

Matt Gardner Homestead Museum Newsletter

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Twelve Years Ago!

It was twelve years ago that Dr. Carroll Van West and Trina Binkley of Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation prepared and presented a nomination of the Matt Gardner House in Elkton, Giles County, Tennessee to the Tennessee Historical Commission for the National Register of Historic Places.

On July 28, 1995, the Tennessee Historical Commission certified the Matt Gardner House and it was entered on the National Register of Historic Places for ethnic heritage, commerce, agriculture, and architecture.

On October 5, 2001, the Gardner house and its surrounding structures were incorporated in the state of Tennessee as a nonprofit house museum known as the Matt Gardner Homestead Museum.



On July 26, 2007 the preservation and restoration began!

Miller Renovations of Burns, Tennessee, was hired in July to do the works of preserving, restoring, and repairing the house in preparation for opening it to the public.

Once the work of restoring and repairing the foundation, porch, flooring, and roof of the house is complete, the museum will open on a requested basis only and for special fund-raising events and programs. A grand opening will take place once all other restoration to the farmstead is complete, exhibits and displays set up, and all furnishings in place.



Restoration Progress Update

May 2007

Received grant from Humanities Tennessee to consult with David Currey, Executive Director of Travellers Rest Plantation and Museum, Nashville, Tennessee, to prepare an organizational assessment for the museum.

July 2007

The house was cleaned due to vandals and squatters.

August 2007

- Restoration contractor removed non historical contributing structure from house.

- Windows and doors repaired or replaced.
- Electrical inspection
- Temporary electricity installed.
- Telephone service installed and turned on.

October 2007

- Front porch restored and reinforced by restoration contractor.
- Sign placed in front yard stating: Coming Soon The Matt Gardner Homestead Museum.
- Received grant from Humanities Tennessee to have David Currey, Executive Director of Traveller's Rest Plantation and Museum, prepare a long term strategic plan

Matt Gardner Homestead Museum

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Participating Events:

Elkton Historical Society had its annual Trail of Tears Volksmarch October 27, 2007. Each year on the last Saturday in October the Trail of Tears Club of the Elkton Historical Society hosts a 6 mile (10 km) non-competitive walk or "Volksmarch" through the town. Participants pass by some of Elkton's most historic places. Elkton's Volksmarch was dubbed "Tennessee Trail of Tears Volksmarch" because of the town's connection to the Indian Removal of 1838, also known as the Cherokee Trail of Tears. On the Friday before the Volksmarch event, the Elkton Historical Society guides their local school 7th and 8th grade students on a "Walk Into History." This walk is a shortened version of the Volksmarch route, taking the students by foot (or by bus in case of inclement weather) to historic landmarks in Elkton. One of the favorite stops each year is the Matt Gardner Homestead house. Board member Elmorie Miller had an exhibit on display at the homestead to teach the students about the history of Matt Gardner and his contributions to Elkton and Giles County. On Saturday the 27th President Carla Jones had another exhibit on display for the Volksmarch walkers. For more information on the current and future Elkton Historical Society's Trail of Tears Volksmarch, please visit www.elktonhistory.net

Museum Membership Drive

A membership drive will be going on in the months of October and November to help raise funds to keep the restoration process going. If you as an individual would like to become a member or patron of the museum or you as a business would like to donate or become a corporate sponsor, please see attached membership and donation form. This is a terrific opportunity to make a real difference in the community! It is also a great opportunity to ensure that the achievements and challenges of the past are preserved for our children and grandchildren to appreciate and learn from.

Museum Opportunities

We the People of Tennessee—Stories of Land and Place

The Museum has a great opportunity to partner with Humanities Tennessee and the Elkton Historical Society. **We the People of Tennessee—Stories of Land and Place** is a statewide, eighteen-month, project of oral history collection and provocative programming centering on the connection between land, place, and community in Tennessee. The purpose of the project is to gather and create an electronic database of stories that give land and place its meaning. This database will tie these stories to the places they explore on electronic maps, which are publicly accessible on the Internet. The Elkton Historical Society has chosen the Matt Gardner story as one of their twenty stories that they will collect and map, and then use them to create an online cultural tour, K-12 lesson plans, or a community history web site. For more information see:

www.humanitiestennessee.org or
www.elktonhistory.net

Southern Middle Tennessee Quilt Trail

The museum and the handmade quilts of Henrietta (Ritta) Jenkins Gardner will soon be part of the Southern Middle Tennessee Quilt Trail. The quilt trail is a sightseeing venue to introduce the public to the many virtues in the area and to encourage tourism growth and community pride. The trail consists of nine counties: Bedford, Coffee, Franklin, Giles, Lawrence, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, and Moore. The Quilt Trail consists of historic sites, century farms, and places of interest. A website will be launched that will have all the information concerning the history of the sites and owners as well as the history of the quilt and the quilt maker. A quilt of the museum's choosing will be painted on a 4 foot x 4-foot block framed and mounted at the museum for a permanent display. To see a sample of a quilt trail, visit the Eastern Tennessee Appalachian Quilt Trail at www.quilttrail.org