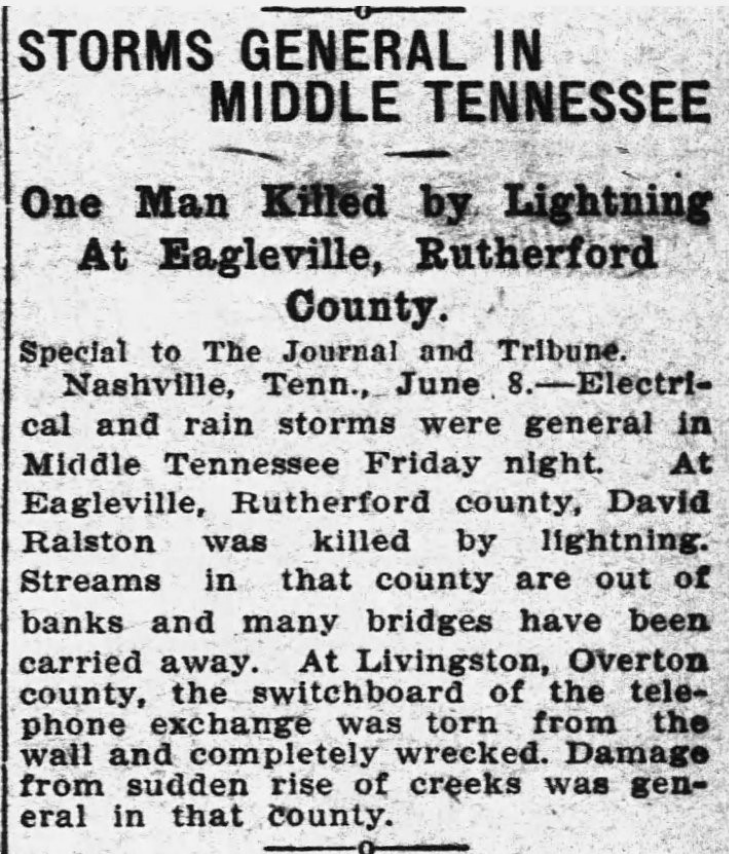


Reports of His Death Greatly Exaggerated

My father was approached by a local Eagleville, Tennessee, historian who was inquiring about an old Knoxville, TN, newspaper article she had found. The article described the death of David Ralston at Eagleville in 1907.

Knoxville, The Journal and Tribune, June 9, 1907



The lady asked my father if he knew who this David Ralston was. My father had no knowledge of a Ralston being killed by lightning in 1907.

When my father called me about this, I first searched for any Ralstons in the area who may have died in 1907. I found none. I then searched for all David Ralstons living in the area on the 1900 census and the 1910 census. The list was the same:

1. David Wayhat Ralston 1878-1966 (went by Wayhat)
2. David Edward Ralston 1886-1960 (went by Eddie D)
3. David Crockett Ralston 1875-1950
4. David Ralston 1830-1913 (son of Andrew Ralston 1798-1863)

All of these were in our Ralston family, but obviously, none of them could have died in 1907. The only difference in the two census reports was that after 1900 the elder David Ralston had moved from Eagleville to neighboring Holts Corner, in Marshall County, a few miles away.

Further searching turned up another article from a Nashville newspaper saying the same.

The Nashville American, June 9, 1907

STAFF—Storm does damage in Williamson County.—Ala Overby killed by lightning near Adams, and David Ralston, of Eagleville, lost his life from the same cause.—Judge Gardenhire decides to admit W. S. Bryant to bail in \$10,000 after hearing all the evidence in the Vestal case.—Opinions handed down by the Supreme Court.

This presented quite a mystery. I could find no other articles on Newspapers.com in 1907 referencing this incident or David Ralston, such as an obituary.

I finally located another article from two days later by doing a Google.com search for David Ralston. (Newspapers.com did not have this article properly indexed.)

The Nashville American, June 11, 1907

SHOCKED BY LIGHTNING.

LEWISBURG, Tenn., June 10.—(Special.) David Ralston, an aged citizen, was severely stunned by lightning near Holt's Corner. He had gone in a barn from a shower, when the building was struck by lightning.

So, mystery solved. Apparently, David was so stunned by the lightning he was taken for dead and this was picked up by the newspapers. It is strange that the June 11 article did not mention the June 9 articles, but the June 11 article may have been published because of the June 9 articles. It is also interesting that the June 11 article is datelined "Lewisburg, June 10" instead

of "Holts Corner, June 8". Since Lewisburg was the most convenient hospital to Holts Corner, my guess is that David was taken to Lewisburg after being struck and may have been recuperating there on June 10.