

Fort Nashborough



A while back, I wrote about my 5th great grandfather, [John Blakemore](#), and the role he played in the settlement of what was to become Nashville. It turns out that my daughter-in-law's 7th great grandfather, William Austin Cooper, may have known him.

Cooper was a trader, guide, scout and commissioner for Daniel Boone. He was paid to assist Boone and others in clearing the Wilderness Road and escorting families from Clinch Mountain to the Cumberland Settlements in Tennessee. In December of 1779, the new settlers were divided into two expeditions. Cooper and most of the men took the land route to Nashville while Blakemore travelled via his ill-fated river journey. But the two groups eventually met up at their final destination, the bluffs of the French Salt Springs where they built their settlement, Fort Nashborough. It was a palisaded log fort, made entirely of wood without metal nails or fixtures.

Cooper, who had married Malea Labon of the Chickasaw Nation, died in 1781 defending Fort Nashborough from attacking Cherokee Indians being led by Chief Dragging Canoe. In recognition of his service and sacrifice, his heirs were granted 640 acres of land situated on the north side of the Cumberland River.

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