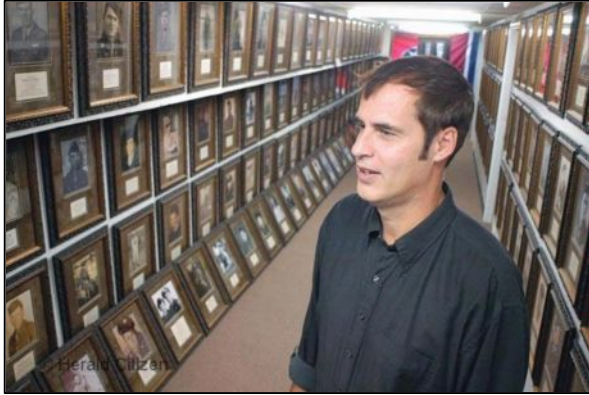


MILITARY TREASURES ABOUND AT UPPER CUMBERLAND VETERANS HALL

By Liz Engel

Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN: Sunday, 11 November 2007, fp-A-2

GAINESBORO – Just walk through the Upper Cumberland Veterans Hall, and you're overwhelmed with patriotism.



There's the large hallway filled with photographs of local veterans, and large display cases with history – all among county archives almost 200 years old.

(Photo: Herald-Citizen Ty Kernea: Upper Cumberland Veterans Hall Director Glenn Jones stands in the memorial where more than 380 veterans have been honored with a display. The hall, located on the third floor of the Jackson County Courthouse, will be honoring veterans during an open house from 1-5 p.m. today).

On most days the hall, located on the third floor of the Jackson County Courthouse, is quiet, but Veterans Day is particularly special here.

From 1-5 p.m. today, the UCVH will host an open house. It is one of two yearly events held to honor local veterans, and everyone is encouraged to attend.

“We will always have a service or open house with refreshments on Veterans Day and Memorial Day,” said UCVH Director Glenn Jones. “We’ve had one the last four years.”



Also a Jackson County archivist, Jones has been involved in almost every aspect of the memorial since its beginning.



And, he said, this memorial is different from any other you may ever see.

“I just knew we needed a place to honor veterans and do it in a personal way,” Jones said. “Usually there

are just certain people displayed, and they might have the names, but you won't find everyone's pictures.”

And by everyone, he means it. Each veteran is honored with a specialized frame, photo and description, and several are honored, uniforms and all, in large display



cases – from local Civil War veteran Prettyman Jones to Wesley Tucker of Clay County, who died in Iraq in 2005.



The hall has come a long way since the first memorial was dedicated in February of 2005. There are now 388 veterans and more than 30 of those showcases with full-length military dressed mannequins.

And, to add a more personal touch, the UCVH has added several scrapbooks of veterans to the collection, complete with old letters, photographs and family history.



“People in the future might say, ‘I’m related to that veteran,’ and we’ll have a book to show them. That makes it really personal,” Joes said. “That’s what makes our veteran’s memorial different from others.”

With so much interest and local history to gather from, the UCVH has certainly outgrown its current space on the third floor of the courthouse.



The UCVH and its board of directors has been collecting funds – the groups is nonprofit and relies heavily on donations – to move the memorial out of the courthouse and to a location where it can continue to grow.

“This is a great spot, but it’s outgrown this location,” Jones said. “People have donated guns, medals, flags – we have things we can’t even display because we don’t have enough room.”

Jones said he would prefer the memorial be relocated to a one-story building on a 2-3

acres so it would have even more room to expand in the future.

And although most of the people that come out to the Upper Cumberland Veterans Hall each year on November 11 have a relative on display – Jones has sever – he said it is important for everyone to pay tribute to our nation’s heroes.

“Even if you don’t know anyone or have a relative, it’s still a touching feeling,” Jones said. “Here, it’s just about the regular soldier.”

The Upper Cumberland Veterans Hall, located on the third floor of the Jackson County Courthouse, is currently accepting donations for its building fund. Funds are set up and Jackson County Bank & Trust in Cookeville and Gainesboro, TN.





Inside the Jackson County Courthouse, Gainesboro, Jackson Co., TN. This is a photo of the Jackson County Courtroom. Photo: Audrey J. Lambert, Oct. 2007.



Robert Denton Patton
 b. 15 March 1917
 d. 22 January 2000, Cookeville, TN
 h/o Maurine Ensor
 s/o Chester Patton & Lola Mae Quarles

Staff Sergeant
 US Army WWII
 345th Quartermaster Corp.
 Received 5 Battle Stars

Buried in Crestlawn Cemetery,
 Putnam Co., TN



Charles Russell Maxwell
 b. 8 June 1925
 d. 25 November 1944
 Killed in action WWII in France.
 s/o Charlie Johnson Maxwell & Ida Ann Whiteaker.

Private First Class US Army WWII
 Member of Patton's 3rd Army
 Buried in Rob Draper Memorial Cemetery, Stone
 Community, Jackson Co., TN



Doliver Brinton Loftis
 b. 25 June 1914, Jackson Co., TN
 d. 15 March 2006
 h/o Laura Catherine Ragsdale
 s/o Noah Lee Loftis & Cora C. Chaffin

Technician 5th Grade
 US Army WWII
 Inducted: 13 June 1941
 Wounded: 8 June 1944, Normandy
 Discharged: 1 September 1945

He was a schoolteacher, principal
 and farmer.



Donald Everett Loftis

b. 1 August 1923, Putnam Co., TN
 d. 4 January 1945, Eastern France
 Killed in action WWII in Eastern France.
 Body returned 17 April 1948, buried in
 the Morrison's Creek Cemetery, Jackson
 Co., TN on the 19th of April 1948.
 s/o Noah Lee Loftis & Cora C. Chaffin

US Army WWII
 44th Infantry Div. 7th Army

Buried in Old "Mat" Loftis Cemetery,
 Jackson Co., TN



U. L. Loftis

b. 1 December 1924, Jackson Co., TN
 d. 17 June 1983
 h/o Polly Roselle Gentry
 s/o Harvey Lee Loftis & Icie Ann Ballard
 Children: Rita Ann & Rhonda Lanett Loftis

US Army WWII
 Switchboard Operator for
 25th Evacuation Hospital in New Hebrides,
 Philippines and Japan.
 Relayed incoming and outgoing messages.

Served 1 June 1943 to 27 January 1946

Buried in Hensley Cemetery,
 Seven Knobs Community, Jackson Co., TN

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FUNDS NEEDED FOR EXPANDED VETERANS HALL

[Liz Engel](#)

Herald-Citizen Staff
 Sunday, Mar 09, 2008

By LIZ ENGEL

HERALD-CITIZEN Staff

GAINESBORO -- A framed photograph of Army veteran Benny Kirby is among the hundreds on display at the Upper Cumberland Veterans Hall in Gainesboro.

Photos like this, depicting veterans from the War of 1812 to the recent war in Iraq, completely cover the white walls of the third floor upstairs room in the Jackson County Courthouse, but because of lack of space, Kirby's photo, along with dozens of others, has been reserved for a spot along the floor.

It's been an ever growing problem -- literally -- since the veterans hall opened about four years ago. The hall, and its displays, artifacts and photos have even been extended into several side rooms, once reserved only for the county's archives.

And what's worse, many others can't even visit. The hall is only accessible from a narrow flight of stairs, certainly a hardship for the elderly or disabled.

"There are so many of the older veterans whose family members have placed their photos and historical information in the hall, but are unable to see it themselves," said veterans hall Director Glenn Jones. "We are finding ourselves in a predicament when it comes to housing the increasing number of photographs and memorabilia, and providing total accessibility to the public."

So, the hall's volunteer board of directors has been working to raise funds -- more than \$20,000 has been collected through donations -- and the first official fundraiser for the hall is planned for 5 p.m. June 14 at Jackson County Middle School. The event will be chaired by former Jackson County and current Baxter resident Beverly Johnson, who has organized many local benefits, events and fundraisers over the years. This project will admittedly be one of her biggest.

"My goal is to raise \$100,000," Johnson said. "I've already raised several thousand, and I've just been working three weeks on it."

The fundraiser will feature a full buffet-style dinner, prepared by Jackson County Middle School cafeteria workers, a large cakewalk and an auction. Johnson is still looking for volunteers to help and auction items ranging from used antiques, household items, etc.

It will be the first of many similar events, Jones said. The group is already selling engraved granite-style bricks (\$100 each) that will line the outdoor patio of the building, and Johnson said she is planning a bluegrass festival for later.

All funds raised will go toward helping the veterans hall group purchase a tract of land for the future construction of a new building. Jones said they are hoping for at least 5-acres, centrally located in the county, with enough room for a building, outdoor park and pavilion, parking and possible future expansion.

Johnson said the project will probably need upward of around \$250,000 in funding.

For more information about the Upper Cumberland Veterans Hall or to volunteer/donate to the fundraiser in June, contact Jones at 931-268-2293, Johnson at 858-5055 or visit www.veteranshall.org. Jackson County Middle School is located off Highway 56, north of Gainesboro, next to the high school.

An account for donations is also currently set up at Jackson Bank & Trust in Cookeville and Gainesboro.

FUNDRAISING UNDERWAY TO BUILD NEW HOME FOR UC VETERANS HALL

GAINESBORO – They come from all walks of life to see the photos on the wall and the uniforms in display cases. The problem is, a lot of them aren't able to climb the three floors to get to them. That is the motivation behind Beverly Johnson's efforts to raise money for a ground-level facility that will house the military artifacts lining the halls of the third floor of the Jackson County Courthouse. Johnson and her assistant Bessie Robinson want to built a permanent home for the Upper Cumberland Veterans hall, a place where young and old can appreciate the sacrifices that so many of the Upper Cumberland's own have made for their country. And one way she's accomplishing that is by holding a fundraising buffet dinner, cake walk and auction at 5 p.m., Saturday, June 14, at Jackson County Middle School.

"(The veterans) have their temporary hall on the third floor at the Jackson County Courthouse," said Johnson. "It's three flights of stairs with no handrails." The courthouse is equipped with an elevator, but it

only goes to the second floor, leaving visitors to climb two sets of stairs to reach the hall. That might be easy for some, but it is difficult for older and/or disabled visitors to the facility.

Johnson mentioned Fred Dixon, who's in his eighties, and addressed the difficulty he had just being in the photo for this story.

"Mr. Fred Dixon is one of our older vets," Johnson continued. "It was so hard for him just to come up and get his picture made. He went up the lift to the second floor and then had to go up another two flights of stairs. He'd take a step and have to rest. He said to me, 'never can I come up and view this again.' I asked him if we needed a new building and he said, 'Most certainly.'"

Johnson, whose husband is retired from the military, knew that something had to be done when she visited the space for the first time.

"If I can just give just a few months of my time to raise money to build the veterans a new building...I'd like to say, 'Look at what they did for our country,'" she said. "This is just something small we can do for them.

"It's such a beautiful display, I can't imagine anyone not wanting to go to a ground-level building and look at all of it."

And there is a lot to the display. More than 500 photos have been donated to the hall, and there are more than 45 showcases displayed. With the confined quarters of only 1,0880 square feet in the third floor of the courthouse, every inch of available space has been employed. But it's not enough. Framed photos of veterans sit on the floor because there just isn't anywhere to put them.

And Johnson and her assistant Bessie Johnson, whose husband and son served in Vietnam and Desert Storm, respectively, are motivated to make sure that all of those photos receive their rightful place on the wall.

"I would like a ground-level building with space to serve all veterans' needs as well as a banquet hall and a park with a pavilion, so veterans can have memorial events. Even if they want to hold funerals there, they would have room."

Planning has been months in the making. The first step for Johnson was to pull records of anyone who had lent items to the hall and alert them of her intentions.

"I have people coming from different states to this event, contributions coming from different states," Johnson said. "I did all of my paperwork to get ready to go out and get donations. I'm contacting 112 churches in the area, local newspapers and television stations in the surrounding businesses are supporting us. It's such a great thing. It makes me want to get up and get out there to get this project done."

Money raised for the building will go toward land first. Once land is acquired, state and federal grants are easier to come by.

"Right now, I'm shooting for \$100,000," she said. "You have to have a goal. If everyone comes out and helps, we can do this. We can do it together."

People have been coming out of the woodwork to help, too. Past and present cooks from Jackson County Middle School are volunteering time to cook for the expansive buffet, on which Johnson says there will be every kind of meat and vegetable available as well as desserts and drinks.

"Helen's Restaurant in Gainesboro will be providing turkey and dressing. Kroger is providing 72 pounds of sirloin. I've already got seven 21-pound hams from what people have already donated. There's something for everyone," Johnson said. "We'll have everything on the table."

Tickets to the event are \$6 for adults and \$3 for children 10 and under, and, of course, additional donations will be accepted and appreciated.

And with the help of Harris Monument Company, guests can purchase engraveable granite bricks that will one day line the walkway of the veterans hall. For \$100, people can dedicate a brick in honor of or in memory of a loved one with his or her name, rank and branch, or they can engrave a family name as well.

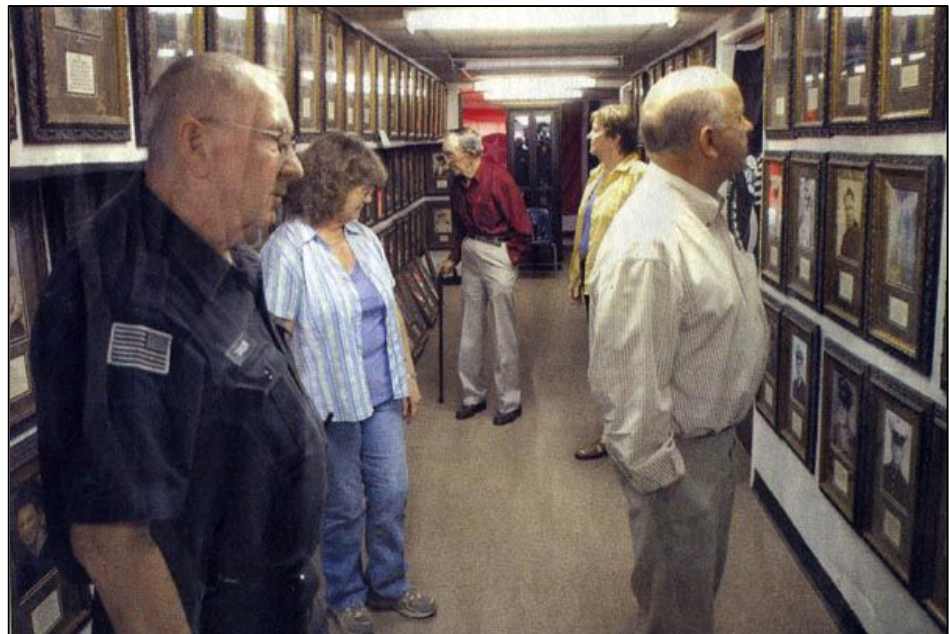
For the auction, Vanas Medlock and Melvin Turner of McWilliams Realty Company are volunteering their time to the fundraiser auction. Johnson and Robinson already have several items donated to them to put up for auction, but they're still looking for more.

"We've already got lots of handmade quilts, limestone gravel, mulch, top soil, yard and household items, all kinds of tools and lots of certificate from restaurants. They're so supportive in this," Johnson said.

To donate items to the auction, call Johnson at (931) 858-5055. Also, Jackson County Middle School will be opening its doors at 9 a.m. the day of the event to take up last-minute donations. The Upper Cumberland Veterans Hall has acquired 501(c) (3) status, so donations and contributions to the fundraiser will be tax-deductible.

"Everyone has been so generous," Johnson said. "We're just so appreciative."

For more information about the Upper Cumberland Veterans Hall or the fundraiser, call Beverly Johnson at (931) 858-5055.



Admiring portraits of Upper Cumberland's military past are, from left, Robert Taylor, retired master sergeant; Bessie Robinson, fundraising assistant; Fred Dixon, veteran; Beverly Johnson, chair of fundraising events; and Charlie Hix, Jackson County Executive. Jonson and others are working on a June 14 benefit dinner, cake walk and auction to build a permanent, more spacious home for these military artifacts in the new Upper Cumberland Veterans Hall.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: Sunday, 11 May 2008, pg. C-1.

UPPER CUMBERLAND VETERANS HALL BENEFIT



A fundraiser dinner and concert was held Aug. 2 at Union Hill Community Center to raise money for the Upper Cumberland Veteran's Hall. Above from left, members of Anderson Brothers and Browngrass Band Teresa Goolsby, Roger and Edward Anderson and Benjamin Brown entertain the crowd.

Below from left, volunteers Dorothy Gracz, Lena Mai Davis, Beverly Johnson, Sue Pippin and Anna Mai Loftis prepare the home-cooked buffet that fed the masses. For more information on the Upper Cumberland Veteran's Hall or to donate to the cause, call Beverly Johnson at 858-5055 or Bessie Robinson at (931) 268-4326. Herald-Citizen Photos/Camille Fliss

Tuesday, Aug 05, 2008: Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN



CONTRIBUTION TO UPPER CUMBERLAND VETERANS HALL



DT McCall & Sons in Cookeville made a contribution to the land and building project for the Upper Cumberland Veterans hall in Jackson County. From left, Brian Hardin, office manager; Beverly Johnson and Bessie Robinson, veterans hall fundraising coordinators; and Dave Wright, sales representative.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: Sunday, 7 September 2008, pg. D-3.

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