

## **BUFFALO VALLEY SCHOOL (#109)**

**Source:** Heritage of Putnam County Tennessee – 2008 by Putnam County Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage Inc.

Pg. 31: The Buffalo Valley School building is situated in the southwestern corner of Putnam County. The building was a State project in the late 1920's and was built by local carpenters and volunteers, including Henry Buckner, Waymon Leftwich, Cass Leftwich, Jim Bo Medley, Lem Brown, Byron Bartlett, and others. It replaced an older two-story structure situated on the "bluff" that was a subscription school.

Students in grades one through eight moved into the new school in 1929. The windows and classrooms remain intact. The mural on the back of the stage and the cakewalk on the stage are outstanding, features of rural American folk life. In the 1940's Grand Ole Opry stars Flatt and Scruggs, the Carter Family, and Roy Acuff performed on the school stage. A flood in 1948 caused extensive damage to the seats in the auditorium. On December 23, 1948, an order was placed for 176 new theater-like seats for the auditorium. Presently, 112 of those seats remain.

The school remained a "free public school" until 1966 when the doors were closed because of consolidation. With the closing of the school, it remained unused for about ten years where it suffered vandalism and destruction. A request was made by James Christian and Erlene Mikitka to turn the building over to them for community use rather than being sold as surplus. Various programs were started. Crafts were taught, including ceramics.

Senior citizens met weekly for quilting and potluck. School reunions became a yearly event.

*Submitted by: Carolyn (Shanks) Huddleston, Silver Point, TN 38582.*

## **BUFFALO VALLEY SCHOOL COMMUNITY CENTER/NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER (#109)**

**Source:** Heritage of Putnam County Tennessee – 2008 by Putnam County Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage Inc.



Pgs. 31 & 32: The school building has served and supported many functions of the community since it closed its doors as a school. It is now a well organized Community Center under the direction of capable board members. It serves as a center for community functions, such as family reunion, school reunions, wedding and receptions, as well as a place to vote. A former classroom now presents a newly organized library, staffed with volunteers who had a vision to help meet the educational needs of the

community. These volunteers are reaching out in the community to help fulfill the needs of others while hoping more people will become involved with reading and perhaps become volunteers, too. So far, a four year old girl, Britney Tucker, and a lively one hundred year old woman, Mrs. Nettie Allison, have checked out the most books. What's more important than good books to read and yet conveniently located in the neighborhood? Now, through the efforts of a group of community people, spearheaded by three women, Carolyn Huddleston, Barbara Markel, and Char Wanser, who saw a need for a library, the village schoolhouse, built by the people and for the school children, has received a new status.

The Buffalo Valley School was entered on The National Historic Register in the year 2006, after more than two years of research by L. L. "Bud" Alley of the Center for Historic Preservation, along with the

assistance of Ted and Carolyn Huddleston, two locals who have deep roots in Putnam County. To achieve the goal, many people were interviewed along the way, including Luke Leftwich, Erlene Mikitka, J. T. Askew, Bud Maddux, Jack Williams, J. B. Leftwich, and others. The spirit of the school will live on as it goes forward with plans, not only for its future as a historic place to be remembered by its many students who have passed through the doors, but a place to come and enjoy being part of the community. Although it's no longer a school house, lettered on the building over the door are the words: BUFFALO VALLEY SCHOOL, 1929.

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