

Darling Jones

1764 - 9 Oct 1848

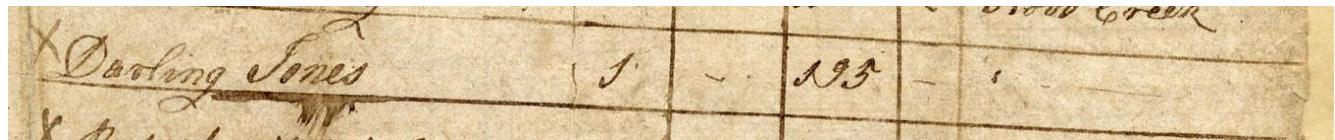
Darling Jones was born in 1764, in Wake County, North Carolina, according to his Revolutionary War pension application. At some point, "in a very early period of the settlement of that Country," [his father] moved to the area that is now Carter County, Tennessee. Settlement in the area, began here with the earliest settlers arriving around 1769. Darling would have been a small boy.

When the Revolutionary War broke out, Darling was still a child, but as soon as he was of "sufficient age," he was placed on the muster rolls, and put into service. Soon, he was sent to join Francis Marion's Army in Santee, South Carolina. He travelled there under the command of Captain Landon Carter, and Colonel Isaac Shelby. They joined with Marion's army and he remained there until his three months of service expired.

He returned home, but the Cherokee were striking the settlers, and he volunteered to go against them under Colonel John Sevier. He was stationed at what is now the "Sycamore Shoals crab orchard," again serving his agreed service time, before being discharged.

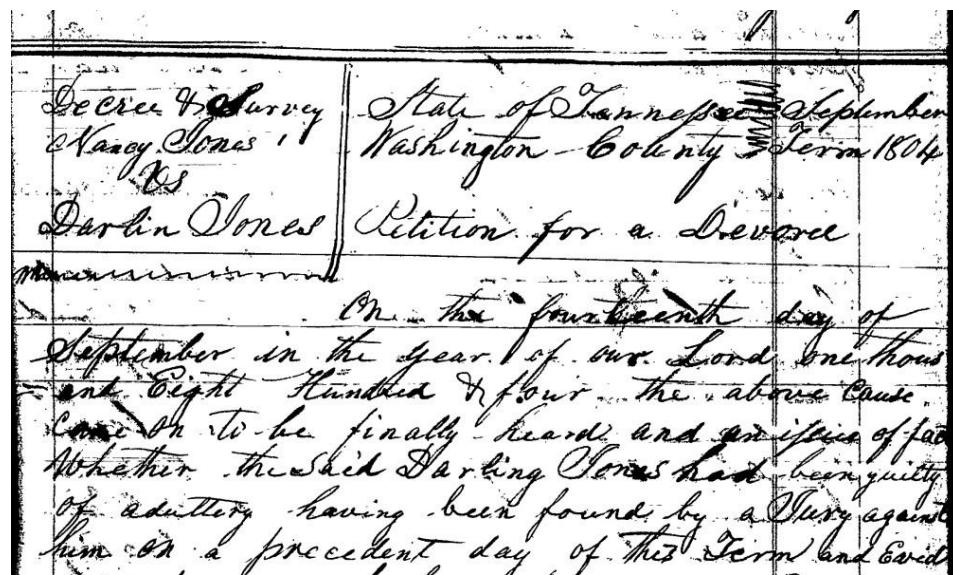
Jones first appeared on the Washington District Tax Lists in 1791, with no land, and only one white poll.

A North Carolina land grant, #1073, was granted to Jones for a tract containing 259 acres in 1794. It states that the property is bounded by Nelson and Rader's lines. The property was in the present-day Asbury Community, just off State of Franklin Road in Johnson City.



The 1796 tax list lists Darling Jones with one white poll and 195 acres of land. He has the same listing in 1798, as well.

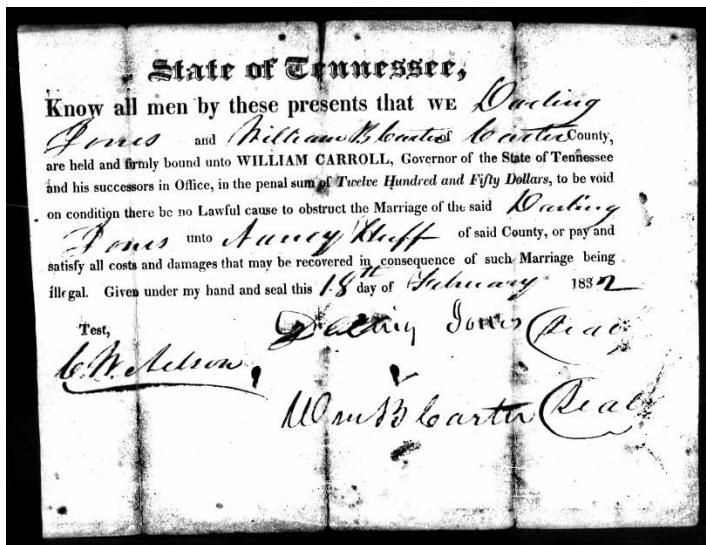
Darling was married as a young man to a woman named Nancy. There is no documentation as to the date they were married, but by 1804, Nancy filed for a divorce. Prior to 1835, divorces were only granted after going before the Tennessee General Assembly. The divorce petition was listed in the Washington County Register of Deeds office (Deed Book 21, page 115), and states, "On the fourteenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and four, the above cause came on to be finally heard...the said Darling Jones had been guilty of adultery." The adultery had been with a female slave, and custody of said slave was awarded to Darling's wife, Nancy.



A clip of the final hearing of the divorce recorded in Deed Book 21, page 115

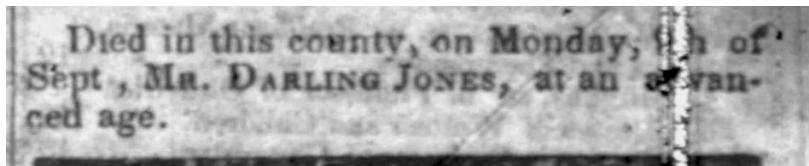
Interestingly, Darling Jones had a transaction (a mortgage deed) with another of our Early Landowners, Isaac Lincoln, an uncle of President Abraham Lincoln in 1809. Lincoln lived in Carter County, and Jones' had secured a loan from him.

In 1817, another document is recorded in the Register of Deeds, "Deed of Gift, Darling Jones to his children." The deed reads, "for the natural love & affection that I have for Abraham Rader, Cebar Rader, Manuel J. Rader and Pleasant Rader my reputed children & Henry Jones my lawful heir." He asked that they care for him in his old age, in lieu of any payment. The deed gave these children 130 acres of land. These Rader "children" may have been fathered by Jones during his first marriage, but it cannot be proven. Jones had at least the one legitimate child, Henry, likely born to his first wife.



In 1832, Darling Jones married for the second time to a young girl of 16, named Nancy Huff. The couple married in Carter County and lived in the Jones cabin in modern-day Johnson City. Darling was at least sixty years her senior, but they lived together on Brush Creek for many years. They were the parents of Jessy James, Darling (Jr.), Lewis Jones, Alfred Jones, William, and Isaac.

Darling Jones wrote his will in 1846, and died on October 9, 1848. He is buried on the land of his original land grant, and his grave is marked with a military marker in the Jones-Bayless Cemetery in Johnson City, Tennessee.



This is an announcement of the death of Darling Jones that was printed in the Knoxville Weekly Whig, on October 11, 1848, in a section of Washington County news.



Photos courtesy of Gordon Edwards, Cemetery Survey Team of Northeast Tennessee

The story does not end here, though!

Darling's widow, Nancy Huff Jones was one of last three women to receive a pension for the Revolutionary War service of her husband. We have two photos of her in our collection. She spent the remainder of her life in the cabin that she shared with her husband and their children until her death in 1902. Nancy wrote a will, and it is now housed in the Washington County Archives.

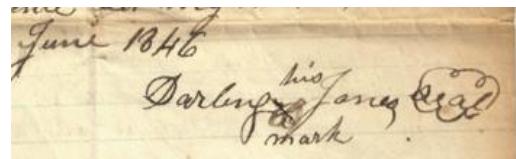


Original photo from East Tennessee State University,
Archives of Appalachia



Original photo at the Washington
County Archives

Their cabin stood on the banks of Brush Creek. After Nancy's death, it sat empty for several years, and was then slated to be torn down. E. H. Miller purchased it in 1929, and it was moved intact to his property on Mountain View Circle. Miller was interested in local history and knew that the cabin had historical significance. Miller was also a supporter of the Girl Scouts, and in 1944, the cabin was moved to its present location on Woodland Avenue and Oakland Avenue in Johnson City, where it is still used as a part of "Camp Wildwood."



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