



Echoes from the Past

Pleasant Hill Historical Society of the Cumberland, Inc.

PO Box 264 Pleasant Hill TN 38578

Fall 2021

Greetings from the President,

Another year has gone by. Covid has slowed us down this year but has not stopped us. I recently saw a sign that read “Retire to Live.” Pioneer Hall is certainly still alive and running strong as we continue to receive new items and displays for our museum and as we place them in the museum and on our webpage (pioneerhallmuseum.net). The museum continues to open its doors on Sunday afternoons through October and other special times by appointment.

Our maintenance projects for this year have been sanding and pressure washing the metal fire escapes located in the back of our museum. We are currently in the process of repainting them with a rust resistant paint. Water is entering under the foundation of the museum; therefore, we are planning on installing French drains on each side of the building to prevent water from entering the basement.

Thank you for your donations and continued support to help keep our building in good repair and help keep the history at Pioneer Hall Museum alive.

Sincerely,

Jim Blalock,

President



Uplands Celebrates 100 Years



Beecher Seegraves

Spirits were high despite an earlier downpour of rain the afternoon of August 7 as Uplands celebrated the 100th anniversary of Dr. May Wharton's first hos-
pital. In 1921 Dr. May and Elizabeth Fletcher opened their two-bed hospital on the second floor of an old house on Main Street. That day marks the beginning of a journey that led to a larger hospital, a tuberculosis sanatorium and eventually the Cumberland Medical Center in Crossville. All of this was accomplished while Dr. May and her colleagues held clinics all over this area and treated families wherever they lived and however hard it was to reach them. Dignitaries gathered for the festive occasion which included the opportunity to add our names and photos to a time capsule that will be opened 25 years from now. The Crab Orchard Chapter of the DAR presented a beautiful plaque and medal in honor of Dr. May's contribution to American history.

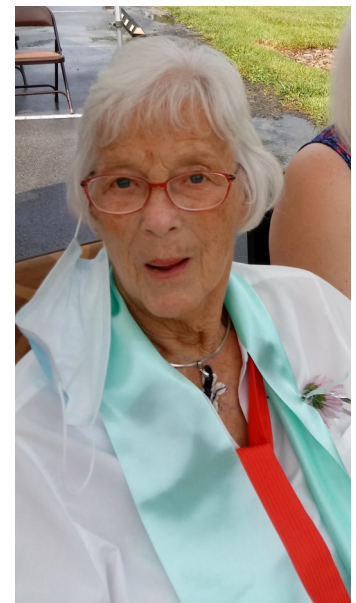
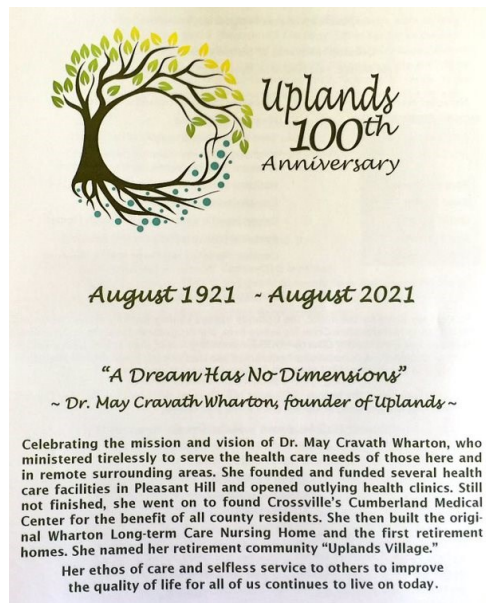


Iris Cole Miracle

Dr. Wharton delivered five of the special guests. **Iris Cole Miracle, Ann Cunningham Meisamer, Larry Woody, Beecher Seegraves and Sandra Smith Mathes** were the "Dr. May Babies" who added a living link to Dr. May's work here. Jym Mitchell read his poem, "A Mountain View," honoring Dr. May. Great refreshments, music, souvenirs and an historical display added to the festivities. It was a celebration of Dr. May's commitment to the care of others and a challenge for us as we enter the second 100 years.



Larry Woody & Sandra Smith Mathes



Ann Cunningham Meisamer



Gifts Galore

Was it the covid pandemic, an unusually strong desire to do spring cleaning, or just happenstance? Whatever the reason, Pioneer Hall Museum has received gifts galore recently. Each gift created a sense of excitement as the museum's collection increased with interesting memories and tangible items from the past. **Jeannie Smith**, 100 years old, stopped by and shared precious memories. She weighed only 70 pounds when she started at the Academy and the staff worried about what kind of work she could do. She has vivid memories of working in the library with Emma Dodge and in the laundry and of playing basketball with the **McCormick twins, Thelma and Delma '40**. And she loves to say that her husband came from the same hometown as Eva Peterson, Academy history teacher!

Walter "Corky" Pettit PHHS '48 was class president his senior year at Pleasant Hill High School. He has fond memories of his years at the Academy where he played basketball. "We sure wanted to beat Sparta and Crossville." Walter said his favorite subject was "girls!" His jobs varied: he helped Flossie Clark at the Grab, checked the water level in the water tower, and fired the furnace under the laundry. He helped Earl Clark build Heritage Hall. "Earl Clark kept everything running; he was a smart man." One of his favorite memories is standing in line for "Ma" Lehman's milk and crackers. "Misbehaving meant leaving and not coming back." He also recalls going to the Caney Fork River for picnics. He lived for two years in Roberts Hall and on the porch of the Slattern family's house for two years. "During his Academy years he felt nurtured, cared for. It changed his life," said his daughter Kathy Thomason. Walter has remained friends with **Ruth Beaty Holloway '47**.

Emma Dodge gave a black hat to **Nannie Peek Thompson '11** and **Virgie Peek Bice '16** (2 of 17 Peek children enrolled at the Academy at one time) that now is in the museum thanks to Nannie and Virgie's niece Linda Wynne. We received photos of **Ethel Anderson '29** who lived on Cottage Street (now Mayland Road).

Ron McGrath, grandson of **Sylvanus Suttle '1895** and son of **Marie Suttle '34**, donated a beautiful ladderback chair, a child's rocker, a print of Pioneer Hall, a slate and photos of Sylvanus. He also donated a citation written in Latin. Can anyone translate?



Cheerleader's Uniform

That very same day Frances Brown Swallow, niece of **Tom Brown '34**, brought four Tom Brown carvings: woman with pig, Davy Crockett, basket weaver, and her favorite, a couple folk dancing.

Ann Cunningham Meisamer '46 gave the museum an array of photos showing the Uplands hospital grounds and a travel clock given to her husband Frank by Dr. May's brother, William Birney Cravath. It's interesting to think that William used that clock on his round-the-world trip with Dr. May in 1930.

There's a cute green cheerleading outfit and pompoms hanging with Pleasant Hill High School memorabilia. This, along with photos, is the gift of **Iris Cole Miracle PHHS '55**.

Whatever the reason for this largesse, I hope it inspires others to think of contributing their memories and memorabilia. Many thanks to those who have. Let me know if I forgot someone.

Sharon Weible



Folk Dancers Carving



Travel Clock



Rocking Chair

Contribution Form

Yes, I want to support the work of the Pleasant Hill Historical Society.

\$1000 \$500 \$100 \$75 \$50

\$25 Annual Membership

Contributions are tax deductible.

Membership year May 1-April 30.

Make Checks Payable to:

PHHS

PO Box 264

Pleasant Hill TN 38578

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Another Anniversary – Dr. May Celebrates 25 Years

As we approached Uplands' twenty fifth birthday [in 1946] it seemed fitting to celebrate the occasion in some appropriate manner. A pageant was planned, to be given in the Academy's large auditorium. It was a tremendous undertaking. Twelve scenes were the fewest possible if we were to depict the various crises through which this medical venture had passed.

We could not omit the presenting of the petition by our neighbors, asking me to stay, for this was the turning point in my life. Certainly some of the first calls to the cabins in the hills, like the one to Uncle Pink's when he broke his hip, must be shown. Then, too, the actual organization of the first six directors [L.R. Neal, S.C. Bishop, John Frey, Elizabeth Fletcher, J.M. Roberts, Dr. May Wharton] who were courageous enough to get behind our "crazy" venture, was our first step toward becoming an institution.

To enliven the interest and to make vivid the early hardships, a horse back scene on a cold rainy dark night was staged, to the amazement of all. Uplands, the new building, just ready for use, must be dedicated. Crowds were present. Mr. White, our minister at that time, gave the dedicatory address....

Of course we couldn't leave out a "Home-made Chautauqua," for people had never understood just what we did. As in our actual week-end Chautauquas, we represented an afternoon program when children were trained in first aid, some prepared to give little health plays and still others, older young people, taught to play folk games.... I began the program with a health talk, showing charts which made plain how to eat for health, how to can for health, and so on. Mr. Ervin, the agricultural teacher at the Academy, talked about chickens and how to care for them. Mr. White gave a thrilling account of the stars, and Mr. Obenhaus, a former principal at the Academy, gave a spicy talk on the value of high school education, especially as offered at Pleasant Hill Academy.

Then came a major operation under primitive conditions, the patient, a life-sized doll.....An out clinic was perhaps the most realistic demonstration. Simple clinic room, the people from the hills waiting impatiently for the doctor, each telling of aches and pains, groans and limps conspicuous. Dr. Stewart and Miss Goodale arrived, the latter with magazines to distribute, and finally there were shrieks and wails as the children were called in to be immunized – they were afraid of such treatments.

Van Dyck and its work was beautifully represented – three hospital beds showed patients eager to participate in the rehabilitation instruction given, such as how to do shell work, embroidery and crocheting as well as actual classroom work, so that some could continue their high school course.... The demonstration of the X-ray added reality to the scene.

Then came the Uplands babies, big and little, and a scene from present day Uplands. At the last, the Board of Directors was called to the platform to be introduced. At the same time a purse of \$8000 was presented to the founders to help complete their quota in financing the new hospital.

I consider this the high point in my life; to be so eagerly helped by my own loved people of the mountain, and to be sustained through it all by the presence of those for whom my life had been given, was a deeply emotional experience. It still sings in my heart and will ever as the crown of these years of joyful service.

Excerpts by Sharon Weible from Dr. May's Typed Manuscript, Page 301+

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of the Cumberlands, Inc.**

P.O. Box 264
Pleasant Hill, TN 38578

IS THIS YOU?

Concerned about preserving local history?

Enjoy being with others who do?

Have a few hours a month for interesting work?

Call 277-5313 or 277-5226 and volunteer today!

Pioneer Hall Museum

The museum will be open
On Sunday
From 2-5 p.m.
Through October

Special tours are available.

Call (931) 277-5313 or
(931) 277-5226

Take a virtual tour on our website.
www.pioneerhallmuseum.net

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produced and published by the
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of the Cumberland to promote
awareness of our heritage and to
support the museum

of the society.

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