Bemis Heritage Day will be held on Saturday, May 21, 2022, at the Bemis Mill Village Museum which was built in 1921-1922 as the Bemis Auditorium. The centennial celebration will honor this beautiful building located at 2 North Missouri Street in Jackson, TN (formerly Bemis). We will also celebrate the bicentennial anniversaries of the City of Jackson and Madison County. Special guests will be Jackson Mayor Scott Conger and Madison County Mayor Jimmy Harris.

Museum doors will open at 10:00 a.m. with free admission. Browse the museum to visit with friends and to view artifacts and vintage photos. Visit the museum’s Company Store to purchase a cookbook, coloring book, keepsake hand-held fan, historical ornaments, baseball caps (Historic Bemis and Chat ‘N Chew), DVDs of vintage photos, and other items listed on our website.

At 10:10 a.m., there will be a grand opening of the new playground equipment purchased from funds donated by Amerigroup Corporation for the Stella Duncan Park of Bemis at 110 South Missouri Street. The grand opening will be led by Tony Black, Director of the Jackson Recreation & Parks Department, with special guests: Amerigroup President Chad Pendleton and Amerigroup staff members Madeline Mays, Psasha Taylor, Evan Swafford, and Kelly Shearin.

From 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., Bobby McAlexander will display his impressive and detailed ceramic replica of the Chat ‘N Chew, a well-known hangout, that was located beside South Side High School on South Highland Avenue from 1958 until 1972. Rhonda Young will have a display for historic preservation, “Archives R Us: Preserving Our Family Archives.”

From 10:30 until 11:00 a.m., a program inside the museum will include a joint proclamation by Mayor Conger and Mayor Harris. There will be a portrayal of Ransom Hammond, Employee of Bemis Bro. Bag Company, portrayed by his grandson Greg M. Hammond, and a portrayal of a Bemis Book Club Founder from 1930, portrayed by current member Judy Roach Dorris. The Jackson-Madison Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, will recognize our United States veterans on Armed Forces Day. The City of Jackson Fire Department will display a large flag of the United States of America in front of the museum.

Lunch will be available under the tent on the front lawn of the museum from 11:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. (or until sold out) with delicious barbecue plates by Gaylon Cooper for $10 per plate (including soft drink). Will Kemp from R & J Feed Supply will provide homemade strawberry ice cream (made in an ice cream maker powered by a John Deere motor) for $3 per cup with all proceeds to Bemis Historical Society. Enjoy live music from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s performed by the Bemis Boogie Blues Band – Willi X Evans, Steve Patterson, Tony McCaslin, and Bobby Cleary.

From 1:00 to 2:00 p.m., Joel Jackson, Chairman of Bemis Historical Society, will present a slideshow of photos and a video about the Bemis Auditorium/Museum, including the entire building – attic, balcony, main floor, basement, and tunnel.

Children can enjoy the splash pad at the Bemis Mill Memorial Park located at 7 A Street and the playground at the Stella Duncan Park. Games will also be available at the museum for children and the young at heart under the direction of the Jackson Recreation & Parks Department with Recreation Manager Bridgett Parham and staff. Get ready for a game of washers, cornhole, and other fun games.

Bemis Historical Society looks forward to sharing our Bemis heritage on May 21. Anyone interested in the history of Bemis, Jackson, and Madison County is welcome to attend.
**Cotton Boll Remembrances**

Cotton Boll Remembrances are honorariums and memorials at the $500 level of giving.

- In memory of Richard Dean Fisher  
  Donated by Richard Jackson
- In memory of Onus and Shirley King  
  Donated by Onus King Family

**Artifact Donations**

The following artifact donations have been added to the historic preservation of Bemis Mill Village.

- Bemis Cotton Mill ledgers from the estate of the late John Maddox Webb  
  Donated by Connie Webb Ledbetter
- Bemis Cotton Mill plate  
  Donated by Farrell Mills
- Bemis Boy Scout pack flag  
  Keith Crowley’s skating rink whistle  
  Donated by Tommy Wheat

**Monetary Donations**

Thank you to the following donors for their generous support.

- Alice-Catherine Carls
- Nellie M. Gaia
- Joe Nip McKnight
- Doris K. McKenzie
- Sue Roark for Bemis Heritage Day
- Penny Stutzman for a museum tour

**Memorial Donations**

Thank you for your kindness in remembering your loved ones with a donation to Bemis Historical Society.

- In memory of John David “J.D.” Carden  
  Donated by Robert & Joan Allen
- In memory of Joe Billy & Mildred Austin  
  Donated by Matt & Marla Baggett
- In memory of Harry & Jennie DeLoach  
  Donated by Joe & Elizabeth Holmes
- In memory of Joel & Brenda Jackson  
  Donated by Royce & Shirley McClintock
- In memory of Doris K. McKenzie  
  Donated by Sue Johnson Roark
- In memory of Patty Stanfill Wilken  
  Donated by Kathy Haney Williams
- In memory of Billy Joe King  
  Donated by Sadie Collins Rogers
- In memory of Sue Johnson Roark
- In memory of Wallace Mills  
  Donated by Mattie Sue Johnson Roark
- In memory of Cynthia Pickens Simmons  
  Donated by Richard & Margie Simmons, Pam, Bettye, Laura, Trinity, Trey, & Casey
- In memory of Charlotte Stanfill Wright  
  Donated by South Side High Class of 1962

[https://bemishistory.org/memorialshonoraria/](https://bemishistory.org/memorialshonoraria/)

**Bemis Historical Markers**

New historical markers were erected in 2021-2022 with sponsors.

- **COW PASTURE #1** – Second Street near the creek  
  In memory of Ennis Theus Sr. & Napoleon Theus –  
  By Ennis Theus Jr. & Beverly Theus Chism
- **FIREHOUSE** – A Street at TN Street – In memory of Billy Pruitt – By James “Pete” Pruitt
- **JUDSON MOSS BEMIS MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN** –  
  110 S Missouri Street – In memory of Robert & Marie McNatt – By Ronnie & Patsy McNatt
- **SITE OF TENNIS COURT, 1922-1947** –  
  112 S Missouri Street – In memory of WWII Vets: Raymond, Charlie, Robert, & Marvin McNatt –  
  By Ronnie & Patsy McNatt

The following historical sites need sponsors.

- **BEMIS CLINIC** – S Missouri Street
- **CLASS OF 1939 & 1940 SCHOOLHOUSE** – TN & B Streets (northwest corner)
- **HOME EC HOUSE** – TN Street
- **SHOE SHOP** – By West Drug Store (building in back, sign on street)
- **SHOP/CAFETERIA**
- **SKEET RANGE** – Cemetery Road

Thank you for supporting the historic preservation of Bemis Mill Village.

**1950 US Census**

The 1950 census records were released by the United States National Archives on April 1, 2022. This website provides full access to the 1950 census images, including population schedules, enumeration district maps, and enumeration district descriptions.

If you want to know what someone did in the Bemis Cotton Mill in 1950, search for them in the census to see their occupation and industry (cotton mill).  
[https://1950census.archives.gov/](https://1950census.archives.gov/)

**Thank You to Dennis Hays**

Thank you to Dennis Hays for turning off the museum’s water in the winter and turning it on in the spring. Dennis has provided this dedicated service for twenty-one years.
Bemis Historical Society’s Board of Directors
If you have questions or comments, please contact the Board of Directors.
Chairman Joel Jackson
731-424-0739 joeljackson2@eplus.net
Vice Chair Kathy Haney Williams
731-225-6938 KatherineWilliams@charter.net
Secretary Robert Gaugh
731-499-2229 rgaugh@gmail.com
Treasurer Anita Roark
731-427-2609 arr285@me.com

Bemis Historical Society Received Three Grants in 2021
During 2021, three grants were awarded to the Bemis Historical Society and helped us meet our expenses, as well as purchase much needed audio/visual equipment. The Board of Directors would like to thank Joel Jackson, Bemis Historical Society Chairman, for doing most of the work that was instrumental in procuring two of the grants below, in addition to many grants in the past.

2021 Grants

Tennessee State Library & Archives ARPA Grant for $4,860
This grant allowed us to purchase the following audio/visual equipment:
- Dell Da Lite 120” Projector Screen, remote controlled
- Dell Epson Projector
- Pro Sound Gear 12 Channel Mixer
- 2 Rockville Audio Powered Speakers with Stands
- Samson 4-channel Wireless Mic System
- 250 ft. HDMI Cable for installation.

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia, Inc./Avalon Charitable Fund for $500
This grant was in honor of the William Benton Fisher, Sr. & Acenah Mills Fisher family.

Jackson-Madison County Community Economic Development Commission (CEDC) Grant for $500
This grant was used to help us fund our annual Bemis Heritage Days event.

Revisiting the Rosenwald Days
Walter Brewer Bemis Community Center
324 Second Street, Jackson, TN 38301
Friday & Saturday, May 6 & 7, 2022

As we look back on the early history of Jackson-Madison County, the West Bemis Elementary School (now Walter Brewer Bemis Community Center) is clearly a notable place to be recognized. The facility was built as a Rosenwald School in 1916 and is on the National Register of Historic Places. According to research by the Middle TN State University Center for Historic Preservation, it is the oldest Rosenwald school building in the State of Tennessee still standing in its original structure. As a part of the Jackson-Madison County Bicentennial Celebration, the WBBCC will sponsor an event themed “Revisiting the Rosenwald Days” on May 6th (6 pm – 8 pm) and May 7th (10 am – 3 pm). The weekend will be filled with food, fun, and games that bring back memories of the Rosenwald School days. A special presentation will be directed by Dr. Jerry Woods that is sure to be both educational and entertaining.

Through much hard work of volunteers and the support of many friends, local businesses, the City of Jackson, and Madison County, this building has been beautifully restored. The board of directors and advisors are excited to share in the Jackson-Madison County Bicentennial Celebration! The WBBCC is a 501c3 non-profit organization. The board of directors is seeking contributions to help with expenses for this project and any amount would be greatly appreciated. Please plan to attend these special events.

Thanking you in advance!
Ida “Lucy” Smith, Director
731-343-4965
wbbemis324@gmail.com

Annual Membership Dues
Annual membership dues are $25 for individual or family memberships. Mail payment to:
Bemis Historical Society
PO Box 9266
Jackson, TN 38314-9266
Bemis Auditorium/Theatre/Museum 1922-2022

The Bemis Auditorium/Theatre was built in 1922 for $100,000 with a seating capacity of 850 to provide a place for school activities and other community meetings and entertainment featuring motion pictures that were shown at hours to accommodate all three of the mill’s shifts. Helen Keller, Carl Perkins, and Johnny Cash performed on the stage. The Bemis Auditorium/Theatre closed in August 1958 and was later used as a warehouse.

Bemis Historical Society was established in 1998. The Society purchased the building in March 1999, and the building was restored and named Bemis Mill Village Museum. Society officers, members, and interested friends maintain the building and its interesting artifacts with membership dues, donations, and grants that are important for our historical preservation of the museum.

This photo was taken in 1932. The photo on page one was taken by Bill Hollaman in 2018.

Museum’s Company Store

There are a variety of items for sale in the Company Store. Mail a check to the PO box, attend a meeting, or contact a member of the Board of Directors to visit the museum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost of Items</th>
<th>Cost of Shipping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseball Caps – Historic Bemis¹</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball Caps – Chat ‘N Chew²</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-Year Anniversary Fan³</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>$2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Ornaments⁴</td>
<td>$17</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat-in-the Bag License Plate</td>
<td>$7</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum Note Cards/Envelopes (10)</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloring Book w/Bemis History</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50th Anniversary DVD w/123 photos</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of Bemis from 1932</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schematic of Bemis Cotton Mill</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Baseball cap – unstructured, cotton twill, 6 panels, choice of three colors – red, khaki, or gray
²Baseball cap – structured, cotton twill, blue with mesh back in charcoal, 6 panels (limited supply)
³Baseball cap – unstructured, cotton twill, black, 6 panels with an embroidery of the Chat ‘N Chew sign
⁴Keep safe fans (1–2) can be shipped for $8 postage/handling.
⁵Historical Ornaments

Bemis Historical Society’s Monthly Meetings

Bemis Historical Society meetings are held the third Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. at Bemis Mill Village Museum. Attend our meetings to learn about Bemis and the surrounding area and to preserve our history. If you would like to present a program, please contact Vice Chairman Kathy Williams.

Recent meetings:
August 17, 2021 – Johnetta Wilbourn Black – Wilbourn Family of Bemis
https://youtu.be/tsu6P0gn0tU
Bemis Museum Tunnel Tour – Video by Bill Hollaman
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liJm-JTgFOo&t=108s
September 21 – Evelyn Keele – The Making of Historic Madison, the Story of Jackson and Madison County, Tennessee by Emma Inman Williams
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivSsPvBNajY&t=1603s
October 19 – Joel Jackson – George R. Wadleigh’s Memories of Bemis, Oct 1900 – 1931
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oL_rXC1oejc
November 16 – Vintage Bemis Photos & Blueprints
March 15 – Rodger Holtin – 1922 Popular Culture
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v601taveq_E

Upcoming meetings:
April 19 – David Mayo – FindAGrave & Tombstone Preservation
May 21 – Bemis Heritage Day – Saturday
June 21 – Steven Harrison – Photo Identification & Restoration
https://bemishistory.org/monthly-meetings/