

Cumberland Homesteads Museum: A Heritage Development Plan



**A Public Service Project of the
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation**



August 2023

Background

In January 2023, the Cumberland Homesteads Tower Association requested assistance from the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation for recommendations on how to (1) improve the museum exhibits at the Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum; (2) identify historic preservation needs of the building; (3) identify potential new funding sources; and (4) ensure the future sustainability of the museum.

Center director Dr. Carroll Van West assigned the project to his spring 2023 Seminar in Public History Classes. The following graduate students visited the property--some on multiple occasions--and developed the following DRAFT report for the consideration of the Association's board and other interested public and private parties. The graduate students were:

Mercedes Collins
Allie Hasty
Rachel Hooper Reece
Kayla Jenkins
Ryan Nedrow.

A DISTINGUISHED AND SIGNIFICANT HISTORY

The Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum has served the communities of Cumberland County for 40 years as a landmark in local, state, and national history. The Tower is the central element of a large historic district of buildings, structures, and sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places representing the history and achievements of the federal Division of Subsistence Homesteads during the Great Depression. Here, in the hard times of the 1930s, a group of modern-day Tennessee pioneers shaped federal programs and initiatives to their own needs, creating a strong, stable community that emerged from the depths of the depression to become an educational, cultural, and recreational center for the Cumberland Plateau.

A Bold Experiment, 1933-1939

“The Cumberland Homesteads project had a major economic impact at the local level, but is also of national significance as an intact planned community representative of an important New Deal movement to aid destitute rural families” – Cumberland Homesteads Historic Places Nomination

As a response to an ever-worsening economic depression that left millions of American with little hope in the future, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt promised a New Deal for the United States. Congress approved a series of public programs, projects, financial reforms, and initiatives between 1933 and 1939 to combat the economic hardship faced by Americans. The story of Cumberland Homesteads begins within a part of this relief effort--the effort to bring hope and a better life to rural Americans. In May 1933, Congress approved the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), where Section 208, Title II established the Division of Subsistence Homesteads. President Roosevelt chose Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, to spearhead the program.

Once officially organized in August 1933, leadership of the Division of Subsistence Homesteads passed to Milburn Lincoln Wilson, who had earlier been an influential agricultural leader in the Montana homesteading movement. Wilson and his staff brainstormed four possible "subsistence homestead" communities: experimental farm colonies, subsistence gardens for city workers, colonies for stranded workers, and homesteads for part-time industrial workers.¹ The term "subsistence" does not entirely mirror the goal of the program. As President Roosevelt said "I wish we could have come up with a new term to take its place. This work we are doing is not a matter of subsistence...we want more for the families than that...it is the thing that we have called 'the more abundant life.'"² The idea of subsistence homesteads can be traced to earlier projects by the American Friends Service Committee in mining regions of "West Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, and Pennsylvania."³ Tollett argues that "the American Friends Service Committee have not received the credit they deserve for their impact on Cumberland Homesteads and other Subsistence and Resettled communities."⁴

The division announced on October 14, 1933, that it would concentrate efforts around three types of homestead communities for: part-time farmers near industrial employment, resettled farmers from submarginal land, and stranded miners. The Cumberland Homesteads

¹ Elizabeth A. Straw, "Cumberland Homesteads Historic District, National Register of Historic Places - Digital Archive on NPGallery," (National Park Service, August 16, 1988), 3.

² Charles Tollett, "The Cumberland Homesteads," *Crossville Chronicle*, n.d., pp. 31.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Tollett, 30.

project was designated as a “stranded” community, since its focus was on out-of-work coal miners and lumbermen.⁵

Becoming a Homesteads Project

Cumberland Homesteads, established as a “Subsistence Farm Community” in 1934 by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads, was carved out of timberland cleared for farmland by the federal Civil Works Administration (CWA). The location was selected largely due to the work of Cumberland County agricultural agent, Robert L. Lyons, who brought together community, regional, and national leaders in Crossville.⁶ The sparked connection to a national level initiative came from Homer L. Morris, a Fisk University professor, quaker, and friend of Clarence E. Pickett and his work with the American Friends Service Committee. A letter written July 5, 1933 from Pickett to Morris states the intention for a community to be established in Cumberland County.⁷ Morris went on to an appointment as Field Director to the Division of Subsistence Homesteads later that year and served on the board of Cumberland Homesteads, Inc. Both local and national figures were invested in the prospects of the Cumberland Homesteads project.

The community truly needed the hope the Homesteads provided. The devastating flood of 1929, the frequent closing and final closure of the Roane Iron Company in that same year, and local labor unrest and strikes at the Harriman Hosiery Mills all contributed to the pain and suffering locals in Cumberland County and the larger mountain area had undergone even before the onset of the Great Depression. The need was ripe for a community effort to reinvigorate the spirit of the region.

The newly founded Cumberland Homesteads consisted of 8,903 acres of farm tracts, 1,245 acres of “common land” for grazing, woodland, and cooperative enterprises, 11,200 acres for “further development”, and 5,055 acres owned by the cooperative association. The land for the Cumberland Homesteads was selected in conjunction and centered on a 1,300-acre recreational area. In total by 1938, the government and the cooperative association for Cumberland Homesteads held an area totaling 27,802 acres. In addition to the land, \$435,500 was allocated in a grant (called a loan in reports) to spur the overall project.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), an organization created through the Emergency Conservation Work Act of 1933, carried out work on the recreational park and in other areas of the Cumberland Homesteads project. The CCC “allowed single men between the ages of 18 and 25 to enlist in work programs to improve America’s public lands, forests, and parks.”⁸ The park consisted of forested land and the man-made Byrd Lake. Initially intended as a recreation area for homesteaders, the park featured “a beach, bathhouse, boathouse, cabins and two hiking trails.”⁹

The administration at Cumberland Homesteads was by no means faceless. Newton D. Walker, a prominent and successful businessman, led the leadership team. Walker “could see what others count not see and go where others were not able to go.”¹⁰ F. O. Clark, the first

⁵ Straw, 69.

⁶ Ibid., 72; Tollett, 2.

⁷ Straw, 72.

⁸ “The Civilian Conservation Corps (U.S. National Park Service),” National Parks Service (U.S. Department of the Interior, February 8, 2018), <https://www.nps.gov/articles/the-civilian-conservation-corps.htm>.

⁹ Straw, 20.

¹⁰ Tollett, “The Cumberland Homesteads,” 3.

project manager, was a teacher and farm manager from Berea College and functioned as “an exceptional leader.”¹¹ Dr. Dwight F. Folger of Clemson and Yale Universities was the Personnel Director of the project with education in education and sociology. Tennessee Valley Authority Board Chairman, Dr. Arthur Morgan, “used his considerable influence” to advocate for the project.¹² Administrators sought people with a desire to learn and grow, as Troy Hammons, a 99-year-old homesteader, stated “We needed to learn, we wanted to learn, they gave us teachers, and we learned.”¹³ The growth of the homestead relied on a cooperation between homesteaders and administrator.

Becoming a Homesteader

Over 2,500 applications from “needy, yet worth, families” were submitted. By the end of January, 1935, 233 homesteader families were selected from the first year’s 1,500 applications. The applications came in from Cumberland, Fentress, Putnam, and Morgan Counties and “most were looking for something better than what they had.”¹⁴ Administrators under the direction of Personnel Director Folger reviewed the applications.¹⁵ Additionally, applicants who passed an initial review received a home visit from one of ten case workers. The average homesteader was a thirty-four-year-old married man with three children. With the acceptance of their application and their arrival at the homesteaders, homesteaders first moved into “communal barns” before they completed their “family barn.”¹⁶

Building the Homestead

The 251 original homesteads built of the intended 350 cover 10 to 160 acres each with an average plot of 16 acres. Each homestead featured a home, as well as a number of outbuildings ranging from barns, chicken houses, and smokehouses, to sheds, root cellars, and privies. These outbuildings augmented the purposes of the homestead allowing homesteaders versatility in their economic activities.

Community buildings were vital to the homesteads as they centered the efforts made on site. These cooperative buildings included a canning factory and a hosiery mill, a cooperative store, a government garage, loom house, and adjoining water towers for the cooperative buildings. The Cumberland Homesteads Tower, the current museum site, functioned as both a water tank tower as well as office and meeting room space for the project. Located nearby stand the Homestead Schools, both elementary and high school buildings were built with a separate “Home Economic Lab” and a “Craft Building.” The present-day Homestead Elementary School, which now occupies these structures, is invariably tied Cumberland Homesteads and a long history of education and learning.¹⁷ As Principle Vanwinkle wrote in the School Improvement Plan from the 90s “Homestead Elementary School continues to challenge the students with the same perseverance, self-reliance, and dedication, characteristic of the community’s birth.”¹⁸ The Cumberland Homesteads tower, school buildings, hosiery mill, loom house, garage, and water towers for the cannery and hosiery mill, are all still standing.

¹¹ Tollett, 3.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 4.

¹⁴ Ibid. 3.

¹⁵ Straw, 73.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Tollett, 44-59.

¹⁸ Ibid., 59.

These historic homes, outbuildings, and community buildings are also architecturally significant. As Straw emphasizes, the Cumberland Homesteads “represent an important aspect of workers’ housing in the United States as well as a significant example of the use of local materials in buildings.”¹⁹ Thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Roosevelt and Mr. Wilson, the homes featured some of the latest technology for rural properties including plumbing and electricity, a “crusade” for housing reformers to improve living conditions and quality of life concerns.²⁰ Additionally using the native Crab Orchard sandstone for walls and gable roofs as well as local timber and blacksmithing, these one to one-and-one half story houses were formed physically from the hills of Appalachia.²¹

In Crossville, the Milo Lemert Memorial County Offices, built originally as a post office in 1937 due to the high amount of mail going through the homestead, also utilized Crab Orchard sandstone to great effect as does the Palace Theater and the Military Museum.²² While physically built from local resources, the construction process, much like the project itself, was one of national collaboration. William Macy Stanton, “a gifted Quaker architect” from Pennsylvania with prior experience with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), who designed fifteen unique house plans for the homestead and bears much of the legacy that contributed to the National Historic District.²³ These homes and the tower are physical representations of the dual local and national investment that made Cumberland Homesteads work.²⁴

Making the Homesteads Successful

Families made the homesteads project successful. Every member of the family contributed to the effort. Girls learned “crocheting, rug hooking on burlap, and other crafts” while boys were encouraged to learn “leather tooling, making buttons and buckles from black walnuts, carving and other crafts using crude tools with self-sufficiency as a goal.”²⁵ Women within the family were encouraged and took readily to crafts to provide supplementary income for the household and themselves in turn. Women developed economic power as furnishers of “all of the fine arts” as Marie Ervin, a home economist, and Nurse Amy Cox (Harshman) spearheaded activities for women.²⁶ Though relegated to specific tasks, women specialized as incredibly skilled crafters and artists who contributed to the larger economy and community atmosphere. As Pauline Pruitt concluded the women homesteaders were “making the community more than just a place to live.”²⁷ Ervin and Cox are credited as “helping the Homesteads to be a healthy and successful community.”²⁸

At roughly \$1.00 an hour, the skilled workers building their family homesteads were given a “self-help” philosophy in which they were paid to build their own home.²⁹ For fourth-five hours of work a week, the homesteader received cash for fifteen of those hours and the rest went toward the purchase of their home. But by 1936 the credit hour payment practice of placing cash directly aside for the later purchase of the home was discontinued. The Quaker

¹⁹ Straw, 78.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 6.

²² West, 54.

²³ Tollett, 5.

²⁴ Ibid., 3.

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ West, 135.

²⁸ Tollett, 5.

²⁹ Straw, 73.

based practice of credit hours was instead replaced amid protest as “homeowners were paid in full for their labor and back credit hours were either paid off or used as payment for back rent.”³⁰

Not all was work for the community and recreation contributed greatly to their quality of life. In addition to being motivated people who found fulfillment in their work, the homesteaders enjoyed time off. In addition to the nearby park, “the usual activities of farm life” were supplemented with classes, music and dance, theater, arts, crafts, games, and a baseball team as early as 1934 which “was a great boon to community spirit and morale.”³¹ Time off and breaks from laborious tasks are an essential part of President Roosevelt's ideas for “the more abundant life.”

Tollett notes that “the salaries of these workers did wonders for the local economy.”³² However, with the failure of the sorghum plant, cannery, and coal mine, industrial development did not arrive. On July 28, 1938, a celebration was held to mark the completion of the homestead project.³³ This was not the end of the process homesteaders embarked on. In 1939, the FSA began “a long and often emotionally charged process of selling the hoes to the cooperatives or residents of the houses.”³⁴ The homesteaders were arguably frustrated by the process they had undergone and when presented with the terms of agreement to purchase their houses a rent strike occurred for nearly a year. The economic as well as emotional investment in the building of their own homes had galvanized the homesteaders against the administration's policies. Mobilizing their power, homesteaders forced the FSA “to look closely at payment for credit houses and did change some of the terms in the farm purchase agreement.”³⁵

Change Brings Controversy

Some critics considered the subsistence homestead projects across the country as “social engineering,” thus worthy of scorn while President Roosevelt put it more simply as government helping rural Americans achieve “the more abundant life.”³⁶ Senator Harry F. Byrd countered that the projects were “too good” for rural people--he thought the addition of technological advances like electricity and indoor plumbing would be lost on “simple mountain folk.”³⁷ Yet “simple mountain folk” actually built their homesteads and took pride in their achievement. As the *Crossville Chronicle* wrote on January 25, 1934: the homesteads held “more beauty and comfort than ever assembled in like space in the United States.”³⁸

There were legal challenges as well. The law creating the program expired on June 15, 1935--no way would the project be complete by that date. Thankfully for the residents and workers of 691 completed houses and 1,369 incomplete houses, Executive Order 7041 issued on May 15, 1935 transferred the division to the Resettlement Administration and work could continue under administrator Rexford G. Tugwell.³⁹

³⁰ Straw, 75.

³¹ Tollett, 5.

³² Tollett, 3.

³³ Straw, 73.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

³⁶ Tollett, 4 & 7.

³⁷ Straw, “78.

³⁸ West, 134.

³⁹ Straw, 70.

Other critics worried about sustainability. Would the homesteads work and be productive? Or would “stranded communities” remain “stranded”? At Cumberland Homesteads the answer was yes and no. Yes in that families could develop mini-farms with livestock to help feed their families but no in that it proved difficult to have nearby industries established until the second half of the 20th century. Charles Tollett concluded that “hope was the gift that kept giving” in both positive and negative lights.⁴⁰ “The miracle that reformers such as Eleanor Roosevelt had prophesized” never came into being at least how the reformers intended--it came instead as the homesteaders made it happen through hard work and commitment.⁴¹

By 1941, 44 of the homesteader families had moved out, six of which due to eviction.⁴² The conviction and hope felt by the homesteaders for their future persisted throughout the process despite the failures, trials, and tribulations along the way. While looking at the successes and failures of the Subsistence Homestead projects, Lord concludes that “no one was enough like another to make them completely comparable.”⁴³ Cumberland Homesteads did however provide housing and jobs though some of the hardest years in our nation’s history. The “homestead families worked hard to own their own homes and feed themselves...”⁴⁴ The hardworking people of Appalachia built the homestead owning both the fruits of their labor and the legacy of their work.

A Lasting Impact

If you had one pulling mule and your neighbor had one pulling mule, you worked together on the jobs each of you had – Horace Hall, second-generation homesteader⁴⁵

As stated by Dr. Carroll Van West in his book *Tennessee’s New Deal Landscape*, grasping the “mind-numbing count of different agencies supervising housing is daunting enough” without adding into consideration “the monies and/or labor supplied” to these efforts.⁴⁶ As W. Calvin Dickinson noted of Cumberland County “It might be appropriator to tag Cumberland County a ‘New Deal County’ because of all the federal money that poured into the area in the 1930’s and 1940’s.”⁴⁷ The sheer power demonstrated by all those involved in the Cumberland Homesteads project is phenomenal and worthy of note beyond recognition. Indeed, as Tollett expresses “there were a few folks who applied because they had a desire to be part of something significant” and they proved that significance through their personal effort.⁴⁸ The massive number of hours of work committed by homesteaders and the sheer costs involved by the administration warrant an impact far beyond 251 houses and assorted community structures. The tower itself is “one of Tennessee’s most potent symbols of the New Deal Era” and represents a monumental effort to mold employment and prosperity from the hills of Appalachia. Though Cumberland Homesteads was only temporarily successful in providing welfare, housing, and employment, the community endured the trials of the Great Depression and lived on. As expressed by Dr. West, “The light on top to the tower literally was a beacon of change for the hundreds of displaced farmers, miners, and loggers who built a new home out of this rugged Cumberland Plateau land.” These were people bound together in struggle and made friendship and family their watchwords. Much like the friendship quilt made for the Carson

⁴⁰ Tollett, 4.

⁴¹ West, 135.

⁴² Straw, 76.

⁴³ Straw, 76.

⁴⁴ Tollett, 4.

⁴⁵ Tollett, 4.

⁴⁶ West, 131.

⁴⁷ Tollett, 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 7.

Whiteaker family wedding, for the people on the ground it was a homespun effort. This was an effort taken on by the whole community. Being part of this significant effort inspired First Lady Roosevelt to contribute as well with a lasting national impact on the Homestead Project through her off-site influence and multiple site visits.⁴⁹ Recalling her visits in *This I Remember* (1949), Eleanor Roosevelt contrasted her first trip to Tennessee in 1932 where “she saw firsthand the poverty and inner strength of Tennesseans” and in her own words by 1940:

After the housing and educational and agricultural experiment had had time to take effect, a more prosperous area would have been hard to find. I have always wished that those who opposed authorities to create similar benefits in the valleys of other great rivers could have seen the contrast as I saw it.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Tollett, 37-38.

⁵⁰ West, *Tennessee's New Deal Landscape: A Guidebook* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 24-25.

Cumberland Homesteads Tower: Preservation Assessment and Recommendations

Introduction

The assessment of preservation needs and potential recommendations reflect our visual inspection of the building as informed by information gathered from *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: With Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* and Robert A. Young's *Historic Preservation Technology*.

Tower

Repairing/Replacing Stairs: Three wooden stairs at the top of the tower, as well as one, when you first start your ascent that, are loose and another that is cracked. Loose steps are a safety hazard as visitors can trip and fall causing bodily harm to themselves and others around them. This is a major liability for the museum. Heavy foot trafficking areas can lead to wear and tear on the walkway. It is important to make sure they are structurally sound in order to prevent accidents. An assessment of the stability of the stairs needs to be conducted by a trained contractor with knowledge of the methods used when the original stairs were installed. The loose steps should be repaired, or if too worn, be replaced. The stair with a crack in the middle needs to be replaced.



Cracked and worn steps may lead to individuals accidentally harming themselves and others.

Repairing windows: The tower's immediate concerns are the broken windows which allow bats and other pests to fly in, as well as leading to moisture damage. Open broken windows can allow a variety of pests into the building that can cause damage to the structure as they scavenge for food and build habitats for themselves. This intrusion can harm not only the building but those that visit the tower, especially from bats as their guano, according to the CDC can carry fungal diseases or rabies.⁵¹⁵² Along with the risk to individuals, the broken windows lead to moisture damage. Wood is an absorbent material that can easily absorb water leading to an array of structural issues. Some of the most common issues that can come from sustained moisture damage are fungi growth, rot, wood expansion, staining, and attracting pests. To

⁵¹ "Histoplasmosis: A Common Fungal Lung Infection," CDC, last modified August 22, 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/features/histoplasmosis.html>.

⁵² "Animals and Rabies," CDC, last modified January 6, 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/animals/index.html>.

combat the problems attached to the broken windows in the tower is to first find a way to seal them until a more permanent solution can be executed. Then the next step will be to have the wood primed. Exposed wood, especially those subject to possible element exposure to protect the wood from weathering and prevent moisture absorption. The best course of action to prevent further pest and moisture damage is to have the windows resealed in a proper fitting frame that will seal out unwanted damage.⁵³ UV filters should be applied to windows to protect the interior from sun damage.



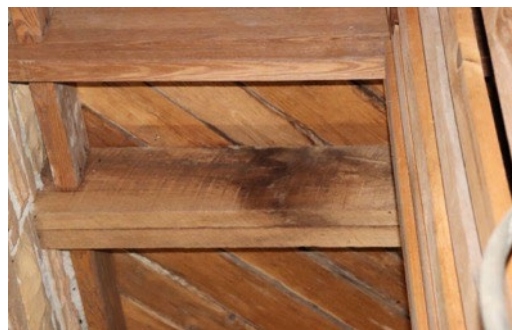
Excessive moisture can cause wood to expand And then contract when it dries. It leads to wood cracking or separating at the seams.

Currently some windows are sealed with duct tape that is not holding.



Moisture damage: Moisture damage can be detrimental to buildings, so it is important to take note of possible water damage. Some parts underneath the wood flooring at the top of the tower show evidence of water damage. This could be caused by water coming in through the broken windows and soaking into the floor. It is important to check if this is just a stain or the beginnings of wood decay. If the stains turn out to be rot they should be treated. Rot is caused by the growth of fungus within the wood and should be treated by trained contractors with a fungicide to kill the fungi.⁵⁴

An example of discoloration on the floor beneath the tower. Should be investigated since a water stain or rot can compromise the structural integrity to the wood.



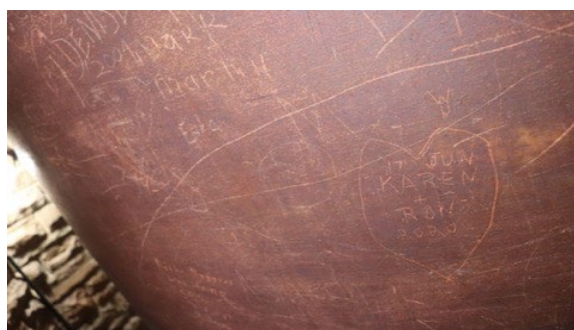
Cleaning: A thorough deep clean of the tower needs to be conducted. The removal of dead bugs by a simple sweep as well as dusting to remove cobwebs will help keep the area clean and stop other pests from continued migration into the tower. Proper care should be taken when removing the droppings from birds and bats, it is recommended that masks and gloves should be worn to ensure any possible air-diseases are

⁵³ Robert Young, "Chapter 4: Wood," in *Historic Preservation Technology*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008).

⁵⁴ Young, "Chapter 4: Wood."

not contracted such as, a fungus sometimes left behind by bird and bat droppings known as histoplasmosis.⁵⁵ Using a dry cloth or feathered brush (like a swiffer duster) along the windows including the corners and edges will help remove all the excess dust and debris built up from weather and elevation of the tower. The windows also need cleaning, routine maintenance on windows should be done annually at least, and if needed the removal of flaky paint through hand-removal is recommended.⁵⁶ The same process of cleaning applies to the rest of the historic building.

Cleaning Rust: The stairs wrap around the metal silo from the original water tower that was constructed. This metal has severely rusted from being exposed to the air and humidity as it is a ferrous metal (meaning it contains iron).⁵⁷ Special care needs to be taken when cleaning the water tower so as not to cause further corrosion with the metal and lead to further damage to the tower. To ensure this the gentlest cleaning method is recommended such as a low pressure wash, wire brushing, and possibly a rust remover should be used.⁵⁸ It is important to note, if a rust remover is used it should first be tested on a small area of the surface to determine if it will help or cause further damage.



Beginning of corrosion on the underside of a metal platform in the tower

Monitor: It is important to take note of issues that while at the moment are not perceived issues, but have the potential to become future problems that will need to be addressed. The expansion of rust on metal structures can be the beginnings of metal deterioration, the spread of water stains as it can indicate a recurring moisture damage, and expansion of wood damage in the form of cracking or lifting as this can be a precursor to structural damage. If any of these issues begin to occur it is important to identify the cause of the damage, correct the issue causing damage, and then repair the damage.

Graffiti: Although a less immediate concern, the addition of graffiti and writing done to the tower can distract from the historic significance of the structure. Part of preserving a historic site is to maintain its historic integrity. The addition of unapproved elements, including by visitors, can subtract for the historic experience of the tower.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ "Histoplasmosis: A Common Fungal Lung Infection," CDC.

⁵⁶ Robert Young, *Historic Preservation Technology*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), 211.

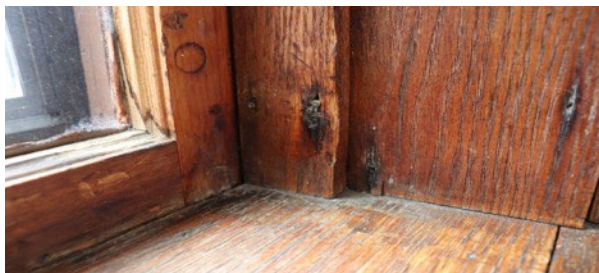
⁵⁷ Ibid, 132.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 150.

⁵⁹ Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer eds., *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: With Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing*

New Deal Exhibit Room

Repair windows: Windows are often in a vulnerable position as they act as a barrier between the inside and outside environments, which can lead to damaging issues in the form of moisture, dry rot, or weathering. It is important to make sure the windows are properly sealed so as to not let moist air into the building that can lead to condensation around the frame. To make sure that the windows are sealed properly you can carefully apply a glazing putty or weather striping around the window panes. Or in the case of broken glass, remove and replace the glass before applying the glazing putty or weather striping (can be used on the bottom track as well).⁶⁰ Some of the window frames show signs of dry rotting where the primer/ wood stain has worn off.



Moist air condensed on metal nails as they were colder than the surrounding air, leading to water damage.

The area around where the primer/ wood stain has worn off should be cleaned and the primer/ wood stain reapplied using a product type as close to the original as possible to match with the rest of the room. Cleaning or should be done as gently as possible avoiding abrasive and harsh chemicals before treatment.⁶¹ To protect the interior from damage from exposure to sunlight UV filters should be applied.



Window shows sign of dry rotting and worn protective coating.



A chip in the window, possibly spreading

Separating wood: As a building gets older it is prone to shifting to various degrees depending on material, environment, and building practices. However, separating in wood can also be an indication of moisture damage, as wood can expand after absorbing water and then after drying shrink causing displacement. An assessment by a contractor can be made to investigate what is causing the separation and then how to fix the issue causing the problem and stabilize the wood from separating further.

Historic Buildings, (Washington D.C.:U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Technical Preservation Services, 2017), <https://permanent.fdlp.gov/gpo83651/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf> pf 2

⁶⁰ Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: With Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, 105.

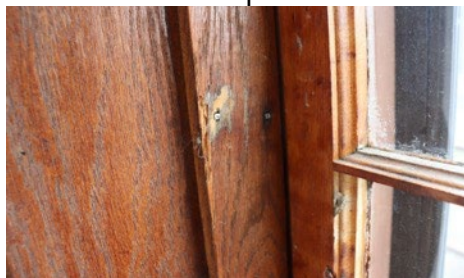
⁶¹ Ibid, 46.



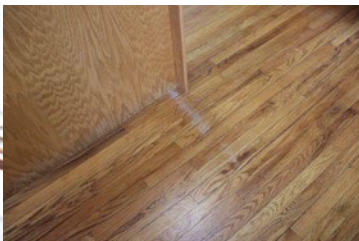
wood splitting in a window sill

Cleaning: It is important to prevent dirt and dust build up as it can cause allergies or attract pests. Keeping areas clean can also make it easier to identify problems due to accretions obstructing the view of damage indicators.

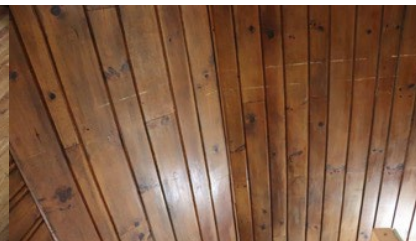
Scuff marks and scratches on wood surfaces: There are scuff marks and scratches on the ceiling, floor, and walls that could be cleaned and retained to blend into the surrounding wood. Other areas may need to be smoothed before the wood and be resealed. Have a trained contractor come to inspect and assess possible avenues to repairing damage with least abrasive methods possible.



Chipped stain around window.



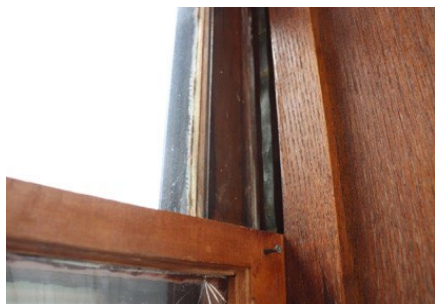
Scuff marks on floor.



Scratches on the ceiling.

Rust on hinges: The hinges on the door walking in have rust on them. The rust should be removed and then monitored to make sure it does not spread further into the metal causing corrosion.

Window operability: Some windows appear as if they would not open due to warped tracks. This can be caused by metal being weakened by age and/or exposure to changes in temperature from hot to cold. This can possibly be remedied by replacing the metal tracks, but may also need to lubricate friction points.⁶²

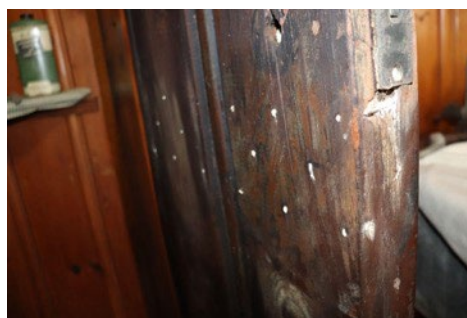
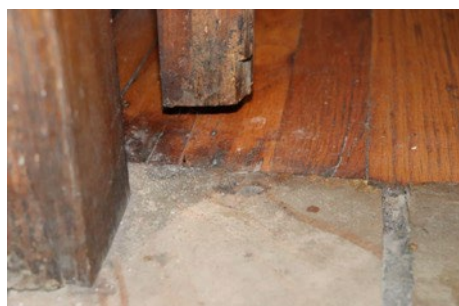


⁶² Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: With Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, 103.

1930s Exhibit Room

Windows: Similar to the rest of the rooms in this building the windows require attention. First, a further inspection around the windows is needed to see if water is seeping in around any of the seams as moisture is the primary contributing factor to wooden window decay.⁶³ The windows in this room did have signs of damage so the caulk and putty around the seals needs to first be gently stripped. A new layer of caulk on the outside window needs to be applied around the frame, putty on the back of the window to protect from outside elements needs to be reapplied. Finally, there are some cracked window panes that need to be replaced then sealed with glazing putty around the window panes. The hinges and locks on the windows need to be inspected for rust and damage. The windows need to be cleaned. Both the inside and outside glass of the windows should be cleaned, outside using a gentle power wash, inside glass cleaner to remove all built up residue and dust. There are also some windows that have warped window tracks. The more severely warped tracks cause less operability of the window, so it needs to be decided if these windows should be permanently sealed or fixed. Permanently sealing them would help with pest and moisture control of the room, completely replacing the window track could be more expensive and has the possibility of warping again, so sealing is recommended. UV filters should be applied to windows in order to protect the interior from sun damage. Finally, once the inspections and repairs are completed the windows need to be routinely inspected to ensure all problems have been solved and new damage is not occurring.

Water damage and lifting floor: Another inspection with a licensed contractor needs to be conducted to confirm, the wooden planks on the floor at the entrance into this room appear to have suffered from water damage. This can cause warping, which is what it looks like is happening, causing the wood to pull away from the connecting stone floor.⁶⁴ This is a structural issue as water damaged wood can also lead to wood rotting. It is also a safety hazard, anyone who walks into this room can trip and fall over this separation causing injury.



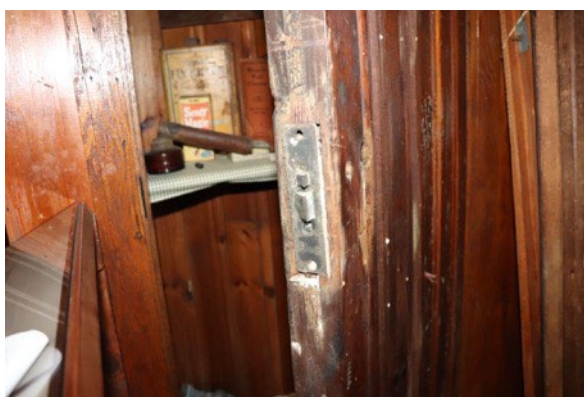
Door rotting and mildew: One of the more pressing issues that needs to be addressed is the cabinet door towards the room entrance that is infected with what appears to be rot and white mildew. This situation is a concern as the long-term result includes compromising the major structural components of the wood in the door leading to destroying the door's structural integrity.⁶⁵ The damage of the door can be addressed in the following manners: leave it alone,

⁶³ John H. Myers, "Preservation Briefs: 9 The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows," U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Cultural Resources, last modified 1981, [Preservation Briefs 9: The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/pubs/pb/pb9.htm).

⁶⁴ Robert Young, *Historic Preservation Technology*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), pg. 166.

⁶⁵ Young *Historic Preservation*, p 64.

try to repair parts of the damaged wood, or completely replacing the door with a replication. The overriding guideline for treatment is to remove the source of decay, in the case of this door complete removal is recommended in the long-term as this is not an entrance door.



Corrosion of lock (clean then watch): On the same door as above and the entrance door, the lock has been exposed to enough elemental damage to cause corrosion. This is an intermediate concern as the locks are not in use, so the risk of security is not compromised. However, to keep some structural integrity of the door the lock should be cleaned using a small wire brush, then monitored for further corrosion.

Wood Paneled Walls: Some of the wood paneling's along the wall have begun to lift and pull away from the wall. This could be caused by moisture exposure from being in a room that consistently changes from hot too cold with humidity. This can cause the wood to expand and pull away. A contractor is needed to come in and survey the scope of the damage and type of wood (hard or soft) to conclude what type of reinforcement and retainment can be safely conducted to keep the structural integrity.

Scuff marks and Scratches on Ceiling/floor: It needs to be noted there are multiple scuff marks and scratches on the wood in both the ceiling and the floors of the 1930s room. While this is not a pressing structural integrity issue it should be mentioned, but it is not recommended to attempt any type of reinforcement or replacement. It is recommended to monitor the scratches to ensure deeper damage is not developing.

Family Exhibit Room

Condensation on windows: Condensation on windows can be a precursor to moisture damage as water seeps into wood that is exposed. Important to make sure that exposed wood has a protective coating covering it for protection. The foliage around the building may be contributing to this issue, as the exterior glass receives inadequate sun.

Cracked windowpane: Cracked windows, if in a single place, can spread across glass. They can be replaced with similar style glass and be resealed in. Fixing broken windows can prevent

glass from eventually falling from the windowpane.⁶⁶ Along with correcting issues within the windows, UV filters should be applied on the windows.

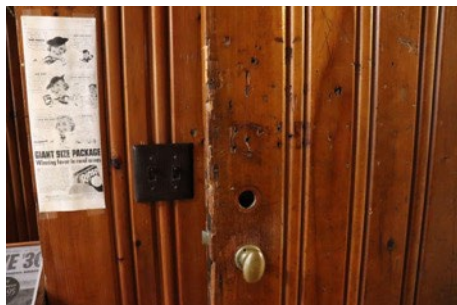


Rotting wood: On part of the wall as you walk into the room there is evidence of wood rot. This rot should be treated by a contractor with fungicide and area assessed to discover probable causes to prevent rot appearing again.

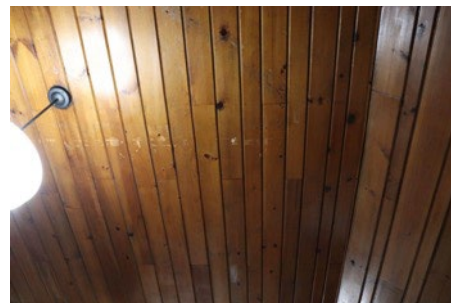
Wood paneling lifting: Wood paneling lifting is a common occurrence as structures age and shift. Discussion with a contractor should be had about how to stabilize the lifting of the paneling and or fix it without compromising the wood.



Scuff and Scratches in the Wood: There are scratch marks present on ceiling, floor, and walls. Some of them can be cleaned and retained. Others need to be discussed with the contractor about how to properly repair it without damaging the wood and blend it in with undamaged wood. However, there are some examples that should simply be monitored to make sure further damage does not occur.



Damage done to wooden door.



Scratch marks on the ceiling.

Male Restroom

Window damage: Within the men's bathroom there are many issues regarding the window.

⁶⁶ Robert Young, "Chapter 10: Windows," in *Historic Preservation Technology*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley Sons, Inc., 2008).

The paint is chipped away so should be cleaned and gently removed with no harsh treatments, such as wire brushing. The wood surrounding and making up the window is cracked, lifted away from the frame, and chipped. An assessment should be discussed to explore preservation and restoration methods like using an epoxy to prevent further cracking in the wood if it is going to be painted over. These issues are indicative of age, wear and tear, and water damage. Steps should be taken to make sure windows are sealed against moisture that could lead to premature wood deterioration, as well as broken windows replaced and fitted with the same lamination as the other windowpanes.⁶⁷

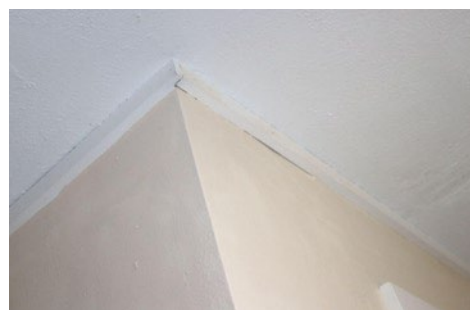


Paint chipped off of the window frame.



The window broken in the pane.

Trimming on ceiling lifting: The trimming on the ceiling is beginning to lift and separate away from the wall. This situation can be caused by the structure resettling. The trimming should be refitted to the wall to form a flush border.



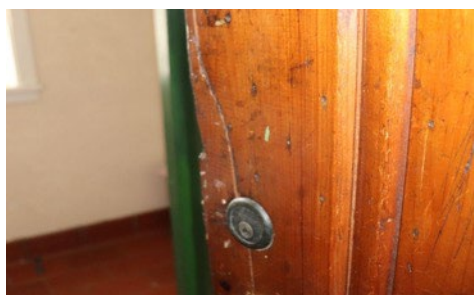
Door frame: The door frame to the men's entrance is no longer sitting flush, but there are gaps due to movement overtime. An assessment by a contractor should be made to determine if it is structurally sound and how to stabilize against further shifting. The paint around the frame is also begging to peel. The area should be cleaned and smoothed at least, if not removing all of the old paint through gentle means (no abrasive/harsh methods) and reprime and paint surface.⁶⁸



⁶⁷ Robert Young, "Chapter 10: Windows," in *Historic Preservation Technology*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley Sons, Inc., 2008).

⁶⁸ Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: With Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, 39.

Clean heater: There is a heater that has rust and other buildup on it. If an item is still in use, it is important that it remains free of build up to make sure it is able to continue to be in working order. If not properly maintained it can lead to a fire hazard.



Door cracking: There is a crack in the door that, if not already done, should be sealed to prevent further cracking and moisture penetration. This crack should be monitored to make sure it does not spread further.

Discoloration on door: There is a clear discoloration on the men's bathroom door where a previous sign was. This may be caused by light damage caused by UV light or by buildup of dirt around the area and the lighter patch was protected by the previous sign. Recommend cleaning the door with warm soapy water and a rag, avoiding harsh abrasive methods, then patting dry. These should help indicate if discoloration is caused by UV fading or dirt buildup.



Female Restroom

Window: The women's bathroom has one window, and it requires some maintenance work. Some of the wood is lifting away from the frame, so this needs to be reinforced and resealed to prevent moisture damage.⁶⁹ There are parts of the frame where the paint has been chipped away, this can be fixed by stripping the remaining paint then repainting the wall.

There is also some paint that has been found on some of the stonework outside the door, this should gently be removed so the chemicals from the paint do not cause any damage to the stone.



⁶⁹ Robert Young, "Chapter 10: Windows," in *Historic Preservation Technology*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley Sons, Inc., 2008).

Light Switch: There is corrosion on the light switch that can be solved in a couple of different ways. The light switch can either be cleaned gently with a wire brush with continued monitoring, or it can be replaced as it is just the paneling outside that is affected. It is recommended in this case to just clean the corrosion away and routinely checked for further damage.



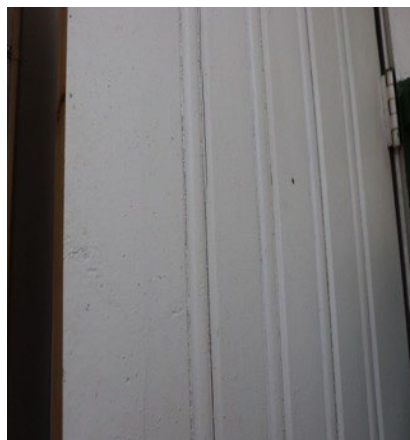
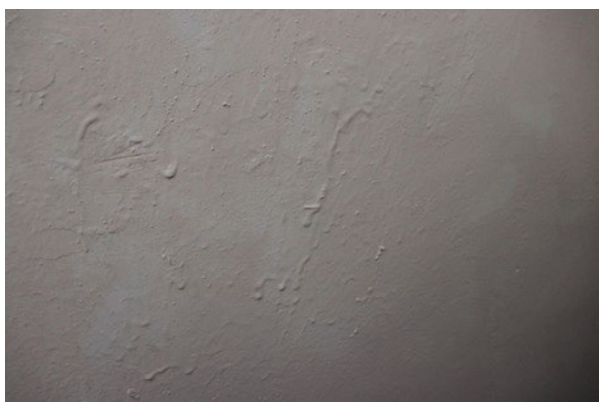
Door: The door of the women's bathroom is structurally very sound with minimal issues. The main priority is to keep that structural integrity strong and minimize damage over time. It is recommended to clean the wood panels and metal doorknob with gentle clothes then continue to routinely clean and monitor for any issues.



Heater: A concern of the bathroom is the heater in the corner. There is some notable corrosion that has developed which is an issue as a buildup of can lead to major hazards such as a fire. Monitoring is recommended.



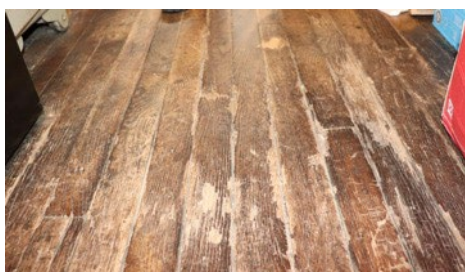
Paint: The paint in the bathroom requires some attention. There are multiple chips, cracks along the walls as well as some noticeable dried paint drips. These should be looked into to ensure there are not severe damage issues on the wall, if there is the paint should be tested for lead and other chemicals then stripped. If not, nothing needs to be done for structural integrity.



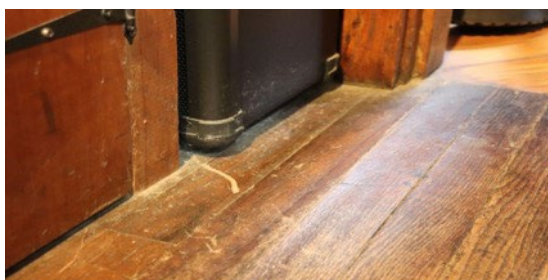
Gift Shop and Office

Wood Giving: There is a spot in the gift shop as well as in the side office where when stepped on the wood underfoot bows inward. For both spots it is important that a contractor accesses them to determine the cause of the weakness in the wood. If it is caused by moisture damage, rot, pest, cracked wood, or other possibilities, each will have their own preventatives to prevent further damage. The contractor could stabilize the loose flooring or may have to replace part of the flooring. If replacement is needed it should be done with preferably the same type of wood, treated, prepared, and installed to the same or similar methods used in the original installation.⁷⁰

Side Office floor: The flooring in the side office of the gift shop shows obvious signs of discoloration caused by wear-and-tear of people walking and dragging items across it. A contractor should investigate to make sure that the discoloration does not have other probable causes, such as moisture. It is important to be mindful of substances being used on wood flooring including cleaning substances as strong chemicals or abrasive practices can deteriorate the protective coatings. To counteract discoloration, discuss with the contractor about cleaning and smoothing the surface to reapply a new protective coating that is similar to the original one. Along with discoloration there is evidence of the floor warping close to the entrance. Warping can be due to moisture absorption causing swelling and shrinkage. Should discuss with the contractor how to stabilize and prevent further warping of the floor.⁷¹



Discoloration and scraping across the floor.



Warping of the floor in the office.

⁷⁰ Robert Young, "Chapter 13: Floors," in *Historic Preservation Technology*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008).

⁷¹Robert Young, "Chapter 13: Floors,".

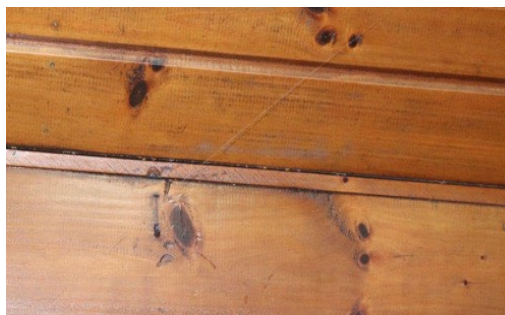
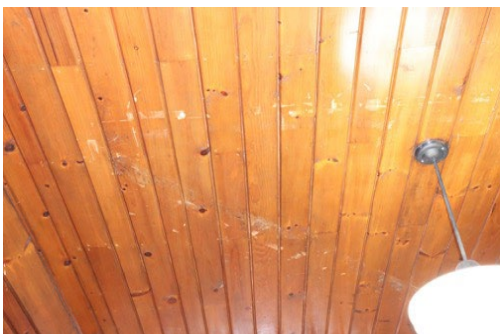


Gaps in Floor: There is a segment in the floor of the gift shop where a replacement wooden plank (signs of earlier wall?) is not properly sealed. There are gaps along the seams where it connects to the rest of the wooden flooring. Recommending that a contractor be brought into seal gaps with a sealant that will cause excessive damage and preferably reflect possible methods used during the period of original construction.

Worn Wood: The wood along the windowsills shows signs of discoloration through possible excessive use. They should be cleaned and make sure they have a protective coating and if not the apply one that mirrors the one that would have originally been placed. If discoloration was from rubbing along the surface caused by excessive use, constant interactions with area should be limited to prevent further wearing down of surface.



There are scratch and scuff marks on ceiling, walls, and floor. Some of these could be cleaned, smoothed, and refinished; others should be monitored to prevent further damage to wooden surfaces.



UV Filters: Sun damage can have an effect on the interiors by causing fading and deterioration. To prevent sun damage UV filters should be applied to the windows to filter the sunlight coming into the building.

Exterior Assessment

Add/extend gutters to remove water farther from the building: Gutters are an important aspect of a building as they direct water away from buildings. Without gutters or short gutters water is drained directly next to the structure, which can then seep into the foundation, possibly causing damage and compromising the foundation's integrity.⁷² Currently there are only gutters present on the front of the Cumberland's historic homestead tower, which needs to be extended to direct water further away from the foundation. Gutters need to be installed around the rest of the building, whether boxed gutters for better concealment or hanging gutters that attach directly to the eaves of the roof. After installation gutters should be maintained to make sure they are directing drainage properly and not being hindered.⁷³



Tree trimming: When discussing preservation it is important to identify possible hazards to the historic building, such as falling trees.⁷⁴ If a tree falls or even a branch falls onto the building it can cause extensive damage, so it is recommended that trees should be inspected, trimmed,

⁷² Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: With Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, 64.

⁷³ Robert Young, "Chapter 8: Roofing," in *Historic Preservation Technology*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), pg. 166.

⁷⁴ Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: With Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, pg. 72.

and if the tree is diseased, then it should be removed. The tree trimming will also help to mitigate the persistence of mold and moss on several areas of the roof and the walls. These locations are not getting enough sunlight to dry the building thus the retained moisture is leading to the mold and moss issues.

Roof assessment: It is recommended that the state of the roof be assessed and repaired. There is evidence of missing shingles and pieces of the roof itself falling off. This issue should be investigated to see how much damage has been, and how significant it is. If moisture begins to penetrate into the roof it can seep into the underlying layer causing decay and affect the structural integrity of the roof itself.⁷⁵



Evidence of the flashing from the tower is missing.



Clean/replace roof: The roofing needs a thorough cleaning to remove the moss and mold that has gathered. If left untreated the moss will retain more moisture causing further water damage to the roof and compromising the structural integrity of the building even further. This can lead to even bigger problems such as wood rot and decay and causing the roof to collapse in on itself.

⁷⁵ Robert Young, "Chapter 8: Roofing," in *Historic Preservation Technology*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008).

Foundation/stone assessment/repair: A thorough inspection of the outside stonework needs to be completed by a mason familiar with the standards of stonework to assess how much damage has already been done with particular attention to the tower itself. Based upon those assessments an initial cleaning needs to be done, and potentially removing and replacing the mortar which is known as repointing.⁷⁶ After inspection, stones may need to be replaced.



Clean outside walkways: There is growth on the walkways leading into Cumberland's historic homestead tower that, especially when wet, can become slick to walk on. This can cause harm to visitors and if this growth progresses too much it may have the potential of violating both the federal and state regulations for handicap accessibility. Access for the physical disability must be both provided and maintained so that they are functional.^{77 78} If growth on the ramp continues, it could reach a point that someone with a disability might find it difficult to use.



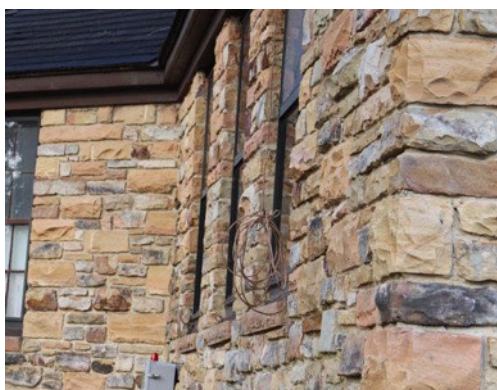
⁷⁶ Robert Young, "Chapter 4: Masonry," in *Historic Preservation Technology*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), pg. 166.

⁷⁷ Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-120-202.

⁷⁸ ADA ACT Title III Regulation, § 36.211, Maintenance of accessible features.

Weathered Window Frames: Outside windows are exposed to more extremes than the inside counterparts as they are faced with the elements and changes in the weather. It is important that outside windows are monitored to check for damage and repair them before permanent damage can set in. Currently, the outside windows need to be checked for damage in the form of moisture damage, cracking, and protective coating damage. If cracking of the wood is occurring then, it should be discussed with a contractor if it could be sealed (epoxy might be a choice if going to be covered with paint). All wooden surfaces should have some kind of protective coating to protect it against damage from the elements.

Loose/Exposed Wiring: Along the right side and back of the building there is loose wiring and possibly exposed wiring. Exposed wiring should be covered and along with loose wiring secured so as not to be disturbed by strong weather or from possibly tampering.



Clean tower: There is a notable black ring around the lower half of the tower that needs to be assessed and cleaned. It appears to be black mold, but further inspection is recommended followed by careful cleaning and treatment to rid the stone of any further damage without damaging the exterior of the rock.



Remove moss and fungus: There is more notable moss and fungus growing at the bottom and up the sides of the wings of the building. These need to be removed through careful washing and scrubbing so the damage can be mitigated.

Outside shed for storage: The outside shed is heavily deteriorated and needs to be sealed to prevent elements and pests from getting inside. Wood needs to be cleaned, reprimed, and repainted to try and prevent further deterioration.



Clean exterior monuments: There are some exterior public interpretation markers and memorials that visitors can enjoy, however, most of if not all of them have lichen and moss beginning to grow on them. This should be cleaned as it takes away from the significance of both the feature and historic building.



Growth on the memorials and dedications on the grounds.

Clean/replace light fixtures: The rear of the property is outlined by short lamp posts. These posts are all dirt built on them and some of them. They need to be cleaned and repaired. Their deteriorated state might reflect on the historic building and/or subtract from the historic importance to the Cumberland's historic homestead tower.



Close vents: There are several vents along the bottom of the building that allow airflow underneath the structure. It is recommended that, unless intentionally opened, the vents should be covered with mesh to allow air circulation but to prevent animals and pests from getting underneath the building.

Uneven Walkway: The walkway leading up to the front entrance of the museum is slanted and uneven. This could cause any person that walks on it to fall or lose their balance.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND INTERPRETATION

As a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places and as a community made up of over 250 remaining homesteads, the Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum has great abilities to share its story of the New Deal and beyond. Emphasizing the New Deal beginnings of its history and refocusing the current information on the links to homesteaders and modern Cumberland County are focus points that could allow the museum to provide ample educational materials and to connect with its community.

Currently the museum is split into three distinct rooms with different themes: the New Deal Room, which provides an overview of the New Deal and some context for the building of the site; the 1930s room, which contains various artifacts donated by homesteaders, showing what could be found in a home; and the Family Room, which shares stories of the families that lived in the homesteads, organized by the roads they lived on. There are many possible ways to update Cumberland Homesteads' current public programming and make for a more lively and engaging visit. Let's start by thinking about key themes for your museum interpretation:

- A concise history of the Great Depression and the New Deal response. The Tower is one of the best places in Tennessee to address this topic.
- What was the homesteads project?
- Who were the homesteaders? What did they build?
- How did residents take the federal ideas and turn them into realities for their families and their communities?
- What challenges did the homesteaders face?
- What is the legacy of the homesteads project today?

These themes can be addressed by reorganizing the current three exhibit rooms and adding new interpretive panels and electronic media.

Room One: The Great Depression, the New Deal, and Cumberland Homesteads

Key Facts:

The Great Depression, which began in the fall of 1929, is the greatest economic challenge ever faced by Americans. Millions were out of work and many banks failed, taking with them the living savings of many citizens.

The New Deal began in 1933 as a set of programs developed by President Franklin Roosevelt and Congress to restore prosperity to Americans after the hardships of the Great Depression.

The Division of Subsistence Homesteads was created in 1933. This program was aimed at providing housing for the under- or unemployed who were willing to work hard and create a new community based on a cooperative government and a "back-to-the-land" philosophy. I

Cumberland Homesteads was one of the first homestead colonies built in the nation. At 251 houses, it was the largest of the "stranded communities" built by the Division of Subsistence Homesteads to direct resources to out-of-work coal miners and lumbermen.

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt had high interest in the Cumberland Homesteads, visiting the project twice

Cumberland Homesteads faced many difficulties: controversy about the "back to land" philosophy; the role of government in providing housing for rural Americans; and the assumption that industry would move into a rural area because of the homesteads.

In 1936, the Resettlement Administration loaned \$55,000 to the Cumberland Homesteads Cooperative Association in order to build a sorghum plant, a cannery, and to operate a coal mine. All of these projects eventually failed.

The architecture of the Homesteads Tower and the homestead houses is important. Architect William Stanton used Crab Orchard Stone for exteriors and knotty pine paneling on interiors. An executive order in 1935 required that all houses contain indoor plumbing, toilets, baths, and electric wiring, but many did not actually end up containing these features. There are approximately fifteen different house designs.

The Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) built a recreational area for the homesteaders; it is now Cumberland Mountain State Park.

Room Two: Becoming a Homesteader

Key Facts:

Over 2,500 applications were received for the planned 350 homes. The application process was detailed and screened applicants on a variety of areas of skill. The average homesteader was a 34-year old man and married with 3 children. In some instances, men were required to get married before being allowed to be a homesteader, such as Carson Whiteaker.

Families built most of the houses under a "self-help" program, with the homesteaders being paid to build their own houses and outbuildings. Homesteaders would first move into a "communal barn" until a "family barn" was completed and the family would move in while waiting for construction on the house to be completed.

Most of the homestead's families came from Cumberland and the surrounding counties, but there were some from all over Tennessee and even outside the state.

Skilled workers on the homesteads received approximately \$1.00 an hour.

Homesteaders were meant to grow or raise their own vegetables, chickens, cows, or hogs, to supplement their income. The farms were originally intended to only be part-time, as a supplement to outside employment.

Women were strongly encouraged to take up a craft to provide additional support to their families.

Social activities were planned for the residents. They included skill-building activities to educate the families in ways to provide for themselves, such as woodworking, canning, sewing, and crafts.

Many of the families of Cumberland Homesteads remained in the area, despite the difficulties faced. By 1941, only 45 families had moved out.

Room Three: Lasting Legacies

Key Facts:

Many homestead families still live in Cumberland County today.

There was a “homesteads spirit” that exemplified working together and building the community, as can be seen through the story of Pauline Pruitt.

The hard work and contributions of homestead families can be seen through those such as the Peavyhouse family, who were one of the original homestead families. Ervin Peavyhouse learned how to be a stonemason through being a homesteader, and worked on his home, the tower, the school, and the bridges. After the completion of the homestead, he had to travel for work, leaving his wife and children at the homestead house. He was employed by Oak Ridge in WWII, and later worked as a stonemason at important Tennessee sites, such as Graceland and Sewanee University of the South.

Other residents share and amplify such stories by donating objects from their family's time at Cumberland Homesteads.

Homestead Elementary is a legacy of the Cumberland Homesteads project that is still used today.

Residents fondly remember other early schools in the projects.

Much of the community was supported and developed by homesteaders, such as the Wellons and Huan families' work on developing community churches.

Recommendations for How These Messages Can be Conveyed:

In this section are recommendations for how the above interpretive messages can be conveyed through the use of the Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum space. The first section contains ideas that can mostly be done in house with minimal extra funding or staffing. The second section contains ideas that will need a larger commitment of resources or time to be implemented.

We suggest that a rearrangement and reinterpretation of the current rooms in the Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum be a priority. A new layout, with focus on the suggested interpretive themes, could increase visitor interest and understanding of the story being presented, as well as contribute to the preservation of the artifacts housed in the museum.

Along with the new exhibit design would come a more consistent presentation of information. A consistent look and format for labels should identify objects clearly and provide brief descriptive material to help readers understand how these objects contribute to the interpretation offered in the exhibit panels. Adding new labeling would maximize the impact of the items on display in these rooms, as well as contribute to the overarching story that the museum is telling. Current labels are fading and contain handwritten descriptions of artifacts which may make it difficult for younger or visually-impaired visitors to read and limit the degree that changes can be implemented in the museum. We suggest that new labels contain clear, typed headings and a small section of interpretive text.

As improvements are being made to labels, the mounting of objects may be improved to increase the overall professional look of the exhibit. High quality copies of some photographs, documents, or newspaper articles could aid in presentation and allow for long term archival preservation of the originals.

The goal of these changes in exhibit panels and labels is to create a visitor-friendly, self-guided tour of the museum. Museum's limited staff then can focus on the gift shop and attend to visitor questions.

The bullet points below suggest some ways that the labeling or layout of the exhibit rooms can be changed to better aid in interpretation.

Room One: The Great Depression, the New Deal, and Cumberland Homesteads

- Upon entering room one, the first item of the tour that guests are greeted with is an interpretive video played from Youtube. This video is about ten minutes in length and is very informative about the start of the Homesteads. However, requiring visitors to watch the video is time consuming and may prevent visitors from being able to see notable artifacts and other interpretation initially. We suggest instead having the video play on a loop as visitors are walking through the New Deal room, so that they can choose to sit and watch if they so desire. This also provides an auditory learning experience for those who prefer it to reading. If information on how to access the entire video on Youtube is posted (perhaps as a QR code or simply a web address) nearby as well, then visitors will be able to watch the entire video at home, increasing the time spent reflecting on the museum's message.



- We suggest developing new interpretive panels on the importance of the Cumberland Homesteads along with its history, even controversies. Visitors may wonder what the Cumberland Homesteads is and *why it is important*. The "federal" side of the story is important to emphasize in Room One and objects displayed in that room should be focused on the Great Depression, New Deal, and the Homesteads program.
- Then the artifacts and objects in the room need to be selected and arranged to illustrate and add to the "big picture" background of the Homesteads.
- A longer-term goal would be funding and acquiring a consistent type of display case to better showcase your objects and photographs.

Room Two: Becoming a Homesteader (the 1930s room)

The Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum Board reviewed an initial draft of this report and concluded that this room needs to be addressed first. We strongly support that decision. It is the room that is overflowing with objects, and the physical barriers introduced by the low interpretive panels make it difficult to maneuver or to handle large groups well. By carefully assessing which objects and images best convey the process of becoming a homesteader and life at the Homesteads in the 1930s, and by using pop-up interpretive panels throughout the room, the visual clutter of the room can be lessened, its storyline can become more prominent, and visitor experience can be enhanced.

- The current focus of the second exhibit room is the 1930s, and it contains various artifacts donated by families of original homesteaders. We suggest reworking this room to tell the story of what it took to become a Homesteader and the process the families went through to build their homesteads.
- This approach would establish a room layout similar to the first room, with interpretive panels setting the scene and associated stories supported by objects and images in display cases with interpretive labels and signage. The focus would be on telling the story of the challenges that the homesteaders faced in moving to Cumberland County and beginning a new life and highlighting the artifacts that tell a story, such as the friendship quilt for the Carson Whiteaker family wedding.



- The long display board would be removed so visitors could more freely move about the room, and key objects and stories could be highlighted.

As an example of how panels and exhibit cases work together, here is part of the exhibit space that the Center installed at the Hiwassee River Heritage Center in Cleveland, Tennessee.



- Museum staff have indicated that little is known about some of the donated artifacts in the room. The storage of some artifacts would contribute to less overall clutter and a more cohesive story in the room.

Room Three: Lasting Legacies

You have in your collection many images and objects associated with the project's lasting legacies and particularly good content on the different communities within the larger project. These items dominate the room currently, but for many visitors it is too much of a good thing. Shifting to strong interpretive panels and better highlighted objects and images is a first step.

Also, much of the family and community material is available that the best way to convey the information may be through computer stations (where people can search for documents and images about their families and communities) as well as a video screen where people can sit and listen to the oral history interviews that the Association has been planning to carry out. These electronic exhibits will be a crucial part of the room.

The computer station could potentially provide access to familysearch.org (a free service) and/or contain a database of homestead families and the information the museum has available on them. This would make interpretation much more interactive for visitors and provide an incentive for local citizens of Cumberland County to visit.

As a long term goal, adding technology to an exhibit can increase engagement and update the look of an exhibit. This addition allows visitors to access materials that may not be on display or provide more information than what may be put on an exhibit panel. However, there are several factors to consider before adding technology to an exhibit, such as:

- Initial set up cost.
- Maintenance costs, including the decision to upkeep technology through a third-party or in-house.
- If doing in-house maintenance, remember staff time as well as software costs.
- Consider what parts of the narrative would be most enhanced and what interpretation goals could be best met with the inclusion of technology. What types of digital experiences do you wish to provide?
- There are many devices that can be used to provide a digital experience to guests, such as televisions, touch-screen devices, or computers.

- There are several types of software that can be used for the guest experience. Will you purchase premade software?

"Room Four": The Tower

The tower is potentially the best exhibit room in the building. Currently, many visitors enjoy seeing the view from the top of the museum's tower, but there is no interpretive text to go along with the view. We suggest adding interpretive panels to the top of the tower, so that there is some educational material for guests who make the climb. This could include information about the use and construction of the tower specifically or even photos of what the landscape through the windows looked like in the early days of the homestead. Not all guests are physically able to experience the Tower. In order to make this experience accessible for all, we suggest taking a 360-degree photo/video of the view from the tower and providing a QR code for guests to access this information.

Education Outreach

The Cumberland Homesteads Tower Association has also expressed a desire to increase their educational outreach in order to realize increased awareness about the museum. An improved educational program will lead to a better impact on one of the museum's most consistent and vital audiences. The nearby Homestead Elementary School is a fantastic starting point for this relationship, as it shares a history with the Tower museum as being a community building for the homesteads. Unfortunately, many current students are unaware of this history. An improved outreach program, such as the suggestions made below, hopes to increase awareness about the importance of the Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum (and the Cumberland Homesteads in general) to the general public.

Currently there are some field trips being conducted to the museum, but according to staff, child visitors' main concern is being able to climb the tower. Updated labeling and engaging signage as mentioned above can assist in making the museum portion of the education activity more engaging. But the key improvement is to ensure that local teachers know that a visit to the Tower Museum can help them meet Tennessee social studies standards.

Field Trips and other educational programs must be connected to the state social studies standards to illustrate to teachers why Cumberland Homesteads is important to visit (the state standards can currently be found at https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/standards/ss/Social_Studies_Standards.pdf)

Below are some examples of the ways that the state educational standards can be met through programming at Cumberland Homesteads. This list is not exhaustive, but should provide options and a baseline for appealing to teachers' state mandated education standards. The examples given below will focus on K-5 standards in order to appeal to Cumberland Homesteads' most available audience from Homesteads Elementary, but these ideas can be adapted to standards for higher grades as well.

- K.02 - "Compare and contrast family traditions and customs, including: food, clothing, homes, and games." Younger students can compare their modern homes and lives to the lives of the homesteaders. Artifacts such as children's toys, kitchen appliances, and photos of homesteaders will help children compare their lives to history.

- K.04 - “Identify and explain how basic human needs of food, clothing, shelter, and transportation are met” can be met through discussing the development of the Homesteads program to meet the human need for shelter during a time when many people did not have money for food, clothing, or shelter.
- K.14 - “Explain that the President is the leader of the U.S.” Highlight President Roosevelt’s leadership and responsibility by showing that he wanted United States citizens to be able to have a home. Discuss the importance of Cumberland Homesteads through illustrating visits by Eleanor Roosevelt.
- 1.01 - “Describe the cultural aspects of a place, including a student’s community and state” can be met through framing Cumberland Homesteads as a part of Cumberland County’s culture. Interpreters can share that even the students’ school was part of the homesteads project, explaining the name Homestead Elementary.
- 1.07 - “Recognize major products and industries found in Tennessee (e.g., agriculture, manufacturing, mining, music, and tourism).” Explain the attempts at industry development for Cumberland Homesteads.
- 1.08 - “Determine the difference between basic wants and needs, and provide examples of each.” List what Cumberland Homesteads did/provided for homesteaders and ask students if these are wants or needs. Explain that Cumberland Homesteads was created to meet the needs of destitute Americans.
- 1.25 - “Compare ways people lived in the past to how they live today, including: forms of communication, modes of transportation, and types of clothing.” Show artifacts and photos pertaining to everyday life of the homesteaders, asking students to compare life back then with life today.
- 2.18 - “Analyze how the location of regions affects the way people live, including their: food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and recreation.” Discuss the construction of the homesteads with local materials. Discuss sustenance farming and the creation of the state park for homesteaders’ recreation.
- 2.32 - “Contrast primary and secondary sources.” Highlight potential differences between primary source accounts of life on the homesteads and secondary source accounts/criticisms of the homesteads.
- 3.04 - “Examine major political features on globes and maps, including: boundaries, cities, highways, railroads, and roads.” Share maps of the Homesteads area, showing students the vast geographic location that made up the community.
- 3.14 - “Compare natural resources within the three grand divisions of Tennessee, and trace the development of a product from natural resource to a finished product.” Students will learn about the resources in Cumberland County and the Cumberland Homesteads area, including the farms that were created by homesteaders. Discuss the work that goes into creating a finished product on the homestead through processes such as farming, weaving, canning, mining, etc.
- 5.16 - “Describe how New Deal policies of President Franklin D. Roosevelt impacted American society with government-funded programs, including: Social Security, expansion and development of the national parks, and creation of jobs.” Explain the New Deal context of the Cumberland Homesteads. Discuss the foundation of the nearby national park by the CCC as part of this program as well.
- 5.48 - “Describe the effects of the Great Depression on Tennessee and the impact of New Deal policies in the state (i.e., Tennessee Valley Authority and Civilian Conservation Corps).” Explain the importance of Cumberland Homesteads and that it was one of the first Homestead programs to be developed. Explain that this led to many people moving to rural Tennessee.

- 5.49 - “Describe Tennessee’s contributions during World War I and World War II, including: the conversion of factories to wartime production, the importance of Oak Ridge, and the influence of Tennesseans (i.e., Cornelia Fort, Cordell Hull, and Alvin C. York)” can be incorporated by explaining how many homesteaders ended up working at Oak Ridge to make a living when industry failed to come to Cumberland County.

There are also six Social Studies Practices (SSPs) highlighted in the state standards that apply to all grades, increasing in rigor as students get older (SSPs can be viewed in the same document as the state standards:

https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/standards/ss/Social_Studies_Standards.pdf

These are less specific than the state standards but are still important in showing that Cumberland Homesteads meets the base criteria for a social studies education across all ages. Appealing to SSPs as well as state standards provides an impetus for teachers to use Cumberland Homesteads in their curricula.

- SSP.01 involves gathering information from a variety of sources, including documents and artifacts. As Cumberland Homesteads houses a variety of documents and artifacts relating to the homesteads, it is important to stress to teachers that a visit to the museum will allow students the opportunity to interpret a variety of materials. This could be especially useful if using the “field trip boxes” highlighted below. Cumberland Homesteads could also take a multimedia approach by playing the CD “Family Songs and New Deal Appeals” for students and discussing the meaning of the songs.
- SSP.02 requires students to critically examine a primary or secondary source and summarize its significant ideas, draw conclusions, differentiate fact from opinion, and recognize the author’s purpose. Cumberland Homesteads has a plethora of primary sources for students to examine, such as newspaper articles highlighting the controversies associated with Cumberland Homesteads.
- SSP.03 involves comparing and contrasting multiple sources and recognizing the difference between multiple accounts. Cumberland Homesteads could choose to appeal to this SSP in their educational programming by doing an activity in which students compare and contrast criticism to the “back-to-the-land” philosophy versus the Roosevelts’ belief in the importance of the philosophy.
- SSP.04 encourages students to communicate ideas supported by evidence, including cause and effect and predicting outcomes. This can be promoted at Cumberland Homesteads by engaging with students by using facts and encouraging predictions of what happens on the Homesteads before telling the whole story. For example, an interpreter could explain that there was little industry in the Cumberland County area prior to the development of Cumberland Homesteads and then ask students what they think would happen if a large number of homesteaders moved to an area with no jobs.
- SSP.05 has students develop historical awareness by understanding that things change over time and sequencing events in chronological order. This is encouraged at Cumberland Homesteads by using temporal language with students and explaining the changes in Cumberland County and the homesteads over time, leading to the state of the tower and the homes today.
- SSP.06 develops geographic awareness by having students use maps and learn the relationship between people, places, and resources. Cumberland Homesteads has many maps of the area that can be used based on grade level appropriateness. The connection between the local resources and the attempts at industry and the livelihoods of the homesteaders may also be discussed.

There is currently no large area for educational groups and students to congregate and discuss the themes studied in the museum. A redesign of space in the gift shop to make room for a classroom/adult learning center should be considered (more discussion of this point is below).

Consider setting aside specific artifacts (potentially ones that have many duplicates or are not considered valuable) or recreations of artifacts to create a “Field-Trip Box” or an educational activity kit. In order to engage students and get them thinking about life on the Homesteads, an interpreter could pass around artifacts, allowing students to touch them and guess what they may have been used for. This would work especially well with artifacts such as children’s toys, farm or building implements, or objects that are not commonly used today.

Interactive Experiences

Continuing with the theme of making field trips and educational programming more engaging for younger audiences, we suggest adding interactive elements to the tour. This could include a variety of solutions, including new or updated exhibits (such as the “assigned homesteaders” idea mentioned below), new technology (such as that outlined in the “more resources” section below), or something as simple as engaging speech from the tour leader. For example, instead of simply telling students the application process for homesteaders was rigorous, perhaps read or show a few sections of the application document and then ask, “Would you want to apply to be a homesteader?”

Currently when guests enter the main lobby of the tower building, they are able to view an example of an application that a homesteader would have had to fill out. In order to increase guest excitement and overall interest in the exhibits to come, we recommend turning this into an interactive station where visitors can put themselves in the shoes of a homestead applicant.

There are multiple ways to achieve a meaningful experience. One way could be to provide a simplified copy of an application for visitors to fill out themselves, showing how rigorous the process is. Alternatively, the Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum could do something similar to the interpretation at the Titanic Museum in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. At the Titanic Museum, when visitors enter the building, they are given a “passport” with information about one of the Titanic’s guests on it and the visitors “become” that guest for the duration of their stay. This provides incentive to consider how the events highlighted throughout the museum would affect the individual and adds an emotional aspect to the information as well, as guests are rooting for “their” assigned person. Similarly, at the Tower Museum, guests could be given an “application” form and be randomly assigned a homesteader to “become” as they travel through the museum. At the end of the tour, in the Family and Genealogy room, guests would be encouraged to see what happened to their homesteaders and could possibly do some genealogical research on them to learn more.

Interpretive Training

Interpretive training for those who lead tours and field trips may be helpful, especially in developing an education program that works for various ages. This process does not have to be expensive or involve hiring an interpretation coach.

For the website thinkingmuseum.com, Claire Brown has produced some very useful tips for problems to avoid and techniques to use for good guided tours:

Problems to Avoid:

- Guides memorizing information and transmitting it in a rote fashion.
- Guides giving too much information in one big 'information dump'
- Guides sharing information too fast or, perhaps worse, too slowly...
- Guides doing all the talking and not allowing interaction from the group or between group members
- Guides sharing information that is irrelevant to the theme of the tour
- Guides sharing ALL THEIR KNOWLEDGE about any given subject.

Best Practices to Remember:

- Less is More. Don't try and cram everything into your guided tour. I know you only have a certain amount of time with this group and you want to deliver maximum value, but that doesn't mean you need to cram as much information into their heads as possible. A lecture or monologue is the worst possible way to deliver lots of information to your group. Your audience has no control over the pace of delivery, and they can't pause you so they can process and think. Look for clues that your audience have lost interest – are they looking elsewhere, are they fidgeting?
- Three as Magic Number. Think of the information you hold as a fully-stocked larder. You might have a lot of ingredients but you only use certain ingredients to make a specific recipe. Three is the magic number: as a general rule of thumb, have 3 pieces of information that you would aim to get across at a particular stop or object. Any extra is a bonus, but not always necessary.
- Avoid Fact Regurgitation. Don't regurgitate facts. People remember what they understand, and they understand concepts and ideas, not a huge volume of dates and numbers. Instead share your information as a narrative. Maybe you have a personal story that is relevant to your theme or you can tell a story about a person relevant to it?
- Kill your Darlings! Eliminate non-essential information: work on *what needs to be removed rather than what you need to add*. Ask the questions: 'Is this essential to the theme of the tour? Does this need to be said here and now?' Think also about relevance to different audience groups: Is it relevant to today's audience? What might be relevant to an adult might not be so interesting to a teenager. If it's not relevant to your theme or today's group, kill your darlings!
- Be Clear and Accessible. Don't make assumptions about what people ALREADY know – present any information without jargon. Make it clear and accessible.
- Weave Info at Key Points. If you offer information too early at a stop, it can shut down your group's ideas. If you give it all at the end, it can have a "here's the real story" tone, which either invalidates everything your group has said or tells they "got it right." You should be aiming for little and often.
- Pass along information In small 'chunks'. For every few minutes of new information, your participants will need a minute to process what they've learned. So, present any new information in a small chunk to make it easier to absorb. Avoid the big 'info dump' like the plague – you don't want to kill their curiosity!

- When the Discussion Starts to Dry Up. When there is a gap in the conversation or the discussion starts to dry up. You can add new lines of inquiry to get the conversation going again. Use 'What if I was to tell you...'
- When Answers can't be Found through Observation Alone. A lot of answers can be found by looking and asking questions. Get your group to slow down and notice all the details. However, if a question can't be answered by looking, please provide the information.

STORAGE NEEDS

Redesigning and reimagining the exhibit rooms also means that some objects will need to go into storage as they will not be on permanent display. The board should first consider "de-accessioning" any objects that lack a strong, documented association to the Homesteads and the Homesteads story. You should not be in the business of having to keep donations that really do not fit your mission; you are not the community attic.

Next, objects such as books and documents not used in the exhibits would be best stored at the Cumberland County Archives, which already has a Cumberland Homesteads collection. Discussions with the county archivist would help you make decisions on what to put on display and what should be kept in archival storage.

The great advantage of having a strong selection of objects in storage is that you can now "rotate" objects from being on display, a step forward in object conversation as well as a way to keep exhibits "fresh" for repeat visitors. Because of the very nature of the Tower itself, having adequate storage space for objects in the building is a difficult challenge--there is just not that much "free space" to work with.

Our suggestion is to explore a partnership with the Cumberland Mountains State Park and identify a space at that state-owned facility where objects could be properly stored. You could explore a partnership with the park where park officials could use some of the objects for their own displays in the visitor center or at other interpretive points in the park.

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR CUMBERLAND HOMESTEADS TOWER MUSEUM

Introduction

Strategic planning is initial for any museum, large or small. Planning will help the Cumberland Homesteads Tower Association (CHTA) to establish and achieve short-term and long-term organizational goals. The CHTA uses its museum to define, in a local context, the national significance of the New Deal and to provide leadership and guidance in understanding and determining the future of this historic community. The association's mission is to:

- promote the history of the Cumberland Homesteads Project through the preservation of its legacy;
- maintain exhibits illustrating the social and economic circumstances of the original Homesteaders who gained opportunities through President Roosevelt's New Deal Legislation; and,
- assist in determining the future of the historic community by developing partnerships that foster the values of the community at large.

The following guide to strategic planning was drafted after a meeting with the CHTA staff, along with a thorough review of the Mission and Vision Statements of the CHTA and the CHTA Five Year Goals Planning Documents. The plan is separated into three sections: Organizational Changes and Volunteer Management; Optimization of Space; and Funding Strategies and Preservation Initiatives. Organizational Changes and Volunteer Management consists of structural changes within the board, redistribution of the workload required to be operational, and programs that can be utilized to attract volunteers to the site. Optimization of Space includes how the space is being used currently, the accessibility of the space, and ways it could be better utilized. Finally, Funding Strategies and Preservation Initiatives includes all the information concerning potential funding sources and finances.⁷⁹

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES AND VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Currently there are seven official board members for the Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum. A significant issue that was brought up during our initial meeting with the Tower Museum staff was the need to attract new board members, as many of the current board members are ready to retire or are "burned out" from years of service to the organization.

How do you attract new board members? The first step is to establish in writing a clear description of what a board member's role in the organization is expected to be. In the description, you should establish an estimated level of time commitment and any expectations about donations to the association. A list of expected responsibilities should also be included; that list will help potential board members to see the best ways that they can contribute to the Tower Museum's mission.

How do you identify potential board members? Community leaders are invested in promoting

⁷⁹ NOTE: More information regarding successful strategic planning documents can be accessed at the Center for Historic Preservation's Partnership Projects Database. This plan was formatted using the Skyline Farms Heritage Planning Document as a model for development, which may be found here:

<https://www.mtsuhistpres.org/partnership-projects>

the welfare of the local area, so members of the Crossville-Cumberland County Chamber of Commerce will be a good source for potential board members, especially Chamber members associated with tourism and hospitality initiatives. Local government officials and employees are a second source. The county archivist, a member of the county planning commission, or the county historian are logical "fits" for the organization. Also consider state employees from Tennessee State Parks. The board should always have a strong relationship with the adjacent Cumberland Mountain State Park. The faculty and staff of Homestead Elementary School, located in the backyard of the Tower Museum, is another excellent source of potential board members because they will already be familiar with the Tower Museum and can create more opportunities for collaboration with said school. Members of the school's Parent Teacher Association are also potential options.

Members of the county's legal profession should also be approached. Having an attorney on the board may provide some pro-bono legal work for the site. Having a Homestead property owner on the board ensures that you have a perspective from local property owners and/pr descendants of the original Homesteaders. Whatever their background, board members should be residents with the drive, energy, and dedication to their museum's mission to get the job done.

To attract volunteer workers to the Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum, the Museum must be able to offer them something in return besides lots of work. There are several potential avenues for volunteer recruitment within Cumberland County:

- connecting with local high school students who need volunteer hours for their graduation requirements;
- connecting with college students who need volunteer hours to service requirements for internship courses;
- allowing local residents to fulfill their community service requirements by volunteering at the site (Contact the Cumberland County courthouse for more information on establishing the Tower Museum as a community service site); or,
- even by collaborating with other volunteer service groups in the region. The United Fund of Cumberland County is a community resource that serves thirty-seven non-profit agencies in the area by aiding the homeless, victims of emergencies/domestic violence, disabled veterans, at-risk youth, and much more. A partnership with the United Fund of Cumberland County may look like a day of volunteering at the Tower Museum to give people a sense of normalcy, a chance to connect with their history, and a place to feel safe. Contact the United Fund of Cumberland County at hollyneal@cumberlandunitedfund.org or by phone at 931 - 484 - 4082.

A great resource for finding volunteers outside of Cumberland County is the AmeriCorps national service program. AmeriCorps is the domestic version of the Peace Corps, and their mission is to bring out the best in Americans, young and old, by helping them serve their local community organizations. The program is divided into regions, and the Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum may be able to benefit from the Appalachia CARES AmeriCorps program. According to its website, "The Appalachia CARES program is a state-wide AmeriCorps program of the Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation and Development Council. AmeriCorps service members are assigned to individual sites to work for a contracted period of time and produce a service-learning project for their host site. Its primary direct service activities include the implementation of projects and education related to Housing Services, Energy Efficiency, and Capacity Building," and the nature of the Homesteads Tower Museum would qualify for Housing Services service-learning projects. More information about AmeriCorps

national can be found at <https://americorps.gov/partner>. The program director for Appalachia CARES is Ms. Trenna Brown, and she may be contacted by email at appalachiacares@clinchpowell.net.⁸⁰

OPTIMIZATION OF SPACE: THE GIFT SHOP

The Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum currently has five rooms in operation: the entry hall, three exhibit rooms, and a gift shop/office room plus two restrooms. The three exhibit spaces are addressed earlier in this planning document, so the focus here is on the gift shop/office space.



Gift shop facing lobby, photo by Carroll Van West

The first assessment is the annual income produced by the gift shop. If the gift shop money is an amount that significantly adds funding to the museum's operating budget, meeting 20-25% of operating costs, then no change is needed. Then you must consider the role of the gift shop to the museum's overall mission. If allowing local residents to sell items through the gift shop is important to community relationships, then no change is needed. Sales also might be increased by a different mix of items or reconsidering prices: what do visitors look for; are their needs being met by the current retail environment. Should the gift shop specialize in certain types of items or certain types of craft?

Another option is to reduce the size of the gift shop space to open other possibilities for connections to visitors. For example,

- could the room be divided so that part remains a gift shop while the remainder becomes a research station, with two computers and a printer, where patrons

⁸⁰ Appalachia CARES Clinch-Powell AmeriCorps Homepage, accessed 5/2/2023.
<https://clinchpowell.net/content/appalachia-cares>

could explore documents and images from your collection and carry out online genealogical research (Library of Congress; familysearch.org)? This space would serve as an adult learning center and a way to better present and preserve your invaluable photographs in the collection.

- could the room be divided with part as a gift shop, while the remainder is a classroom/group space with a white board where the introductory film/program could be shown? Creating spaces for guides and teachers to interact with students before or after (and sometimes both) a tour would enhance the learning outcomes of a visit to the museum. This same space could be used for the introductory film for adult visitors and groups. By locating the education space within the gift shop, you also ensure that visitors go to the gift shop and perhaps encourage more buying from visitors.

Accessibility to the Tower Museum should also be considered. Currently the Museum has a handicapped ramp to access the front door, but additional services like automated doors and level walkways outside the building can make a significant difference in attracting visitors with mobility issues. Consider the average width of a standard wheelchair (twenty-six inches across) when organizing your space so you are certain it can be accessed by everyone. Adding photos or a video of what the view from the top of the tower looks like on the ground floor allows people who cannot make the climb a chance to see that stunning perspective.

Finally, adding more benches or chairs where visitors could stop and sit, both indoors and outdoors, is key for making the space feel welcoming to all guests. Many history lovers are elderly or disabled, and we always want to accommodate and never alienate a visitor because the site was not accessible to them.

Along with additional seating outside, the Tower Museum should consider adding more interpretive signage outside the building, so visitors can learn and understand the property's significance even if the museum is closed.

FUNDING STRATEGIES AND PRESERVATION INITIATIVES

The Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum should seek funding from a variety of sources, including grants, corporate sponsorships, and private donations. When considering the cost of keeping the Museum operational, the Center for Historic Preservation considers three key ideas: Launch, Succeed, and Sustain. The CHTA must consider these factors when deciding on the estimated annual operating budget:

- Maintenance costs
- Yearly small projects
- Cost of paying a professional staff or recruiting volunteers
- Full-time operation or seasonal operation
- Programming costs
- Marketing
- Utilities and landscaping

Once the initial overhead costs are calculated, then the fundraising strategies can begin in earnest. Currently the Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum hosts one annual fundraising event in the fall, the Homesteads Apple Festival. The CHTA should consider holding a springtime fundraising event as well to get a boost of funding twice a year instead of only once.

When organizing a special event fundraiser, the Center for Historic Preservation recommends first calculating the overhead costs to host the event, then deciding what can be done to maximize the generated profits. A designated working committee should be assigned, along with recruiting an emcee or host who can entertain the crowd. The purpose of a fundraiser is to raise money, so set a goal, know the costs, develop a detailed plan with deadlines, and stick to the budget. Types of special event fundraisers include craft sales, antique shows/auctions, beverage tastings, concerts, historical reenactments, and even outdoor movie nights.

Grand funding is available to those who know where to look and are willing to ask for it. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development offers grants that the Center for Historic Preservation has used before, along with the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Forest Service, and the Tennessee Historical Commission.

Some grants may be used for programming needs and others may be applied to bricks-and-mortar projects. Grants are often competitive, so it is important to make sure your organization is grant-ready. The American Association of State and Local History suggests that you should begin with simple grants applications in your immediate area. Once you become comfortable applying for (and receiving) these types of grants, move on to the more complex grants. You should target each grant to its specific foundation. Try to avoid writing one proposal that you send to twenty different organizations. The grants that are listed below run the gamut of state, federal, and private organizations.

Tennessee Historical Commission Preservation Grants. Federal Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grants are matching grants and will reimburse up to 60% of the costs of approved costs for projects with a public benefit. The remaining 40% must be provided by the grantee as matching funds.

The selection process will emphasize projects that provide the most public benefit such as restoration of historic buildings that are listed in the National Register and have a public use. Examples of publicly focused projects include: Restoration of historic buildings listed in the [National Register of Historic Places](#). Projects must follow the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties](#).

Applications should be open in late 2023 and are made through the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation [online grants management system](#) (GMS). It is very important before you apply to be affiliated within GMS with your organization and then to apply "under" that affiliation (you can change to your affiliated organization with the building icon in the upper right hand corner of GMS) to make sure your grant application is started correctly.

Humanities Tennessee Annual General Grant: Any not-for-profit organization or governmental agency is eligible to apply for grants, including museums, libraries, historical societies, colleges and universities, public television and radio corporations, arts organizations, municipalities, churches and religious organizations, neighborhood and community groups, social service agencies, and various state agencies.
<https://www.humanitiestennessee.org/programs-grants/our-grants/general-grants/>

Humanities Tennessee Opportunity Grant- Opportunity grants provide financial support to nonprofit partners for public humanities projects. It is designed to encourage nonprofits to use humanities projects – those that engage the audience's skills of inquiry, analysis, and reflection, and provide the historical and social contexts with which to do so – to strengthen work in their

communities. <https://www.humanitiestennessee.org/programs-grants/our-grants/opportunity-grants/>

TN Association of Museums Scholarships- The scholarships are open to volunteers without museum-related backgrounds who work for a nonprofit museum or organization that is starting a museum which has no paid professional staff. Each scholarship provides two nights lodging and conference registration fees for up to two people from each applicant organization.

<https://www.humanitiestennessee.org/programs-grants/our-grants/tennessee-association-of-museums-scholarships/>

Tourism Enhancement Grant- Tourism is one of the largest industries and most important economic drivers in Tennessee. This grant was developed to help communities improve their tourism assets and increase tourism-related economic impact. These projects are being funded through the Tennessee Rural Economic Opportunity Act of 2016.

<https://www.tn.gov/tourism/statewide-partners/tourism-enhancement-grant.html>

Arts Build Communities Grant- Tennessee Arts Commission's Arts Build Communities (ABC) grant program is designed to provide support for arts projects that broaden access to arts experiences, address community quality of life issues through the arts, or enhance the sustainability of asset-based cultural enterprises. ABC funds may be used to: Provide innovative arts experiences that are new or unfamiliar to community residents. Offer arts programs that are designed to help affect positive change in community social issues. Develop arts programming that strengthens social networks through community engagement. Undertake cultural arts initiatives that enhance a community's identity and/or economic development.

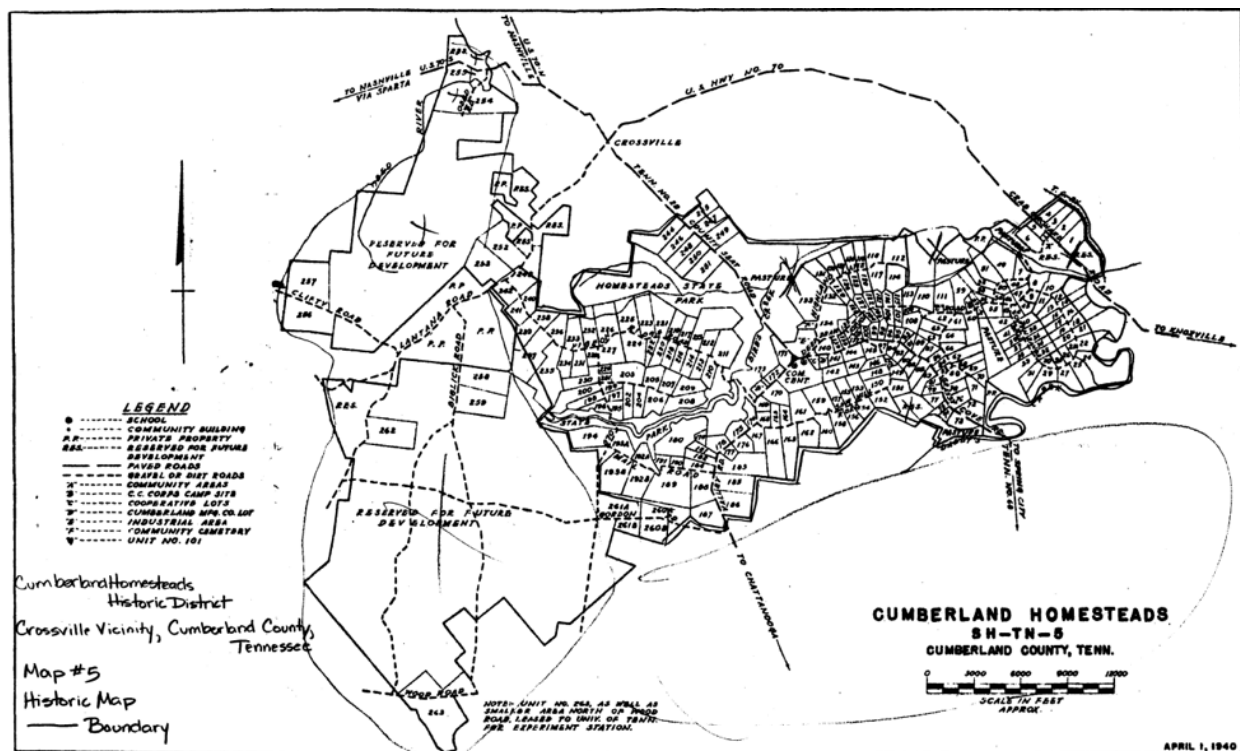
[https://tnartscommission.org/grants/arts-build-communities-grant/#:~:text=Fiscal%20Year%202023%3A%20August%2016%2C%202022%20%E2%80%93%20June%2015%2C%202023&text=Objectives-,The%20Arts%20Build%20Communities%20\(ABC\)%20grant%20program%20is%20designed%20to,of%20asset%2Dbased%20cultural%20enterprises.](https://tnartscommission.org/grants/arts-build-communities-grant/#:~:text=Fiscal%20Year%202023%3A%20August%2016%2C%202022%20%E2%80%93%20June%2015%2C%202023&text=Objectives-,The%20Arts%20Build%20Communities%20(ABC)%20grant%20program%20is%20designed%20to,of%20asset%2Dbased%20cultural%20enterprises.)

Institute of Museum and Library Services- Inspire! Grants for Small Museums is a special initiative of the Museums for America program. It is designed to support small museums of all disciplines in project-based efforts to serve the public through exhibitions, educational/interpretive programs, digital learning resources, policy development and institutional planning, technology enhancements, professional development, community outreach, audience development, and/or collections management, curation, care, and conservation. Inspire! has three project categories: Lifelong Learning, Institutional Capacity, and Collections Stewardship and Access. <https://www.imls.gov/grants/available/inspire-grants-small-museums>

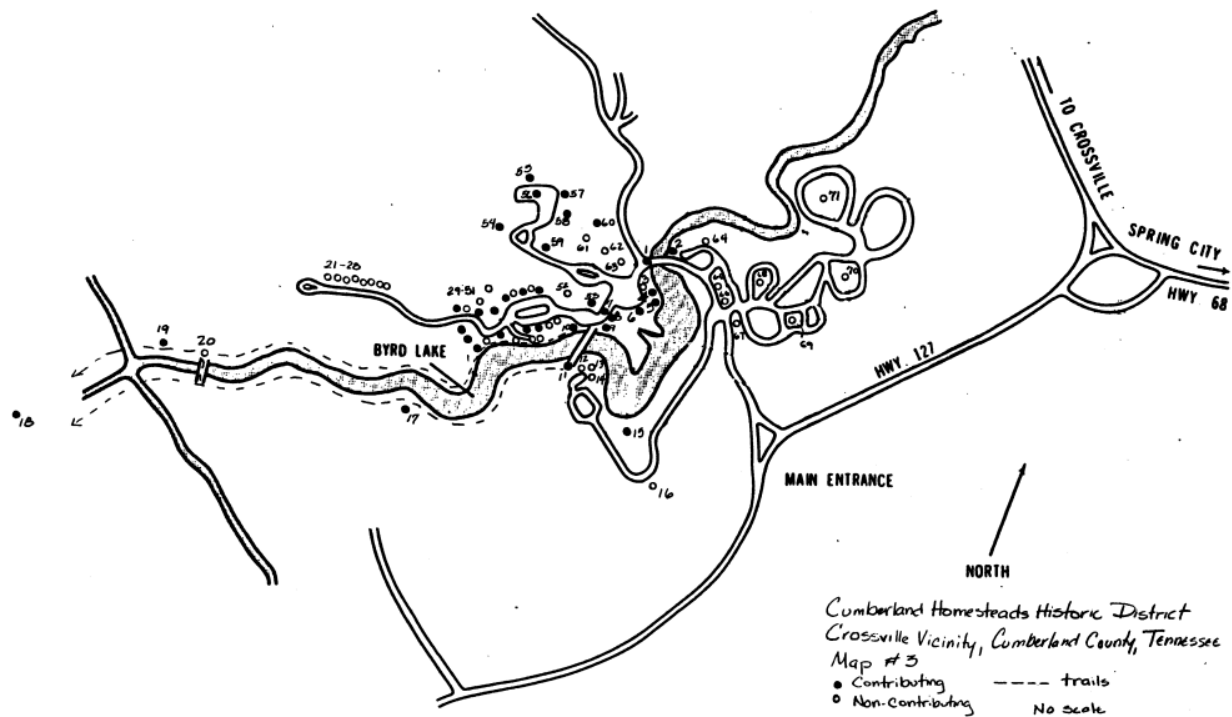
NEH Public Humanities Projects- Project topics may be international, national, regional, or local in focus, but locally focused projects should address topics that are of regional or national relevance by drawing connections to broad themes or historical questions. A partnership with faculty at Tennessee Technological University may be the best way to pursue a large NEH program grant. Projects that don't address issues of concern to wider regional or national audiences might consider local sources of funding, such as their state humanities councils. Award amounts offered to successful applicants will reflect the project's scope and the size of its expected audiences. <https://www.neh.gov/grants/public/public-humanities-projects>

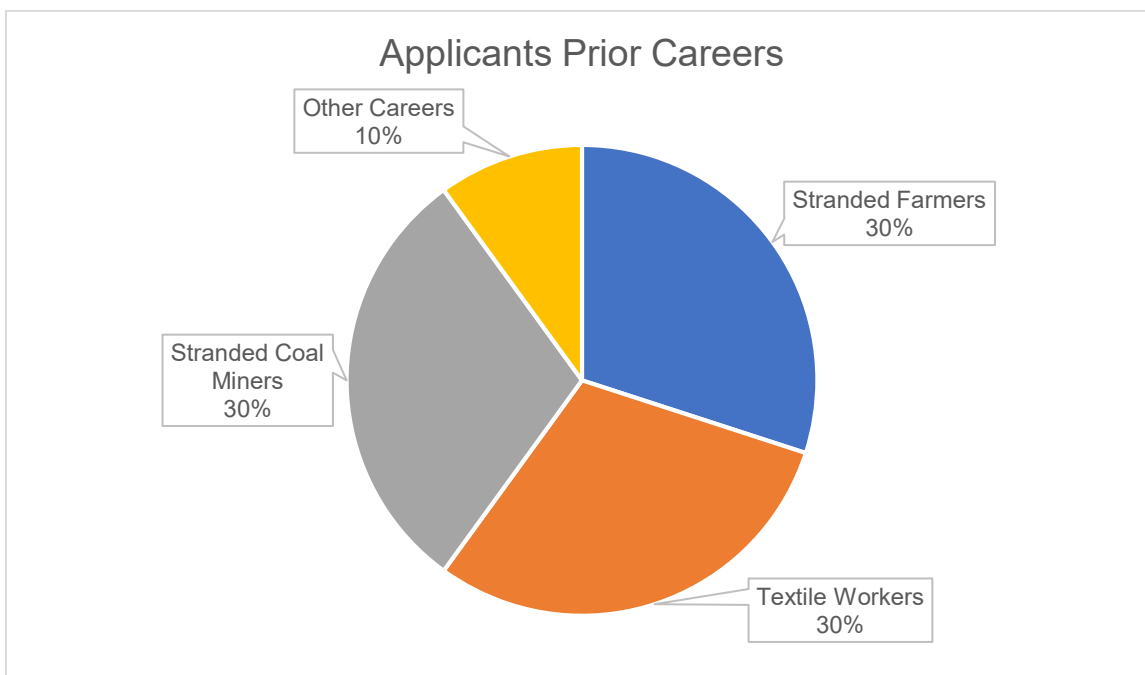
More information regarding grant funding initiatives is available at <https://www.mtsuhistpres.org/>.

Appendix:

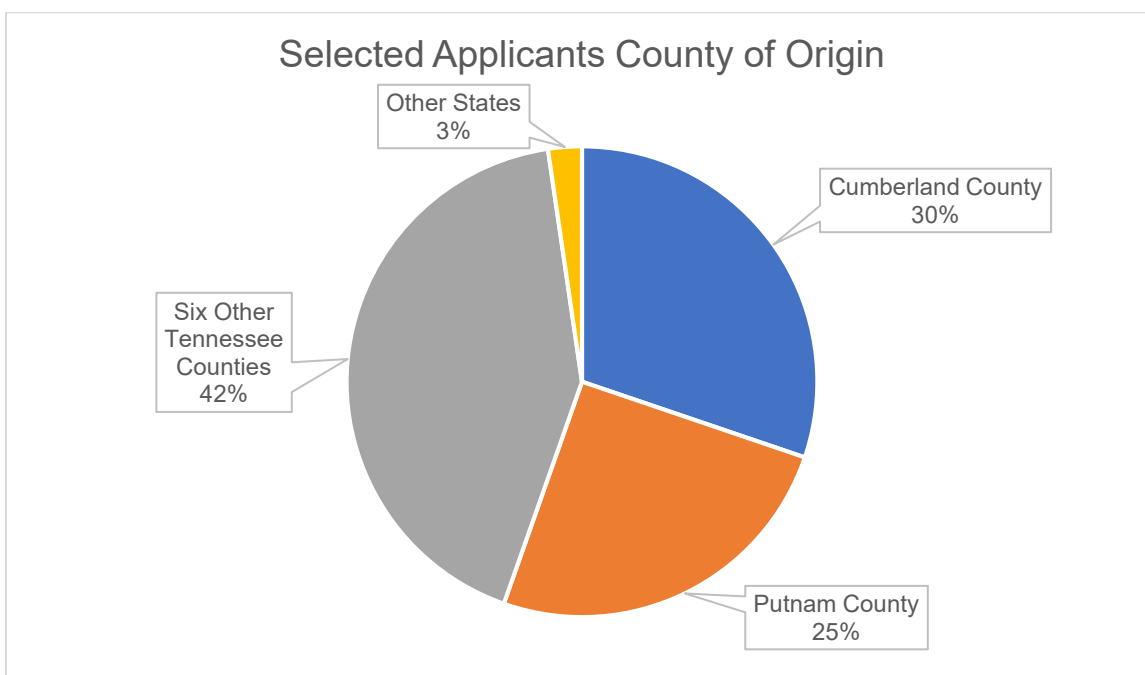


CUMBERLAND MOUNTAIN STATE PARK





Graph 1: 1934 applicant pool statistics provided by Tollett



Graph 2: 1934 applicants selected by county of origin provided by Tollett

Bibliography

“The Civilian Conservation Corps (U.S. National Park Service).” National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, February 8, 2018. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/the-civilian-conservation-corps.htm>.

“National Register of Historic Places (U.S. National Park Service).” National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, May 2, 2023. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>.

Robbins, Drew J, ed. “Cumberland Homesteads.” Cumberland Homesteads Tennessee's Largest Historic District. Cumberland Homesteads Tower Association, 2023. <https://cumberlandhomesteads.org/>.

Straw, Elizabeth A. “Cumberland Homesteads Historic District.” National Register of Historic Places - Digital Archive on NPGallery. National Park Service, August 16, 1988. <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/157e56d0-0c05-4d61-a125-5fe7855743cd>.

Tollett, Charles. “The Cumberland Homesteads.” *Crossville Chronicle*. n.d. A special publication of the Crossville Chronicle.

“Travel the Shaker Historic Trail (U.S. National Park Service).” National Parks Service, March 26, 2018. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/travelshaker/index.htm>.

West, Carroll Van. *Tennessee's New Deal Landscape: A Guidebook*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2001.