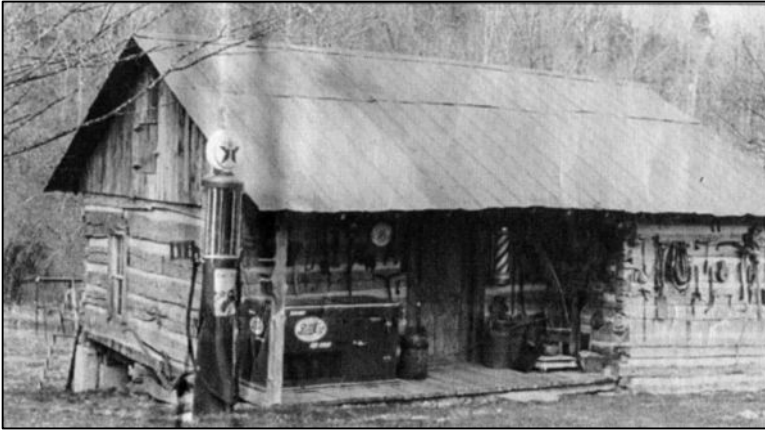


## QUILT SQUARE HAS FAMILY MEANING

By Megan Trotter, Herald-Citizen Staff  
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**COOKEVILLE** – The log cabin that once housed the late Howard Taylor Hitchcock’s workshop behind his home in the Poplar Grove area of the Dry Valley community was moved to the Putnam County Fairgrounds in 2009 to be used to house the plaques for the Century Farms of Putnam County, which honors local farmers.

“He did his woodworking in here,” said his daughter, Kathy Daugherty. “Lots of people in the county have things that he refinished or things that he made, replicas of old furniture and things like that, blanket chests, wingback cabinets and corner cupboards. It’s what he loved to do.”



(Pictured: The Hitchcock family’s workshop as it appeared on their property before being moved to the Putnam County Fairgrounds).

Now the old cabin has gotten another family link – a 4 by 4 painted quilt

square inspire by a quilt made by Ruby Lee (Whitaker) Mansell, the mother of Hitchcock’s widow, Frances. The quilt was one of nine handmade pieces that Mansell’s family was able to salvage after the deadly tornadoes that ripped through the Midwest on April 3, 1974, and destroyed her home and ultimately took her life. Articles in the *Herald-Citizen* printed after the storms report that the tornadoes killed 11 people and injured more than 40 in Putnam County that night and destroyed about 15 houses and 15 trailer homes. More than 300 people died nationwide, 52 of which were in Tennessee. Ruby L Mansell died from her injuries about 20 days after the tornadoes.

“She was thrown about a football field away from the house when it exploded,” said Daugherty. “She was home because she had not gone to work, so she was laying on the couch and grandpa had gone to church. He couldn’t get back to the house because of all the trees and everything that were down.”

Hitchcock decided to donate her late husband’s cabin workshop to the Putnam County Fairground as a way to honor his memory and the hard work he did with the agricultural office for 44 years.

“(Daugherty) heard that they (The Fair Board) were looking for one, and it was going to fall down because a lady hit it and it had shifted. I was going to see it,” Hitchcock said.

She actually had sold the building, but the buyer graciously allowed Hitchcock to return her deposit so the cabin could be donated.

The building is now used to house the plaques honoring century farms of Putnam County.



These farms have been in their respective families for at least 100 years, contain at least 10 acres of the original founder's land, produce at least \$1,000 in farm income annually and have at least one owner who is a resident of Tennessee. Spots are still available, and anyone interested can visit [www.tncenturyfarms.org](http://www.tncenturyfarms.org) or call (615) 898-2947 for more information.

"Dad worked so long for the farmers of the county, and this way it continues to be a legacy for them. We felt that dad would like that," said Daugherty.

(Pictured: Mary Frances (Mansell) Hitchcock holds her moth's quilt while standing under the painted quilt square it inspired. The cabin the square hangs on belonged to Hitchcocks' husband (Howard Taylor Hitchcock) who used it as a workshop).

The painted quilt square installed on the cabin was painted by Cephas Ablakwas' Cookeville High School are students, while a second, smaller square on a building behind Hitchcock's home was painted by Randy Mansell's carpentry class. Both pieces are part of the Upper Cumberland Quilt Trail, which is part of a commitment to preserve the historical craft of traditional quilting. For maps of the locations of each quilt square in the county or further information about the quilt trail, call Shellie at 372-6047 or visit [uppercumberlandquilttrail.com](http://uppercumberlandquilttrail.com).

\*Read more about the History of Putnam Co., TN at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>

#### Century Farms Established Before or in the Year of 1796

Beginning in the mid-1700s, men and women journeyed to the lands west of the Unaka Mountains where they could establish farmsteads on what appeared to be a frontier of unlimited promise and possibilities. Settlers migrated generally from the colonies of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. Their families originated in Scotland, Ireland, and England, primarily, but also Wales, Germany, Switzerland, and France. Many brought African slaves with them, and some free blacks chose to come into the largely uncharted wilderness.

The lands they sought to purchase, clear, plant, and farm had been, for centuries, the hunting and dwelling places of tribes and nations with their own agricultural traditions. Through treaties with the native tribes, and by establishing forms of government including the Watauga Association (1772), these early

settlers attempted to impose familiar law and direction in an area removed by distance and culture from the Atlantic colonies and ties to England.

With the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, the conflict between colonists and British soldiers escalated in the east. At the same time, hostilities between natives and settlers increased in the west. In hope of some protection, as well as a more stable governing body, the settlers petitioned North Carolina in 1777 to recognize the western frontier as part of its domain. In that year, Washington County, extending from the mountains to the Mississippi River and covering most of what is Tennessee today, was established as part of North Carolina. A second county, Sullivan, was established in 1779. After the Treaty of Paris officially ended the Revolutionary War in 1783 and the Treaty of Hopewell sought to end the hostilities between the United States and the Cherokees in 1785, the Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio, or the Southwest Territory, was created in 1790. Through the provisions of the territorial government, Tennessee moved forward to claim its place as the 16<sup>th</sup> state on June 1, 1796.

Within this historic period of settlement, many family farms were established and thousands more were founded in the succeeding decades. Representing all the family farms of Tennessee, including the more than 1,300 certified Century Farms, are farms that trace their origins to 1796 or before. That these farms have remained in the same family and in continuous agricultural production from those pioneer days, more than 200 years ago, until the present is an extraordinary achievement. Through wars, economic depressions, natural disasters, personal tragedies, public projects, and encroaching development, each generation has chosen to maintain their roots in one place. Because of the fortitude, perseverance, enduring labor, contributions, and stewardship of these families, Tennessee is a richer state. We honor and commemorate the founders and heirs of these family lands with the designation **Pioneer Century Farms**.