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The Bemis Story

Where Industry and Friendliness Blend Into Progress

A publication of the Bemis Historical Society—www.bemishistory.org

January 2007



President's Update Joel Jackson

Much has been happening in Bemis since the last Newsletter. At the Society meetings we have heard stories about shenanigans all around Bemis from times past. Some were told after the meetings from folks too bashful to get behind the mike. (Like when Carl Perkins got run back home from the MS state line for using a magnet on a pinball machine) The Halloween pranks which bordered on the dangerous and the school memories were interesting but the people profiles were most interesting.

The speakers were all great and brought back memories of "How it used to be". Bemis had some "real characters". The speakers were obtained by Kaye Patrick, our capable vice-chair. We found out that our 20 musicians from Bemis made at least a part time living with their skills, And David Green has released a complete CD with just Bemis songs which he wrote, except for "Jolly Inn Cafe" which was written by Billy Wayne Rolison. The title song is "Living in a Cotton Mill Town". He is donating all the proceeds to the Society for the Museum. In the near future we will have individual Society program speakers on CD for sale. If you have a favorite, we can start with that request first.

The best news lately was in September when City Councilman Maurice Hays convinced Mayor Farmer that his promise of "matching funds" made in 2003 was now due. The Mayor signed a check for \$110,000 to the Society. Jackson Energy Authority, with the guidance of Bruce Dorris, has agreed to sponsor the Technology Exhibit. Over 40 people have donated artifacts since the last newsletter. These along with the other hundreds will be rotated into various displays in the Bemis Mill Village Museum.

The work on the Museum is really coming along. All the holes in the walls are now patched and smooth as silk. Original trim has been reproduced and installed. Original paint colors are now being researched and will be applied by May Bemis Days Reunion.

The wing walls have been reconstructed to provide the look of the old theater. Reproducing lighting fixtures is a bit of a problem but should be decided soon. Central heat and air are now working. The porches on the west side have been

rebuilt with fresh concrete. Richard Fisher has done a fantastic job of bringing the Auditorium back from the edge of extinction. His donations of "In Kind" work has amounted to thousands and his contacts with subcontractors have led to others thousands of dollars to the project.

Jim Schippers, formerly employed at the TN State Museum for 13 years plus other places, has recently been hired to help us with the displays in the Museum. His expertise will be welcome.

The Fall fundraiser was fun for all. Gaylor Cooper was the barbequer of the pig and donated alot of the fixins. Homemade desserts topped off a great meal which raised about \$2000. It was held at Bemis First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall. They let us use it free. A BIG THANK YOU goes to them. I would also like to THANK Bemis United Methodist Church and Grady Longmire for the use of their facility each month. We have been meeting here since February, 1998.

It is time to pay membership dues for the new year. Dues are \$25 per year per household. You can pay Joe Roard at the meeting or send it to him at P. O. Box 9266, Jackson, TN 38314. Dues have been a source of obtaining matching money for grants and also a testament to our Grantors that we have a viable society worthy of their support. Please keep it that way. Anyone wishing to remember someone can purchase a "Cotton Boll". It can be either "IN HONOR OF" or "IN MEMORY OF". It can be a husband and wife combo or a single individual for \$500. Presently they are on a sign on the street but will be on a plaque in the Museum when it is finished. Anyone wishing to remember the Society in their will with at least a \$500 donation will also receive a "Cotton Boll".

My Bemis Memories

**By Joseph W. (Joe Billy) Austin
(Second Installment)**

In pre WWII years, most children were born at home. Mrs. Pauline Hammond, the Company Nurse, visited each new or many times mother, advising and instructing them on proper child care and the mother's health as well. She made several visits for each child birth and there was no charge for the services rendered.

The Bemis community offered an excellent environment for rearing and educating children. The "Y" had good programs, doors to homes were seldom locked, and if you did something wrong someone was sure to tell your mother. The churches were interested in you, you could get a bite to eat at just about any home in town, and you were welcome most of the time.

"Pass the time games children played, etc."

Mother and Children, Hop Scotch, Ring Around the Roses, Red Rover, Annie Over, Pop the Whip, Tag, Hide and Seek, Tin Can, Kick the Can, Foot Races, Sack Races, Rolling a Tire, Rolling a Metal Hoop with a Paddle, Marbles, Spinning Tops, Mumbly Peg, Rolling at the Bat, Fly Ball, Street Ball, (string balls were made with yarn from the mill using the core of a golf ball to start it and we used broom sticks for bats), Air Plane, Cowboys and Indians, Sidewalk Skating, Riding Carts, Coaster Wagons, Scooters (home made scooters were made by nailing skate wheels to 2x4's), Bicycles (after your bicycle skills improved, Bicycle Hill just south of 6th Street was the challenge)

"Nicknames that might generate some memories"

Archie, Art, Arlie, "B", Babe, Bad Eye, Bear, Big Mule, Blubber, Bob, Bobby, Bobo, Boots, Boy, Boy Baby, Brother, Bub, Bubba, Bubber, Buck, Bud, Buddy, Buddily, Bull, Bully, Bull Eye, Buster, Butter Bal, Cat Eyes, Chick, Chicken, Chuck, Cliff, Coffee Pot, Cokie, Cowboy, Daddy Rabbit, Dick, Dink, Doc, Doley, Doney, Doug, Fat, Fats, Fatty, Freck, Freckles, Good Man, Growl, Grumpy, Hairlip, Hickey, Hot, Hub, Ike, Jake, Jeff, Jim, Jimmy, Kid, Kitty, Knox, Kraut, Lefty, Lightning, Loose Lip, Loose Jaw, Max, Monk, Motor Mouth, Mule, Muscles, Mutt, Ned, Nick, Neighbor, One Eye, Oz, Pap, Pappy, Pee Wee, Pea Soup, Pete, Poodily, Popeye, Puss, Puss Eye, Red, Rick, Ricky, Runt, Rusty, Sarge, Sheriff, Shot, Shorty, Shug, Sis, Sister, Slick, Slim, Slobber, Clow Poke, Slugger, Snake, Snelly, Snooks, Snorky, Son, Sonny, Sonny Boy, Spike, Squire, Sugar, Sweet Pea, Tack, Tarzan, Ted, Tom, Tommy, Uncle, Vester, Willie and Zeek.

(to be continued)

Your Bemis Memories are also needed. Please send them to Carolyn Davis, 378 Old Malesus Road, Jackson, TN 38301 or email them to cjdavis@aeneas.net.

Memorials

In Memory of Farris Kennon

J. T. and Margaret Webb

In Memory of Gerald "Bo" Duncan

J. T. and Margaret Webb
Pam Duncan

In Memory of Charles Tippet

Bemis Historical Society

In Memory of Dr. Douglas L. Brint, MD and wife Martha

Joyce Brint Miller

In Honor of the James Gibbons Family

Rosalee Gibbons

Cotton Boll Remembrances

(Honoraria and Memorials
at the \$500 giving level)

In Memory of Benton and Acenah Fisher and George and Opal Fowler

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fisher

In Memory of the Reuben C. Cupples and Dan S. Granger Families

Mickey C. Granger and Kemp C. Reed

Donations

Lin and Sandra Holly

Betty Bowen

Shirley Held

Joel and Brenda Jackson

Maurice Stansell, Sr.

Sharon Plemons

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bray

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Nip McKnight

Ella R. Henderson

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Carden

Robert and Ellen Henry

Harold and Betty Vailes

J. W. and Joloy Watlington

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wyatt

Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Jackson

Randy and Carolyn Flanagan

Mrs. William F. Roark

Mrs. Kathleen McCommon

Jerry and Cheryl McNatt

T. R. Hilliard

Mr. and Mrs. Freddie Pruitt

Edward L. Weaver

Tyo Lancaster

Onus and Shirley King

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Turner

Mr. and Mrs. Dalton Meals

Vicky Foote

Joyce L. Collins

Larry H. Mills

Donations continued

Mr. and Mrs. Hubert H. Williams
 Rex and Yurie Brooks
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank L. Newdecker
 Richard and Linda Drewry
 John R. Nelson
 James H. Duncan

Artifact Donations

Joel Jackson	Bemis Postmaster List
Nina Young	"This Old Rock" Poem
Ethel Murchison	Christmas 1946 at Company Store
James Hanna	Map Collection
Sandra Coatney	"Cotton Mill Math" and School Books
Louise Boone	Work Badge and Weave Hook
Opal Buckingham	1920's Parade Photo and 5 others
Tom Collins	1950 Commercial Appeal Bemis Article
Gloris Allen	Bemis Band Photo and Others
Inez McDaniel	Mill Tank Blueprint and Story
Bobby McKenzie	Auditorium Photo, Bemis Tie, Bank Concert Tickets
Georgia Morehead	JBY Graduation Invitation
Betty Edwards	Mill Pond Photo before Wall
Keith & Mary Katherine Crowley	1937 Basketball 6 Teams and 1 Inside Y Photos, 1924 Ad for Minstrel at Auditorium, Various Bemis Picture Postcards, Bemis Newspaper 1921, Bemistories
Larry Atherton	1927 Basketball Team Photo
Marie Mitchell	7 Weave Hooks and Work Tools
Mary Francis Frye	1980 Bemis Today
Billy Knott	1940's Garden Plow
Franklin Rice	Foreign Aid Bemis Bag
Ruth Rice	Bundle Domestic, 1932 Bemis High Annual, Mr. Kirby Scout Folder 1930, Elementary Certificate 1928, Bemis High Diploma 1932
Jeanette Taylor	5 1930-32 Bemis High Programs
Nan Howard	Cotton Gin Pea
Willie Mae Spencer	1950 May 19 Jackson Sun
Pirtle Family	1925 Elementary Certificate; 2 boxes not cataloged
Joel Jackson	Complete 1951-52 Strike "Sun", "Ellis Kinder Story" SUN
Christine Scott Matthews	1940's Scrapbook, Bemistories, 20 Year Club Cats, 1940 Auditorium Photo
Budgie and Peggy Hamilton	Various pictures
Willard and Joy Cable	J. B. Young Society Pin 1929
Roberta Henderson	Bemis White Denim Place Mats
Benny Bridges	1930 Bemis School Library Book
Hensel Petty	1970 Bemis 16mm Training Film
Jolena Fisher	Signed 50 th Reunion Football; 40x48 Aerial of Bemis
Steve Baker, UU	8 Light Sconces, Trim Boards
Gracie Patterson	8x10 Photo Ladies in Spinning Room
Richard Simmons	1 Large and 1 Small Ice Tong
Virginia Sylvester	"Kids Flag Drawing" Photo

Hero, Friend and Legend by Randy Flanagan

Every town has a Legend
 A Hero with no end
 I was fortunate to have known him
 Honored to call him my Friend.
 Sometimes I think I see him
 Passing the old Mill and Swimming

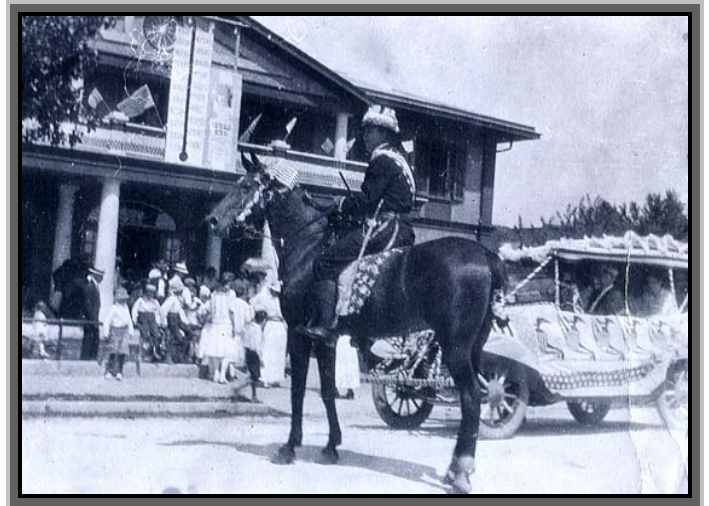
Pool

As I cut across New Town
 Past the memories of the Old School.
 Signing up to play baseball
 Back in the 50's one day
 A gentle giant of a Man said,
 "What position you want to play?"
 From then on He was my Idol
 A Mentor of what to be
 "Mr. Bemis" to us kids
 Ten feet tall inside of a six foot-three.
 He coached all the Sports
 At School and behind the Y
 Whatever the "Company" task
 This Man gave it a try.
 One time I thought He was Tarzan
 As He dove from the Bathhouse Shed
 Sometimes Jungle Jim to me
 When the Boy Scout Troop He led.
 He was a Man among men
 On the sidewalk past the Company Store
 Jogging up the Y steps
 Through the Skating Rink door.
 I hit a homerun one day
 As He coached from third base
 What a thrill for me
 To see the happiness in His face.
 But then Our Town started changing
 With no thought of What was Lost
 We know hindsight is 20-20
 Look around and see What it Cost.
 But no matter what the Changes
 Precious Memories will always be
 Heroes will live forever
 From inside you and me.
 And no matter what comes and goes
 Nor what's Old or what's New
 Bemis will Always have a Hero
 Our Friend, Royce Askew.

Sympathy is extended to the families of Sharon Plemons, her brother Larry Kennon, Dr. Darrell King, and Mrs. Hassie Wyatt. These Society members and supporters have passed away since the publication of the last Newsletter.

The Society meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Bemis United Methodist Church. Visitors are welcome.

**War Production Boards, Spring of 1918
Liberty Loan Drive
(Notice \$110 at top of thermometer)
Photo donated by Ethel Murchison**



Visit our Website

Learn more about Bemis and the Bemis Historical Society. www.bemishistory.org

**Bemis Reunion Days 2007
May 18-19
Bemis Mill Village Museum**

Bemis Historical Society
P. O. Box 9266
Jackson, TN 38314-9266

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Send dues (\$25.00) to
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Consider honoring or
memorializing a loved one
with a Memorial or Cotton
Boll Remembrance.