



# A Walk In Time...

Past, Present & Future

Oliver Springs Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter  
**Volume 1, Issue 1 January 2025**

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"A Walk in Time" is published by and for the Oliver Springs Historical Society. Anyone may submit a submission for the newsletter. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions. For questions or to submit material, email; [suezzee@aol.com](mailto:suezzee@aol.com)

## MUSEUM INFORMATION

**HOURS OF OPERATION:**  
Tuesday 10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Friday 10:00 am - 2:00 pm  
By appointment contact:  
865-405-5959

Oliver Springs Historical Society:  
P.O. Box 409  
Oliver Springs, Tn 37840

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## The Quarterly Forum - CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the new addition to the Oliver Springs Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to promote interest in preservation awareness, knowledge and education relating to the history of Oliver Springs as well as to provide communication within the Historical Society.

Change can be threatening, and it can create emotional dis-Ease! Resistance is expected and normal. Whenever we deal with change, some people are hesitant in dealing with it, but change opens up new opportunities and provides a chance to adapt to new situations. Change brings about growth and development and is necessary to improve and thrive and is important to ensure success. Changes are and will be taking place in the museum and your feedback is imperative to our success. We want to hear from you how we can make our Museum better. We ask that you give the changes a chance and accept that we may hit some bumps on the way!



## TEAMWORK

### BICYCLE BUILT FOR TWO...

Two people were riding a bicycle built for two, when they came to a big steep hill. It took a great deal of effort, struggling to complete the very difficult climb. When they got to the top the person in front turned to the other and said: "Boy, that sure was a hard climb. I am exhausted!" The person in the back replied: "Yes, and if I hadn't kept the brakes on all the way to be safe, we would have rolled down backwards!"

**MORAL:** If everyone is moving forward together, then the success takes care of itself.

**TEAMWORK** is the ability to work together toward common vision.



# A Walk In Time...

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## DR. FRED STONE, SR.

Fred Stone was born in Claiborne County, Tennessee in 1887. His grandfather, Samuel Stone, was a country doctor. Fred accompanied his grandfather on calls as a child, which inspired him to seek a career in medicine. Stone spent his teen years drifting around the country before returning to East Tennessee, where he enrolled in Lincoln Memorial University Medical School in Knoxville, graduating in 1916.

He briefly practiced medicine in Loyston, Tennessee, before joining the U.S. Army Medical Corps at the height of World War I. Dr. Stone was “loaned” to the British Fourth Battalion Regiment, and was awarded the British Military Cross for actions performed at Bucquoy in August 1918. He retired from the Army in 1937.

After retirement from the Army, Dr. Stone was hired by Stone & Webster, the firm which built the Manhattan Project facilities at Oak Ridge. He was an examiner for new employees, a task he carried out from a makeshift clinic at the city’s Elza Gate.

In 1943, Dr. Stone purchased a simple two-story building in Oliver Springs for use as a one-doctor hospital. The second floor contained the clinic space and the Stone family’s residential space.

Dr. Stone began seeing patients at all hours of the day and delivered over 5,000 babies while working at the hospital. In his spare time, he began expanding the building room-by-room, floor-by-floor. For the next three decades, Dr. Stone spent expanding the structure, adding multiple stories, hidden corridors, marble terraces, and a six-story central observation tower.

The building originally covered 1,036 square feet and by the time of Dr. Stone’s death in 1976, the building had grown to over 4,000 square feet.





# A Walk In Time...

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## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

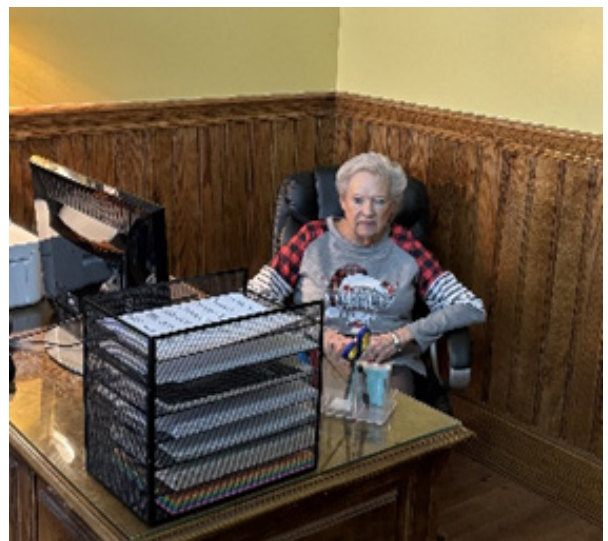
# Pat Stansberry

Pat Stansberry was born in Oliver Springs and attended Oliver Springs High School. After graduation, Pat moved to Washington D.C. for a few years before moving to Johnson City, Tn., where she lived until 1969, moving back to her beloved East Tennessee and the Oliver Springs area.

Even though Pat was away from Oliver Springs for a few years, she never lost her love for the place where she grew up. Pat has been a member of the Oliver Springs Historical Society since 2015 and has a devoted interest in helping preserve the history of the town.

Pat volunteers her time at the museum where she serves as a tour guide and helps with the preservation of documents and collection of photographs. Pat greets visitors and guests where she enhances their experience by providing detailed, contextual information about exhibits.

In her spare time, Pat likes to oil paint and attend church activities where she is a member of Black Oak Baptist Church. Pat has two children, one of whom is deceased, five grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.



## Annual Dues

It is that time again. Annual membership dues are a means to help support the Oliver Springs Historical Society. Dues are \$30 and are tax deductible. Membership runs from January to December. Donations may be dropped off at the museum, pay on-line at our website by clicking on the "Donate Now" link @oshistorical.com, or mail to Oliver Springs Historical Society, PO Box 409, Oliver Springs, Tn. 37840.



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## Oliver Springs Academy Partnership

The Historical Society has partnered with the Oliver Springs Academy in a program called **Performance Based Learning (PBL)**. PBL is an instructional method that involves working on real-world projects to develop and enhance knowledge and skills. This project provides students with hands-on opportunities to assist in projects relating to the history of Oliver Springs. Students will design, create, and install, where appropriate, replica signage and labels/lettering that effectively demonstrates the original building signage or other items that represent the time period.

A task list has been developed to identify project items and will be used as a tool for students to learn about historical people, places, exhibit items and events relating to Oliver Springs.

The Historical Society conducted a tour of the museum to provide students historical information about the history of Oliver Springs. Upon completion of the tour and using the information provided, students will have the opportunity to return to the museum to research and/or review areas to collect data and information to be able to complete identified task. The students will present a presentation and/or provide an example of their plans and/or product before delivering a defined product.

As exhibits change and new exhibits are introduced, this Performance-Based Learning project will maintain an ongoing task list to be presented to the Oliver Springs Academy when new exhibit items become available, updates are needed and additional research required.

### These are examples of project that have been completed by the Oliver Springs Academy



Display cabinet on wall



Rocket boys watching launch of rocket



Christmas banner



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## First Lady Visits Oliver Springs

Did you know that Eleanor Roosevelt stopped in Oliver Springs in 1935. The story below recounts Carolyn Kelly's account of the visit.

As told by Carolyn:

Another year has come and gone and I have so much to be thankful for! My Grandfather Abston's garage was just across the street from where I lived as a child with my mother and dad alone with my two other sisters. Our house was often called "the house with seven gables" because of all the different roof levels that made up our three-story home.

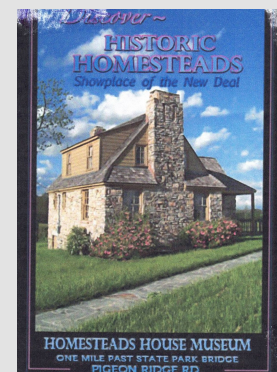
I was remembering an incident that happened across the street from the garage where we lived. Mother's first cousin Laura was married to Lewis Ford. Lewis was the overseer of the "Homestead Project" in Crossville, TN. The Cumberland Homestead Project was started by President Franklin Roosevelt during the New Deal Era between 1934 – 1938 to provide jobs for men who were out of work and to build homes for their families.

Lewis called mother one day and said Mrs. Roosevelt wanted to see how the President's project was progressing, and they would stop by to say hello but couldn't come in to visit because of her tight schedule. When they drove up, my mother with my youngest sister, Barbara Jane and me tagging behind, handed Mrs. Roosevelt a glass of cold homemade lemonade. She never left her car seat but cordially greeted mother, thanked her for the refreshment and then continued her journey to Crossville.

Just think Eleanor Roosevelt drinking lemonade in our small town of Oliver Springs. I wonder what other small memories are hidden in our minds about our town.

...Carolyn Kelly

Mrs. Roosevelt  
addressing workers  
on Homestead project





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## Hotel Love Letters

Many people find it enjoyable to read love letters that were written decades or centuries ago, whether because they relate to the passionate feelings or because they simply enjoy the poetic phrasing. These types of letters are undoubtedly less common in the digital age since most people find it more convenient to contact their beloved via phone, text message, email, or social media than a romantic letter. Love letters from the late 1800's to early 1900's was typically written with a formal tone, often using flowery language and poetic expressions to convey affection, while adhering to strict social decorum, meaning they were usually reserved, avoiding overly explicit language. They were often penned in elegant script on stationary, with a focus on proper grammar and punctuation. The handwritten note reigns supreme when it comes to emotional expression.

This love story begins in 1898 when a young mother and her baby boy were staying at the Oliver Springs Hotel, either for the baby's health or hers. The husband was in Memphis, Tennessee during this time. During their time apart, the young couple corresponded by writing love letters to one another. What makes these letters special is that not only were they written as a "labor of love"; they were written by a person staying at the Oliver Springs Hotel.

People came from all over the country to stay at the Oliver Springs Hotel, which was in operation from 1895 until it burned in 1905. Guests were lured to the hotel by the legend of the nearby mineral springs and their reputed healing powers. There were seven different kinds of mineral waters, each supposedly with specific curative and medicinal powers. There are some today who say there were nine different kinds of mineral waters but as far as I know, only seven were mentioned during the hotel years.

The letters were discovered in 1968 by a seventeen-year-old boy, Jim Collins Jr., and his father, Jim Collins. Father and son had a passion for antiques and old things from the past, including the unknown. They would travel the back roads to see what they could find. One day while traveling across the Mississippi/Tennessee state line, they came across a driveway that led up through the woods for what seemed like a long distance. When they came to a clearing, they saw a beautiful abandoned antebellum mansion, which reminded them of something one would see in the movie "Gone with The Wind".

Continued on next page....



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## Hotel Love Letters *continued...*

As they were walking through the house admiring the structure, they came upon a room with a large bureau of drawers with an ornate mirror above it. Jim Jr. discovered the letters in a yellowed plastic bag under a book that had been left in the drawer. What caught his attention was that the letter on top was dated 1898.

As they returned home and began reading the letters, the content of the letters opened the reader up to a love story about a newlywed couple with a new baby. The young lady was Leila Willins, who was married to John Willins. John had gotten a job at Orgil Brothers Hardware in Memphis, Tennessee. The letters are correspondence between the young couple during the time that they were separated and is a true love story.

Mr. Collins kept the letters for 50 years before he realized what a piece of history he had. In 2018, he decided to seek out information about the letters, which led him to contact the Oliver Springs Historical Society. The original letters are now in the possession of the Historical Society. Copies of the letters are available to read at the museum in hard copy form or may be accessed digitally.

Many thanks to Jim Collins Jr. for returning the letters to their rightful home. As I am sure that the young couple cherished the letters they received from each other, I hope you enjoy reading the letters about a true love story and puts a smile on your face as it did for them for years to come.

### EDITORS NOTE:

These letters are placed on next page so they can be seen together. It is rare we get to "see" a vision of how the past lived, so it is a gift to us to enjoy and learn from. The letters can be seen at the Museum in various formats. The Quarterly newsletter will be placing a letter in each edition to read for your enjoyment.

Continued on next page....



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## Hotel Love Letters continued...

Letter from Leila Willins to her husband John - 1898:

**Oliver Springs Hotel.**  
N. F. POWEL, Prop.  
New 150 Room Hotel.  
All Modern Improvements.  
Electric Bells, Lights and Elevator.

Open May 1, 1898.  
Situated immediately on Southern Railroad, 35 miles north-west of Knoxville, Tenn. 4 daily trains stop in front of Hotel. Telephone and Mail in office. Board reasonable. Write for folder.

Oliver Springs, Tenn., Aug 6<sup>th</sup> 1898

My darling Husband -  
Your nice long letter came last night, I say nice, but it was long. Now I thought you were not going to feed me any more no matter what I did. I think I did right in sending you the telegram for you said you had not heard from me and as you had not heard from me and I did not get a letter from you on Monday I did not know what to think about you. I thought maby you had begun to think about what you had done, and had hated me more

as you struck me as though I was a low woman and did not care to have any thing more to do with me. You see I was justiciable in thinking something was wrong, dont you? I did not know what to think so telegraphed you and you got mad at me. Well I did not think you would scold me for such a little thing any how. But my darling husband you never did think I knew any thing about any thing. But some of these days you will want you darling. The baby is all right as when ever I say John call papa, he runs to the door as says papa, papa gone, train, he know

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Oliver Springs, Tenn., 1898

you have gone home. John is Fred coming here and when is he coming. All your friends ask to be remembered to you. Mrs Shelley & Lucy send their love. Well my darling sweetheart I will have not close with lots of love from your baby. With much love and many kisses from your devoted wife  
Leila  
My paper has given out so please excuse this.

