

**MARKER NOTES BUFFALO VALLEY SCHOOL'S INCLUSION ON  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
by Megan Trotter

**BUFFALO VALLEY** -- Buffalo Valley School recently unveiled its new historical marker, signifying the building's inclusion on The National Historic Register. The building was officially listed on the register in 2006.



"We're just now getting the historic marker up," said Carolyn Huddleston, one of the people who helped get the building included on the register.

(Pictured): Unveiling the historical marker for Buffalo Valley School to the applauding crowd are Jack Leftwich, left, and David Darrow. Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kernea)

A crowd that included several former students of the school, Nancy Maddux Billingsley, J.B. Leftwich and C.J. Maddux, celebrated the unveiling of the new historic marker that reads:

"Built as the Great Depression began, Buffalo Valley School opened in 1929 and served continuously until 1966. It withstood flood and neglect as the once-thriving agricultural community gave way to urban consolidation. An important example of rural American school architecture. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and still serves as an anchor of community life."

The school, which is now a community center, was largely unused before Carolyn, her husband, Ted, Barbara and Vernon Markel and Char Wanser spearheaded the effort to bring a library into the old school.

"That really made things boom then," said Carolyn.

In 2006 a group decided to try to make Buffalo Valley School a national landmark. Bud Alley, a student working towards a Master's degree at the Center for Historical Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University, made it his project to research the building.

"Buffalo Valley has a lot of history to it. It used to be known as the hub of Putnam County. There was more stuff going on there back in the early, early 1920s than Cookeville had," said Carolyn.

Through his research and interviews with local residents, Alley found that land for the school was provided by Grady and Vada Maddux. It was built with local labor in 1923 and opened in 1929 to house grades one through eight. It was a free public school.

Before this school, education was given through subscription schools where the school marm would charge families a fee for the number of days parents wanted their children to attend the school.

The building was flooded in 1948, damaging the seats in the auditorium. Later that year, the school ordered 176 new theater-like seats, 112 of which still remain to this day. Grand Ole Opry stars Flatt and Scruggs,

the Carter Family and Roy Acuff used the school's stage in the 1940s. There is a mural painted on the back wall of the stage that depicts scenes from rural American life. Alley believes that the images were painted there in the early days of the school, at least back to the early 1930s.

The school closed in 1966 because of consolidation and remained empty for about 10 years before being reopened as a community center. It now hosts family and school reunions, weddings, receptions, fundraisers and other social events, as well as serving as a Putnam County voting precinct. One of its most popular recurring events is the monthly birthday parties held for members of the community celebrating their birthdays each month.

"People really look forward to that. It's become a family thing, they can't wait to see each other," said Carolyn.

For more information on the The National Historic Register, visit [www.nps.gov/nr/](http://www.nps.gov/nr/).

16 May 2010, Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN



(Pictured): Pauline Vogel, library president, prepares desserts for the guests of the historic marker unveiling. Lunch was provided by Peachtree Planning. Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kernea)

(Pictured): A few of those who had a hand in getting the historical marker for the school included, from



left, Jeff Comer, assistant director of Putnam County schools; Char Wanser of the Library Board; Vernon Markel of the Community Center Board; Barbara Markel, library volunteer; Carolyn Huddleston, of the Library Board; Ted Huddleston of the Community Center Board; Ann Jared, volunteer with the library; Sheriff David Andrews; Barbara Leahy of the library board; Corby King, Putnam County

Schools Attendance Supervisor; and Kim Blaylock, county executive. Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kernea



(Pictured): Three former students were present at the unveiling of the historical marker. Pictured, from left, are Nancy Maddux Billingsley, J.B. Leftwich and C.J. Maddux. Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kernea

16 May 2010: front page, Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN

\*See History Buffalo Valley, TN & Schoolyard Tales at:  
<http://www.ajlambert.com>



### HISTORIC PLAQUE

From left, Bud Alley of the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation presents a plaque to Carolyn and Ted Huddleston, while Char Wanser looks on. The Huddlestons were awarded the plaque on behalf of everyone who took part in interviews and research to get the Buffalo Valley School building on the National Historic Register. The school opened in 1929, and was later turned into a community center. It now holds annual fundraisers, weddings, family reunions, the library's monthly birthday party for those with birthdays each month, and other social events. It also serves as a Putnam County voting precinct. An historical marker was also unveiled at the school entrance.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: Wednesday, 12 May 2010, pg. 10.

\*See Buffalo Valley Community Center articles at: History – Buffalo Valley, TN & Schoolyard Tales at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>