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# Newsletter

August 2020

*Custodians of the Past. Stewards for the Future*



**Editor's Note:** This Newsletter edition includes the era of Harriman History which several residents and family members actually lived through. This therefore includes first hand insights which CHHCO Historian W. Tom Scandlyn has prepared. Thank you, Tom, for gathering these details over the years, and sharing it with us at this time.

## **Harriman's Semi-Centennial Celebration Was Also a Turning Point**

It was 1940 that Harriman turned the Golden Age of 50. In July, a four day party called the Semi-Centennial Celebration was held. Harriman stood in the doorway between two worlds. On one side was the steep and rough pathway of the 1930's. On the other was a brighter prosperity complete with a nearby secret city, a world war, and an atomic bomb. But in 1940 we are not yet there. The drums of war were beating in Europe but that was a world away. The Semi-Centennial gave Harriman an opportunity to be thankful.

Industry, sobriety, and thrift were the principles on which Harriman was founded. These frugal

values had paid high dividends. In the dark days of the depression, Harriman's only bank under the leadership of Leland Carson and B. L. Sadler had never closed unlike so many similar communities.



Harriman's Semi-Centennial Poster  
Roane St in July 1890 (top), Roane St n July 1940 (bottom),  
Stacia Gardner, HHS Band Majorette (center)

Source: Images of America Harriman, John Norris Brown

Much of Harriman's industry had been destroyed by a flood in 1929. One however stood supremely strong, the Harriman Hosiery Mills, owned and operated by the Tarwater family. This strength, however, was challenged by labor disputes of that day. A strike in 1933 led to hearings before the District Labor Board and the National Labor Board in Washington, D. C. in 1934. The company held its ground, which undermined the Roosevelt administration's National Industrial Recovery Act in southern textile industries. The strike was ended by federal negotiators on company terms. Allegedly union officials and strikers were not consulted. The Tarwaters prevailed but a great

personal cost. It was necessary to deploy armed guards to protect their home at 605 Cumberland Street. Next door at the home of Millard Walker, the company Trustee, several sticks of undischarged dynamite was found. It had been placed by strikers according to Annette Pierce Marler, who purchased the house in 1993 from Mrs. Millard Walker (Ann Geasland). She expressed she “hoped” all the dynamite was found. I would venture to say the Whaleys, Linda Edwards, and the Harndens hope so as well.



Harriman Hosiery site

The death of Tom Tarwater, Sr, in Albuquerque, NM, of respiratory disease was a day of mourning in Harriman. The day of his funeral my father once recalled all the schools and most businesses closed.



Harriman Hosiery 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary photo in 1937

Source: Images of America Harriman, John Norris Brown

Other developments were underway but their impact was not yet fully felt. Harriman General Hospital was built in 1938, and laid the foundation of a new social element in Harriman, physicians and their families. In 1940, this was still dominated by two names, Bowman and Killeffer already prominent in Roane County from other disciplines.



Downtown Harriman ca 1940 was busy. To left are storefronts now part of hospital parking lot

Source: Images of America Harriman, John Norris Brown

Also, the construction of Watts Bar Dam was nearing completion and the lake was not yet backed up – but it came very soon (~1941).

The Art Deco Princess Theatre we know today was built in 1939. So, at the 1940 celebration, Harriman stood at the gateway. Much change was coming, but it was also content where it stood.

For more historic Harriman photos, see [http://texere.tripod.com/harriman\\_tn\\_history.html/id1.html](http://texere.tripod.com/harriman_tn_history.html/id1.html)

## 2020 Hauntings and Christmas Tours Updates

It’s almost Fall season in Tennessee, and while schools and sports are adjusting to modified schedules and events, so is CHHCO.



Planning of the **Hauntings of Harriman** tours continues as an outdoor walking tour, creating social distancing by limiting tour group sizes and remaining outdoors at all times. Aaron & Beth

Johnson are co-chairing, and are actively looking for this year's volunteers. Feel free to contact them or the CHHCO email address [cornstalk\\_heights@yahoo.com](mailto:cornstalk_heights@yahoo.com) if you're interested in helping.



The modified **Christmas Tour of Homes** will continue on the weekend of December 12 & 13. The 2020 Tour of Homes will take on an outdoor Christmas Celebration of Lights and Activities where the entire Historic Community is encouraged to participate. Bruce & Diana Knobloch are co-chairing the plans for this event. Residents in all historic neighborhoods are encouraged to decorate their homes and yards this Christmas season in a Historic theme when possible. The CHHCO Tour of Homes will become a driving/walking tour featuring the outside of our Historic homes with vignettes of entertainment and holiday activities. Downtown stores are encouraged to also participate, with possibly longer hours and special incentives. Advertising for this year's Christmas Celebration will extend beyond Roane County, with the expectation people will be looking for holiday events where they can participate outdoors and small group settings.



The area for this Christmas Celebration is also open to all historic neighborhoods of Harriman. One of the "tour" stops is most certainly to be the renovation progress of the former Christian/Trinity Baptist church. Tour maps will be provided – printed and/or electronic – to guide visitors to the homes "on tour." As there will not be ticket sales for this event, we will instead have multiple opportunities for attendees to donate towards the CHHCO restoration project.

Let's all work together to create a festive historic outdoor celebration this year!

### **Renovation Status**

The recent workday on August 22<sup>nd</sup> accomplished approximately 50% of the main sanctuary interior cleaned out, thanks to the use of dump truck and dumping fee donated by Emory Site Solutions. The original flooring under the carpet is in amazing condition, even below where roof damage saturated the flooring. A similar cleanout date will be scheduled in September. In addition, other exterior prep work continued and it is anticipated the Morgan Avenue façade will be repaired and repainted over the months of September to November.



While 2020 contributions to date have not achieved the funds necessary to authorize all the work needed between now and December, we are close and your commitment will make a difference! Those interested in designated gifts are now available for the window restoration at a donation of \$1,500 per Sanctuary window. The

funds will go directly to replacing any broken glass, repairs to the sashes, repainting of sashes and trim, and installation of protective plexiglass to the exterior. Donors for two of the four Morgan Ave and window next to main entrance have been received. Please consider adding your donation to this phase of the project!

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                 |

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.

