

# Restoration of First National Bank Building Has Begun

Grundy County Historical Society has begun restoration of the historic First National Bank of Tracy City building and related facilities. When completed the building will house the GCHS Heritage Center.

The Heritage Center will include a large Exhibit Hall with galleys around the perimeter that will portray the historical themes centered in Grundy County and environs that have had an impact on national or international history. These include:

- The Chickamauga (Chikamaka) separation from the Cherokees and extension of the western theater of the Revolutionary War by the Chickamauga to the pioneer settlements in Middle Tennessee utilizing ancient trails across the plateau to reach their adversaries, the destruction of the five Chickamauga towns on the Tennessee River, dispersal into the plateau and Trail of Tears removal in 1838;
- The origin of the “New South” with the innovation of the production of coke from Sewanee seam bituminous coal with sufficient heat intensity to smelt iron into steel, the development of a blast furnace at Cowan and extension of mining activities from Coal Bank to Tracy City to Coalmont to Palmer;
- The social experiment of the Republic of Switzerland to relieve itself from chronic economic depression by establishing a colony at Gruetli for willing citizens to emigrate;
- The extension of the Chautauqua Sunday School movement to the South at Monteagle known as the Chautauqua of the South; and
- The labor and civil rights training activities at Highlander Folk School at Summerfield acclaimed to be one of the seven most important sites in the civil rights movement.
- Other important historical themes will include the geological and natural history of the region, the Beersheba Springs story as the cradle of development of the region and the social, cultural and economic history of the people and their institutions on the plateau and within its coves and valleys.

The Exhibit Hall is located in a 1978 addition to the original 1904 structure. It will contain one or more murals as well as models and artifacts. A large model of Shook School is near completion for inclusion in the Heritage Center. It is estimated that the Exhibit Hall will be opened to the public in June 2010.

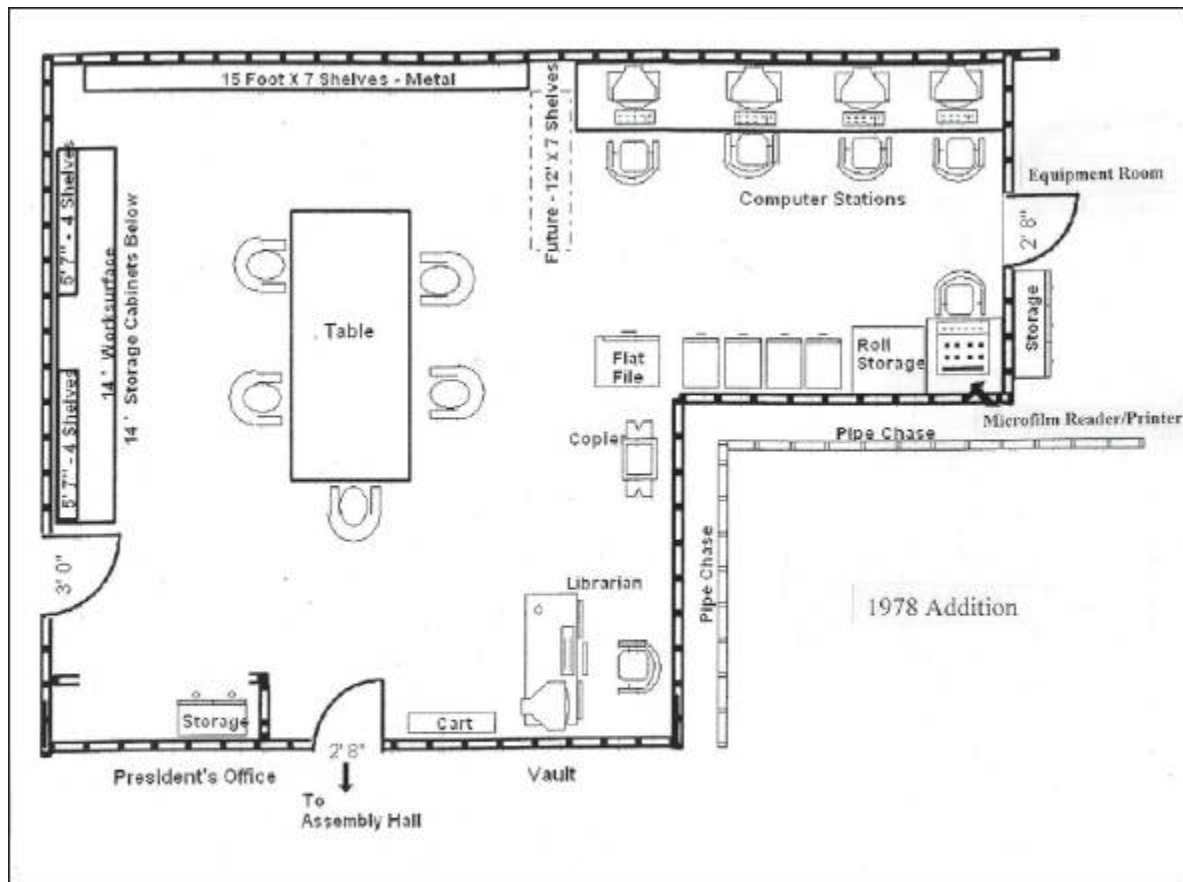
The Heritage Center will feature an Assembly Hall in the former lobby of the First National Bank. The Assembly Hall will be used for meetings of the Society. It will include audio, visual equipment to implement the portrayal of the historical events and stories

of the county and region. The lobby of the former First National Bank is being restored to its former grandeur. The fourteen foot high pressed tin ceiling has been uncovered. The walls have been returned to their original plaster finish. The windows are in the process of being reopened and restored.

An extensive library and research center will be located in the former Cheek Pharmacy portion of the complex. The pharmacy building has been returned to a single large room where it will contain computers, microfilm and microfiche readers that connect the library with databases of the Grundy County Recorder's Office and the State Library and Archives. The Root Cellar, currently located in the Tracy City Library will be moved to the Heritage Center. This part of the facility is scheduled to be opened to the public in January.

When completed the Heritage Center will be open to the public on a regular business day basis five days a week.

GCHS has launched a \$350,000 fundraising campaign for the Heritage Center. It will proceed with improvements as funds are received. Anyone interested in this worthy project may contact the Heritage Center at 931-592-6008.



**THE GRUNDY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
HERITAGE CENTER LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTER**