

STEPHEN PALMER ROUTON HOMEPLACE

From

The Routons of Paris and Henry County, Tennessee

by Stephanie Routon Tayloe.

The home place was bought by Stephen Palmer Routon in 1852 from the Carter family. It lies in the old Sixth District, Henry County, Tennessee, about five miles south of Paris on the old McKenzie Highway.

It was located on a small sloping hill in a curve of the road.

The white frame house had two large front rooms with fireplaces, and rooms were later added on the back. Uncle Joe Routon remembers an old grind stone wheel being used as a stepping stone to the front porch.

In the corner of the front room were corner stair steps, enclosed that connected to the two rooms upstairs. In the curve of the stairs was a small door for the cats to get upstairs to catch mice.

This was called the "cat door."

Vera Routon, a granddaughter of Stephen Palmer Routon, remembers Ma Routon having a long switch she used to run cats out of the kitchen.

At one time the kitchen had been separated from the rest of the house, but was later moved and attached to the main rooms. The kitchen had a huge fireplace as tall as human shoulders where they could do open

fireplace cooking. There was a trap door to the cellar where they kept butter and milk. Some of the treasures that were in the house were:

a four poster bed, now in possession of Betsy Burton Willis, adopted daughter of Catherine Routon Burton, and granddaughter of Stephen Palmer Routon; a beautiful pine pie cupboard, handed down to Richard Routon from his father, Stephen James Routon, grandson of Stephen Palmer Routon; an old cannon ball bed and crazy quilt in possession of Stephanie Routon

Tayloe, daughter of Stephen James Routon; old bookcases, possession of Joe Routon, grandson of Stephen Palmer Routon; and a long oil painting of a trout stream that Pearl Routon, daughter-in-law of Stephen Palmer Routon, had done and presented to her mother-in-law as a Christmas present in 1904,

now in possession of Stephen James and Val Routon,
which was given to them as a Christmas present in 1953.

Aunt Gertie played the high back organ that stood in the parlor,
and was later stolen from an outbuilding in the 1950's.

In the back yard was a well and one of the largest pear trees I have ever
seen. I remember climbing it and eating pears, watching out for the flying yellow jackets after the same
juicy fruit.

The two upstairs rooms were filled with trunks, old papers and junk in
the 1950's after the house was left empty. What fun it would be to go back today and go through that
wonderful junk.

Vera Routon handed down many interesting family stories.
One was that during the Civil War the Yankees, 30-40 in number, surrounded the house and made "MA"
Routon cook for them. They rewarded them by robbing her smoke house and hen house.

Once Jesse James slept in the front yard.

The old log barn was built at the location because the Routons wanted
to obstruct the view of the nearby Bushart property because the
Mr. Bushart living there had the reputation of being cruel and mistreating his slaves whose cries were
audible at times.

After the War, Mr. Bushart killed his wife and then himself. Insanity
and cruelty reportedly ran in the family, into the next generation. Daddy Jim's first cousin, son of
Pertney Hagler, was found dead,

tied to the railroad tracks, and the Routons suspected this was an act committed by a Bushart.

I remember the old wooden gate to the garden.

There were clusters of white star flowers and early buttercups blooming
nearby. There were some tall black walnut trees in the yard.

On the west side of the house, there was a small house, but it was gone
before my birth; but the dugout ground where the root cellar had been, still marked the location. Mary
Fuqua Routon, mother of Stephen Palmer Routon, had lived in this little house. She lived on four years
after her son's early death. She gave our Daddy Jim a silver dollar for his birthday and it was passed on
to me, then I passed

it to my brother, Richard Routon, who has it in his possession.

I have an old lemon squeezer and sugar bucket that originally were at the homeplace.

After "Ma" Routon died in 1920, the house was left alone and the bachelor son, Horace, and unmarried
daughter, Gertie, continued to live there. After their deaths my grandfather bought out the other heirs.

It stood vacant for years, and the month of my grandfather's death,
the last surviving member of his family, the house burned,
scorching the walnut trees.