

THE SEMAPHORE

President's Report

In each edition of *The Semaphore*, our president presents his report on our museum. It is intended to keep you informed about all that has happened, as well as all that is coming up. It's important to us to keep you up to date so that you will know how to best help us keep history alive. [See page 2](#)

Logging Our Blogging

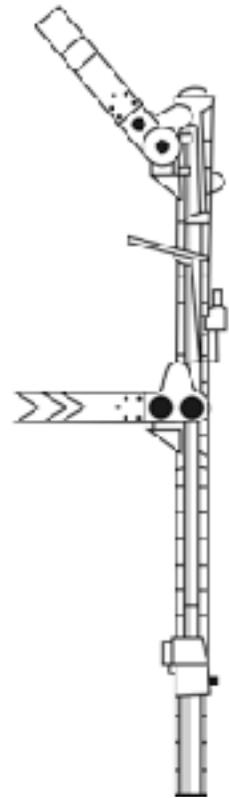
Read our latest blog, from our Logging our Blogging Website Page. It's entitled, **Tanning Your Hides**, and tells the story of Walland's Schlosser Tannery. It was to provide tanbark for this tannery that Colonel W. B. Townsend was initially asked to come to Tennessee and log the Smokies. [See page 3](#)

Membership & Commemorative Bricks

Two ways for you to contribute and help us to keep history alive in the present and to pass it on to future generations. [see page 4](#)



Our museum and gift shop will open for the season on the weekends of April and May. On Saturdays we will be opened from 9:00 A.M. till 5:00 P.M. and on Sundays from 1:00 P.M. till 5:00 P.M. Also, we will celebrate Old Timers' Day on Saturday, May 4th, and hold our annual meeting on Saturday May 18th. On these two special Saturdays, we will have special guests, special activities, and special events. We hope you will spring in this spring for a visit to the Little River Railroad & Lumber Company Museum.



**COMMENTS FROM
SOME VISITORS
WHO DROPPED BY
DURING THE OFF-
SEASON AND
WERE LED ON
SPUR OF THE
MOMENT TOURS
BY MUSEM
VOLUNTEERS
WORKING AT THE
TIME.**

- **Very cool lady; she was very informative.**
- **Very nice history, and of the area as well.**
- **Enjoyed our quick visit, we'll be back.**
- **Great!**
- **Friendly, will definitely be back.**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There is a lot happening these days at the Little River Railroad & Lumber Company Museum.

1. We've got plans drawn to replace our decking and to make our museum handicap accessible.
2. We're looking into the possibility of salvaging two, possibly three, setoff houses from Tremont, which were used in the construction of a house in Pigeon Forge.
3. We're looking forward to soon being able to exhibit our restored baggage cart.
4. An annual budget has been passed, which will help our board to be an even better steward of our contributors' future donations.
5. We're also beginning the process of compiling photos and captions, along with a manuscript, to publish a picture book on the Little River Railroad & Lumber Company in Arcadia Publishing's Images of America series.
6. And we are currently looking into the possibility of acquiring digital tools that will provide our museum with its own APP, a digital membership card, and the ability to offer our museum's visitors a digital tour, as well as our online visitors a virtual tour.

While there are more things that could be mentioned, the above are good examples of what's going on at our museum. Needless to say, as a nonprofit organization, your financial support is sorely needed at this time. Without your help we can neither continue to do all that we do nor possibly do all we hope and plan to do in the days ahead.

To make a contribution to our museum you can write a check to: Little River Railroad & Lumber Company Museum. Our mailing address is:

LITTLE RIVER RAILROAD MUSEUM

P. O. BOX 211

TOWNSEND, TN 37882



TANNING YOUR HIDES

Chilhowee Gap was formed by the Little River basin through the Chilhowee Mountains. Originally known as Murphy's Cove, it was renamed Miller's Cove around 1800, when settled by the Miller brothers—Andrew and Alexander. In 1845, George Amerine built a forge in Miller's Cove. It served as Blount County's largest ironworks until the time of the Civil War. While other settlers arrived and additional development occurred, such as a grist and saw mill built by John Waters, the big transformation in the Cove came in 1901, with the arrival of J. W. Fisher.

Mr. Fisher came to Miller's Cove in search of an isolated site to construct a foul-smelling tannery. He found what he was looking for; and subsequently, in 1901, the Schlosser Leather Company was chartered to "tan hides and manufacture leather," as well as "to operate flour mills and build railroads." A growing community quickly sprang up around the newly constructed tannery, which soon became Blount County's largest employer. Needing a name for the fledgling and flourishing community, the names of Schlosser's two owners—Walton and England—were combined. The first part of "Walton," the "Wal," was combined with last part of "England," the "land," and the new community was called "Walland."

At the beginning of the twentieth century, with the meat packing industry growing throughout the nation, the market for tanneries to turn hides into leather was in great demand. Consequently, the Schlosser Tannery proved to be most successful. For instance, the tannery's profitability enabled Walland to have the first nine-month school in Blount County. Whereas other schools in the county were only in session for six months, Walland, thanks to the fact that the tannery picked up the tab for the extra three months salaries, was able to extend the school year three additional months for its children.

The success of the Schlosser Tannery soon created a problem for J. W. Fisher and his son, A. J. Fisher, who served as the tannery's superintendent. The need for tanbark to handle 300 to 400 hides a day was too much for the tannery's local tanbark providers. A far greater supply of tanbark was needed to keep up with demand. Thus, J. W. Fisher turned to Clearfield, Pennsylvania for a possible solution to his problem.

Colonel W. B. Townsend was a successful and industrious business man. He owned a coal mine, a tile factory, a sawmill, and a logging railroad. However, almost all the timber in Pennsylvania's Alleghenies had been logged, resulting in Colonel Townsend looking for a new location for his next logging enterprise. Hearing of the Colonel, J. W. Fisher extended to him an invitation to come to Tennessee and see for himself the primitive, pristine, and virgin forests of the Great Smoky Mountains.

Obviously, Fisher's invitation to Townsend to come to Tennessee was in hopes that the Colonel would provide an abundant supply of tanbark for the Schlosser Tannery. Although Fisher got his wish, it wasn't the comparative pittance the Colonel could make providing tanbark for the tannery that brought him to Tennessee, but the far prettier penny he could make harvesting lumber from the Great Smoky Mountains. The tannery got its tanbark, but Townsend made a fortune, cutting and selling 560 million board feet of timber from the Smokies' mountainous terrain.

The boom days of Walland, brought about by Fisher teaming up with Townsend, suddenly came to an end on January 7, 1931. On that snow-covered morning, residents were awakened, by the alarming sound of the tannery's whistle, to a strange red glow in the sky canopying their valley. The Schlosser Tannery was on fire! During that sad sunrise, the livelihoods of most of Walland, as well as much of its hopes for the future, went up in smoke.

MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP

As a nonprofit organization we are dependent upon donations for our financial survivor. One of the ways you can donate is by becoming a member of our museum. An annual membership is \$21.47, a figure derived from the number of our museum's Shay locomotive—2147. Our other membership option is a Lifetime Membership. To become a lifetime member requires a onetime donation of \$200.00. All members enjoy certain benefits, like a 10% discount in our Gift Shop and an invitation to our annual meeting.

If you would like to join, cut out and fill out the form below and mail it, along with your check to:

LRR MUSEUM

P. O. BOX 211

TOWNSEND, TN 37882

DATE: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

THE SEMAPHORE

COMMEMORATIVE BRICKS

Another way you can donate to our museum and help us fund our restoration and development efforts, as well as the daily operation of our museum, is by purchasing a commemorative brick. Your commemorative brick will be laid in our Historical Walkway and engraved with your personal inscription. You can inscribe your brick paver with your name or the name of someone you want to commemorate or honor. Our engraved bricks come in three sizes.

- 1. For a donation of \$75.00 you get a 4x8 brick with a maximum of 3 lines of 13 letters**
- 2. For a donation of \$150.00 you get a 8x8 brick with a maximum of 5 lines of 13 letters**
- 3. For a donation of \$250.00 you get a 12x12 brick with a maximum of 7 lines of 19 letters**



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