is now prominent in business circles of San Francisco.

Miss Fanny Gleaves, sister of Mrs. Eldridge Eastman and daughter of W. B. Bayless and Anne Tannehill Bayless, is an earnest and efficient worker in the First Christian Church in East Nashville, where she makes her home.

Capt. Albert Gleaves, U. S. N., son of Mr. and <sup>Henry Albert Gleave</sup> ~~Mrs. W. B. Bayless~~, commanded the torpedo boat Cushing in the Spanish-American War and later became Captain in charge of the protected cruiser St. Louis. He married Evelina Heap, daughter of the United States Consul to Morocco, whose home was in Washington City. Capt. Gleaves was at one time in command of the U. S. S. Mayflower when it was doing service as the President's (Theodore Roosevelt's) official yacht, and which was also the flagship of Admiral Dewey commanding the great Atlantic fleet's maneuvers in southern waters. Capt. Gleaves is now stationed in Washington as naval aide to the First Assistant Secretary of the navy, having been called to that position very recently. His predecessor therefor the rank of Rear Admiral.

Could Wilkins Tannehill awake to life again on earth he would feel justified in the spirit that came through him to invigorate the

latest growth of his family tree. In his grandsons and great-grandsons he would picture the same sap of intelligently directed ambition pushing them, as many branches, to reach upward and still upward. He would find in the veins of his daughter's descendants the Berrys, the Baylesses and the Gleaves the old ichor that made more than common men of their Tannehill, Dewees and Wilkins ancestors.

The last years of Wilkins Tannehill's life were spent in the gloom of total blindness. He died on June 2, 1858, aged 71 years, and was buried from the First Presbyterian Church in Nashville, with Masonic honors. A handsome tomb was erected to his memory by the brethren of the order of which he was a bright jewel.

