

WHEN GOVERNOR MILLER BOUGHT CRYSTAL HILL

By Diana Sherwood

PREFACE: In presenting this article, acknowledgement should be made for the source material. After the death of Judge J.S. Utley, his daughter Miss Fentem Utley gave me a collection of miscellaneous papers. Outstanding among them was a manuscript of research which he had done over a period of several years on the subject of Crystal Hill and Governor Miller's home there. Through correspondence, historical accounts, and various legal records the material left by Judge Utley adds much to hitherto unrecorded facts concerning Crystal Hill. ---The Author.

In his research Judge Utley learned there had been two settlements called Crystal Hill. The first, settled by the brothers Jacob and John Pyeatt about 1811 on an eminence some 15 miles upstream from the Point of Rocks (which is the site of Little Rock). They called it Crystal Hill because the ground was covered with quartz crystals of varying sizes. Utley has this placed in Sec. 9, R2N, Twp. 13 W on the south side of the river. Hallum called the Pyeatt brothers "landed proprietors". Utley found they had never registered their lands. Their names do not appear in any early records.

Fred Allsopp, in his book "Folklore of Romantic Arkansas", gives information of this settlement taken from the records of the daughter of the Rev. Mr. John Carnahan, who married Henry Pyeatt, son of one of the settlers, and lived at the settlement for 16 years. Also, according to Allsopp, it was in 1812 the families arrived at Crystal Hill, and this record further states that Jacob Pyeatt built a large skiff for a ferry. Mary Carnahan Pyeatt collected the fare charged as toll.

However, according to Mr. Utley, the Crystal Hill of historical importance was a mile or so further upstream on the north side of the river, in the East $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 5, Twp. 2N, R13W. All through this story that parcel of land is the arena of action.

Into his record Judge Utley wrote, January, 1933: "This tract is now owned by Tom Young, who, knowing of my interest in the subject, brought his abstract of title to my office January 5, 1933 and left it, saying for me to get what information I desired or needed and he would call for it when I was through." From certain sheets of the abstract he gleaned facts, dates, names, all of vital historic interest leading to the final ownership being vested in James Miller.

Had one the "pen of the ready writer" mentioned in the Bible, this could be made a thrilling story involving shrewd land speculators and their wives, crafty politicians and their henchmen in which the first Territorial Governor seemed a victim of both factions. Into the story could be written the various accounts of the gold rush although it occurred several years earlier and not immediately connected with this account.

Land speculators from St. Louis were on the ground even before Arkansas became a territory in 1819. Two of these stand