

CARR'S CHAPEL SCHOOL
Putnam Co., TN

Pictures courtesy of Mildred "Mert" (Herd) Ray



In this Carr's Chapel School photo I can name some of the kids, but not all.

For my family it's as follows:

1st row standing, I'm the 3rd one from the left (**Mildred "Mert" Herd Ray**)

3rd row, 4th from right, my brother **Ervin Herd** has his hands on our cousin **Aaron Herd's** shoulders.

Back row, 2nd from left is my sister **Jo (Joanna) Herd**. Far right in the checked dress is the teacher, **Lois Phillips**.

Picture & information courtesy of **Mildred "Mert" (Herd) Ray**



Carr's Chapel School

Picture from the book: Pictorial History of Putnam County
Tennessee, pg. 220, by First American Bank



Carr's Chapel School

Second row, 4th from left is my mother, **Notie Waddle Herd** (they changed the last name later to **Waddell**).

Picture & information courtesy of **Mildred "Mert" (Herd) Ray**

A HOME WITH HISTORY

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: Fall Home Special

Thursday, 29 September 2011, pp 2 & 4.

By Bailey Darrow

Carr's Chapel School: Building's history give home a unique spirit:

SILVER POINT – Curtiss Brock knew what he was looking for when he decided to buy a home, but he



didn't realize just how much work it would take to get just what he wanted.

"I lived in trailers and apartments and various rentals until I was 40, so I knew that I really only wanted to buy one house," Brock said. "I

wanted something with spirit.”

To find that spirit, Brock looked at old buildings across the state. As a glass professor at Tennessee Tech’s Appalachian Center for Craft, he felt drawn to old school buildings.

When a friend told Brock about a property in Silver Point housing an old school building and a small home, he fell in love.

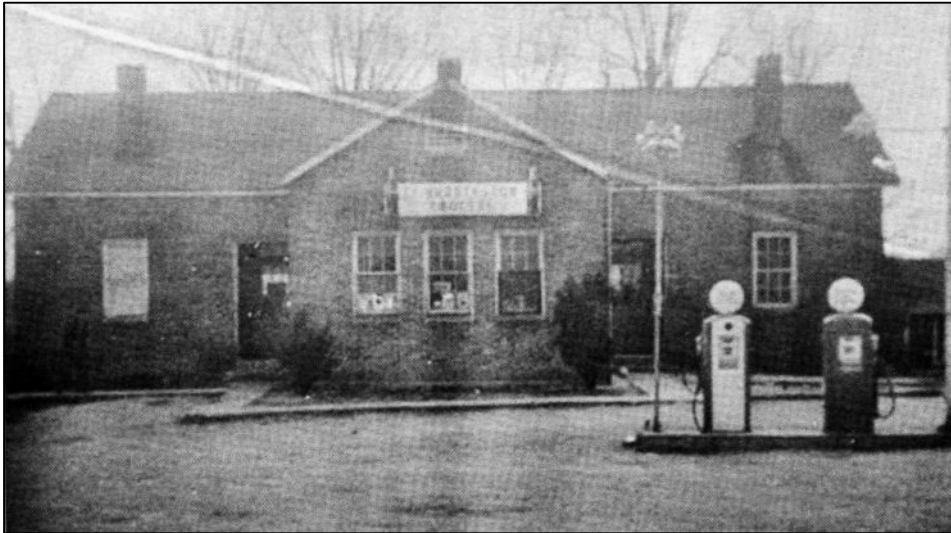
“I feel in love with the building more than anything,” Brock said. “My uncle was an architect, so as a child, I had been in and seen many houses. All of the other places that I had looked at buying just felt like house. I knew that a house can be so much more than just a place to sleep,”

The building at the front of the property had quite a history of its own.

Built in 1939 by the Works Progress Administration, the Carr’s Chapel School served as a school house for students in the rural western portion of Putnam County.

Two classrooms, cloak rooms and a kitchen were heated by a wood stove in the center of the building.

The school was closed in 1961 when the county school system consolidated the large number of small



schools, sending students to larger county schools. The building was put up for auction.

In the small home behind the school building T. C. Huddleston and his wife Ruth were raising a family. Huddleston ran

a general store near the school building.

(Pictured: After Putnam County closed the Carr’s Chapel School in 1961, T. C. Huddleston purchased the building and ran a general store from it, continuing the buildings status as a hub from the community. When Curtiss Brock remodeled the building to make it his home, the gas tanks had to be carefully removed).

Since the building was in his front yard, Huddleston used the chance to buy the property to move his store a few steps closer to home.

It was then that the building became T. C. Huddleston Grocery.

Shelves lined the walls in front of the former chalk boards and fuel pumps were installed in front of the building.

“It was a real hub for this community,” Brock said. “First as a school and then as a store.”

After Huddleston's death, his wife continued to live in the home behind the building, but the old store sat empty for years.

"So many people walked in here and told me I was crazy, that this place was a money pit," Brock said.

Termites, broken windows and water damage had taken their toll on the building.

"I knew when I came in here that I either had to renovate it and make it modern or renovate it in the old style," Brock said.

He had seen school houses that others had renovated and did not like what they had done. Brock saw the building's 12 foot high ceilings as an asset while most suggested that he drop them to 8 feet for heating purposes.

"It was no insult to those home-owners," Brock said. "I see the practicality of lowering the ceilings but I wanted to take advantage of them."

Things like Brock's insistence that the ceilings remain at 12 feet and his intent on keeping the tall windows consistent with their original style made some carpenters skeptical of the project, but Brock found support in his uncle.

"He saw the vision and told me, 'You should do it because no one else will,'" Brock said. "so many of the things that are a part of the house now were his idea. It is really a tremendous tribute to his memory."

Brock did what he could to keep the outside of the building looking much like its original self.

The brick exterior was remortared to repair cracks.

The old fuel tanks had been empty for many years, but environmental tests were required to insure that the surround soil was safe. With the fuel tanks and lines out of the way, Brock was able to pull up the former parking lot driveway and repaved.

"So many people saw me out here working on it and stopped by with stories of the building," Brock said.

Inside, all of the interior walls were removed to allow for a large, open living space.

The current kitchen is in the same spot as the school house kitchen and opens up to a living and dining room. Six large windows and a door leading to a back deck line the back wall of the main room.

The windows had to be custom built because of their unusually large size and Brock opted for argon gas filled windows to help hold in warm air in the winter.

"There is so much glass in the house that I knew I would need to do something to help keep the heat in," Brock said.

A master bedroom and bathroom offer privacy while a reading and TV nook on the opposite side of the house doubles as a guest room.

A guest bath features a gray water system, recycling water that is used to water outdoor plants and fruit trees.

"I had this idea to make it one big open room, but I imagined this as one big white room and knew it wouldn't feel warm," Brock said.

To avoid the empty feelings, Brock purchased two pallets of birch plywood and paneled the entire living space.

The wood floors and plank ceiling remain original but have been refinished.

“Probably the most labor intensive job was the floors,” Brock said.

In its days as a school, the building’s floors were oiled regularly to keep down the dust in the room.

That oiled-soaked floor did not want to absorb the finish Brock had in mind.

After sanding the floor extensively, removing seven 55 gallon drums of saw dust from the home, bringing the inside temperature to 99 degrees and leaving the finish on for nearly a week to dry, Brock finally got the finish he was looking for.

The building’s black metal roof is a tribute to the building’s original look and a ventilation system in the attic helps keep the inside temperature manageable.

Though the home has a central heating and air unit, the wood stove is the main heat source and the large windows let in cool air in the early spring and fall.

“I lost a few buddies over it,” Brock said. “but I stuck with the same carpenter for the entire project.”



Jeff Cobb, the carpenter who Brock put his faith in, helped Brock complete 90 percent of the renovation in only nine months.

“I would work some days from 6 p.m. until 9 a.m. the next day and then go teach,” Brock said. “I really lived for this house for those nine months.”

Brock even cut off half of his pinkie finger working with a saw during the renovation.

(Pictured: Curtiss Brock remodeled this inside of the former Carr’s Chapel School to fit his own lifestyle while keeping several original features in tact. The refinished floors and ceilings are original, along with the 12 foot ceilings).

“Oh well,” Brock said of the incident. “Houses take a piece of you in one way or another.”

Plenty of quirks make the home unique including its entirely handicap accessible entrances and guest bath and lighted alcoves that feature some of Brock’s own glass pieces.

Once his wife moved into the home with him, Brock called upon Mike Whiteman to build a large shelving unit that creates a false wall for the nook area and a closet for clothing items.

Having lived in the home for about 10 years now, Brock does have “had I known then what I know now,” thoughts about the renovation, but overall is happy with the results.

The small home behind the building where Brock lived during the renovation is now a rental property for students studying at the Appalachian Center of Craft and Brock, his wife and their three dogs are well settled into their very personel, spirited home.

*Read more Schoolyard Tales at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>

T. C. Huddleston

b. 21 December 1921, Algood, Putnam Co., TN - d. 16 May 1971, Putnam Co., TN
Wife: Elma Ruth (Pirtle) Scott md 31 May 1947
Buried: Carr Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN

From I-40, take Exit 273. Head South on the Smithville Hwy. Turn left onto Old Baxter Road. Turn left onto Monroe Hendley Ridge Rd. Cross over I-40 and turn right onto Howard Herren Rd. Howard Herren Rd turns left. Take this road. The first road on the left leads to the cemetery.