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Newsletter

January 2021

Custodians of the Past. Stewards for the Future



Editor's Note: We continue this month with our featured Harriman History with "Stagflation" in the 1970s, as written by life-long resident & Historian Tom Scandlyn.

Save the Date
CHCO Annual
Meeting
Sunday, March
21 at 2:00



The Annual CHCO meeting has been set for **2:00 on Sunday, March 21**. The location will be announced in the next Newsletter and posted on the Website and Facebook page. **All are welcome.** Those who attended the last annual meeting, or who have actively participated in at least one organization activity within the last 12 months, are eligible to vote. Please plan to attend. Covid Guidelines applicable at that time will be practiced.

Would you consider serving on the CHCO Board? If so, please contact Aaron Johnson (865-387-1201) or Dick McPherson (865-679-1036) who are on the Nominating Committee.

Stagflation

It is difficult to define the 1970's in Harriman. Most of the pieces of our town were still in place but they no longer seemed to work quite the same. The same could be said of our nation. The economy was described by a new word "stagflation," meaning prices were going up but everything was in a quasi-recession.

Harriman schools were still the best in the area and the only accredited schools in the county. This was key to it being the preferred community to live in the area. But problems were beginning to emerge. The cost of a city school system was being questioned and led to vitriolic attacks of some community leaders against others. The loss of the Harriman High School building to fire in 1969 and its replacement with a temporary prefab blue classroom building was practical but demoralizing. The old school with its columned front had preached the classic values of



The "temporary" Harriman High School hurriedly fabricated in 1969 was "home" to students until approximately 1990

education. It was a doorway to a bright future. The replacement was in the words of the Rev. Howard Crowder, First Presbyterian Church pastor, a "blue factory operated by a kangaroo court attempting to mass produce a product not needed." (cont'd on Page 2)

Holiday Wrap-up

Wow, what a Year! I don't recall hearing the usual annual prediction recap at the end of the year. Did anyone predict 2020 correctly? Even close? (cont'd on Page 2)

Holiday Wrap-up (Continued from Pg 1)

However, I think we all have the tendency to reflect on the past year. Once again, I'm personally grateful for living in the Historic Community of Harriman opposed to the suburban/urban environment of my upbringing. We've had many more opportunities to maintain normal activities, including the start of renovation activities at the newly named *Historic* **Harriman Hall**. We did not accomplish everything we intended by the end of December, however we have the finances and interested volunteers to pick up where we left off when the weather warms up.

We held two successful holiday activities; the Historic Hauntings of Harriman tour in October and the Christmas Celebration of Lights in December. People wanted to enjoy the outdoors and we gave them great opportunities.

But this could not have happened without the enthusiastic volunteering of dozens of people. Reflecting back to the Hauntings, *THANK YOU!!!* to this year's Chairpersons Aaron, Beth Johnson & Heidi Barton. *THANK YOU!!!* to story tellers Pat & Ann Ireland (& Train Station Manager Larry Goldston), Dina Jackson, RJ Foster, Donnie Hall, Russ Sutton, Tom Scandlyn, Martha Wilkinson, Josh Gillespie, and Garry Barton. *THANK YOU!!!* also to all the tour volunteers, too many to mention here, who served in ticket sales, food vending, tour starters, tour guides, and costuming.

Our Christmas Celebration of Lights was a new undertaking to replace our annual Tour of Homes. Besides creating an enjoyable festive destination, we had the intent to celebrate Harriman's 130th anniversary of its founding and the 30th anniversary of the Cornstalk Heights Historic District addition on the National Register of Historic Places. This year's calendar highlights the Founding Fathers of Harriman and several businesses of the past, thanks to the research and skills of Diana Knobloch and Christina Branham. The Christmas Celebration of Lights was the feature of our December Newsletter, thanks to the artful layout of photographs & descriptions by Heidi Barton and her son,

Damien, a Roane State student. *THANK YOU!!!*, first and foremost, to the City of Harriman who collaborated and scheduled concurrent activities at Riverfront Park. *THANK YOU!!!* to all the residents who went above and beyond to create a festive, colorful & illuminated environment for the enjoyment of visitors to our community. Many hours and financial investment went into your displays, and we became a Christmas Celebration destination for much more than just one weekend. *THANK YOU!!!* to Three Rivers Theatre for the telling of the Christmas Carol, and musical entertainment by members of the community, Dr. Geol Greenlee with the Roane State Stage Band and Roane State Chorus, the Scott Mason family, and members of the Yvonne Yates family. *THANK YOU!!!* also to our energetic Gingerbread people, Cameron Cook and Charity Yarger and of course, **Santa Claus!** *THANK YOU!!!* also goes to all the volunteers who served during the driving tour, including Redeemed Outreach Center volunteers who served with traffic control.

Do you get a sense of how active our organization is? People are always willing to step up to a need and purpose. We truly are blessed to be living with such an extensive group of supporting individuals. We'll take a breather during the first couple months of this year, however soon we'll be hot & heavy on the CHHCO initiatives for 2021.

Stagflation (Continued from Pg 1)

In its defense, it still had many fine teachers and programs. I, myself, graduated in 1976 and am grateful for all it gave me. But he was right to see it as a system under strain. Bowers Elementary overtook Central numerically for the first time ever as West Hills became "the place to live." The former black school Jamieson was renamed Margrave and reopened to accommodate students on the Walnut Hill, Meadowview, Fisk Heights, and Webster Pike areas. An expansion of the high school built the current gym dedicated in 1974 by UT Coach Ray Mears, and Harriman's own, Mickey Bilbrey.

This Harriman High School expansion came at a physical and emotional cost. The parking lot and track demolished many homes. The track

construction demolished the Elizabeth Street Baptist Church, a mission of Trenton Street. Also planned was demolition of St. Mary's Baptist Church. It was however saved by community outcry, being the best standing church building serving the black community in town. The Elizabeth Street Church was also a good building, but its congregation moved to Lee Village and became the Lee Village Baptist Church.



Elizabeth Street
Mission established by Trenton St. Baptist Church in 1947, became church in 1959

More on the education front saw the opening in 1970 of the vocational school East of Harriman (now known as the Tennessee College of Applied Technology). The first Roane State Community College classes were in Harriman at Fairmont School in 1971. The welding lab at the vocational school was built by my father, W. T. Scandlyn. It was colorful and new. We were quite proud of it.

In business, downtown began to decline. The Patton Hotel was demolished by the hospital for a new emergency room facility built by the Rockwood Scandlyn Lumber Company. A new store in Emory Gap, called Big K, was the new store in Emory Gap called "Big K" was the new place to shop. It had a new drug store, Revco, and a new Kroger store adjoining. The long standing Stowers Lumber Company was bought by Christmas Lumber Company.



Big K across from current Food City Gas-n-Go, and preceded the first Walmart location in Roane County at that site

Major fires in the East Building destroyed Chase Drugs twice. The first time in 1970 brought rebuilding on the same site. The second in 1974 was total loss, forcing it to move to adjacent buildings and discontinuance of its long popular fountain and luncheonette.

Fast food facilities of Hardee's, Long John Silver's, and McDonald's were built in Emory Gap. Also a new tourist restaurant, the Cracker Barrel, opened for business on the lot now the site of Ruby Tuesday's.



The Cracker Barrel in Harriman was one of the first in the country

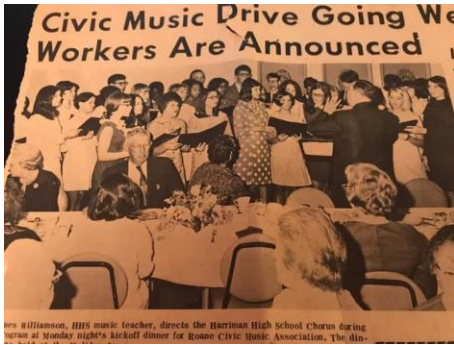
Housing brought new sites as well. Urban renewal on the East side replaced many older homes on Clifty and Clinch Streets. The annex to West Hills opened and continued West Hills ascension as the premier housing area of Harriman in that day.

Two completed highway systems changed the face of Harriman. One was the completion of the 4-lane around Walnut Hill on the East side. The other was the completion of I-40 across Walden's Ridge. No longer was Harriman known as the "place where the Interstate ends."

Spiritually, Harriman was strong. Its churches were full. It had revival meetings and expanded buildings. Trenton Street Baptist Church had standing room only revivals in 1972. It's growth under Pastor John Shepherd built a new family life center/gymnasium. First Presbyterian Church underwent a major redecoration and rededication in 1976. West Hills Presbyterian Church was generally full each Sunday to hear the preaching of Dr. Luder Whitlock, who later became President of the Reformed Theological Seminary. Harriman United Methodist saw the successful pastorate of Harold Ray. Riverside Baptist Church, a small congregation on Clinch

Street, began to show major growth under the pastorate of Mason Goodman. It remains a major presence, having defied the church growth experts who say high visibility and large properties are necessary for growth.

Culturally, Roane Civic Music under the leadership of Max Johnson continued to enrich Harriman with Broadway and other productions. As well, a Harriman physician Dr. Don King began the Roane Choral Society.



"Uncle Willie" directs the [huge Harriman High School Chorus at the Roane Civic Music Association](#)

On the negative side, initial plans surfaced in 1975 to replace the iconic post office downtown with an unattractive facility in Emory Gap. Community resistance stalled this regrettable move until 1980.

So in the seventies, Harriman was in decline. It was still a good place but in the words of the late Glasgow Russell, it only needed a gallon of formaldehyde to be a dead town. And so it was.

Historic Harriman Hall Renovation

As noted above, there remains unfinished work planned to complete in 2020. While we pushed a "pause" button until it warms up, some of our leaders have expressed the desire to start working. You may therefore see some anxious individuals begin to progress on specific tasks soon.

We also will give a progress report at the Annual Meeting and available on the website and Facebook page. It is always difficult to project how far we can get, even without Covid. However, we will lay out the tasks that can be completed, and if funds are necessary, the budget to complete the work.

Donations are always appreciated, and the completion of the renovations is truly dependent on the generosity of those who support Harriman Historic Preservation. Please consider giving now. All donations go directly to the renovation of Harriman Hall, and are not used for any of the organization's operating expenses.

Please send your donations to:

CHHCO
PO Box 611
Harriman, TN 37748

Donation Levels	Cumulative Level of Donations
Preservation Leader	\$25,000 or Greater
Preservation Guardian	\$10,000 - \$24,999
Preservation Steward	\$5,000 - \$9,999
Sustaining Donor	\$1,000 - \$4,999
Supporting Donor	\$500 - \$999
Contributing Donor	\$100 - \$499

In addition, designated gifts can be given in honor/memory of individuals of your choice. Specific project needs can be discussed; however it is suggested to support the continuing window restoration at a donation level of \$1,500 per Sanctuary window.



All donors contributing towards the cost of renovation and equipment will be recognized according to their cumulative level of giving, on a permanent plaque to be placed at the completion of the facility renovations. Cornstalk Heights Historical Community Organization is a 501(c)(3) organization, and donations are therefore eligible as a tax-deductible charitable contribution to the full extent of the law.