

Primary Characters

Rev. Richard Riley Evans (White Male to play 50-60's)

Became Minister of the Germantown Presbyterian Church in 1850. Longest serving and most prominent pastor in Germantown history. Presided over building of sanctuary, the oldest standing public building in Germantown, now known as R.R. Evans Chapel (right up the hill from his gravesite). In 1854, he co-founded the Shelby Male High School, where he was a Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy. This academy brought the town prominence as an educational and cultural center and was ultimately designated as collegiate level and then as one of the state's military academies. The High School was outside of town at Poplar Pike, adjacent to railroad (not as far as Hacks Cross). The High School boarded students, and was equipped with a large library, a science teacher, a language teacher. During the war, he led the locals in efforts to reconcile with federal occupiers, took the Union loyalty oath in 1864 and was the only pastor allowed to conduct services during the northern occupation. After the war, he served as a witness, vouching for others who were also loyal unionists.

Anton Lucken (white Male 40-50's slight German accent)

Immigrant who was a successful, middle class entrepreneur. Lucken immigrated to Germantown via New Orleans from Bremen (Prussia Kingdom now known as Germany). He had enough resources to open a store and an inn, and quickly became famous for the beer he brewed. Over the years, it became a popular venue for visiting politicians who would harangue the crowds assembled on the piazza. By the time he was 44 in 1836, he was so popular that the citizens wanted to name the town Luckenville, but when he declined the honor (humility), it was named Germantown as an indirect honor to him and to the Germanic people of the town, his people and his roots. In addition to running the general store and the inns, he also bought and sold property. He owned up to \$1,000 in real estate by the time he was 58. In fact, he sold some of the land to the railway right of way (near where the Germantown Commissary is now). Lucken was a leader in Germantown. He was a signer of the petition for a formal town charter in 1850, a sign of pride, commitment, and public responsibility by prominent men who would have to pay taxes and hold office in support of Germantown's government and services.

Florida Pettit Thompson (White Female to play 30s-40s)

Florida grew up in a home that was actively involved in government. Her father, Judge Pettit, was head of county government, the County Quarterly Circuit Court. She became one of the first school teachers in Germantown. Florida and Dr. John Thompson were married in 1860 by Rev. R.R. Evans, and after a short absence they returned to Germantown during the war where he set up his practice. She possibly taught "underground" school during the war, and ran "Mrs. Thompson's Place" as a private school for many years after the war (confirm location). She is most known for giving some of Germantown's black residents land for a brush arbor (describe to audience, as this was a tradition, to visualize, the benches at Germantown Cemetery be similar to where people sat under a brush arbor). Later, some of Germantown's black residents bought from Florida some land and built the church and school at the site of the present New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church. Florida believed in education for white and black residents. When there were only private schools available after the war, she taught. But she longed for a strong free public education system and rejoiced when the district resumed free schooling in 1873.

The Yellow Fever epidemic really impacted Florida and her family. Her husband served the community as a doctor throughout the epidemic. Florida was so traumatized by the epidemic that she was unable to correspond with friends about it until November 17, 1878. She recognized the impact the epidemic had on Germantown residents, white and black.

Mahalia Roberts (Black Female to play 30s-40s)

The stories of three families will be told from the perspective of Mahalia. She was purchased by Kirk Roberts in Memphis in the 1830s, she had seven children with Kirk. Background: siring children with one's slaves was not uncommon in Germantown, and one example is the Schuyler H. "Kirk" Roberts family, who was married three times and as many as 22 children. He came from Virginia to Tennessee in 1830, where he had eight more children with his wife, who left him in 1840, and died 9 years later. In 1841, Kirk Roberts married Missinah Pass, and had up to 4 children; Missinah also died in 1949. In August of 1949, at 44, he married his third wife, German-born Maria (Mary) Louise Kuner, age 20. In the 1850 census, the new couple were residing on his 635 acre plantation on Hollyford Road (now known as Hacks Cross) and Winchester.

Sally Reneau (White Female to play 20s-40s)

The chronicler of the Yellow Fever Epidemic. Crusader. Educator. Activist. Caregiver. Ahead of her time. Sally was a distinguished educator and an activist devoting her life to the education of her sex, rich and poor, having been a distinguished scholar and educator. At the time, newspaper content featured letters from residents. Sally was a prolific letter writer to *The Appeal*. She was a crusader for state-supported higher education for women in the South. She especially campaigned for Mississippi to establish a college for women equal to Ole Miss and Mississippi State - both established for the education of white men. She founded Reneau Female Academy, which ultimately became "The W" - Mississippi University for Women. Reneau Hall was named in her honor. Sally also cared for Yellow Fever victims, nursing them when they were sick.

Secondary Characters

Minnie Sue Thompson Cocke (White Female to play 20-30s)

Married Josiah Higgason Cocke in 1886, when she was 27. She had one son, James M Cocke in October 1888 (died June 1825). When Minnie died in 1892, her son James was only 3 years old. Her husband Josiah, a widower, married Minnie's sister, Cora Lee a year later, who raised Minnie's son James, and then went on to have 5 children with Josiah. It was common in those days for a widower to marry one of the sisters of his deceased wife.

William Hack (White Male to play 40-50s)

Hack's name lives on - Hacks Cross Road. Hollyford Road, on which he lived, was later named Hacks Cross Road because his wife was living on some of the land at its intersection with State Line Road. A New Englander by birth who migrated to Alabama, and then to Germantown sometime in the 1840's. He and his wife Caroline appear in the 1850 census (when he was 54) as boarders, and he lists his occupation as a farmer. According to the 1860 census, he was a very prosperous merchant with significant land. Like most businessmen of his time he was not only a merchant but also owned a 100

acre farm to feed his family. In 1862, Union troops overtook the town, and Hack lost his business resources, but still held significant real estate.

Barry Hurt (White male to play 30s-60s)

A story about cotton. Barry was a man of considerable means - an industrialist. He settled in Germantown sometime before 1860. Hurt was a husband to wife Catherine, and they had 8 children. He was the foreman of the Southern Star Gin Factory; probably also a partner (the gin was own/managed by Francis A Hurt). A fire destroyed the factory in 1860, and the partnership broke up. Hurt invented a much improved version of the Star Gin (cotton gin), winning prizes at the Memphis and West Tennessee fairs. There was a rivalry between the two cotton gin factories - The Star Gin factory and the Hurt Gin factory -- so much so that both advertised their opening on the same day. The rivalry ended though when both factories were destroyed in the Civil War because they were both converted to production to support the Confederate Army. Hurt worked as a blacksmith until he could rebuild. He prospered and built a fine home, much respected in the community for his persistence. He, Catherine and four of their children died in the Yellow Fever epidemic in 1878. His two oldest sons continued to operate the factory until the demand for privately owned cotton gins ceased.

Dr. Robert H McKay (White male to play 30-50)

Dr. McKay was an early victim of the Yellow Fever epidemic. He was one of those praised by Sally Reneau for heroic, self-sacrificing service. He served as Assistant Surgeon in the Medical Staff Infantry Regiment CSA. Like many veterans, when he moved to Germantown sometime before the 1870 census he had just enough limited resources to support his family of six. The family lost its home and all possessions in a fire in 1870, so the ladies of the town came to their aid with a fundraising campaign. By 1876, he was listed in the Tennessee State Gazetteer as one of the town's prominent physicians. He participated in the temperance movement.

Arthur O'Neill (White male to play 40-60s)

The blacksmith, Arthur O'Neill, along with the help of an elderly black man, buried his daughter Mary quietly at night without ceremony or marker. When rebuked by another daughter, he expressed disapproval of ostentatious display. Born in Ireland. It is said that he and his wife had means. He was known for wearing shirts so starched that the blacksmith sparks just flew off of it.