

Inkwell

NEWSLETTER OF

Paris-Henry County Heritage Center

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Major exhibit on Civil War will include area driving tour

The Heritage Center is beginning work on a major exhibit about the Civil War and Reconstruction history of Henry County, with visions of eventually sending the exhibit on tour to other locations across West Tennessee.

A part of the project will be preparation of a brochure outlining a driving tour of Civil War and Reconstruction sites in the county.

Joining in the effort will be the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, Fort Donelson, Paris Landing State Park, the University of Tennessee at Martin, and Bethel College. We plan to expand our collection of Civil War artifacts as well as creating the traveling exhibit and driving tour.

Henry County is known as the Volunteer County of the Volunteer State because it had more volunteers, per capita, enlist in the military during the Civil War than any other county in Tennessee.

Several people from Henry County played major roles politically and militarily during the war, and many of those same individuals took positions during Reconstruction that shaped the economic and political landscape of both Tennessee and the nation.

In addition to this rich history, Henry County has significant resources that tell the story of the Civil War and Reconstruction in this area. All that is lacking is the interpretation of these resources

and making that story available and accessible to the public.

The main goal of this project is to educate the general public, particularly the children in area schools, about the history and historical resources of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Henry County.

We plan extensive research leading to preparation of a traveling exhibit and a driving tour of Civil War and Reconstruction historic sites in Henry County.

The research will take place during the first half of this year. We will be interested in speaking with anyone who knows of historic sites in Henry County, has stories they want to share, or has letters,

diaries, receipts, or other artifacts dating from 1860-1875.

Tentative plans call for the exhibit to open at the Heritage Center in the Fall. From there, the exhibit will travel to other locations across West Tennessee.

Our driving tour brochure will not only be available in Henry County, but will be our contribution to a growing number of groups seeking to expand Tennessee's heritage tourism through our Civil War heritage.

In addition to our primary goal of education, our secondary goal is to aid community development through an expansion of heritage tourism resources.



This quilt in the current "Stitches in Time" exhibit (see Page 3), was made from the boxing shorts and robes of heavyweight champion Joe Louis. Virginia Argo inherited it from the seamstress.

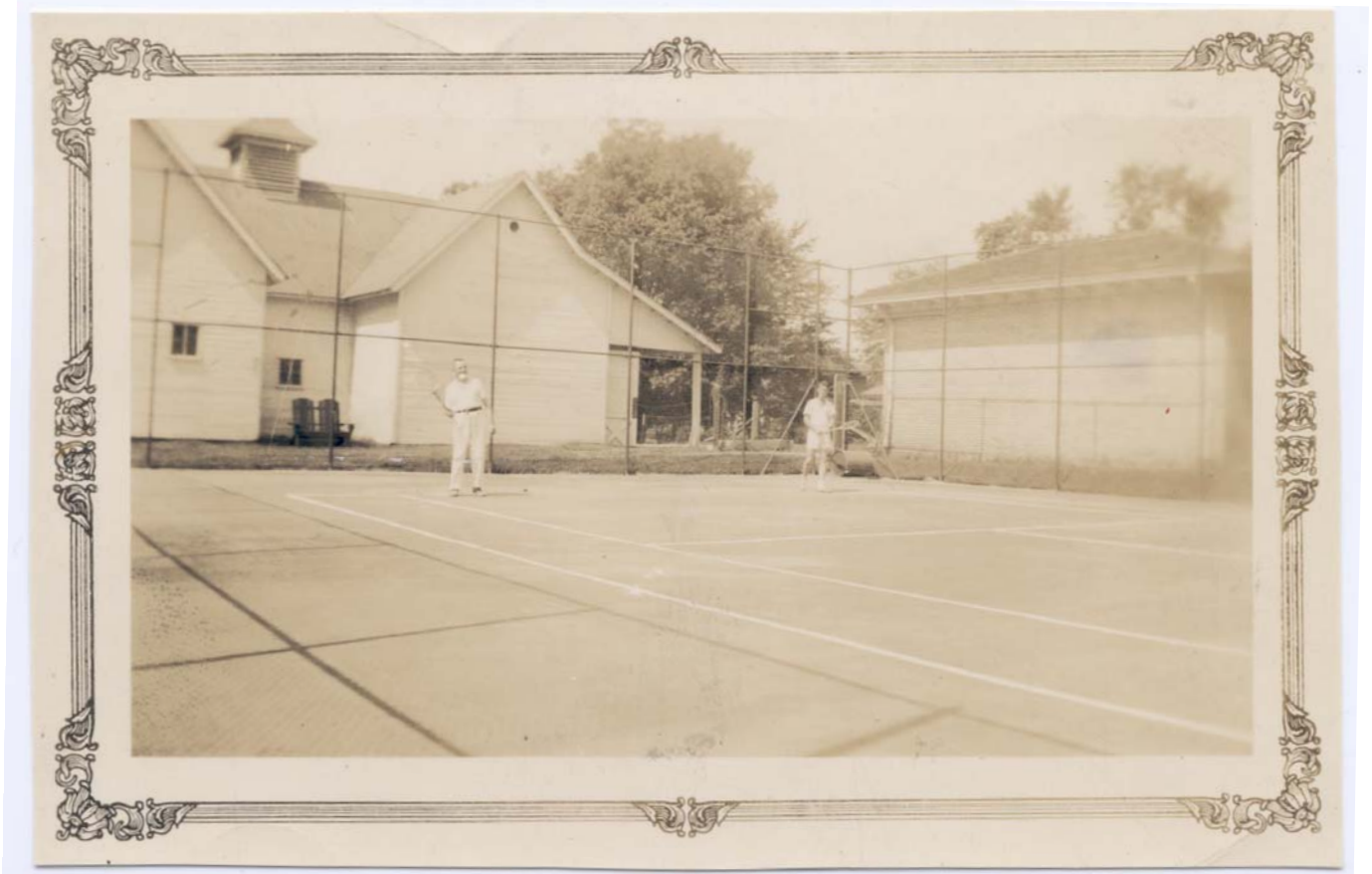


Photo from the collection of Barton and Regina Robison shows the Cavitt Place tennis courts, now the Heritage Center parking lot. The home's garage, now Dana/Plumley Entrepreneur Center, is at right. The barn structure in left background no longer exists.

Interns processing photos like this

This year we are fortunate to have interns from the Technology Center who are helping with some of our computer related projects. Primarily they have worked on scanning in photographs from our collection and those photographs that were temporarily loaned to us.

While we will not be keeping the originals, a few people were glad to make their photographs available to us so that we could make archival quality scans of them.

We hope to use these pictures in future exhibits and will make them available to researchers.

One of the photograph collections made temporarily available to us was the family photo album of Barton and Regina Robison. Included in this album were numerous pictures of Cavitt Place and O.C. Barton's family here on the grounds. We are grateful to the Robisons for allowing us access to this incredible look at the past.

Learning takes place outside the classroom, too

The Heritage Center's primary mission is to educate the public. As part of our educational programming, we have made a special effort to reach out to area schools. This partnership continues to grow and we are looking forward to great things in the future.

While we had the Smithsonian's Key Ingredients: American

By Food exhibit, we had students visit us from Paris Elementary, Inman Middle School, the Cottage Grove School, Henry County High School's Culinary Arts program, and even a group that came all the way from Dyersburg Intermediate. All told, approximately 375 school children visited us during that exhibition.

Since the opening of Stitches in Time: African American Quilting in Henry County, we have already had visits from Paris Elementary students and a business class from the Technology Center. We are excited about the enthusiastic response and hope to see more students from area schools both this spring and in the fall.

Quilts exhibit 'Stitches in Time'



Brenda Morris and Reginald Caldwell of the Black History Month Committee examine one of the quilts in the current exhibit.

This year's Black History Month Committee at the Heritage Center decided to develop a quilt exhibit. We contacted area churches and clubs, advertised through the media, and relied on personal contacts to help us unearth the African-American quilting tradition in Henry County.

We were overwhelmed by the response and have a fantastic selection of quilts currently on display in our new exhibit, "Stitches in Time: African-American Quilting in Henry County."

African-American quilts combine African symbols and textile design with American traditions. Unlike European-American quilts, they use strong colors, large shapes, asymmetry, multiple patterns, appliqué, improvisation, and large strips.

African-American quilting continues to be most prominent in the Southern United States. Overcoming difficult economic and social situations, African-American women have carried on this unique tradition.

These quilts from Henry Countians are not only beautiful artwork, but they also speak to a strong African-American heritage, and the more personal family history of quilts that were passed down to each generation. One of the most popular quilts was made from scraps of boxer Joe Louis' boxing outfits.

"Stitches in Time" opened on February 27 and will remain open to the public until April 30.

Grocery exhibit: Catch it before it goes away!

We are still hosting the Henry County Grocery Store exhibit in our Entrepreneur Center. This nostalgic display contains items from our collection in addition to many on loan from people in the community. The exhibit opened on October 2, 2004, and has attracted many visitors.

This exhibit was researched, designed, and fabricated by Shannon McFarlin. You will find items from grocery stores located all over Henry County. Everyone has enjoyed this exhibit and we are currently planning the next exhibit for our Entrepreneur Center. Before we take down the grocery exhibit, be sure to stop by and take a peek!



Henry County grocery store exhibit in the Entrepreneur Center. The butcher block is on loan from Pat and Rachel Terrell.

From the Director's Desk — **We're off to a great beginning**

By **HEATHER BAILEY**

Although I feel that I am constantly learning something new every day as Director of the Heritage Center, I consider myself comfortably settled into the life of a Parisian. When I saw the advertisement for this job, I was excited about the possibility of working in a community with such a rich history. What I was not expecting was how amazingly helpful everyone would be.

While our local history museum's mission is to serve the community, we are grateful for and reliant on the service and support of the community.

The Smithsonian exhibit was an incredible success, mostly due to a hardworking committee, volunteer docents, and the financial support of Odom's Foodtown and the Lakeway Kiwanis Club. The committee organized and coordinated the arrival of the exhibit, its installation, and the programming associated with the exhibit.

A dependable group of women volunteered to be special docents for the Smithsonian exhibit. They made it possible for large groups from local schools to visit the Heritage Center.

In all, we had 950 visitors to the Heritage Center while that exhibit was here, and 375 of those were school children.

In our daily operations, I find that I rely on volunteers a great



Heritage Center trustees David Webb and Rachel Terrell welcomed Heather Bailey (center) upon her selection as director.

deal. We are always looking for new volunteers to help answer phones, lead tours of the house and temporary exhibits, and to help with some of the office work. We have several exhibits and programs scheduled for this year, so there will be plenty of different things to do.

If being a tour guide or office helper is not for you, we are looking to the possibility of starting a new oral history program. We will need volunteers who are willing to

go out and interview people and to transcribe the interviews.

If you have not been to the Heritage Center lately, please stop by and see what is new here. We are keeping our website up to date, so if you aren't able to physically visit us, you can stay current on what is happening at your local history museum. I am delighted to be involved in this community and to be taking an active part in preserving the history and heritage of Henry County.

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