

# Bricker's Republic

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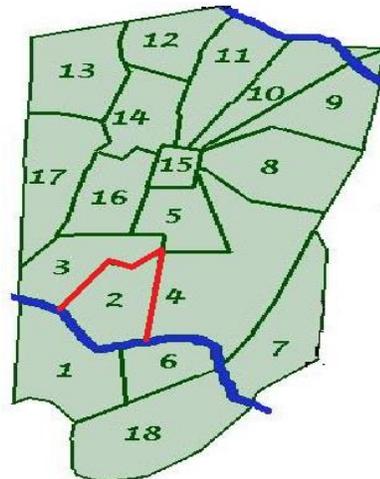
In all my genealogical and historical diggings, I had never heard of “Bricker’s Republic.” A friend of the Archives mentioned that he had found a story about it and was thrilled that someone had researched it. I had no clue what he was talking about, so we set about searching for it, and we found a most unusual story!

The story begins early in the Civil War, and tensions were high in Tennessee. Many wished to secede from the Union, and join the Confederacy, but many others wished to remain with the Union. The people of East Tennessee favored staying within the Union, but a vote was taken and the state officially voted to leave the Union on June 8, 1861. Washington County voted to remain in the Union by a vote of 1,475 to 1,001. The list below shows the tally of votes by each district:

District 1	against separation: 93 for separation: 73	District 10	against separation: 33 for separation: 56
District 2	against separation: 96 for separation: 17	District 11	against separation: 21 for separation: 100
District 3	against separation: 149 for separation: 17	District 12	against separation: 80 for separation: 60
District 4	against separation: 123 for separation: 12	District 13	against separation: 42 for separation: 90
District 5	against separation: 50 for separation: 50	District 14	against separation: 117 for separation: 43
District 6	against separation: 44 for separation: 23	District 15	against separation: 134 for separation: 123
District 7	against separation: 98 for separation: 14	District 16	against separation: 20 for separation: 63
District 8	against separation: 70 for separation: 50	District 17	against separation: 89 for separation: 77
District 9	against separation: 130 for separation: 47	District 18	against separation: 86 for separation: 86

“against separation” means that they wished to NOT leave the union; “for separation” means that they wished to secede.

This map is an 1875 map of the Civil Districts of Washington County, and it gives the names by which they were commonly called. Also of note is that the map was made before District 18 (Flag Pond) was cut off as a part of Unicoi County. District 2 is marked in red in the map to show the general location within the county.



District 1	Mauks
District 2	Brickers
District 3	McAlisters
District 4	Williams
District 5	Taylors
District 6	Embreeville
District 7	Greasy Cove
District 8	Fines
District 9	Brush Creek
District 10	Knob Creek
District 11	Boones Creek
District 12	Buffalo Ridge
District 13	Hoggards
District 14	Swinneys
District 15	Jonesborough
District 16	Leesburg
District 17	Campbells
District 18	Flag Pond

The good people of District 2 had a problem the state voting to secede, and they took matters into their own hands. If you will notice above, District 2 voted 96 to 17 against seceding from the Union. The list below shows the persons who voted in that election. No, we don't know how each person voted, only that they voted in that election.

Edward West, Sr.	Ed. H. West	Elbert Bell	I. C. H. Smith	Alexander Mathes
Charles P. Davidson	T. W. McKee	G. F. Dobson	W. D. Snapp	Jonathan H. Colim
David Brown	John Bricker	R. M. Colum	Jessie Spitzer	Thos. Gillespie
Calvin Woodruff	John Andes	Abraham Ball	David Foster	James Bottles
James M. Tucker	J. P. Paregoy	J. W. Earnest	John B. McLin	James DeVault
Samuel Bolton	R. Rumels	Jeremiah Downey	N. D. Brown	Samuel McCracken
Wm Smith	D. Devault	S. J. Henley	Wm Tyler	G. O. Ermin
Wm Brown	John Bottles	David Arrington	James Wadkins	Joshua Henley
J. H. Smith	Samuel Cox	James Pattin	John H. Greenway	James Henley
Wm Right	Jessie Philips	Willaims Bottles	Wm. R. Greenway	Samuel Warden
Wm M. Mitchell	Jackson Ingle	R. A. Andes	Eldridge Greenway	B. Malonee
B. F. Hawford	D. Rodgers	Hiram Bayless	David Click	James Bayless
T. B. Bayless	G. W. Bell	David Ellis	John Ingle	D. K. Brobeck
Wm Henly	John West	Dr. James Patton	Benjamin Sauls	Wm C. Slemmons
R. McCracken	Abram Snapp	T. P. Wilson	I. H. Morgan	David Title
Romanus Bolton	J. Henson	John McCracken	Reuben Garber	James Tittle
H. H. Hunter	J. M. Brown	R. M. McKee	James Wright	Anderson Title
Joel Williams	H. Presnell	Wm McKee	Elijah Hylton	B. Bashor
D. W. Bayless	Marion Reser	John Presnell	Samuel West	John Scroggs
G. W. Sprinkle	David R. West	Wm Ingle	Jacob Mauk	Jacob Kinney
E. M. P. Moore	S. W. Calwell	Wm W. Bovell	James McCracken	Wm Black
Montgomery Hunter	F. G. Slemmons	John Burton	Wm Gilleyland	Isaac Henley
Henry Hunter Ruble, Esq.				

At least ninety-seven men of that county were very dissatisfied with secession and decided that something should be done, and they came up with a very unusual idea. They would secede from the county! They reasoned that if a state could secede from the Union, then a county should be able to secede from the state, and a district should be able to secede from the county. Jacob Hill was elected president, he chose a cabinet, they wrote a declaration of independence AND drew up a constitution. A congress was elected, and the area was then known as Bricker's Republic. Let me tell you, those people meant business!

On Friday, October 13, 1865, in the local newspaper, *The Union Flag*, a letter was printed under the heading, "Foreign Correspondence," and was sent from the "Capital of Bricker's Republic." This letter, sent by "one of the Cabinet," reflected their displeasure of being a part of the state that had just seceded from the Union.

"After enduring with the most catholic forbearance, "a long train of abuses and injuries," systematically practiced upon us-our dearest rights ruthlessly trampled down by tyrannic legislation, taking the action of Tennessee, in her complicated difficulty with the United States Government, as our precedent, we relieved ourselves of this baneful state of affairs in founding a government of Justice and impartiality, to sectional interests. In thus proceeding, we found we had certain "reserved rights," of which we had hitherto been ignorant, which perfectly justified our course..."

"...the purpose of our government may be stated as two fold; 1<sup>st</sup>, to defend, maintain, and rigidly enforce those laws which secure to every man, tranquil and undisturbed enjoyment of his inalienable rights and

immunities; 2<sup>nd</sup>, to demonstrate the problem from time immemorial in process of solution, of every man's capacity to govern himself."

The letter also stated that, "Our President, His Excellency, Jacob Hill, is now at Washinton, negotiating with this [re-constructing with the US government] in view." The writer of the letter also promised to write to the newspaper again, and give an update on what happened with their president in Washington, D. C. No update was ever printed in the newspaper. In our attempt to find out more about the government, a search was made of Newspapers.com to see if mention was made of the republic anywhere else in the United States. It was not. I suspect the president, Jacob Hill, did not get far with his negotiations with the federal government.



Nofattie Road in District 2,  
Washington County

*Herald and Tribune* article from February 10, 1876, refers to an unusually named road in "Bricker's Republic."

"...An old lady living in the vicinity wrote to a friend not long since, and in speaking of "no Faty" (a prominent place in Brickers) used the sentence, "All is quiet along the Potomac." The friend in reply wrote as follows, "It is true that the age is a time for big names and high sounding titles, and there is no end to putting handles to men's names, but to elevate the little mud puddle "No Faty," to so lift it out of its boots as to compare it to the great Potomac is carrying titles to an excess, and I beg leave to substitute that grand, gloomy, peculiar name, "No Faty."

"No Faty" was changed to "Nofattie Road" and can be found in District 2 of the county.

It is not clear how long the Bricker's Republic government lasted, but it appears that it was not long. The local newspapers continued calling the area "Brickers Republic" until December 1904. After that, there was no other mention found. The two newspaper clippings below are samples showing "Bricker's Republic."

**Bricker's Republic Items.**  
Times are dull at present. Mr. S. A. Bovell delivered an address at Chucky Vale on Tuesday night, Feb. 1st 1876. Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, several persons were present. At times the speakers voice would almost be drowned by the noise of the howling wind outside. On the same night many trees were uprooted, fence rails were strewn over the ground, and even the wonderful tree" on "Piney Mountain" of which "Fax" has been telling us, waved its innumerable boughs to and fro, and notwithstanding its large dimensions it was robbed of some of its smaller limbs.

*Herald and Tribune*, February 10, 1876

**BRICKER'S REPUBLIC.**  
County Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nead, was on an official tour among the public schools of this region recently. Upon the whole he was favorably impressed with the character of the work being done.  
S. D. Stuart, Esq., with the family of Dr. J. G. Stuart, of Cherokee, paid the Republic a visit recently. The Squire was born, raised and lived many years in this locality.  
The tobacco farmers seem well satisfied with the quality and quantity of the crop this year. They have had exceptionally good luck in handling it.

*Herald and Tribune*, December 1, 1887