

Exhibit highlights Century Farms

Even before statehood in 1796, families had settled in what became Tennessee and began their own farms. Farming has thrived for over 200 years and still remains one of the state's major industries.

In honor of farming and the families that have carried on this rich tradition, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture started the Century Farms Program in 1975. Ten years later, the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University took over the program.

First and foremost, the program recognizes farms that have been in the same family for 100 years or more. Secondly, it studies the history and culture of farming in the state.

In 1985, the program's efforts led to the publication of the book, *Tennessee Agriculture: A Century Farms Perspective*.

Since the program's inception

nearly 1,000 farms have been accepted into the program, the oldest being the Masengill Farm in Sullivan County which was founded in 1775, or 21 years before Tennessee became a state.

Henry County alone has 16 farms registered as Century Farms, with the oldest dating back to 1834. In honor of these 16 families' accomplishment last fall the Paris Henry County Heritage Center hosted the Century Farms Exhibit.

Families from all over the county were excited at the opportunity to share a piece of their family history with the community. Among the items on display were a mule collar made from corn husks, an antique cotton planter, and a tin-type photograph from the 1800's.

The Heritage Center would like to thank all the families that participated in making this exhibit such a success.

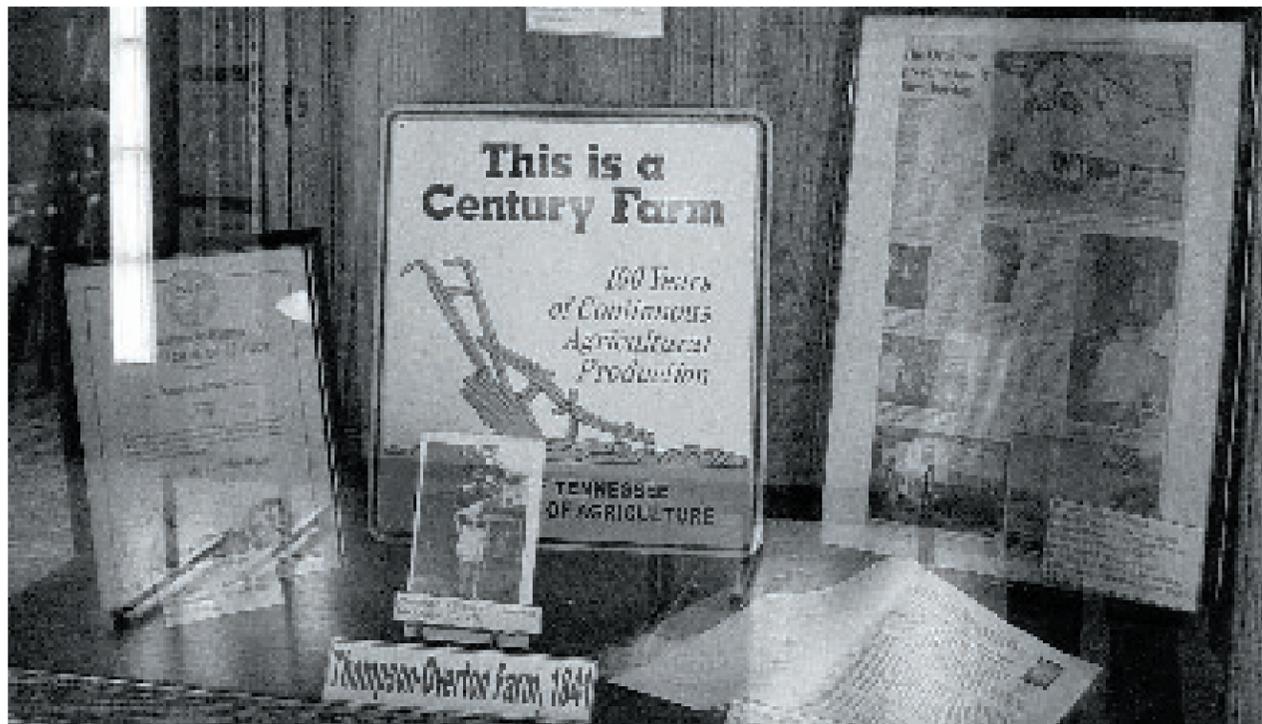
However, these 16 farms that

were honored by this exhibit are likely not the only farms in the county that have been in the same family for over 100 years.

Perhaps your farm belongs in the Century Farm Program. If you would like to nominate your family farm you only need to answer four questions:

- Has the farm been in your family continuously for at least 100 years?
- Does the farm have at least 10 acres of the original founders' land?
- Does the farm produce at least \$1,000 in income annually?
- Is at least one owner a resident of Tennessee?

If your farm meets all of these requirements that you can request an application by contacting the Director, Tennessee Century Farms Program, Center for Historic Preservation, MTSU, Box 80, Murfreesboro, TN 31732.



Part of the exhibit featured the Thompson-Overton farm, dating from 1841.



Samuel and Gale Tharpe, left, talked with visitors at the opening of the 'Breaking Fences' exhibit.

'Breaking Fences: African American Firsts in Henry County' exhibit formally opens

On Saturday, February 17, some 45 guests attending the Heritage Center's formal opening of "Breaking Fences: African American Firsts in Henry County."

Ms. Barbara Gray, the opening speaker, told of her experiences as a young girl going to Grove High School during the first years of integration.

Following her speech, guests heard a hymn by Bird's Creek Missionary Baptist Church.

Among the honorees were Sam Tharpe, the city's first African American vice mayor and the first public school principal since integration. His wife, Gale, became the first African American Fairest of the Fair in 1975.

Government officials such as Jean Palmer, the first African American county commissioner, and Billy Byars, the first city commissioner, were also honored.

There was also memorabilia from the life of Jimmie Rowe, the first African American police officer in Paris. Bird's Creek Missionary Baptist Church loaned an 87 year old ledger to demonstrate the rich history of a congregation that has existed since 1841.

In conjunction with the exhibit the Heritage Center showed movies at W.G. Rhea Library every Monday night in February, including *Partners of the Heart*, *Black Diamonds/Blues City: Stories of the Memphis Red Sox*, *Dawn's Early Light*, and *Hoxie: the First Stand*.

On the final day of our exhibit, May 5, the center plans a sack lunch and lecture series at 12 noon with Mr. Kenneth Humphreys as guest speaker. Bring your lunch and enjoy drinks and dessert provided by the Heritage Center.

As always, the public is invited.



A Century Farm, the Sweatts', dates from 1853.

From the Director's Desk — Transition? It's just a piece of cake

By RACHEL RAAB

It is hard to believe that nearly seven months have passed since I became the Director here at the Paris-Henry County Heritage Center. As a native of West Tennessee, I found the move from Jackson to Paris a smooth transition.

Everyone asks how I am handling the small town environment, but the truth is there is nothing to handle. I like small towns and I do not miss the traffic or crowded shopping. I felt very fortunate that I was able to get a job so close to my family and friends.

I realized I wanted to work in a museum as an undergrad at the University of Evansville, where I had the opportunity to serve as an intern at the Reitz Home, a Victorian Home. I enjoyed giving tours and working with the artifacts so much that I interned a second time.

My desire to work in the museum field led me



to earn my Masters in Art History and a Museum Studies Certificate from the University of Memphis. Then, just three months after my graduation, I was pleased to learn that I had been hired at the Paris-Henry County Heritage Center.

Since that time I have been learning a lot, in fact, I seem to be learning something new everyday not only about my job, but about

Paris as well. Everyone has been most welcoming and extremely helpful, and I thank you all. I have enjoyed working with the board and the community on projects like our Annual Estate Auction and the Century Farms Exhibit.

I am looking forward to next year and hope to being seeing you all soon at our next event.

Driving tour brochure completed

The Paris-Henry County Heritage Center has just completed a brochure to describe a driving tour of Civil War and Reconstruction sites in the county.

The brochure was begun in conjunction with the 2005 exhibit about the Civil War and Reconstruction history of Henry County.

It highlights the importance of Cavitt Place, Paris City Cemetery, the Courthouse, Quinn Chapel, Lee School, Barr's Chapel, Paris

Landing State Park, the James Porter House, and the site of the Mansfield Skirmish in Civil War history.

A generous grant from Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Association made the brochure possible.

The main goal of the project was to educate the general public about the history and historical resources of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Henry County.

Brochures have been sent

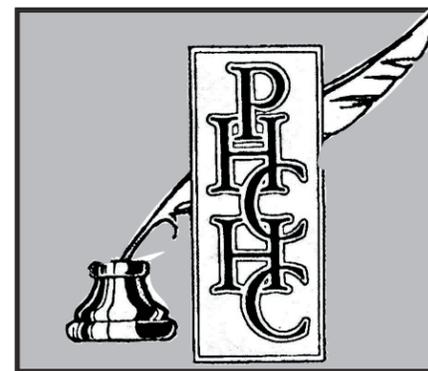
all over the county and state to visitor centers and historical sites and are also available here at the Heritage Center.

We encourage anyone who is interested in taking the tour to either come by the Heritage Center and pick one up, or contact us by phone or mail if you would like one to be sent to you.

The Heritage Center would also like to extend its gratitude to everyone that was involved in this project.

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Smithsonian exhibit No. 2: *Between Fences* opens in May

On May 19 the Paris-Henry County Heritage Center will be host to the Smithsonian traveling exhibit, *Between Fences*.

Only six venues across the state of Tennessee have received the honor of getting this exhibit. These museums and their surrounding communities have been chosen by Humanities Tennessee to host *Between Fences* as part of the Museum on Main Street project—a partnership of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and Humanities Tennessee.

The exhibition began its tour on September 16, 2006, and will end here at the Heritage Center on July 2, 2007.

Between Fences provides a lively cultural history of fences and fencing traditions, and explores cultural settlement and expansion, farming and agricultural history, the evolution of our national boundaries, and fences as expressions of ownership, identity and social relationship through a selection of artifacts, photographs, and illustrations.

Between Fences offers opportunities for host venues to examine the local impact of the 1862 Homestead Act, the development of their original town plots, or the roots and rationale of contemporary zoning.

Henry County Century

Farms, which were on exhibit last fall, will be featured on a digital atlas that will travel with the exhibit to all six venues.

The exhibit committee of Randy Veazey, Arthur Lodge, Kristi Reed and Nathan Etheridge is working hard to promote this event and create supplementary programming which will benefit the community.

Two years ago, the Heritage Center was one of a few sites in Tennessee chosen for a Smithsonian traveling exhibit on America's food history. That exhibit attracted almost a thousand visitors, and the Heritage Center was commended for its administration of the event.



Grove School replicas in stock

This December the latest Paris replica was made available for purchase. The ceramic replicas of E. W. Grove were delivered just in time for Christmas.

Many members of the community anxiously awaited their arrival because they make the perfect gift not only for the holidays, but for any special occasion whether it's a birthday or anniversary.

Replicas of Lee School, Atkins-Porter, Cavitt Place and the Henry County courthouse are also available. The Heritage Center Gift Shop also has many other items of Paris memorabilia including prints, books, music, and crafts.

If you have not already done so, come and pick up your E. W. Grove replica before we sell out.