



Echoes from the Past

*Pleasant Hill Historical Society of the Cumberlands, Inc.
PO Box 264 Pleasant Hill TN 38578*

Fall 2017

Greetings Friends and Neighbors of Pioneer Hall Museum,

My name is Jim Blalock. With me is my wife of 50 years, Kay. I am a life long resident of the Peasant Hill area. My wife and I still live on the family farm that I was raised on. My parents were Bluford and Ruby Blalock. If I had known I was going to be president of this wonderful organization when I was younger, I would have listened to mom more closely. She had an incredible memory. My mom helped write the book "Thy Loving Children Still." There are also several items placed around in the museum that were supplied by my mom. She was a 1926 graduate of the Pleasant Hill Academy. Later she became a nurse and worked closely with Dr. May.

As your newly elected president, I was somewhat concerned about taking this position. Now that I have been involved for a few months, it has quickly become my favorite hobby. It is such a joy to be a part of keeping our memories alive. Not only keeping them alive but also bringing them back to life. While working with our neighbor and good friend Mr. Norman Hall, the new owner of The Principal's House, we are cleaning up and plan to restore the area where Dodge Hall burned, the bluffs, small pond and hopefully a new bridge. Also we have uncovered the large rock where people have carved their initials or names on the rock dated back as far as 1920.

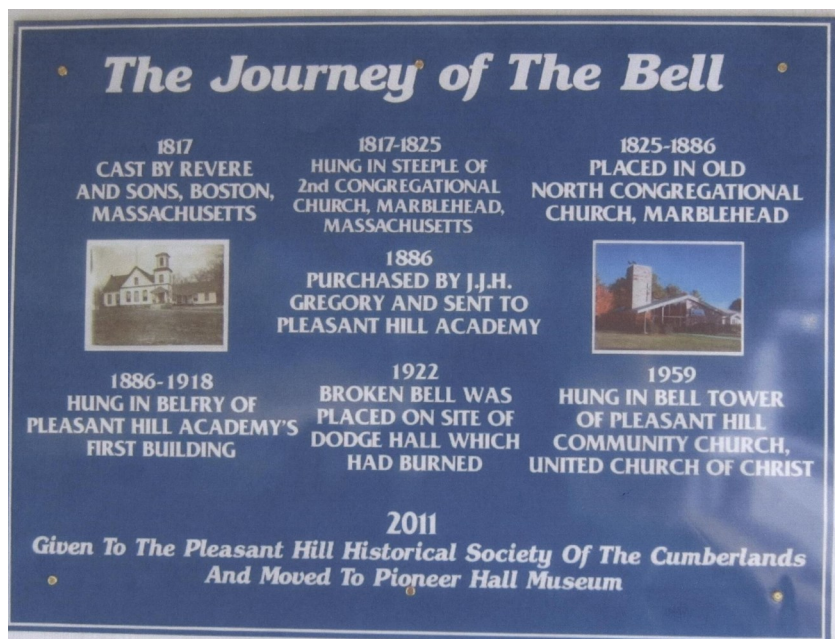
Looking ahead, future projects include making improvements on the fire escape, sewer system, windows, water drains, just to name a few.

As with every reconstruction, remodeling, or in our case restoring history, there come growing pains,. And of course these items come with a cost. We appreciate your generosity and look forward to hearing from you.

All visitors are welcome to stop by Pioneer Hall Museum and see our currently undergoing projects.



Jim and Kay Blalock
President



The Paul Revere Bell is 200 Years Old!

The entire town of Pleasant Hill, the Pleasant Hill Elementary School and, of course, the Pleasant Hill Historical Society of the Cumberlands and Pioneer Hall Museum celebrated the 200th birthday of our famous bell. It was cast by Paul Revere and his sons in 1817. It was one of over 300 bells made by them and only 10 of those came to our southern states. It was a gift to the Reverend Benjamin Dodge from his friend J.J.H. Gregory. It was placed in the belfry of the brand new Academy Building in 1887 after having hung in the belfry of the Marblehead, MA Congregational Church for 70 years.

The activities for the school children began during the week of May 15, 2017, leading up to the big celebration at the annual meeting of the historical society. Grades 3-8 participated by touring their campus and learning where each building of the Academy had been located, seeing a photo of what they each looked like, and learning what happened in each building. Then they crossed the street to see the actual bell and RING IT! The sound was a dull thud because it had cracked in 1922 when it rang to tell the people of Pleasant Hill that there was a fire. But to ring that old bell was a highlight in each child's life. They also visited Pioneer Hall Museum. On Friday, May 19, the children had an assembly during which the school choir sang an original song, "Paul Revere's Bell," with words written by Dorothy Faunce. Pat Robbennolt read "Ring on Dear Bell," and the students learned from a skit by Marilyn Brady, performed by Don Nelson as Paul Revere and Ron Riggs assisting as a "Redcoat." These activities were planned by a committee consisting of historical society board members and teachers from the school. Many hours and planning meetings went into the celebration and many friendships were formed.

Former principal, Kari Rockwell.

Teachers: Pam Taylor, Brian Conaster, Charlotte Griffin, Jamie Atkinson and Ann Schoup, Chairperson of the event and board member of the Historical Society.



The Paul Revere Bell is 200Years Old! (continued)

On Sunday, May 21, the birthday celebration was held during the historical society's annual meeting. A program similar to the Friday School event was capped off with a beautiful birthday cake that was enjoyed by everyone and with the singing of the old familiar "Happy Birthday."

Jeanne Chappell-Kingsbury



Don Nelson as Paul Revere and Ron Riggs as The Redcoat



Did You Know...?

1. That the Pleasant Hill Academy and the Grandview Academy were both begun on the same day and year with monies from the American Missionary Associations
2. That a plant nursery was founded in the 1880's by Abijah A. Hubbard and Martin Luther Abbott?
3. That the Principal's House was a cabin built by A.A. Hubbard for his family. The AMA rented the cabin to the Dodge family. Later Benjamin Dodge bought the cabin and then he proceeded to fix it up to suit his family. Almost every principal to follow changed it to their own liking.



1917-2017

A century. One hundred years have passed and we are still celebrating the life and work of Dr. May Hannah Cravath Wharton. Dr. May's life in Pleasant Hill began in 1917 when she arrived here to join her husband Edwin at Pleasant Hill Academy where he had begun his work as principal.

Dr. May's path was a winding one that took her from her birthplace in Minnesota to the Dakota Territory and back to Minnesota during her growing-up years. Then it was back to North Dakota to graduate from college and teach and on to Michigan to medical school. Her private practice in Atlanta led her to Edwin and together they worked at a settlement house in Ohio. From there they moved to a farm house in New Hampshire where they heard the call from the American Missionary Association to serve Pleasant Hill Academy.

Both Dr. May and Edwin had a missionary spirit and were willing to work. When Edwin died in 1920 Dr. May chose to stay on and serve the families in this area. Her legacy lives on today in Uplands Village, the Wharton Care Homes, and the Cumberland Medical Center. In this centennial year of her arrival here, we honor her dedication and her dreams, which had no dimensions.

To read about Dr. May as a college coed, go to our website at www.pioneerhallmuseum.net and click on Articles. Sharon Weible, Fall 2017



Edwin and Dr. May Cravath Wharton

Jeanne Kingsbury Thanked!

Jeanne Chappell-Kingsbury was recognized for her many years of service as president of the historical society. Jeanne was presented with a plaque at last May's annual meeting. As President Emerita she continues to work tirelessly for the society and the museum.

Loving A “Dig”

When I was a little girl, I wanted to be an archaeologist. I liked digging things out of the ground. One time, I uncovered a melted part of a green bottle that had adhered to a rock.. My mother let me use it as a doorstep. I had it until I married, leaving home and rock behind.

I am still wondering where I would be living now and what my life would have been had I pursued my first dream career. Maybe part of that dream has come true. I find myself and Pioneer Hall Museum in the midst of a “dig”.

Norman Hall, from Massachusetts, is our new neighbor. He has purchased the Principal’s House and the surrounding property. He and Jim Blalock, president of the Historical Society have established a “dig” in the area behind and beside Pioneer Hall.

For many years, it has been impossible to see “the bluff”. Now it can be seen and the view is awesome. We have photos taken by Dr. Edwin Wharton in 1920, showing students studying under a small tree near the bluff. The tree is still there. Alas, it is dying and must be removed but its presence validates the pictures taken so long ag. A variety of steps and pathways have emerged as our local archaeological dig proceeds.

The spring and the pond have been excavated. The area around them is cleaned up. The foundations of the swinging bridge have been uncovered. Hopefully, with the zeal of these two men, the bridge will be rebuilt. Photos of the bridge in the 1930’s and ‘40’s will serve as guidelines.

It was exciting to have two of the foundation stones from Dodge hall uncovered. That boys dormitory had been 40x80 feet at its base.

Another find in their archaeological dig has been a stone from the 1920’s with names and initials of student carved in it.

A rather fortunate accident took place behind Pioneer Hall: a piece of machinery ran into and broke the lid off our septic tank. No one had known we had one! Now a new one will have to be purchased and moved to a new location to meet the health codes of 2017.

This project has brought a sense of fulfillment to my childhood dream. I’ve had a great life. I have no idea where my interest in archaeology might have taken me. It is delightful to suddenly be in the midst of such a project right here in Pleasant Hill.



Bridges to the bluff. Dodge Hall in the background.



An old rock uncovered near the Dodge Hall site.



Excavated bluff and spring showing the Principal’s House in the back ground.

Jeanne Chappell-Kingsbury

Echoes

Closed for the season.
A lock on the door.
But, in the wee hours,
Shadows cross the floor.

Faint laughter and chatter
Of children, long grown.
Amused by the visitors to
This place they call their own.

A swish of the house-mother's dress,
Invisible to mortal eye.
She worries, remembering Dodge Hall.
These fire buckets are dry.

The back office appears now
To provide medical care.
The principal hasn't room whatsoever
To put his desk in there.

Small, muffled sobs echo
Through these darkened halls they roam.
Wishing just to finish this term
And finally be sent home.

When your being is merely essence,
The same dramas incessantly repeat.
We might, on occasion, hear a whisper
Of the patter of absent feet.

Perhaps they approve of the preservation
Yet, remain out of sight.
Realizing that their misty appearance
Could make us die of fright.

Or, are they trapped forever
In the Academy's yesteryear,
And sense nothing unusual
In still being here?

-Jym S. Mitchell
November 12, 2016



Contribution Form

Contribution Amount

Genealogist \$1000.00+

Name

Historian \$500.00+

Address

Pioneer \$100.00+

Settler \$75.00+

Email

Founder \$50.00+

Phone

Ox Cart Driver \$25.00+

Make Checks Payable to:

PHHS

PO Box 264

Pleasant Hill TN 38578

Contributions are tax deductible.

Membership year May 1-April 30.

The first \$25.00 of each donation will be considered as membership dues and placed into the Heritage Fund.

The remaining amount will be placed into the Operation and Maintenance Fund.

Dr. May's Thoughts on Yonside and Retirement

“So the time has now come at 73 years for me to retire from active duty as a doctor at Uplands. I shall still be a member of the Board of Directors and for a time chairman of the Executive committee of that Board.

To adjust oneself after so many strenuous years to a life of comparative leisure is not easy. Fortunately I have been preparing for this far in advance. As early as 1936 I built a little house back of the Sanatorium and across the creek, on a twenty five acre lot I still owned. This home I called “Yonside.” It was built throughout by local men, who with their native artistic ability carried out my plans in a beautiful way. The living room with its great girders of poplar from our own land and its rough stone fireplace, together with the handmade settle, table, bookcases, couch and stairs all of cedar is a source of comfort and fragrance. The wide pine boards in the walls and floor add beauty, as do the hand-wrought iron hinges and cedar latches. Two bed rooms with an extra one for guests, and a tiny kitchen and dining room, make this a peaceful place to retire to, set as it is on a hill-side clothed with pines, dogwoods, maples and poplars, and overlooking distant hills and fields....

A little cabana at Sunset Beach, near St. Petersburg, Florida, where Miss Adshead and I spend most of our winters and where other Uplands workers and friends may be free to visit us, adds to the possibility of enjoyment through the sunset years. Here too human problems need our sympathy, here especially where elderly people are trying to make the most of declining years, there is a challenge. New friends are found and new inspirations. So life looks good as it stretches ahead for long years or short, as the case may be.”
Page 305 of her typed manuscript.

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P.O. Box 264
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Volunteers Needed

Do any of you have a few hours of free time to share at the museum? We need docents, artisans, handymen or women, exhibit builders, computer people, etc.

Please volunteer by calling us.

Pioneer Hall Museum

Open

May-October

Sundays 2-5 pm

Wednesdays 10-4 pm

Or other times with reservations.

Call (931) 277-5313,

(931) 277-3111 or (931) 277-5226

Echoes from the Past is a
semi-annual newsletter

produced and published by the

Pleasant Hill Historical Society

of the Cumberland to promote

awareness of our heritage and to
support the museum

of the society.

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