



NewsLetter

From The President

By: Celia Simon

Dear Fellow Old Courthouse (and Roane Heritage) Fans,

We are so excited about "McCourthouse Night" Mr. Smith, the owner of our Kingston and Harriman McDonalds plan to donate a percentage of his receipts for one night per quarter (that's 4 times a year!) to the Heritage Commission. Several of us dressed up in period dress and stayed at the two stores on Tuesday, January 12, from 5 pm to 9 pm. Janice Black, Robert Bailey, Shirley Smith, Tom McMurray, and Edith Miles were at the Harriman store, while Sally Merian, Darleen Trent, Dick Evans, and I were at the Kingston store. We handed RCHC brochures to everyone who came in to eat, and talked with them about our "mission." There were lots of people who were interested and some who previously had no idea what we are trying to do with the Old Courthouse. So . . . it was a huge success, and we hope that more of you members will jump in and join us for the next one on Tuesday, April 20.

Cheers,
Celia Simon

Building Report

By: Tom McMurray

We continue to work with Frank Sparkman, our architect, on the state grant for phase 2, the visitor center and transportation museum. The right of way certification and utility certification are complete. Contract bid documents and plans were submitted to the state DOT in November 2009 for review. When the state review is complete, we will make any required revisions and resubmit to the state if necessary. When we have final authority to proceed to construction; we expect to have the work completed within 180 days.

Richard F. "Dick" Merian

Richard F. "Dick" Merian With great sadness, we report the passing of Richard F. "Dick" Merian, on Oct. 21, 2009. Born in 1928 in Cleveland, Ohio, he grew up in Willoughby, Ohio, where he began his lifelong love of aviation. He received degrees in physics from Kenyon College and Boston University.

He joined the U.S. Air Force in 1949 and served in the Korean War as a fighter pilot. A high point of his retirement was building his own plane, and flying it with his wife on trips around the country.

He leaves his wife, Sally and four children.

A "McCourthouse" Night



Left - Heritage Commission President Celia Simon was happy to share her knowledge of Roane history and the purpose of the Roane County Heritage Commission with customers and donors. Right - Board Members Shirley Smith and Janice Black were assisted by Lindsey Whitson, the McDonald's representative.

I hope you all have had a wonderful holiday season and your New Year is getting off to a fantastic start! If you do not know already, McDonald's and the RCHC are partnering to raise money for new renovations of the historic courthouse we all love so much.

On January 12, 2010, McDonald's hosted our first quarterly event to promote awareness of the courthouse and the necessity of money for renovations and upkeep. McDonald's of Harriman and Kingston donated a percentage of sales between the hours of 5 pm-9 pm for all courthouse renovation efforts. Our next quarterly AMcCourthouse Night will be in April with a percentage of the proceeds of the sales from both locations being donated for our renovation and upkeep. We invite RCHC members to volunteer for

hourly increments on AMcCourthouse Nights. Volunteering will include visiting with customers and manning a RCHC table that provides a donation box, pamphlets and photos of the courthouse.

We hope you will support our partnership with McDonald's and volunteer your time while raising money and promoting awareness of the familiar treasure which is the historic Roane County courthouse. Our next AMcCourthouse Night has been set for Tuesday, April 20th from 5 pm-9 pm. This time we will have the added help of Ronald McDonald to but we will need members to pitch in and help. Please call the Heritage Commission at 376-9211 for further information or to sign up for an hour at either locations.

THANKS

The Roane County Heritage Commission's 6th Gala in Honor of the Historic Roane County Courthouse was a great success! The party, which was held in the historic building in downtown Kingston on Saturday, September 19, raised a substantial amount toward the Matching Fund requirement of the Tennessee Department of Transportation Grant the Heritage Commission received to restore the 156 year old structure.

There are a number of businesses and people that the Commission would like to thank for this achievement, especially our Guests of Honor, Dick and Sally Merian, who were recognized for their many contributions to the Heritage Commission. We also are indebted to our sponsors who are listed elsewhere in the Newsletter and we ask that you note their names and thank them if you

Roane County Will drink to that! It always has

By Gerald Largen

Continued from previous newsletter:

Back in the late sixties or early seventies, after Interstate Highway 40 had been built down at Emory Gap, I owned properties around the interchange where our family home had been before it was taken for the construction. The state had taken several other homes, and some it had sold to be moved off the right of way. I had the idea to buy a couple of these houses and set them up on my property for rental property. Soon after buying them and setting them up, the foolishness of the whole scheme became apparent and I proceeded no further with the idea. One of these houses was located across Caney Creek behind McDonald's and the Sundowner motel, and it sat there empty for some time.

One day my secretary came into my office and told me that there was a young woman there who wanted to rent this house. I told her to show her in so I could tell her that the house wasn't fit for occupation. However, when she walked in (or possibly more accurately she waddled in, for she was the most overwhelmingly pregnant young woman I have ever seen) I knew that I was in for trouble. I told her the house wasn't fit to rent, but she insisted she had no where else to go, nor anyone else to turn to, and the baby was due, and she just needed a roof over their heads, etc., realized he wasn't going to go away, so as he related it, the door was opened a crack of maybe an inch, and on his request to use the phone was told through the crack that there wasn't one there. So, he proceeded to walk up Ash Cabin Hollow until he could find a phone. But while he was rapidly walking, the inhabitants of the house were moving even faster: They got into their vehicle and sped off, never to be seen or heard of again, for they realized that even the narrow crack at the doorway had been sufficient to allow the strong odour of sour mash to escape and they knew that as soon as he could the patrolman would return with others to raid the place, which is what happened.

The offices found that inside the house was located what was probably the biggest illegal whiskey manufactory ever fabricated in Roane County. There was a generator to provide electricity, pumps to provide water from the creek, and the most important of all easy access to heavily traveled I-40 to go east or west, and Hwy 27 to go north or south, a critical factor, when it was discovered from their projection records, which they also left behind, that they were producing over 500 gallons of illicit liquor weekly.

etc. Well, needless to say I could envision an inn-keeper in Bethlehem telling how there was no room at the inn, and so finally told her that if she could benefit from the house, go ahead and use it. And there the story ended, or so I thought.

But a few weeks later, the Chief Deputy came into my office and after confirming that this house was mine, asked if I had any objection to his inspecting it, which, of course, I did not, but I did wonder why he should want to go in there, and he proceeded to tell me the reason.

At that time, it was not unusual for cars or trucks to run off the off-ramp leading from I-40 down to Hwy. 61/27, just beyond this house of mine, and one had just performed this manoeuvre, which was reported to the Highway Patrol. The investigating office found that a wrecker was needed, but he could not for some reason make radio contact and needed a telephone (this remember was before cell phones) so he went to the closest house, which was the one I had let the young woman have. He knocked at the door several times, but no one answered. He could detect movement, however, and continued to pound on the door until the people inside

Over the years my activities have made headlines and front page stories in the local papers on account of various things in which I have been involved, but this story made the biggest headlines of all as the Roane County News ran a banner lead stating ALargen's still raided@, or words to that effect.

Most embarrassing of all however, was that I had fallen for the young woman's story, hook, line, and sinker, and I never even got any rent money out of the operation!

Another personal anecdote concerns the effort probably 40 years ago to have a liquor referendum in Kingston. After petitions began circulating, I wrote a letter to the editor of the News expressing my opinion that if I wished to retreat to my veranda at the end of a tiring day and sip a julep while I watched the mighty Tennessee roll on to its rendezvous with the sea, it was really none of my neighbors' business to say me nay. Well, this provoked the then pastor of a large Kingston church who the next Sunday not only preached his sermon using me and my wicked ways as a test, but who also proceeded to appoint a

Continued:

committee from the church membership to see what could be done to put a stop to my wickedness. My network of spies alerted me to this state of affairs almost immediately, including the identity of the committee members.

Well, sometime shortly thereafter, as I was returning from Clinton, I recalled that I wanted some item from a liquor store, and stopped at the one on the western edge of Oak Ridge. I soon located what I wanted, but decided to browse over their wine selection, since I had never been in this particular store before. While so engaged, I heard the bell that was wired to tell the clerks when someone had entered the store. Almost as a reflex action I looked up and saw none other than the chairman of the church's anti-liquor committee coming in the door. Although I did not hide, I became as unobtrusive as a man of my size could do until I was sure the chairman had not come in to use the phone, or get change or any other purpose than to purchase a bottle. When it became undeniable that was his purpose, I moved toward the counter, gave him a broad smile, said how glad I was to see him, paid for my purchase and left. Wondrous to say, apparently the committee never had another meeting nor rendered a report! You may wonder why.

Let's conclude with the story of my grandma's grape juice experience:

I have sometime wondered how many farm wives shared my grandmother's grape juice experience. She, like most country folks had a nice vineyard which produced many good things for the table, beginning with green-grape pie and continuing through grape jelly, grape hull jam, and table grapes, all very successful and very good. However, she had one field of consistent failure. She had been taught by someone, possibly her own grandmother that one could make grape juice the easy way by simply stemming and washing the grapes, packing them in fruit jars, adding quantity of sugar and putting the lids on the jars. But she had been warned not to put the lids on too tightly as for some inexplicable reason, the jar might explode, and you would lose your grapes, your sugar, and your jar. So, she always followed the directions given, but when some time later she wanted some grape juice, the jar would contain instead of grape juice, grape wine. Well, what to do? In those days it was regarded as a sin to waste food, and we've all heard the expression - waste not, want not. So the grape juice would of course be drunk, in moderation of course. And being a person of strong will, and determination, she would resolve from year to year not to be defeated by this curious phenomenon and would try again, with the same result, but

never did she concede defeat, to the great delight of grandfather. Back in the late sixties or early seventies, after Interstate Highway 40 had been built down at Emory Gap, I owned properties around the interchange where our family home had been before it was taken for the construction. The state had taken several other homes, and some it had sold to be moved off the right of way. I had the idea to buy a couple of these houses and set them up on my property for rental property. Soon after buying them and setting them up, the foolishness of the whole scheme became apparent and I proceeded no further with the idea. One of these houses was located across Caney Creek behind McDonald's and the Sundowner motel, and it sat there empty for some time.

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John Crawford Vaughn

By Bitsy Keko



The Roane County Heritage Cession's goal is to preserve the past for the current and future residence of Roane County. The archives library is one of the important sources of information from local history to a variety of books from each state. The archives library is proud to announce the introduction of a new book this month for all local history lovers.

The Last Confederate General, John C. Vaughn and His East Tennessee Cavalry written by Larry Gordon. The history in this book is based on factual events in the life of John Crawford Vaughn, information on crucial battles and military strategies, his ability to overcome battlefield wounds, Union incarceration of his family and the effects of the incarceration on his military career. Also there are chapters on his close relationship with Jefferson Davis, his importance as one of the few Confederate generals to return to Tennessee after Reconstruction, and his appointment to the state senate. This is the most factual book published on the local Confederate hero.

There has been disagreement for years on the birth place of John Crawford Vaughn. According to the Democrat-Observer article published April 3, 1984, it is indicated that Vaughn was born in Madisonville, TN. There is an actual roadside marker indicating the location of the house he was supposed to have been born in. The words on his grave provided by his son, John Crawford Vaughn Jr., state that he was born in Roane County, TN on February 24, 1824. This seems more believable since it is information provided from the family of the deceased Vaughn.

Further proof has been provided in the writing of Larry Gordon's book about John Crawford Vaughn. The book indicates that James Vaughn, father of John Crawford, is listed in the Roane County probate documents as the administrator of the estate of Nathaniel Vaughn. James Vaughn is also listed in the Roane County tax records in the year of 1824 and this is the year of John Crawford Vaughn's birth. This indicates it is more likely that he was born in Roane County instead of Monroe County, TN. (to be continued)

Thanks Continued:

have an opportunity to do so. 0 Callahan, Richard Evans & Celia Simon, Tom & Cherie McMurray, Amanda Miller, Debbie Hayes and Frank & Pat Sparkman,

Once again Laura Overstreet was our Gala Committee Chairman and Bruce Cantrell was MC for the program. Without these two our Gala wouldn't continue to be such a success. The Roane State Jazz entertained the guests at the gazebo while Fred Pogue added to the ambiance with incidental music during the social hour. And, of course, Gerald Largen's stories on some of Roane County's most memorable past citizens was both informative and entertaining. Also contributing to the Gala were Sam Lewis and South Harriman Baptist Church, Gibson Girls Catering, Kingston Food City, and McDonald's of Kingston. Special volunteers included Virginia Patton, Marilyn Elkins, Sally Peterka, Judy Wassom, Charlotte Lees, Mickey Seaman, Martha Jean Blevins, Susan Hall, Darleen Trent, Kathleen Emch, Pat Pierce-Goss, Janice Black, Patricia McPherson, Tom McMurray, Mike Demanovich, Sue Pickrell, Celia Simon, Robert Bailey, Bitsy Keko and Rachel Parker.

The Silent Auction offered a wide variety of items ranging from hotel stays to gift certificates given by local businesses. Donating to the Auction were Mr. & Mrs. Copper Bacon, Baggett Pharmacy, Bootlegger's Liquor Store, C & C Estate

Sales, Cabot Cheese, Cheers Wine & Spirits, Cornstalk Heights Historical Community Organization, Imogene Deatherage, Empire Furniture, Richard Evans, Glitterville, The Gondolier Restaurant, Grand Ole Opry, Head 2 Toe Salon, Heart of Knoxville Night Painters, Knoxville Ice Bears, Import Enterprises, Robin Menne of J Lynn Hair Salon, Johnny Appleseed Produce, Kingston Animal Hospital, Kingston Hairstyling Salon, Knoxville Opera, Kyker Funeral Home, Lillie Catherine Designs, Live and Let Live Drugstore, Loew's Vanderbilt Hotel, Lowe's Home Improvement, Mayor's Mansion Inn, Jane McPherson, The Melting Pot Knoxville, Mountain Vista Luxury Rentals, Nashville Symphony Orchestra, Nashville Opera, New Horizon Wellness Centers, O' Those Were the Days Antiques, Rachel Parker, Piggly Wiggly, Charles & Elma Price, ReCal Nursery, Brenda Richards, Ken and Sharon Richardson, Rockwood 2000, Rosemary's Florist, Mickey Seaman, Sophie's Choice, Sweet-N-Spicy Café, Tennessee Finest Trophies and Frameworks, Tennessee Repertory Theatre, Tom & Joyce Tidwell, United Community Bank, UT Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, Whitestone Country Inn, and the Knoxville Zoo.

We also want to thank everyone who showed their support by attending the Gala. We still have a long way to go to fully restore our historic Courthouse, but it helps to know we have so many friends encouraging us.

New Membership & Renewals Since Last Newsletter

Mr. & Mrs. George (Copper) Bacon
 Leola Bergmann
 Pat Pierce-Goss & Jacky Goss
 Johnny & Juanita Griffin
 Fred & Raisa Killeffer
 Robert Lanier
 William & Dot Leggins
 Jim & Barbara McCoin
 Ben & Bonnie McEwen
 Gwendolyn Mullins
 Mary Ann Owings
 Virginia Patton
 Charles & Elma Price
 Mr. & Mrs. Fred Williamson

Business Donations

Allen Co. Public Library
 Motel 6
 ORNL Credit Union
 West Town Realty/Walt Goolsby

Donations

AT & T
 Robert Bailey
 Al & Sue Callahan
 Scotty Dykes
 East Tennessee Foundation
 Bob & Carolyn Henderson
 William D. & June Heydel
 "57 Girls"
 Robert Bailey
 Danny & Janet Collins
 Marilyn Elkins
 Jack & Michelle Haney
 Tom & Cherie McMurray
 Rachel Parker
 Barry & Darleen Trent
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles Cardwell

Gala Underwriters

Citizens National Bank
 CROET
 Diversified Scientific Services, Inc

Annie Holden Houloubek]
 Marilyn McCluen
 Ben McEwen\
 Roane County Government
 William Ross
 Shirley Scarbrough
 Secret City Paranormal Society

Memorial Donations

Lynn & Laura Roberson for Kay Roberson

Donations made at the Gala in Honor of Dick & Sally Merian

Children of Dick & Sally
 Jamey McLoughlin

Library & Archives Donations

Millie Abner - large, framed 1941 photo of Kingston
 B. B. Blevins - numerous early issues of East Tennessee
 Historical Society's Publications
 Terry Crosby - early newspapers and railroad articles
 Imogene Deatherage - historic newspaper articles, photos
 and memorabilia
 Mickey Seaman & Beverly Bensen - large framed photo of
 Kingston
 Shaw Environment - 14 file cabinets, five office chairs, two
 metal bookshelves

Donations made in Memory of Dick Merian

UT-Battelle
 Griffin Insurance Agency
 EnergySolutions
 Walmart
 Bechtel Jacobs Co., LLC
 Oak Ridge Utility District
 Roane County Visitor's Bureau
 AT & T
 Ladd Landing, LLC
 Highland Reserve, LLC
 Waterfront Plantation, LLC
 Philotechnics, LTD
 WUOT Radio/91.9 FM
 The Rogers Group
 Laura's Liquor and Wine Store