



Echoes from the Past

Pleasant Hill Historical Society of the Cumberland, Inc.

PO Box 264 Pleasant Hill TN 38578

Spring 2019

Greetings from your president:

This has been a year of great progress. A lot of work has been done on Pioneer Hall this year. Our biggest project was installing 74 new windows. That job is now complete. A new smoke alarm and burglar alarm has been installed. Yes, there is a lot of work to keep up a building the size and age of Pioneer Hall. It was necessary to remove two pine trees beside the building due to deterioration. At the present time, due to wind damage on our roof, a new roof must be installed. Our insurance company is working with us, soon we'll have a new roof. A large amount of work has been done in the basement to solve the water problem (not completed yet). Much work has been done on the inside to preserve and improve the looks of the building (a little paint on the old barn never hurt).



A big thank you to all who purchased a window. A plaque is being made with your names on it. To each of you who contributed any amount, your support is greatly appreciated. Also we have the old windows for anyone who would like to have a keepsake. Please contact me at jim3blalock@frontiernet.net and I will have one ready for you.

Much work has been done surrounding Pioneer Hall. I hope to have a park soon where people can enjoy a picnic or simply sit and remember the way it was.

As I look back over the past year, my job was made easier because of an outstanding Board of Directors, Ann Schoup, Beecher Frasier II, Al Dwenger, George Hartz, Ed Schneider, Paula Blalock and our officers, vice president Don Dowdy, treasurer Larry Burch, secretary Pat Robbennolt, curator Sharon Weible, and docent chair Chris Gulick. Please give these fine individuals a big thank you when you meet them.

As we enter a new year striving to keep Pleasant Hill and surrounding communities alive, we must use this history from our past to move forward to the future by telling our children and grandchildren. Let us welcome newcomers to our communities, teaching them of the past so they too can love this area as much as we do.

Thank you for all your help and continued support.

Jim Blalock

President



**Annual Meeting
May 19, 2019, 2 p.m.
Community House**

This year's guest speaker for the Pleasant Hill Historical Society's annual meeting is Linda Mackie, President of the BonAir Mountain Historical Society. Linda will talk about the history of coal mining in this area. Dr. May and Reverend Edwin White had close ties with the coal mining communities. The 25th annual Coal Mining History Fair is May 5 from 1-5 p.m. at the Bondecroft Elementary School. Linda had a major role in the founding of this event. Election of officers for the PHHS will be held and memberships in the PHHS can be renewed. Please come.

*Please note the Annual Meeting will be on the 3rd Sunday this year instead of the 2nd Sunday.



WINDOWS PROJECT DONORS

Names of those who "bought" windows will appear on a plaque in the entryway of Pioneer Hall Museum. The plaque will be ready for viewing by July 27. Names can be added as gifts are received to pay the remaining \$4300 loan. Many thanks to all who contributed and to those who will help us round out our fundraising effort. Thanks also go to Ann Meisamer, Paula Blalock and Jim Blalock for their work on this project. Be sure to admire the new windows when you drive past Pioneer Hall. Better yet, visit the museum and appreciate all aspects of this wonderful old building.



The THANKS Never End...

---Pioneer Hall Museum has handsome new rack cards which will appear in public places around the area to attract visitors to the museum, thanks to Ruth Dyal, Bill Luton, the Upper Cumberland Tourism Association and the Crossville Chamber of Commerce. This means of publicizing our museum is a real gift.

---Kathryn Uziel, Mary Uziel, Elaine Martin, Jym Mitchell, Jennifer Selby, everyone who helped on our cleaning day, and our new website coordinator Stephanie Hernandez, all who worked behind the scenes.

---Humanities Tennessee enabled Paula Blalock and Jerry Blalock to attend the Tennessee Association of Museums annual meeting last March in Clarksville. These scholarships energize us all by reminding us that we are part of a large network of museums throughout the state.

Dr. Margaret Stewart Kesler

Dr. Margaret Kesler Stewart



Dr. Margaret Stewart, whose medical practice in Pleasant Hill spanned nearly 40 years, is being honored with a new sign in Pioneer Hall Museum. Dr. Stewart specialized in pneumothorax therapy for tuberculosis, but she also delivered babies, developed x-rays, and did her own research and lab work. Stacks of medical books in her home testified to her belief that education was the best defense against the spread of infection. Margaret drove children to Vanderbilt Hospital for treatment and her love of music led her to often take children to the symphony in Chattanooga. She and Dr. May made a great team. Kathryn Uziel, Dr. Stewart’s granddaughter, said “A close neighbor told me Doc Stewart saved his life when he

was young. He was slowly losing use of all his limbs. This would have been in the late sixties or early seventies which is hard to imagine, because Margaret would have been around seventy. But he said Doc Stewart kept visiting and researching until she diagnosed him correctly.” Mary Uziel, Dr. Stewart’s daughter, remembers that she “saved lives when she recognized babies with RH disease and drove them to Vanderbilt to get blood transfusions. Children in diabetic comas were also saved by a trip to Vanderbilt for expert treatment.” Mary and Kathryn remember that Dr. Stewart loved the people here and was loved by them.



Margaret Kesler in her office at the Nursing Home



Voices from the Past

The work program is democratic, too, in that some of the faculty take part. The English teacher supervises the campus and care of the grounds; the teacher of Bible has charge of the janitors; the math teacher the furnaces; and the principal helps with the repairs! I never thought when I was an engineering student at the University of Illinois that I would some day use my training to repair leaky roofs at Pleasant Hill. Walter Mueller, Principal of Pleasant Hill Academy



Many a ride have I taken through the forest when the blue sky overhead, the bracing air and the beautiful scenery made me feel, as my mother-in-law used to say, “Like holding onto these experiences with both hands.” I have said over and over again to myself at these times, “My life has surely fallen into pleasant places.” Dr. May Wharton

***Pleasant Hill Historical Society
of the Cumberlands, Inc.***

P.O. Box 264
Pleasant Hill, TN 38578

URGENT!

Our ever-pressing need for docents has reached a critical point.

Please volunteer by calling Chris Gulick at 277-3742.

**A docent training session and a pairing with an experienced docent will
prepare you to greet our visitors.**

Pioneer Hall Museum

Open

May-October

Sundays 2-5 pm

Wednesdays 10-4 pm

Or other times with reservations.

Call (931) 277-5313 or

(931) 277-5226

www.pioneerhallmuseum.net

Echoes from the Past is a

semi-annual newsletter

produced and published by the

Pleasant Hill Historical Society

of the Cumberlands to promote

awareness of our heritage

and to support

Pioneer Hall Museum.

Officers

Jim Blalock-President

Don Dowdey-Vice President

Pat Robbennolt-Secretary

Larry Burch-Treasurer

Board of Directors

Ed Schneider

Ann Schoup

Beecher Frasier, Jr

Al Dwenger

Paula Blalock

George Hartz

Curator

Sharon Weible

Stories Dr. May Heard from George Brown

When I (Dr. May) began thinking of writing this book, I went to Uncle Pink's brother, whom we call Uncle George, and who now, twenty years later, is himself ninety-three years old. He gave me the following stories, which I repeat in his own words.

"We come here away back yonder when there was just one child in the family. My father went from North Carolina to Indiana where he had a 150-acre farm. He took typhoid. His daughter died but he got well and came back to Tennessee to work and just stayed. My father was English, but his great grandfather was a Dutchman. They moved because they had heard of the game in Indiana. A lot of people settled here because they had heard of gold in California. They would start out West and maybe their money would give out or their wagons break down. They would take up headquarters wherever they happened to be.

Our nearest neighbor was eight miles away. He used to own most of the land around here. He bought it from the companies. There were eight boys in our family. They all married and settled what is now Browntown. My father paid one dollar and one twenty-five an acre for land. Some sold as low as twenty-five cents an acre. My father swapped razors with a man and a hundred acres was thrown in to boot. We used to raise flax and spin it. I have helped my mother with it until eleven o'clock at night. I reckon folks have just got above raisin' it now. We would pull the flax and cradle it, threshing the seed out and breaking it with a hackle. I have filled quills all day for mother. We used quills for shuttles. That machine got throwed out during the war.

The people who came here just farmed. Timber was good, and hogs stayed fat, and there were bears and wolves. That was a long time ago. I am ninety-three years old. 'Twas over a hundred years ago that the wolves and bears were here. The people who lived here just ate the hogs and cattle they raised, and they killed deer. I have killed deer myself. I have seen fifteen in a bunch playing about like lambs. That was seventy years ago when I was just a boy. Wild turkeys were all around, as many as sixty in a flock. I made a turkey pen and sold three turkeys to the Academy. I made a turkey trap. I dug a ditch and made a pen with a fall door. I baited the pen with corn. Occasionally I would go down to the pen, and if any turkeys were eating the corn, I would spring down the door. Usually I shot the turkeys.

Sparta was where we went to buy things; then stores were put in here. I have farmed most of my life. We used to sell a cow for from ten to fifteen dollars. We raised corn and Irish potatoes mostly. There were fifteen children in my father's family. There were twin girls. Eight boys grewed up. If we had to have a doctor, we got one in Sparta. We had to pay twenty-five dollars to get one. He would come on horseback or in the buggy. But we didn't need doctors when we first came here. There was hardly any sickness. If we had a bad cold, we would get in the river and break it.

I was here during the Civil War. I can remember when they held the election down at the bridge and the state voted out of the Union. Father and three of the boys went to the election. There were lots of bushwhackers through here during that time. The war lasted five years, you see. I had a brother and a brother-in-law in the war on the Southern side. It was a poor man's fight and a big man's war. The South run Davis, and the North Lincoln, and the North got it, and the South rebelled. They said, 'They are going to free our slaves, and we are going to fight.'

The war brought the land to desolation. It robbed and starved the people to death. The bushwhackers would take out even the quilts. I would have joined the Union army if I had been big enough. I saw them bring slaves through here. I saw them tie one across a log and whip him because he had run away. They stripped him naked and then had another slave beat him. The next day they tied him to the back of the buggy and dragged him along.

Before the war, there weren't any feuds. I went to the camp ground to school. The Methodists and Baptists united and had meetings at the camp ground. There was no fighting or drinking. There were no bootleggers at all. You could buy whiskey for twenty-five cents a gallon from the still. There was no law against it. Nobody got drunk. Father wouldn't let us touch it at all.

Father had a shop and made horseshoes and plows. The plows we made were better than the ones they have now that just scratch the surface. The bull tongue goes down six or eight inches. We raised seven horses, five cows, and sixteen head of cattle and 160 sheep, and in March, after feeding them all winter, shucked out five hundred bushels of corn. The hogs ate the acorns. It's so thick settled now that people can't do no good raising sheep. A nursery was started here. We used to raise Northern Spies and just feed them to the hogs. They hit every year.

I went to school about three months and then the war came up. I learned my letters at school, but I learned to read from the Bible. Charley Brown has that old Bible now. The families paid the teacher a dollar a month for each scholar. After the war it was hard times here, and they couldn't afford to pay teachers. I never had a pair of shoes until after the war. I went barefoot even during the winter. The first pair of shoes I had I made myself. We tanned the hides and made them. I wore flax breeches. We dyed the cloth with maple bark or walnut or hickory. The maple made blue, the walnut brown, and the hickory yellow.

All the first houses were log houses. We made them double because it was the style. We had to keep fire all night during the winter. It used to be cold here. Everything is different now. The Bible says, 'Behold, all things became new.' They have. A log house is awfully warm. Times were better then. We took care of ourselves. If we got wet, there was a good fire, and we soon dried. We kept the houses warm. Stoves bother me. I was used to a fireplace. Mother cooked with a skillet and lid over the fireplace. She had a little fireplace to cook over. We used to eat lots of game. Venison was the best meat. We kept it hanging in the smokehouse. Once we had killed sixteen hogs and salted them and put them in the smokehouse. It turned warm, and every ham spoiled. We had to throw them away. We carried them off in the wagon. I stayed six months with father. He had bought a stove for mother. She cooked on it a day or two, but she didn't like it, and tore it down. I bought it for my wife and she cooked on it. She was used to a stove at home. I had been married fifty-two years when my wife died. Uncle Pink died at ninety-three and my brother, Uncle Lewis, is ninety-one.

Crossville was a mighty little place in the war. It had a log cabin for a courthouse and a log house for a jail. I was on the jury when the courthouse was in the log house. It was a right smart cabin. We used Confederate money through here. It was all we could git. We probably had \$500 on it, and lost it when the war was over. That is what broke Father and all the rest of the folks."

Dr. May's Typed Manuscript

Pages 156-159

