1

THE CURSED CHILD

Freedom and whisky gang thegither.

–Robert Burns, Scottish poet

Jasper "Jack" Newton Daniel was the cursed child. The youngest and by far the smallest of ten children born to Calaway and Lucinda Daniel, he was the neglected runt of the family. His mother had died shortly after he was born in 1849–most likely, from complications in childbirth. His stepmother had never taken to him. And now his father was dying. It was the winter of 1863–1864. The Civil War raged on. The family's once-productive Middle Tennessee farm lay raped and wasting; the avaricious Union invaders had long pillaged their livestock, their produce, their grain, and their wood; Confederate soldiers on the run had begged for any remaining scraps; and bandits continued to raid indiscriminately. Perhaps Jack's four older brothers could have protected the family land–perhaps–but Robert and James had removed themselves to Texas, while Wiley and Lemuel had enlisted in the Confederate army. There was nothing young Jack could do as his father lay stricken with pneumonia in their drafty, dank, wood-frame house. Soon, the fourteen-year-old boy would be left to his own means, forced to become resilient and self-reliant. Fate was apparently against him.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

Calaway was a broken man; the Civil War and the subsequent plundering of his farm had shattered him. It was a humiliating end for a man whose brazen ancestors had fought in both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. The Daniel blood, a mix of Scotch-Irish and Scottish, was the right kind of "blude" for soldiers, for pioneers on the American frontier, and for distilling robust whiskey. The family's most prominent ancestor and hero was Jack Daniel's grandfather, Joseph "Job" Daniel, an adventurous immigrant. Through the bloodline, Job bequeathed to his grandson a fierce desire for independence and a fighting spirit.

Joseph's nickname said it all. In the book of Job from the Old Testament of the Bible, God severely tested Job's faith by allowing Satan to inflict indignities and pain upon him. His oxen, asses, and camels were stolen; his servants killed; and a windstorm struck down his son's house, killing all of his children. As a final affront, Satan "afflicted Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head."[1] Despite these rather brutal calamities, Job eschewed Satan and never lost his faith in God. Eventually, he was rewarded. Our Job Daniel also suffered, only under a would-be god–the king of England.

Job's plight began in Northern Ireland, where he was a member of the oppressed Scotch-Irish enclave. This ethnic recipe had been concocted in the early 1600s, when, after ruthlessly suppressing a rebellion in Northern Ireland, the British crown had granted land there to Scottish lairds, on the condition that they recruit thousands of their minions to settle the region. Promised more freedom and liberal leases on land, they did so. King James I hoped these Scottish emigrants, or royal colonists, would prove relatively domesticated and would rub off on their wild Irish peers. Thus was born the Scotch-Irish, an opportunity-seeking and freedom-loving people. Among them were the ancestors of Job.

More poignant to the Jack Daniel story, in the ensuing years, the Scottish settlers, who were practiced in the art of distilling single malt scotch, shared their respective trade secrets with the native Irish whiskey distillers–secrets that would eventually make their way to American shores. Both traditions use barley, one of the few crops easily grown in the harsh Irish and Scottish soils, but from there the

respective recipes take different courses. The Scots relish the earthy peat flavor created when they add decomposing vegetable matter to their fires while toasting their barley during the malting process, whereas the Irish prefer their whiskey unpeated. Debate over the respective recipes, however, played second fiddle to arguments over which land started distilling whiskey first. As many a Scot says, "Aye, the Irish may've invented the stuff. But, by Jings, man, we were the ones who perfected it."[2] What's known for certain is that by the 1490s, single malt was being produced by one Friar John Cor for King James IV of Scotland, who, like any good gluttonous king, had a royal taste for the intoxicating spirit.

PEACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND didn't last long. It began to disintegrate as early as the 1640s, when England and Scotland passed excise taxes on "all strong waters and aqua-vitae"—cultured terms for whiskey.[3] So much for promised freedoms. The dogged excise man, who represented the despicable monarchy, became a hunted animal and met with increasing violence, as distillers refused to pay taxes on what they considered a basic necessity. Not until the 1700s would the tension climax, brought on by economic deprivations that created calamitous conditions. Expensive food, discriminatory trade policies on the part of the English, and the collapse of the linen industry in the early 1770s compounded the Scotch-Irish financial woes. Particularly galling to the Scottish settlers was "rack-renting." This devious practice was executed by the native landowners, who unjustifiably inflated rental costs to force the Scotch-Irish from their homes so that pure-blood Irish could reoccupy them. Between the 1750s and the 1770s, rent doubled.[4] Another indignity: the native Catholics and members of the Church of England persecuted the settlers for being Presbyterian, the Protestant sect that dominated Scotland. The time was ripe to move on—namely, to the New World. Joseph "Job" Daniel was among the throng of Scotch-Irish immigrants who arrived in America just prior to the Revolutionary War.

Several attractive options were open to Job, in deciding his destination. In particular, there was Pennsylvania, which had a tradition of religious tolerance dating back to the days of William Penn, a Quaker

who founded the colony. A popular port of entry was Philadelphia, from which immigrants pushed west to Pennsylvania's Allegheny Mountains, some choosing to breach the mountains while others turned southward, racing each other down the Shenandoah Valley via the Great Wagon Road in search of fertile land. Immigrants migrating south also poured through the Cumberland Gap, a mountain pass close to where the borders of Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee converge. Here, the premier trailblazer Daniel Boone, clad in buckskin, created the Wilderness Road and founded Boonesville, Kentucky, in 1775, thus accelerating migration. The Scotch-Irish refused to be hemmed in as they scrambled for property and freedom. Their sentiment: "I hain't a goin' to rent. I'll own some land if hit's only a house-seat."[5] Another popular destination was the Carolinas, which boasted acres of cheap, sometimes free, frontier land. Southern ports of entry included Charleston, South Carolina, and New Bern, North Carolina, the latter a major seaport strategically located at the confluence of the Neuse and Trent rivers.

After weighing his options, Job Daniel booked passage to New Bern, where he would settle. The insidious passage from Northern Ireland to North Carolina was typically a long nine weeks, barring headwinds or no winds. Few ships had portholes for ventilation and light, and the crowded deck space was stuffy. Disease and pestilence, privateers and pirates, and shortages of food and water always threatened to make for a more brutal odyssey. Adult passengers were promised seven pounds of beef, seven pounds of bread, one pound of butter, and fourteen quarts of water weekly; however, the cost of food cut into the captain's profits, so you can be certain he didn't overstock.[6] A high mortality rate was about the only thing the captain guaranteed.

To ease the suffering, rum was sold on board. West Indies rum, plentiful and cheap, was the liquor of choice in the Americas; corn whiskey had yet to make its grand entrance. Rather than taking a liking to this cheap dark liquor, which was valuable for bartering and trading slaves, the Scotch-Irish came with a thirst for good whiskey, an essential ingredient for survival in a foreign land where, as far as they were concerned, the quality of water was suspect. Even though fresh water in America would be the least of their problems, still

houses sprung up as quickly as log homes. As one pious Pennsylvania doctor observed of the settlers, "The quantity of rye destroyed and of whiskey drunk in these places is immense, and its effects upon their industry, health and morals are terrible." It was commonly acknowledged, "Where there's smoke, there's bound to be whiskey."[7] Such was the case in New Bern, where the frontiersman–known as "the meaner sort"–would come into town and "there remain Drinking Rum, Punch, other Liquors for Eight or Ten Days successively," a physician wrote, "and after they have committed this Excess, will not drink any Spirituous Liquor, 'till such as they take the next Frolick, as they call it, which is generally in two or three Months."

While New Bern was the North Carolina colony's capital from 1765 to 1778 and a major seaport, it was hardly a booming metropolis, with a mere 150 dwellings when Job arrived. It had been founded by a native of Switzerland but became a particularly popular destination for the Scotch-Irish after a former citizen of Ulster, Arthur Dobbs, became the governor of the North Carolina colony in 1754. In addition, the colony offered vast tracts of land without fencing where livestock could roam, and farmers could simply clear new land as the fertility of old land was exhausted. As for the social scene, New Bern offered the aforementioned binge drinking, as well as card playing, hunting, fishing, cockfighting, and hand-to-hand competitions.[8]

JOB DANIEL HAD HARDLY settled into his new life as a North Carolina farmer when the tyrannical British crown–a vicious dog clinging to America's coattails–again threatened his freedom. King George III's coffers were empty after the Seven Years War, which had engulfed Europe's colonial powers from 1756 to 1763, and the French and Indian War, which had been waged in North America from 1754 to 1763. As his greedy eye swept the landscape, he determined that the resource-rich American colonies were ripe for taxing. It began with the Sugar Act of 1764 and culminated with the British Tea Act of 1773, the latter resulting in the Boston Tea Party on December 16, 1773, during which Bostonians disguised as Indians threw tea into the harbor in protest. Because they had no voice in the royal court or in the British parliament, the colonists' rallying cry became "No taxation

without representation." The next year militia groups–the Minutemen–formed. Tension built between the patriots and the loyalists. The Revolutionary War exploded on April 19, 1775, when the Minutemen engaged the British on the Lexington Green in Massachusetts.

Devoutly loyal to their new homeland, the Scotch-Irish volunteered in droves to fight the despised redcoats. Job Daniel was in a quandary, however. He had just married Elizabeth "Bettie" Calaway, an adventurous lass who had emigrated from Scotland. Born circa 1757 to wealthy parents, Bettie forsook any dowry and, at age fifteen, eloped with the family's coachman. They then made the voyage to America, and she never spoke to her family again.[9] Not long after, due to either death or disenchantment, she lost her first husband. Subsequently, Bettie swooned for Job. Bettie was the romantic in the Daniel family, a young woman with a zest for life, who lived to be an old woman with vinegar, surpassing the ninety-year mark. From Bettie, her grandson Jack would inherit a romantic streak; he would gain quite a reputation as a light-footed dancer and for having an eye for the ladies.

Despite his recent marriage, Job volunteered to fight for the patriots when Captain Charles C. Pinckney of the 1st South Carolina Regiment was in New Bern, North Carolina, recruiting men for the cause. Pinckney was a Charleston native, who in 1775 served as a member of the first provincial congress and would become an aide to George Washington. In 1804 and again in 1808, he would run for president of the United States unsuccessfully. Yet his charisma could not be ignored. Job Daniel enlisted on November 4, 1775, and served at least until December 31, 1776, but possibly until May 16, 1777.[10] In describing the rugged patriot soldiers drawn from the pioneer ranks, the historian Robert Leckie wrote, "No breed of frontiersmen existed in America hardier than these settlements of mostly Irish and Scots-Irish. . . . Fiercely independent, hunters, Indian fighters, deadly shots with those rifles to which they had given such names as 'Sweet Lips' or 'Hot Lead,' they could campaign for days on their horses with no other equipment than a blanket, a hunting knife and a bag of parched corn sweetened with molasses or honey."

The journalist and social critic Irvin S. Cobb further perpetuated the Scotch-Irish reputation, observing that they were "self-reliant, high-

tempered, high-headed, high-handed, high-talking folk who would be quick to take offense and quick with violent force to resent it; a big-boned, fair-skinned, individualistic breed, jealous of their rights, furious in their quarrels, deadly in their feuds, generous in their hospitalities. . . . a breed of lovers of women, lovers of oratory and disputation, lovers of horses and card-playing, lovers of dogs and guns–and whiskey."[11] Jack Daniel would be imbued with these characteristics, too. The Scotch-Irish love of whiskey was a key card to be played in winning the war, and George Washington was all too cognizant of it. In 1777, he wrote to the Continental Congress, "Since our imports of spirits have become so precarious, nay impracticable, on Account of the Enemy's Fleet which infests our Whole Coast, I would beg leave to suggest the propriety of erecting Public Distilleries in different States. The benefits arising from the moderate use of strong Liquor, have been experienced in All Armies, and are not to be disputed."[12] Yes, a belly full of whiskey made for a courageous soldier.

Job and his regiment were active in defending Charleston, South Carolina, in late June 1776, when a fleet of nine English ships took up positions there. The English pounded modest Fort Moultrie–strategically located in Charleston's harbor–with heavy cannon, but the men held. With unerring accuracy, the patriots raked the ships, eventually driving them off. Still, Charleston would fall to the English in 1780, and their forces would turn northward, wreaking havoc in the Carolinas. Years later, Bettie Daniel regaled her grandchildren with stories of the war. Her favorite was from when Job was home on furlough. A band of Tories hunting for patriot soldiers–that is, traitors–was approaching their property, so Bettie hid Job in the fire pit of a large oven in the yard. Her cool actions saved his life.[13] With Tory leaders like the homicidal Colonel Banastre Tarleton, who allowed the massacre of over a hundred effectually unarmed Continentals at Waxhaw, roaming the Carolinas, had Job been discovered, he would clearly not have been taken prisoner. Even after Job left the army, his life was in danger, as the Tories continued their raiding, looting, burning, and murdering. Retaliation by the rebels was equally bloodthirsty. The war effectively ended when General Charles Cornwallis surrendered his army at Yorktown on October 19, 1781, and it was officially concluded with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on September 3, 1783.

Without the strong Scotch-Irish and a few wee drams of whiskey, the American Revolution would have been lost.

Now Bettie and Job could focus on having a family, which would eventually include at least five boys, two of whom would fight in the War of 1812, and an untold number of girls. One of the youngest boys and the father of the future sour mash whiskey king, Calaway Daniel, was born in 1800 in New Bern. Before he reached age ten, his parents decided to move to Tennessee, a reputed land of milk and honey. Not only was the land fertile and cheap, but the threat of frontier violence had greatly diminished since 1796, the year Tennessee was granted statehood, with George Washington himself signing the bill. Subsequent *peace* treaties with the Chickasaw and Cherokee tribes in the early 1800s further opened the land to settlers. On the heels of these developments, pioneers, including Job and Bettie, breeched the Appalachian Mountains, with their family treasures loaded in oxcarts, and tumbled into Tennessee. Members of the Daniel family settled in Franklin County, located in Middle Tennessee, where they purchased fertile land at the head of Coffee Creek.[14]

In Tennessee, with its great geological diversity, the land truly shapes the human experience. The east is defined by the Cumberland Plateau and the Appalachian Mountains, the middle by the Central Basin, while the west gravitates toward the Mississippi River. The Central Basin, where Jack was born and bred, is an expansive, elliptical area of gently rolling plain, surrounded by the Highland Rim, a ring of hills rising several hundred feet.[15] Plateaus, ridges, and spurs shoot out into the plain like the coast jutting into the sea, while ravines in the forest-crowned hills dive three hundred feet or more. The dramatic folding and the sensual swooping of the earth create a beautiful sylvan landscape. The rich soil here is spread across a limestone table, from which clean, cool water percolates and rushes, filling the air with a fresh scent. These gurgling springs emerging from clefts in the land are ideal for feeding whiskey distilleries.

When the Daniel family members and their fellow pioneers arrived in Middle Tennessee, they discovered a lush, heavily forested land– the hill slopes were dense with groves of yellow poplar, oak, chestnut, and walnut, with underbrush of pawpaw, dogwood, and canebrake several feet high. There were no trails or road signs to guide them.

While the soil was rich, frontier life remained perilous, challenging, and arduous. Fortunately, these men were not soft aristocratic plantation owners; they were toughened yeomen, many of them Revolutionary War soldiers, who owned few slaves and were well prepared for the challenge. These men cleared their own land by the sweat of their brow.

Although they encountered plenty of wild game–bear, deer, and turkey–farming quickly became more crucial to their survival than was hunting. Corn, planted in fields and on hillsides, became not only the foundation of their daily diet but integral to their culture. Corn was made into hoecakes and provided hominy for the settlers; it was used to feed hogs and horses; the husks made fine stuffing for bed mattresses; and, most significant of all, it was the base for making their aqua-vitae–corn whiskey. It was indeed aqua-vitae, the elixir. The very word *whiskey* evolved from the Gaelic word *uisgebeatha,* or *usquebaugh,* which translates as the "water of life," but the word was reduced over time to *uisge* and then *whiskie*. The simplification of the word made sense, with *whiskie* much easier to pronounce than *uisgebeatha* when under the influence. Corn whiskey was key to survival, as it not only soothed aches and pains but was medicinal. Like wizards and witches over their caldrons, the pioneers mixed whiskey with yarrow tea to cure colds, with a poultice of beeswax and black pepper to combat pneumonia, and with honey and hot water to ward off chills. A good snort of whiskey also alleviated the psychological stress of being on the frontier.

Whiskey raised many a log cabin and barn, too. As one frontiersman recalled, "When we had a corn-shuckin', a log rollin', a house-raisin', or any such frolic, the whiskey just sloshed around like water. . . . Whiskey! I should say so!"[16] Often, there were open tubs of whiskey, with gourd dippers for slurping it down. In Tennessee they deservedly drank their share, as these pioneers were attempting to cultivate a land where Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, and Shawnee Indians once roamed but never settled, land where English and French traders had ventured into over a hundred years earlier but had built no communities.[17] Carving out a piece of civilization in the unforgiving wilderness killed many men, women, and children. Job knew he was in no Garden of Eden as he hewed logs for a cabin, chinked and

daubed the walls, then turned to building a corn crib, a smokehouse, and a barn. He plowed the fields with two mules and a bull-tongue plow, the beam made of yellow locust wood. For Elizabeth, it was no easier, as she cooked the game he killed; made cornbread, hoecakes, and mush; collected berries; hauled drinking water from the stream; sewed cloth; bore children; and served as a midwife. Women married as young as age thirteen; they were old and worn out by thirty.

These small farming communities were extremely tight-knit, with families relying on each other for survival. During hog killing season–farmers might kill a hog or two for meat that would last the year–together, neighbors butchered the meat; salted it down in the salt box; hung hams, shoulders, and bacon to cure in the smokehouse; and ground sausage and rendered the lard. During wheat thrashing, they also joined together, and afterward, each farmer hosted a big dinner to show his appreciation. At any time, if one man fell sick and behind in his field work, the others came to his aid. This spirit of cooperation continued in Jack Daniel's time. And this sense of community was imbued in Jack, who, despite his success, would never leave his home of Lynchburg, Tennessee, for such glitzy towns as Nashville.

The only cultural activity with any semblance of leisure in their small community was the quilting dinner, a popular event that brought families together and usually featured a plump gobbler for dinner.[18] Perhaps, after a social dinner, one of the men might pull out a fiddle and strike up "Billy in the Wild Woods" or "Jenny, Put the Kettle On," among other tunes that celebrated frontier life. One of the favorite folk songs among the children was "Buffalo":

> Come to me, my dear, and give me your hand
> And let us take a social ramble to some far and distant land
> Where the hawk shot the buzzard and the buzzard shot the crow
> And we all ride around the canebrake and shoot the buffalo.[19]

Book reading was another matter. In stark contrast to upscale neighborhoods in New York City, there were no literary clubs; most pioneers were illiterate and spoke in a rich folk idiom, merrily using nouns as verbs, verbs as nouns, and adjectives as nouns or verbs. Isolated in their "hollers"–that is, hollows–they produced such beautiful

colloquialisms as "My mind went a-rambling like wild geese in the West," "I've got them weary dismals today," and "Granny's standing on the drop-edge of Yonder and we'll soon be laying her down in her silent grave."[20]

As for Job, he lasted a half dozen years in Tennessee and then, as related by Bettie to her grandchildren, he "died two years after the big shake."[21] The big shake was the earthquake that ripped through the region in late December 1811 and early January 1812, sending the earth reeling, the aftershocks reverberating for two weeks, and rupturing the land to create Reelfoot Lake in western Tennessee. Jack's father, Calaway, was just a thirteen-year-old boy who was now forced to be a man. Jack would find himself in precisely the same situation fifty years later.

LIKE HIS FATHER, Calaway was a yeoman, a modest farmer who rode in a buck wagon pulled by mules, a far cry from the fine horse-drawn surreys paraded around Nashville by plantation owners living in Greek Revival mansions. Once he established himself, in 1822 Calaway married a seventeen-year-old Irish girl, Lucinda Cook, daughter of James Watson Cook and Mary Riddle. Lucinda proved as fertile as the land, bearing ten children–split evenly between boys and girls–over a span of twenty-seven years. About the time of the arrival of their fourth child in 1835, Calaway moved the family from Franklin to Lincoln County, where he bought land about five miles southwest of Lynchburg and seventy miles south of Nashville. Even though Lynchburg was on the main road–the pike–running between the towns of Fayetteville and Tullahoma, there was very little traffic. Nor were there railroads or navigable rivers. This land was in the middle of nowhere, which would have both its advantages and its disadvantages when the Civil War broke out.

The Revolutionary War soldiers John and Mark Whitaker first settled in the area in the early 1800s.[22] Other families and former soldiers of the patriot's army followed in 1809 and 1810, the names including Taylor, Motlow, and Crawford, among others. Not long after came the Waggoners, the Calls, the Tolleys, and the Daniels–all of these families were considered pioneers. Prior to the Daniels' arrival,

Lynchburg had been christened under somewhat grisly circumstances. Moses Crawford, who settled in the area in 1809, recalled for the editor of the *Lynchburg Falcon* "that after the war of 1812 closed, a clan of thieves was found in and about the present town of Lynchburg. And that in the neighborhood of Barnes Clark, a blacksmith three or four miles southeast of Lynchburg, stealing was as common as going to church. A member of this clan by the name of Woods, or something else, was lynched till he told of or showed the cave or warehouse of stolen goods."[23] Because there was no organized law, vigilante citizens used the same tree on the village green to administer justice to other offenders, sometimes tying them to it for a good whipping, other times hanging them, with "Judge Lynch" presiding. In a sentimental fit, Lynchburg was named in honor of the lynching tree.

More than just the lynching tree brought the community together. By the 1820s, a number of stills had sprung up, providing the men with places to congregate discreetly and shoot the breeze while they passed the jug. Another spirit bringing people together was God. One of the more prominent local churches was the Mount Moriah Primitive Baptist Church, established in 1816 and located on a stream suitable for full immersion baptisms a few miles from the Daniel farm. It was not only a place of worship but a social center for exchanging news and arranging marriages. Primitive Baptists had broken away from the main Baptist church in the 1830s, due to disagreements over embracing missionary work and other initiatives, arguing that they wanted to maintain strict traditions. The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, including the stoic Daniel family, were naturally drawn to the rigid Primitive Baptists, who did not overindulge in exhibitions of emotion that marked revivals. More appealing, Baptists were concerned about protecting freedom of speech, as well as freedom from civil authorities. With an endearing sense of equality, Primitive Baptists decreed that their ministers required no special education—anyone could be called by God to be a minister. All of this was quite attractive to frontier settlers, which explains why the Baptist church rapidly took root in the rural South and still enjoys a strong presence.

Members, some traveling an entire day, gathered one Sunday a month to hear the elders preach with full-throated passion. "Primitive Baptists will drive the furtherest to hear the least" is a favorite apho-

rism for those with a cynical streak.[24] Indeed, the preaching lasted for several hours but was often quite entertaining. The sin-bustin', Bible-thumpin' preachers put on a better show than dancehall girls, the best sermons coming from vagabond Whiskey Baptists. "Ef you're elected you'll be saved," they would cry, "ef you a'n't, you'll be damned. God'll take keer of his elect. It's a sin to run Sunday-schools, or temp'rince s-cieties, or to send missionaries. You let God's business alone. What is to be will be, and you can't hender it."[25]

The Daniel family joined Mount Moriah, the church a very simple wood-frame structure with side-by-side doors, one for women, one for men, who sat on opposite sides. They listened to the chanting style used by church elders; they joined in unaccompanied hymn singing; and they participated in the traditional foot washing. Using tin pitchers and bowls, members washed their pew neighbors' feet, mimicking Christ washing the feet of his disciples during the Last Supper, as recounted in the Gospel of John, chapter 13. It is not just symbolic of a spiritual cleansing but is also a demonstration that one man is no greater than another. It ends with handshaking, embracing, and sometimes weeping. Even though the Primitive Baptists were relatively informal and democratic in their practices, to Jack the church was still too gloomy and too sober concerning how one's life should be conducted, and once of age, he would leave the church. Jack Daniel was a free spirit.

BY THE TIME JACK WAS BORN in January 1849, Lynchburg was established and prospering.[26] Downtown boasted a livery stable, a saddlery shop, a blacksmith shop, a dentist, a doctor, and several spacious residences. On the immediate outskirts of town—on the very land where Jack Daniel would one day locate his distillery—was a gristmill. Also near the future distillery was a carding factory, where wool and cotton rolls were made, to be used for spinning thread for blankets, socks, and other clothing. Two horses walking around a big, flat wheel powered the machinery.[27] Mules were the most important beasts of burden, however, and Lincoln County was considered the Mule Capital of the South. In nearby Fayetteville, on the first Monday of each month, men gathered in the square to trade or sell mules, as

well as horses, hogs, sheep, turkeys, crops, and sundry merchandise. In time, Lynchburg would become a mule-trading center. Mules were far more suitable than horses for the area's steep terrain. They were more even tempered and more durable, didn't bolt at the first sign of trouble, and, unlike their equine compatriots and human owners, ate only what they needed to eat. When the sun is low in the Lynchburg sky, casting shadows, it is still possible to see the furrows, the paths left by mules cutting diagonally across the hills from the days when they were ploughed for planting corn. Also along the hillsides and through the meadows thousands of sheep and cattle grazed, as livestock was the area's greatest export.

Considered a pillar of the community, Calaway Daniel prospered, owning several slaves and a couple hundred acres of land, his personal assets valued well above those of his neighbors.[28] The family appeared blessed, with not one of their ten children dying in infancy. But then, shortly after Jack's birth, his mother, Lucinda, died.[29] The diminutive boy would grow up with the haunting stigma of wondering whether he had directly caused his mother's death. There would be little comfort from his father, who spent his waking hours working the farm. Later, their relationship was largely limited to a father teaching his son the ways of the land, of planting and harvesting, and of managing livestock. An earnest backwoods boy knew well, "When it comes to farming, I'd sink down to beggar-trash in no time if I didn't know the things I learnt from my daddy and he learnt from his daddy about farming. Suppose you plant potatoes near onions. Well, onions will put their eyes out. I've never seen a garden that throve good unless it was planted in the full of the moon. . . . Always plant peppers when you're good and mad at your wife and give your gourd seeds a hard cussing or they wont come up."[30] And on went the folk superstitions of farming.

Including Jack, there were still eight children at home when his mother died. There was also Calaway's feisty old mother, Bettie, who relished spinning yarns for her grandchildren but was suffering from dementia and was useless around the house. A desperate Calaway shipped Bettie off to his sister Anne and actively searched for a second wife to care for his brood. Although considered a kind and indulgent father, he wasted no time; on June 26, 1851, he married thirty-

year-old Matilda Vanzant, who was from a relatively prosperous farming family in nearby Franklin County, his old hunting ground. Over the next six years they had three children, one boy and two girls, the boy dying in 1858. With Matilda more attentive to her own children than to her stepchildren, little Jack–or Jackie Boy, as he was called–became lost in the porch cracks. Also, by all family accounts, Matilda was not a particularly loving mother, to put it kindly.[31] Legend has it that Jack ran away from home for good when he was only six years old to escape his evil stepmother, but the truth is, he endured and was living at home in 1860, on the eve of the Civil War. He even managed to attend school for a year. Book learning was a luxury, however; in 1860, less than half the white children in Tennessee were enrolled in school.[32]

TONGUES HAD BEEN WAGGING about war for ten years, as people complained about how the North was attempting to violate the Constitution of the United States by restricting slavery or even ending it; how the North was making a mockery of states' rights; how the federal government was behaving like a dictatorial ogre. For those who read the four-page *Fayetteville Observer*–$2 for a year's subscription, if they were willing to pay upfront; otherwise, a total of $2.50–they encountered emotional editorials as early as 1851: "We led the way into this Union; we remain faithful to its Constitution and its laws; we shall never desert the Union; if you choose to rebel or secede, go, but we abide!" Editorials on southern slaves enjoying better living conditions than the northern poor were also standard fare, as were runaway Negro lists. However, the bigger concerns for farmers like the Daniels remained the market prices for cotton and flour, a newfangled corn-shelling machine, and the size of one's manure heap–you didn't want unused manure to dry because it would burn and become waste.[33]

The Lynchburg citizens couldn't understand all the hoopla over slavery–partly because, measured by slave ownership and land ownership, Lincoln County was the third-poorest county in Middle Tennessee in 1860. Just 28 percent of family heads owned slaves, whose average value was pricey at over $800, and just 59 percent owned the

land they farmed.[34] Slaves just weren't that prevalent, with one voting district in Lincoln County having none.[35] Although slaves could be bought in Fayetteville–even in 1863, with the war raging–a distant Nashville was the closest major slave-trading market. Out of sight, out of mind. In general, Tennesseans were relatively lenient toward their slaves; however, at the same time, according to the prevailing public opinion in Tennessee, abolition was simply not practical. Freed slaves wouldn't be able to sustain themselves, they weren't prepared for citizenship, they needed to be nurtured and civilized. This view on abolition was accepted by the freedom-loving Primitive Baptists, who believed slavery was morally and spiritually right. Some ministers preached that abolitionism was no different than theft.

Tennesseans did begin to take a harsher attitude toward their slaves in 1856, when there were rumors of a slave insurrection. Panic swept through large swaths of Middle Tennessee, but the rumors were indeed just "loose talk." In 1860, a rash of mysterious fires in Middle Tennessee was blamed on blacks, prompting one Middle Tennessee planter to declare that "a servile rebellion . . . is more to be feared now than [it] was in the days of the Revolution against the mother country. Then there were no religious fanatics to urge our slaves to deeds of rapine, murder, & c.–now the villainous hounds of Abolitionism will glory in gloating in the blood of the 'Slave Drivers' and turn loose upon us the very worse material in our midst." In Lincoln County, the editor of the *Fayetteville Observer* argued for a patrol system: "While we do not learn of any misgivings as to continued quiet hereabouts, yet the news that is frequently reaching us of attempted insurrectionary movements elsewhere, are a warning."[36]

In the summer of 1860, the war of words between the North and the South moved closer to becoming a bloody war. Democrats, who held their national presidential convention in Nashville, once again chastised Republicans for desiring to curtail slavery and for attacking both the rights of states and the constitutional rights of the South. The election of Republican Abraham Lincoln, who received less than 40 percent of the popular vote, was the final provocation. Two days after the November election, South Carolina called for a convention and on December 20 voted to secede. The states of Texas, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, and Alabama quickly followed suit,

in that order. Tennessee, as well as Arkansas, North Carolina, and Virginia, was not yet ready to take such a radical step, however; Nashville and Memphis newspapers carried editorials that supported trade with northern states and pointed out the monetary benefits. Tennessee, a border state, felt that the Deep South was leaving it on a sinking ship.[37] In February 1861, delegates from the seven secessionist states met in Montgomery, Alabama, and organized a new nation, drafting a temporary constitution and electing a provisional president, Jefferson Davis. When he was introduced to the cheering crowd, Davis declared, "The South is determined to maintain her position, and make all who oppose her smell Southern powder and feel Southern steel."[38] In that spirit, their sharpened eyes immediately turned on Fort Sumter, located on an island just off Charleston, South Carolina, and home to an enemy garrison. A delegation from South Carolina attempted to negotiate for the fort, but, unwilling to lose face, Lincoln refused to capitulate and even attempted to resupply the federal troops. The Confederates took matters into their own hands.

On April 12, 1861, the Confederates attacked Fort Sumter with a heavy bombardment, signifying that the war for southern independence was on. Two days later the garrison was forced to surrender, and the Confederate Stars and Bars was raised over the fort. The very next day Lincoln called for all states to supply troops to put down the insurrection, forcing Tennessee to choose sides. It was difficult for the people of idyllic Lynchburg to fully comprehend what their choice meant, to measure the weight of consequence. They could only imagine the carnage of a real war, as the stories of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 were too romanticized and distant. The only local disasters to date that had caused any amount of grief were a vicious storm that hit in February 1851, known as "the storm," which killed a number of people, and the cholera epidemic of 1854. In June of that year, cholera had raged through the area, forcing Lincoln County businesses to close. Church bells hung motionless in their cupolas, as citizens–including the preachers–fled towns, taking refuge in the fresh air on surrounding ridges. More than thirty died in the county. Fortunately, the highland ridges around Lynchburg and the surrounding villages were healthy places to live; typhoid was virtually unknown, and during the cholera epidemic, the area

was largely unaffected.[39] More recently, in the summer of 1860, the people in the Lynchburg area had suffered a drought that brought a poor harvest and empty barns; therefore, in the spring of 1861, the farmers of Middle Tennessee were more concerned with rain than with war. Yet after Fort Sumter, attitudes changed quickly, and the people of the Lynchburg area were irrevocably pro-secession, wholly committed to their southern brothers.

At the outbreak of the war, public meetings were immediately organized in Lynchburg–each speaker more grandiloquent than the last–with the people voicing almost unanimous support for the Confederacy.[40] Momentum to join the fight picked up quickly. In May 1861, the nearby village of Boone Hill organized a home guard; its motto: "He who is not for us is against us"–a rallying cry still used almost 150 years later to galvanize the country and the world against *evil doers*.[41] In June, Tennessee voted to secede in a statewide referendum, the eleventh state to do so. Volunteer companies mustered and marched in training camps. In Fayetteville, boys too young to join the Confederate army formed their own companies for training purposes and paraded like peacocks. Jack's two older brothers still at home, Wiley and Lemuel, announced their determination to volunteer, even though the crops required tending. The Civil War would tear the Daniel family and its community apart; Jasper "Jack" Newton Daniel would be left with nothing.