

THE SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum

Volume 27 Number 1

Townsend, Tennessee

March 2009

Annual Meeting

The Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum, Townsend, TN has set Saturday, April 18, 2009 for our Annual Meeting.

We have planned a number of activities including a presentation by Ed Thompson, Jr., who is the great grandson of Jim Thompson. Ed will present the historical photographic work of Jim Thompson from the late 1800s through the 1960s, concentrating on Jim's work in the Great Smoky Mountains. Jim was one of the area's first commercial photographers, and his work was instrumental in convincing Congress to locate the national park in the Great Smoky Mountains. Jim continued documenting and promoting the Smokies after the park was established.

In addition to a picnic lunch, we will also have motorized speeder and hand car rides (you provide the power for the hand car) and tours of the museum and the new shop building.

Please note that all activities are free of charge, but we do require reservations for the picnic lunch.

For out-of-town members, we have made arrangements with The Highland Manor for specials rates for this event. You can visit www.highlandmanor.com or call them at 800-213-9462.

We would also like to encourage you to bring any photos or other memorabilia of Little River Railroad for others to see. We will have scanning equipment on sight that will allow us to make copies.

We are planning a full day of events that will include entertainment for the whole family. Starting at 10:00 we will have live music provided by Lost Mill String Band. They will play until 11:00 and will feature a performance of *The Ballad of Daddy Bryson*.

Our schedule is:

Time	Activity	Presented By	Reservations
11:00 - Noon	Special Walking Tour of Museum Property	Museum Staff	No
Noon	Bill Hooks commemorative brick laying	Museum Staff	No
Noon to 1:00	Lunch	Museum Staff	Yes
1:00 to 1:30	Business Meeting	Rick Turner	No
1:30 to 2:30	Presentation on the photography of Jim Thompson	Ed Thompson	No

There is no limit for the picnic lunch, but we are requiring reservations so we can get a head count and determine the amount of food we'll need.

To make your reservations, please call Rick Turner at 865-428-0099 or email him at

president@littleriverrailroad.org.

Please plan to attend. We look forward to seeing you there!



In Memory of William S. Hooks

It seems the frequency is increasing that we have to announce the passing of someone very close to us at the museum. This last October 5th we lost Bill Hooks. He was 92. Bill's importance to The Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum is immeasurable as he had an unequalled wealth of knowledge of people, places and events related to logging and railroads in what is now The Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

A Brief Biography of William S. Hooks

Bill Hooks became a well known and beloved personality around Gatlinburg and the Smokies over the last thirty years. Bill came to the Park Service as an Interpreter in 1972 from the University of Tennessee, where he had completed his doctoral work in Plant Ecology.

Although he was one of our leading experts on wildflowers and forests, he also had an abiding interest in history. He began collecting oral histories and photographs from the logging days on the Little River, and developed a slide and lecture program on the Little River Railroad and Lumber Companies called "Whistle Over the Mountain."

This program was presented regularly at the Elkmont Campground for many years. It was seen by over 300,000 people, more than any other program presented anywhere by the National Park Service. This program became the basis for a book by the same name, which is now the definitive history of the Little River Lumber Company. The original slide presentation was updated and expanded and has been published as a DVD.

Bill retired from the Park Service in 1984. Since that time he taught more than 240 classes at Elderhostels on the mountains, their people and their culture. He also served as a guide for several Smoky Mountain tour companies, and served on the Board of Directors of the Little River Railroad and Lumber Company Museum in Townsend.

In addition to his doctoral work at UT, Bill also held a BS degree from the University of Illinois in Horticulture, a BA degree from Blackburn College in Biology and Chemistry, and an MS degree from Northern Illinois University in Biology, Ecology and Earth Sciences.

We will be dedicating a special commemorative brick for Bill in our historic walkway during our annual meeting on April 18.



Bill Hooks 1916 - 2008

2008 In Review

The past year has been a very productive one for the Museum. The most visible changes can be seen with the landscaping work that was completed in August. We now have walkways, trees and shrubbery that give our property a new appealing look.

As part of the landscaping project we have some major tasks left to complete. The first item on our to do list is the steps to the cab level of our Shay 2147. Along with a viewing platform the steps will provide visitors with a complete interior view of Shay 2147. Tommy Enos of The Woodland Homes Construction Company has volunteered to build the steps. Now that Shay 2147 has been located in its permanent location, our plans call for one of the flat cars to be moved behind the Shay with the log loader placed on the flat car. This will require a major effort to complete since Shay 2147 would need to be moved to the track leading into the Engine House to allow positioning of the flat car. This may not sound like a big task, but Shay 2147 will not go past the Depot building without removal of its cab. The alternative solution will require the use of a crane to lift the flat car and place it in its desired location behind Shay 2147. This appears to be the best alternative since we'll need a crane to place the log loader on the flat car.

We are also waiting for the completion of our new roadside sign which is being constructed by Captain Dave Lavoie. The sign will be a carving of Shay 2147 pulling a log train with the right side of the sign showing the train curving towards Maryville and the left side showing the train curving away from the Park. When completed the sign will give the Museum a very attractive entrance. Captain Dave is an internationally famous wood carver and has been invited to Japan to compete in the next international carving championship. His business is Smoky Mountain Wood Sculptures, 125 Wears Valley Road, Townsend.

We have designated an area in front of the Gift Shop to be the location of our planned garden railroad which will be a large scale model depicting Little River Lumber Company operations. This model railroad should be a fascination for both young and old. This project is the most ambitious and will require a considerable amount of labor and money to complete.

We have also made considerable progress in the completion and finishing of the Engine House. The classroom and office are now completely and beautifully finished thanks to the fine painting and trim work provided by Mark and Janet Snyder while Bud Chandler provided the labor to install ceramic tile on the floor. In the shop area we poured concrete along side and between the rails. This improvement gives us a completely flat working area and also provides us a space for large groups either seated or standing. In addition to installing gutters and down spouts, we poured concrete steps for the entrance doors giving the building easier access as well as making it handicapped accessible at the roadside door. Bud has also provided his tractor to spread crusher rock between and along side the rails going into the Engine House. This will allow us to move rolling stock into and out of the Engine House with ease.

During the 2007 Christmas season a windstorm blew the roof off our Little Woodie caboose, forcing us to put it in the Engine House where we are now in the process of putting on a new roof. At the same time, after a trip to Kentucky to see a complete Little Woodie, we are planning on adding back the cupola and restoring the interior. Jim Thurston is leading this project.

For the 2008 Christmas season we had a great display of lights and decorations thanks to the efforts of Andy Wellman. Andy put lights on just about everything we have, and it was spectacular and brought many visitors to the Museum.

This year for the Townsend Winter Heritage Festival we had a great turnout for our events. Ron Briggs led a walking tour of the Tremont area and Don Headrick led a

walking tour of the Townsend area. In a tribute to the late Bill Hooks, Jim Thurston showed the *Whistle Over the Mountain* DVD. This year we added a new walking tour of Elkmont which was led by Raymond Palmer.

Again this year for our Annual Meeting we will have music provided by the Lost Mill String Band. Last year they performed the *Ballad of Daddy Bryson* at the Annual Meeting, and I'm sure they'll do it again for us this year. After last year's meeting they professionally recorded the song and presented it to the Museum for which we are extremely grateful. As a side note to the Daddy Bryson wreck, June 30, 2009 will be the 100th Anniversary of that fateful day. We are currently in the planning stages of commemorating that day. For further details check our website (www.littleriverrailroad.org) or call us.

Our morning activity at the Annual Meeting this year will feature a Board Member stationed at each of our artifacts (Shay 2147, the caboose, the Frick, etc.) providing in-depth information about that artifact. Our intention is to allow attendees to learn more about the Museum, and at the same time provide the Museum with the basis of a brochure about the Museum. After the business meeting we will feature a program by Ed Thompson which features the East Tennessee photography of his great grandfather Jim Thompson which included many photographs of Townsend and the Little River Railroad. We think you will find this to be an informative and entertaining day. We hope you will attend.

For those of you who missed our walking tours in Townsend and Tremont and wish to participate on one or both of them, we are, as part of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park 75th Anniversary celebration, having these tours at 10 AM on the fourth Saturday of every month during 2009.

Some final notes: As you can see we are aggressively trying to improve the Museum in all phases of operation. We can always use your help either financially and/or by volunteering your time. If you are coming to the Annual Meeting and plan to have lunch with us, please let us know how many are in your party so we can have enough food for everyone. Also if you are coming to the meeting and have old photos or artifacts from the Little River Railroad or Lumber Company, we would love to see them.

We look forward to a great 2009.

