

Samuel "Sam" Rankin Bacon Story

SAM BACON TURNS 100

By EUNETTA JENKINS
Special to the Herald-Citizen



Tomorrow, July 1, he'll turn 100 years old, and Sam Bacon of Cookeville has this comment about that: "I'm old, but not out."

Ask him what the gift of life is all about, and he'll tell you it is about "man turning to the Bible if we ever have peace on this earth."

He'll say it's about caring for your friends, your community, yourself -- and about life itself.

He was born July 1, 1900, in My Lady's Manor, Baltimore County, Maryland. He was the second of four children and

is now the only surviving member of that nuclear family.

He grew up on a dairy farm and worked there until he went to the University of College Park, where he majored in agronomy. He graduated in 1924 and went to work with the Maryland Agricultural Extension Service.

His career included working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Plant Industry, which later became known as the Soil Conservation Service.

He was working in West Tennessee when he met Reba K. Broyles, who became his wife in 1939. They moved to Cookeville in 1950.

After 35 years with the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Sam retired in 1963 and plunged into a second career as an entrepreneur, selling novelties and personalized key chains. He retired from that career in 1991 at age 91.

He has always served his community, helping out in many efforts, such as walking for the March of Dimes. He always helped in the production of the Benlee Art Show, a popular annual event founded by Mrs. Bacon, who was an artist.

He is a member of the First United Methodist Church in Cookeville, belongs to the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, is a benefactor of the Cumberland Art Society, and is a member of Cookeville Senior Citizens.

For 17 years he was among the volunteers delivering Meals on Wheels.

He still plants tomatoes. He still drives. He reads, he likes to watch historical and nature programs on TV.

He goes to church. He cooks, a skill his late wife taught him when he was 90 and she was battling an illness.

At the Senior Citizens Center, Sam Bacon not only works on his own exercise program, but helps others exercise. He plays cards, checkers and chess there too.

He is the father of three daughters and has four grandsons, three great-grandsons, and a great-granddaughter.

Life is still good, and Sam Bacon is celebrating a century of it.

Published June 30, 2000 1:23 PM CDT: Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN.

COOKEVILLE'S SAM BACON IS 105

Jill Thomas
Herald-Citizen Staff

When Cookevillian Sam Bacon was born, William McKinley was President of the United States.

In Germany, the first zeppelin was launched and in South Carolina William and Orville Wright were experimenting with gliders.

Seven cities in the US had just come together to form the American Association of Baseball Clubs -- later known as the American League.

Bacon was born July 1, 1900, in Baltimore County in Maryland.

Last week he celebrated his 105th birthday.

Sam's life can be divided into three parts: his career in soil conservation, his career as a notions distributor and his career as a caregiver to his community.

He graduated from the University of College Park in Maryland in 1924. He worked for the Agricultural Research Service starting in 1928. He continued with the Soil Erosion Service in North Carolina in 1935, and then came to Tennessee as a soil conservationist in 1945.

After 35 years with the US Dept. of Agriculture, Sam retired in 1963.

This month, on the day following Sam's birthday, Tennessee's Natural Resources Conservation Service honored Samuel R. Bacon as the USDA agency's senior former employee.

"When our agency was first created, Samuel Bacon was already 35 years old," said Tennessee's State Conservationist James Ford.

"Now, 70 years later, NRCS has grown and thrived because of the lasting legacy of dedicated people like Mr. Bacon."

At the NRCS celebration, Ford presented Sam with copies of some of the soil surveys he authored during his tenure.

When he wasn't working at his day job, Sam and his wife, Reba, both members of the First United Methodist Church of Cookeville, worked with dozens of charities and were instrumental in helping to establish the Cumberland Art Society.

When he retired from the NRCS he began a second career, spending the next 31 years distributing small items to retail stores.

When Sam was 90, Reba became ill and decided it was time for Sam to learn to cook.

She died that year, but not before she had taught her husband how to care for himself.

Her name is still listed with his in the telephone directory.

When he was 91 Sam Bacon retired from his second business and began using his time to serve others.

For more than 17 years he delivered Meals on Wheels (now called the UCHRA Nutritional Program for the Elderly) to seniors who were housebound, driving himself to their residences and distributing both hot food and welcome chit chat.

"Sam embodied the qualities that made that program work," said Linda Tramel who is the field services director for the 14 counties of Middle Tennessee.

"He wanted to do this and he had both enthusiasm and consistency," she said.

Sam was especially active with the Cookeville Senior Citizens' Center developing an exercise program for himself and helping others with their exercises.

While he has stopped delivering Meals on Wheels, he still drives himself to visit the NRCS field office, to other sites around Cookeville and to visit friends.

When asked about the secret to longevity at his 100th birthday celebration, Bacon told Eunetta Jenkins that life is "about turning to the Bible if we are ever to have peace on this earth. It's about caring for your friends, your community and yourself."

A couple of years ago Bacon came marching into the Herald Citizen office carrying a plastic grocery bag laden with fruit and vegetables from his garden.

The weight of the bag made him list a little to the right, but Sam, at that time 103 years old, hefted the bag onto a conference table and removed the ripe produce.

"I wanted to bring you something to say thanks for all you do for the community," he said.

Published July 08, 2005 7:25 AM CDT : Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN.

Cookeville icon Sam Bacon dies at 106

Lindsay McReynolds
Herald-Citizen Staff

COOKEVILLE -- Cookeville lost one of its oldest and most generous citizens over the weekend with the death of Samuel "Sam" Rankin Bacon.

Bacon, who recently celebrated his 106th birthday, reportedly died on Saturday in his sleep at his Cookeville home.

Friends remember Bacon for his independence and active life, as well as his generosity toward a variety of community projects.

"He was someone who showed everyone that you could grow old gracefully," said former Cookeville Mayor Dr. Chuck Womack. "He was delivering meals on wheels to people when he was over 100.

"He was a good role model for us all," Dr. Womack said.

Bacon was born July 1, 1900, in Glencoe, Md., and grew up on a dairy farm there. He graduated from the University of Maryland in 1924 with a degree in agriculture.

His longtime friend, Handley "Ozzie" Oswald, joked that Bacon once told him he went to school in order to "get off that dairy farm."

But Bacon's career in agriculture was very beneficial to farmers, beginning in 1928 and continuing through 1963 as a soil conservationist for the federal Department of Agriculture in Soil Science and Soil Conservation.

"He served his country as a soil conservationist, helping farmers get the most out of their land," Oswald remembers. "He gave a lot of credit to the fact that he had grown up on dairy farm."

Oswald said that it was actually Bacon's work as a soil conservationist that brought him to Tennessee during the Great Depression, when Bacon came to see what kind of crops could be grown in this area.

And after his retirement from soil conservation, Bacon worked for the next 30 years distributing small items to retail stores and continued to help others in the Cookeville area.

He and his late wife, Reba, were instrumental in establishing the Cumberland Art Society, and for more than 17 years, he delivered Meals on Wheels to the homebound elderly, many of who were younger than he was.

Many people noticed his interest and activities in community events and politics as being unique for someone his age, in spite of the fact that Bacon never sought publicity, according to his friends.

"He really didn't want publicity," Oswald said. "I'm glad that I knew him. I think everybody that knew him profited from just knowing him.

"He kept up with world events," Oswald recollected. "One of the things that bothered him was the attention he got for his age while young men were getting killed in Iraq."

But Bacon did enjoy celebrating life. Just last year, the City of Cookeville and the Cookeville First United Methodist Church threw Bacon a party for his 105th birthday.

And friends held another party for him this year when he celebrated his 106th birthday.

Cookeville Councilwoman Jean Davis remembered Bacon as an active fellow church member at the First United Methodist Church and for his generosity to the community.

Davis recollected that Bacon called her after noticing that she and her husband, Bobby, had made a contribution to Tennessee Tech University's new nursing school building fund. Bacon subsequently decided that he would make one as well.

Bacon had been a very generous contributor to the programs at TTU over the years.

"You never know what actions you take, what impression that makes on people," Davis said. "We're going to miss him a lot."

Dr. Womack also recalled one of the things about Bacon that made such a big impression on him was the fact that he continued to be so physically active in his older age.

When he was 74 years old, Bacon reportedly walked 68 miles in one day along Highway 70 from Lebanon to Monterey.

"He's just an example of living to be about as old as anybody can get and still be involved in the community and be active," Dr. Womack said.

According to his friends, Bacon had recently recovered from an accident in his home, where he had reportedly fallen. He spent some time in the hospital and a nursing home before returning to his own home.

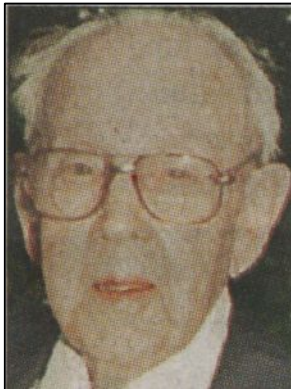
Bacon's funeral will be held Wednesday at 11 a.m. from the Cookeville First United Methodist Church.

Visitation will be held at Hooper-Huddleston & Horner Funeral Home on Tuesday from 5 to 8 p.m. and on Wednesday, from 10 a.m. until the service begins at the church.

An obituary for Bacon is being published elsewhere in today's edition of the Herald-Citizen.

Published September 11, 2006 12:01 PM CDT: Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN.

Samuel Rankin Bacon Obt.



COOKEVILLE -- Funeral services for Samuel (Sam) Rankin Bacon, 106, of Cookeville, will be held Wednesday, Sept. 13, at 11 a.m. at Cookeville First United Methodist Church. Burial will be in Crest Lawn Cemetery.

Family will receive friends Tuesday, Sept. 12, from 5-8 p.m. at Hooper-Huddleston & Horner Funeral Home, and Wednesday, Sept. 13, from 10 a.m. until time of services at the church.

Mr. Bacon died Saturday, Sept. 9, 2006, at his residence.

He was born July 1, 1900, in Glencoe, Md., to the late Samuel Rankin and Elizabeth Anabelle Benson Bacon Sr.

Mr. Bacon grew up on a dairy farm in Maryland and graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in agriculture in 1924. During his public career, he worked for a North Carolina agricultural experiment station and spent 35 years (1928-1963) working for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Soil Science and Soil Conservation. He worked in 10 states, including Nebraska, Puerto Rico, New York State, Pennsylvania, Maryland, North and South Carolina and Mississippi.

During work in Livingston Parish in South Louisiana, he did his work in the wetlands amidst many cottonmouth moccasin snakes. While in Louisiana, he attended a graduation at Louisiana State University at which Huey Long gave the commencement address. The oldest living alumnus of University of Maryland, Mr. Bacon was still driving and delivering Meals on Wheels in Cookeville when he was 102.

When he was 74, he walked from Lebanon to Monterey (a distance of over 68 miles) in one day and remarked that he wasn't even tired when he got there. He was a quiet, humble man, somewhat small in stature but giant in character.

His family includes two daughters, Janet Baggett of Nashville and Suzanne Bacon of Clinton, Md.; two nephews, Joseph Warren and Allen Broyles; four grandchildren, Lee and Ben Baggett and John and Russell Brown; five great-grandchildren, Terry, John and Lauren Baggett and Luke and Scotty Brown; and two special friends, Margaret Hale and Betty York.

In addition to his parents, Mr. Bacon was preceded in death by his wife, Reba Bacon; a brother, John Edward Bacon; and two sisters, Mary Gorsuch and Ada Wilson.

Pallbearers will be Lee, Ben, Terry and John Baggett and John and Russell Brown.

Honorary pallbearers will be members of the Cookeville Senior Citizens; Cumberland Art Society; Backsliders Class of Cookeville United Methodist Church; Roger Johnson; Dr. Charles Womack; and Handley (Ozzie) Oswalt.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Samuel Bacon Memorial Scholarship, TTU School of Agriculture, TTU Box 5047, Cookeville, Tenn., 38505.

Revs. Jon Bell and Woody Adams and Dr. Alan Broyles will officiate the services.

Hooper-Horner & Huddleston Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Published September 11, 2006 11:16 AM CDT: Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN.

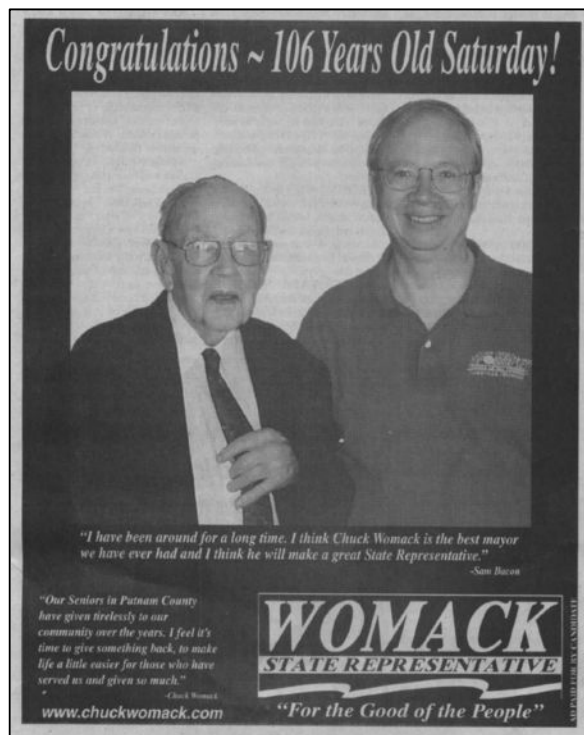


Herald-Citizen Photo/Ty Kernea

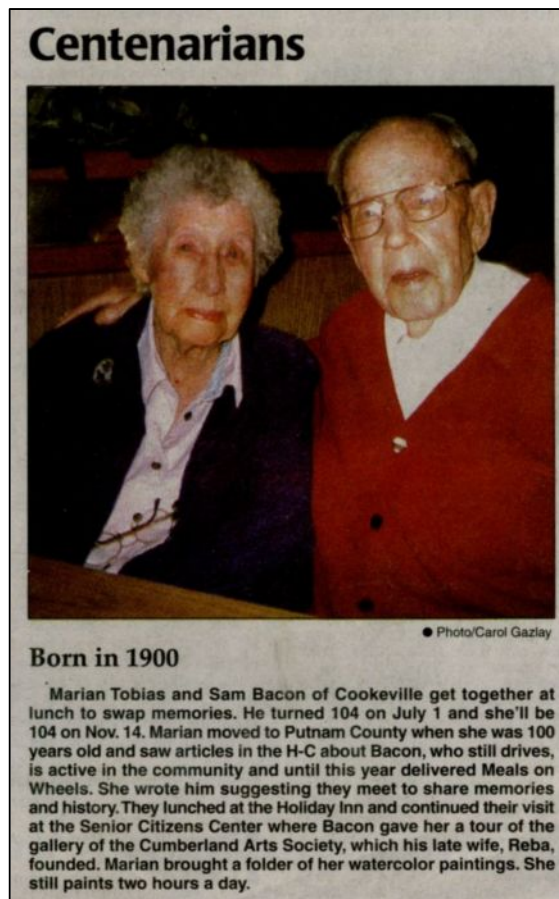
ADULT CARE AVAILABLE

The Adult Day Care is a service provided by the Cookeville Senior Citizens Center to family care givers. The day care is a safe and friendly environment, and the opportunity gives care givers the ability to run errands, shop or rest for a bit. It opens at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday through Friday. For more information, call 526-9318. Donators for the day care are, in front from left, Lois Anderson, also a member of the center's board; and Sam Bacon, a member of the center; and in back, Clarice Bush, executive director; Judy Sparkman, coordinator; and Judy Bartlett, a donator.

<http://www.ajlambert.com>



Herald Citizen newspaper, Cookeville, TN:
Friday, 30 June 2006, Pg. 5.



Herald Citizen newspaper, Cookeville,
TN: 23 September 2004,
Front Page.

BACON'S LEGACY LIVES ON – CUMBERLAND ART SOCIETY CELEBRATES 45 YEARS

By Bobbie Bruton: Herald – Citizen Staff

COOKEVILLE – “It’s been a very alive group from the very first meeting,” said Romola Drost, a charter member of the Cumberland Art Society, in describing the membership of the Society now in its 45th year.

An open house and reception are planned at the Cookeville Art Center from 4-7 p.m. on Friday, June 16, to celebrate the Society’s 45th anniversary.

“We’re going to have a big party and a cake decorated with Cumberland Art Society all over it,” said Drost. “We’re going to have live demonstrations in acrylic, pen and ink, watercolors and oil paintings going on in the studio part of the building and probably in the lobby, too. One lady will be painting on a piece of muslin. It’s really neat. Some of the demonstrations will be craft like but with paints. We’ll have stations set up showing everything we do. And there will be an exhibit in the gallery.”

“We want everybody in town to come. Everybody,” she stressed.

Founded February 26, 1961, by the late **Reba Bacon** (*Reba K. (Broyles) Bacon, wife of Samuel “Sam” Rankin Bacon*), early meetings of the Society were held around town at various locations, including the Backdoor Playhouse at Tennessee Tech University and at several local churches.

Finally, in 1964, the Society moved into its first home at the former location of City Hall on North Walnut Avenue. That building was torn down in 1974 to make room for the construction of the Cookeville Drama Center. The Society moved into a new building in 1976 at its present location at 186 S. Walnut Ave.

Drost said she and Bacon formed a committee and planned the layout of the building so everything would be movable and allow those who came in to work to be undisturbed by other activities in the building. She said visiting artists have expressed surprise at how many artist can work there at one time.

Over the years, the Society has had more than 500 members from the 14 counties in the Upper Cumberland area.

“We have everyone from beginners who have never done any art to professional artists,” commented Adrienne Stone, president of the Cumberland Art Society. “We have members here who have a working gallery, not only in Tennessee, but in Georgia nad Alabama.”

“The first time I came in here, I couldn’t believe it,” Stone continued. “I thought, ‘This is the best kept secret in Cookeville.’ It’s the kind of facility that has made other people from large cities say, ‘Wow, you don’t know what you have got here.’”

Other events at the Cookeville Art Center include an exhibit currently on display through June 25 featuring the completed works of approximately 30 members of the Society in the backdoor gallery.

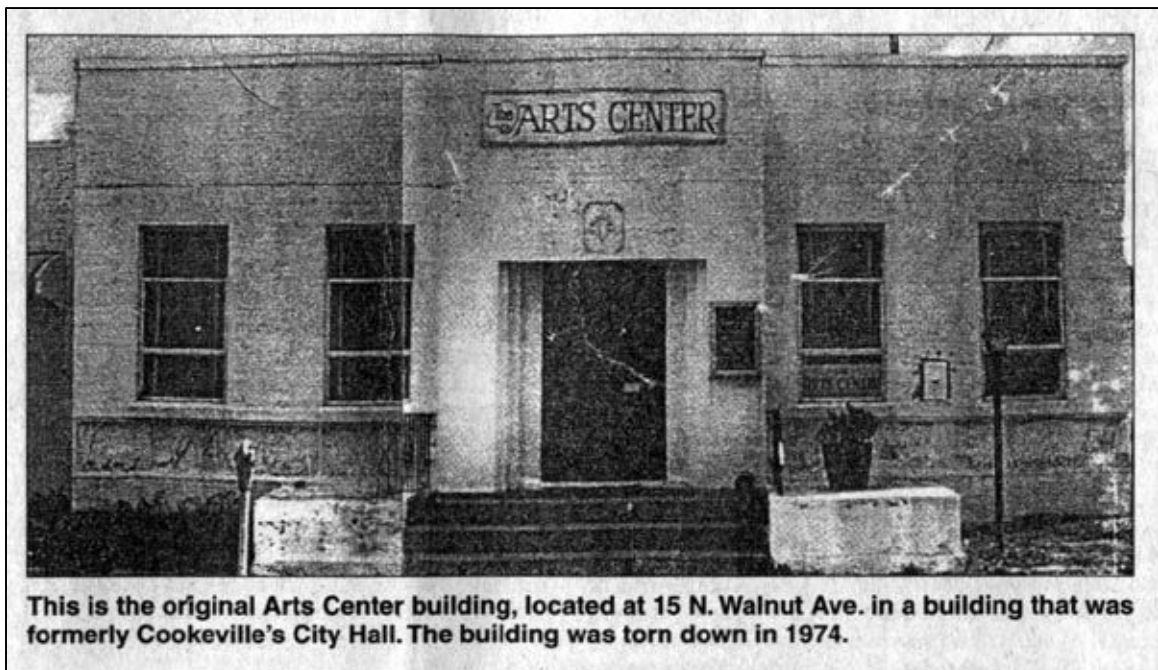
A six-week “Fun With Watercolors” class will be held from 1-3 p.m. on Wednesdays, beginning July 5. The cost is \$35.

“Come with your watercolors and have fun. Come on even if you don’t have water colors – we have extra paints and brushes. – and just try the class,” urged Drost, one of the instructors of the class. “anyone can try it out, and if they don’t like it, they haven’t bought anything.”

For more information about the class, call the Cookeville Art Center, 186, S. Walnut Ave., at 526-2424.

Herald – Citizen newspaper, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN: Sunday, 11 June 2006, Section C.

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REBA BACON MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL ART COMPETITION
AWARDS CEREMONY SUNDAY
Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN
Thursday, 5 March 2009, Section B

COOKEVILLE - The 31st Reba Bacon Memorial High School Art Competition will open with a reception to honor the participants on March 8 with an awards ceremony at 2 p.m. The Cumberland Art Society, 186A S. Walnut Ave., Cookeville, sponsors this competition and will exhibit the entries in their Backdoor Gallery March 8-29.

Any sponsored student in grade 9-12 may submit one entry in each of the nine categories designated by the art society. The artwork varies in media and subject matter.

Many of the fine arts programs in this area were instigated, promoted or supported by the late Reba Bacon, founder of the Cumberland Art Society and a former elementary education professor at Tennessee Tech University. She felt strongly about children learning the arts and the importance of acknowledging their recognition in their achievements.

In 1978, Bacon decided it was time to expand the knowledge and encourage the students in the Upper Cumberland region to become more aware of the fine arts. She notified the high schools in the 14 counties of the region and opened the competition.

The number of counties that participate in the art competition varies from five to 10 and some have more than one school per county with a yearly average of 200 entries. There are many excellent young artist in the Upper Cumberland area who need to be encouraged and supported to develop their talents.

Coordinators Romola Drost and Lois Frounfelker have organized and maintained an exhibit worthy of Bacon's legacy. This years committee members are Anna Briggs, Anne Smith and Candi Bachour.

The Cumberland Art Society invites the citizens of this area to show their support by attending the reception or visiting the gallery during the month. The gallery is open Monday through Friday, noon-4 p.m. and Sunday, 1-4 p.m.

<http://www.ajlambert.com>



From left, coordinators Lois Frounfelker and Romola Drost promote the Reba Bacon Memorial High School Art Competition. The competition is an annual event sponsored by the Cumberland Art Society, 186A S. Walnut, Cookeville. The exhibit may be viewed March 8-29 Monday through Friday noon-4 p.m. and Sunday 1-4 p.m. For more information, call (931) 526-2424.