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The Bemis Story

Where Industry and Friendliness Blend Into Progress

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

Summer 2008

Bemis Days Event A Huge Success!

Approximately 1,000 “friends of Bemis” attended this year’s annual Bemis Days event on May 16-17. The two days were filled with music, food, fun, laughter and reminiscing.

The Society would like to publicly thank the following for helping to make this year’s event a complete success:

Gaylon & Betty Cooper; Dennis Watson & Frito-Lay; Tennessee Concert Sound, C.B. Canovan & Andy Roark; Market Fresh Produce; Gary Ritter & Kroger South; W.S. Holland; Roy Neal Mitchell; Troy Sullivan; Major Jerry Gist; Anita Todd, Jackson Recreation & Parks; Michael Cook & the YMCA; the John Norvell Family; Bennie Bridges & the Pea Pickin’ Possum Band; Jennie & Jimmy Mitchell; First Baptist Church of Bemis; Fulton Mullis; June Holloway; Richard Fisher & Jackson Storytelling League; Sue Roark & the many Society members who worked at the bar-b-que dinners & helped to clean up.

Sincere thanks to Betty & Gaylon Cooper for providing two bar-b-que dinner fundraisers that raised over \$1,700. A very special thank you goes to past Chairman Joel Jackson. Joel single-handedly organized almost all aspects of the 2008 Bemis Days event. He as always been, and continues to be, the driving force of the Bemis Historical Society. Our most sincere thanks, Joel!

Break Room, Stage Ceiling Approved for Museum

The Society’s board recently approved a \$5,000 budget to move forward with building a break room and installing a drop ceiling in the stage area at our museum. Both projects will pave the way to ready our building for renting.

Thanks to many hours of labor & “sweat equity” by board members Frank Murchison & Jimmy Mitchell, the break room project is complete! It is located behind the west wing wall, and has a new floor, sheetrock, cabinets, counter-top, sink, refrigerator and a fresh coat of paint. Please thank Jimmy & Frank profusely for all their work on this project. We are *so proud* of this new addition to our museum! The drop ceiling will be completed by mid-September.

Thanks also to Richard Fisher who, as always, has provided excellence guidance on this project, and has found much of our supplies at or below cost, including kitchen cabinets. We owe a debt of gratitude to residents of the local penal farm who have provided hours of manual labor to tear out sheet rocking, paint the bathroom floors, move roof tiles to the basement and move everything out of the future break room area. We could not have done it without them!

As we move toward completion of this project, **we need your help.** If anyone

would like to donate a new – or even gently used –microwave or coffee urn for the break room, please contact Anita Roark at 427-2609 (evening/weekends) or by email at anitaruth.roark@wth.org. Thanks for your support!

Cotton Boll Remembrances

Cotton Boll Remembrances are memorials and honorariums given at the \$500 level of giving. The following Cotton Boll Remembrances have recently been made:

In Memory of Perry & Hermie Goff
By: Richard & Melba Jackson

In Memory of Aunt Minnie Granger
By: Her Family

In Memory of Rev. & Mrs. R. G. Jackson
By: Richard & Melba Jackson

In Memory of Nell Marie Fisher Jones
By: Larry & Jenny Beeman

In Memory of Nelson & Evy Nerren
By: Richard & Melba Jackson

In Memory of Lyman & Daisy Vailes
By: Harold & Betty Vailes

In Memory of E.W. (Bob) & Irene Viers
By: Harold & Betty Vailes

Donations

Thank you to the following supporters for their recent donations:

Alice Arnett	Jeff Arnett
Rex Brooks	Georgia Busby
City Florist	Lyda Kay Feree
Robert Fisher	Charlotte Hammond
Billy Landers	Wallace Mills
Andy Patterson	

OCTOBER FUNDRAISER

Bemis Historical Society

FISH FRY

Saturday, October 25, 2008

11AM-1PM

Bemis Museum/Theatre

Tickets: \$6

Sponsor: South Side Optimist Club

Call Joel Jackson for tickets at

731-424-0739

Museum Floors:

First Major Supporter Named

Mrs. Kathleen McCommon has become our first major supporter for restoring the floors in our museum to their original magnificence. For those of you who have not seen the recently refinished floors, they are truly a sight to behold.

Major supporters of this project (those donating at the \$500+ level) will receive recognition on permanent signage in the museum that gives a brief history about the floors. Thank you, Mrs. McCommon, for helping us to preserve such a vital part of our American Treasure. Thanks also to Charlotte Hammond for your donation toward the floors, and to a large number of members & Society friends who gave cash donations at Bemis Days toward this project.

As you may recall, the Society's treasury paid the \$10,500 required to fund the floor refinishing project. With a total of \$961 in donations in May, we need to raise \$9,539 to repay the Society's treasury. If you would like to support this worthwhile project, send a check or money order marked, "for floor project" to the Bemis Historical Society, P.O. Box 9266, Jackson, TN 38314-9266.

Honorariums/Memorials

The following honorariums and memorials have been recently made:

In Honor of Gloris Dean & Floyd Allen

Joe & Sue Roark

In Memory of Beula Bomar

Margaret Webb

In Memory of Peggy Justis Curlin

The 49ers

In Memory of Dot Eskers

Margaret Webb

In Memory of Nell Marie Fisher

Gary & Anne Vollen

In Memory of Thomas Fisher

Larry & Jenny Beeman

In Honor of James Aaron Hailey

Mrs. George E. Morris

In Memory of Naomi Weaver Hailey

Mrs. George E. Morris

In Memory of

Janey Raines Mitchell Marshall

Glenn & Kathryn Curlin

Linda J. Higgins

In Memory of Mrs. Olean Mayo

Mr. & Mrs. William Earney, Jr.

David Jernigan

In Memory of Austin Siler

Nancy Fogelman

Margaret Webb

In Memory of

Shirley Johnson Watlington

By: Helen Johnson

GOAL: Move Society Meetings to the Museum by Christmas!

When Santa asked the Society's Board what they wanted for Christmas, the answer was simple. **Move our Society meetings to the museum in time for the holidays!!**

So Santa's little elves are now working overtime to make our Christmas wish come true. Over the next few months your officers will bring samples of chairs to our meetings that we feel are appropriate (and

reasonably priced) for the museum. We'll be asking members and friends of the Society to purchase a chair (or two!) so they will be available for our meetings.

We may also need to purchase a small sound system so that members will be able to hear our guest speakers. (If someone would like to play Santa and donate this equipment, we will put at star on your Christmas tree!!!)

If all goes as planned, we hope to have an "open house" at our December meeting to show off our building and our new Cotton Boll Remembrance displays. So spread the word! We're museum-bound by Christmas. Stay tuned for updates!

Grant Update

The Society wishes to thank Dr. Vicki Lake for writing a grant for us to the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC). Dr. Lake worked with Joel Jackson and Richard Fisher to submit a very professional grant. Thanks also to Congressman John Tanner who provided a letter of support for our museum project and grant application.

The grant proposal was for \$45,630, of which the THC would fund 60% and the Society would be responsible for 40%. If the total amount of this grant were approved, it would allow us to complete *the majority of remaining rehabilitation to the building itself*. Yes, we are that close to being finished with all interior and exterior projects – then on to the exhibits! It will probably be late Spring 2009 before we are notified if our grant will be funded.

Artifact Donations

1st Grade School Work; 15 Papers
Josh Herriman
Otis Greer Collection from Jackson SUN
Pat Greer Warren
1948 Meeow
Billy Walters
2 Frost Proof Toilet Displays
Dennis Hays
J.B. Pearson Bio Sketch
Rev. Elton Watlington
Memories of a Mill Town”
in *Tenn. Cooperator* May .08
Joel Jackson
1958 Bemis Lions Club Charter
Bruce Rogers
1990 West Drug Store Calendar
Benny & Barbara Bridges
Bemis Fire Hat & Raincoat
Carlos Ivy Jr.
“Bemis Days” Ad in KY-AAA Mag.
March/April ‘08
Bobby Fisher
Photo of William Scoggins receiving
1st Bemis Pension Check
Dr. Smythe Birthday Mini Album
Barbara Bridges
2nd Grade 1932 Photo
1942 Bemis Bonus Envelope
Floyd Butler
1980 Negatives-Aerial of Mill etc
Steve Baker
YMCA Basketball Poster
1920-21”Y” Team Photo for 1920-21,
23-24, & 36-37
1926-27 Bemis Team Photo
Joe Moore
Bemis –“A Company Town”-Book
David Flynn
20 Year Club CAT Book ‘78
Dorothy Babb Ferrell
JBY Freshmen 1942 Photo
Marie James Mitchell
Dr. Smythe Office Scales
Billy Smith

J.B. Young Elem. 1955 Plaque
Bobby & Bernice Johnson

Last Flag at Bemis Mill 8/2/91
Larry Bray
14 Bemis “A” Bags
Don Bemis
1949 Football Team in Harris Café
3 Newspaper Photos
Josh Herriman
12/12/1976 Annexation “SUN”
Joita Jones Alexander
42 Year Retirement Certificate
Benny Savage
Dr. Smythe Poem/Bob Gary
Carolyn Tate Haggard
Verbal Simmons Collection
On Lowell’s Death
Billy/David/ Richard Simmons
Fashions from Feedbags
National Winner (23items)
Cora “Jo” Evans
1912 Herron Chapel
Robert Nolen
7 Photos Around Bemis
4 Wage Envelops 1942
Inez Hampton Dyer
1976 Bicentennial Bag
Dot Pruitt
“Dr. Kelly” Poem at Death
Pauline Matthews
Mrs. Tate Retires Photo
Unknown
Bemis Mural Unveiled
At Bemis Intermediate
Joel Jackson
9 Bemistory Clips; 8 SUN Clips
Old Bemis House Keys; 1951 Meeow
Joyce Cross Collins
1950 Meeow
50 Years in the Life.....
Pre 1921 Mill Photo
Photo 1950 Slogan Winners
May 1950 Show Ad
“SUN”3/11/56 Carl “Hit”
1966, ‘75 and ‘76 20 Year CATs
1992-2copies the Last Meeow
“Good Bye JBY-G. Mulherin
JBY-50-Reception- Invitation
Guest Book, News Release
Dr.Smythe history, 7 ppg

Dr. Smythe Poem-P. Matthews
 Ronald Fisher Essay 1950
 SUN 1940 New Cafeteria
 SUN 50th '49 Football Team
 1950-51 & 51-52 Sports Scrap Book
 7-1949 & 50 Football Programs
 Football Cartoons/Wilford Roach
 Jr. Marines Photo
 1952 Girls basketball Photo
 1950 Boys Basketball Photo
 1951 Football Team
 1952 Class 8x10 Composite
 Class of JBY '52 -50th Reunion
 12 Photos Chester's Typing Class
Bobby/ Sara Scoggins
 Autographed Carl Perkins Photo
 "SUN" Val Perkins Dies
J.E.& Luneate Mullis
 3 Patton Block Photos
Dennis Watson
 Bolton High Band in 50th Parade
 Royalty Float
June Holloway
 4 Bemis Maps
Jack Wood
 Stop & Shop Ad 1952
Joel Jackson
 Dr. Smythe Print
Barbara Brewer
 1908 Ladies Jackson Fibre
 1917 Parade; 1920 Play Cast
 5-Union Church Photos
Earl & June Holloway
 SUN Dr.Smythe 50 years in W.O.W.

Volunteers Needed – Bemis Days 2009 Committee

It is never too early to start planning our Bemis Days event for 2009. We are looking for eight to ten volunteers to serve on the Bemis Days Steering Committee. This committee will be responsible for planning the events to take place during Bemis Days, as well as coming up with meaningful items for keepsakes that can be sold at Bemis Days. If you are fun-loving and organized,

this is the committee for you. Call Anita Roark at 427-2609 (evening/weekends) if you would like to join the committee. Thanks!

Construction Update

The primary artifact of our future museum is the building itself, a designated American Treasure. Our primary efforts over the last few years have been to rehabilitate this lovely building to its former beauty. It is with pride that we announce that we are "almost there."

Over the years, our Society has raised over \$677,690 through grants and private donations, the bulk of which has gone toward saving our building. We are now down to just thirteen remaining projects, then the interior & exterior of the building will be complete. Five of the thirteen projects are already underway:

- Rework, rewire & hang original two lobby entrance lamps
- Purchase & install four wall-hung fixtures at the side lobby entrances
- Purchase & install eight exterior hanging light fixtures over exit doors from the auditorium
- Repair floor of 2nd floor in auditorium for storage space
- Purchase & install drop ceiling for stage area

It is important that all of our members know how close we are to completing the rehabilitation of our building. We could not have done it without your past support, and we are grateful for all future support that will help us to preserve our historic American Treasure which will fittingly house the history of Bemis itself.

***Preserve Our Past by Supporting our
Museum Project!***

Help preserve the history and heritage of Bemis, Tennessee, by supporting our Bemis Mill Village Museum project. For information about credit card donations, gifts of assets (stocks/bonds/real estate) or planned gifts (bequests/trusts/life insurance), contact our development consultant, Frank McMeen at 731-660-8770, or by e-mail at Frank.McMeen@wth.org. For information about direct contributions (cash/checks), Cotton Boll Remembrances (honorariums and memorials at the \$500 level of giving) and Named Gift Opportunities (museum/exhibits), contact Anita Roark at 731-427-2609. Cotton Boll Remembrances can be purchased with one \$500 donation or through ten (10) consecutive \$50 payments. **The Bemis Historical Society is a 501(c)3 entity. Part or all of your contribution may be tax deductible.**

If you were unable to purchase the commemorative plate of the Bemis United Methodist Church during their 100-year celebration, you are in luck! Plates can still be purchased for \$45 by calling 731-422-4997.

Attend a Society Meeting!

The Bemis Historical Society meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7PM at the Bemis United Methodist Church. A short business meeting is followed by a program. Join us any month to find out more about Bemis, our Bemis Mill Village Museum project, and just to visit with current and former Bemis residents. You will be welcomed!

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

Bemis United Methodist Church –
Commemorative Plates Still
Available