

**HIGHLIGHTS  
OF  
THE WILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM  
NOVEMBER 2009 - NOVEMBER 2010**

By  
Carole Gandy Pinches  
December 2010

"To achieve all that is possible, we must attempt the impossible.  
To be as much as we can be, we must dream of being more."

In loving memory of my uncle, Carl Cumpton (1923 - 2010), this newsletter is dedicated.

Not liking to begin with an apology, it certainly is in order due to getting this letter to you at such a busy time of the year; it was delayed since it became necessary for us to change our election of officers from November to December this year. However, this does give me an opportunity to wish all of you a very wonderful holiday season and to extend my wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous new year. I also hope this year has been a good one for you.

**CARL CUMPTON**

For those of you who may not know, Carl was diagnosed with bladder cancer in January of this year. He underwent two surgeries, BCG treatments, then a course of radiation. He had just completed the radiation when, unfortunately, he fell and broke his hip on September 14th; he passed away September 21st leaving us all with a huge void in our lives. Carl had done so much for the City of Wilson as well as for the Historical Society and Museum that it is going to take all of us working together to fill his shoes. As Carl's son, Jim, said at Carl's Celebration of Life service, "If it is to be, it's up to me" indicating that we shouldn't sit around and wait for someone else to do something -- we each as individuals need to do what we know needs to be done. That is the way Carl lived -- he took it upon himself to get things done; consequently, the Historical Society and Museum as well as the City of Wilson are much better off for all that he did. Carl will be greatly missed.

**ON-GOING ACTIVITIES AT THE MUSEUM**

The Museum continues to expand its collection of artifacts from Wilson and the surrounding region. At the same time we have initiated a program to access (that is to record and document) every artifact in the Museum. We have completed accessioning most of the items received during the last couple of years. Once that is completed we will concentrate on accessioning all of the other artifacts in the Museum. This process involves using PastPerfect, a widely employed software program for Museums. Using this software has many advantages -- not the least is that with very little effort we will have a record of every artifact donated by specific individuals, as well as having the ability to search the Museum database in many different ways. In addition, we continue to make copies of all current Wilson newspapers, and Mindy Taylor, one of our very

dedicated volunteers, continues to add to our extensive obituary collection. Mindy is also working on a book of Wilsonites who served in World War II.

### **THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM'S ANNUAL CELEBRATION**

On November 5, 2010 members of the Society and guests gathered together to celebrate our founding on November 5, 1998 as well as the opening of the Museum on November 3, 2001 -- twelve and nine years respectively! With seven of our founding members present we reminisced about that original meeting and all that had been accomplished since then. Founders present were Florene Parker, Anna Heath, Anna Cumpton, Orval and Nita Segroves, and George and Carole Pinches. Following a delicious dinner, three of our volunteers were honored as Volunteers of the Year: Nita Segroves, Vivian James, and Barbara Burris; they each were presented plaques in recognition of their service to our organization. George then presented a plaque that now hangs in the Museum listing the names of all seventeen founders. It had occurred to us that after all these years we did not have those names on prominent display anywhere in the Museum!

### **ANOTHER CELEBRATION!**

Since the Historical Society and Museum is a "cultural" entity, the Board decided that it would be nice to recognize a Wilson resident for his/her artistic/cultural abilities and contributions. Because of all that Jim Miller has done in terms of sculpturing and painting, we honored him in February of 2010 at a recognition dinner held in the Fellowship Hall of the Assembly of God Church. Close to one hundred guests were present with Ken Barrett, one of our lifetime members, being the featured speaker since he knew Jim so well. Several other guests remembered Jim with their stories and tributes and it was an exciting evening. In addition, four of our members were recognized as Volunteers of the Year for 2009: Juanette Miers and Wilma Miller for all their varied contributions to the Society, while Chris Hammett and Susan Pinches were recognized for all the time spent developing and maintaining our website. Much to the surprise of George and me, on behalf of the Society, Anna Heath presented us with two identical Founder's Plaques thanking us for our visionary efforts in establishing the Museum; one now hangs in the Museum -- the other in our home. What a surprise that was!

Even though we experienced a very special evening, it was bittersweet in that one of our very dedicated and beloved founders had passed away early that very morning. Sonny James had cancer for several years and until shortly before his passing, he had done quite well continuing to do the things he loved, but much of the last few months of his life was spent in and out of the hospital. Needless to say, the Wilson Historical Society and Museum has lost a dedicated and loyal member as well as a dear and good friend. Sonny had been awarded our Volunteer of the Year Award in 2007.

### **OTHERS HONORED**

In honor of Jim Miller, at our February event the Society announced the establishment of the "Jim Miller Artistic and Cultural award" to recognize those who are highly deserving of recognition in their field. The first recipient of this award was Holly Gaines, a member of Wilson's High's Senior Class of 2010 who has received statewide recognition for her talent as a flutist. Holly won numerous awards during her senior year and was presented with a \$15,000

flute from "Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation" in March. Among her honors are being the highest ranking high school-aged flutist in Oklahoma for three years in a row; she was also Valedictorian of her graduating class, having graduated with thirty hours of college credit. Two of our members, Nita Segroves and Vivian James, at the High School Awards Assembly in May presented Holly with a plaque from the Historical Society as well as a \$500 scholarship. Her name has been inscribed on the Jim Miller Artistic and Cultural award plaque that hangs in the Museum.

It was also decided by the Society that we wanted to honor Carl Cumpton in some way this year. With his 87th birthday being on August 23rd, we honored him on Saturday, the 21st, with a party in which almost one hundred guests came to share their tributes. It was a wonderful evening of sharing stories as well as finger food, birthday cake and ice cream. For those of you who have witnessed Carl passing out his crosses and repeating "The Cross in My Pocket", he did the same at the party. As he spoke to the group, he indicated that probably would be the last time he would be able to do that in a group setting, and just as he said, it was. It was truly another bittersweet evening. In honor of all that Carl as well as Anna had done to help in getting the Museum established, a Founder's Award was presented to them. It hangs in the Museum; they were also given one for their home.

### **FUNDRAISERS**

Given the number of recognition events we had this year, we probably should have had more fundraisers! As it was we were only able to work in one, but it was successful and provided us assistance with on-going expenses. One of our members, Barbara Burris, suggested the idea of having a raffle in which a coupon book was created with certificates for gifts from five Wilson merchants -- including the Wilson Historical Museum. Tickets sold for \$1 with a value of \$110 in merchandise. The raffle was held during Fall Festival and proceeds came to almost \$500.

In addition to this fundraiser, we received grants this year from The Chickasaw Nation (the third of three yearly gifts to add to our Endowment) and the Westheimer and McCrory Foundations (to help purchase a microfilm reader-printer and a large number of reels of microfilm).

### **PAINTING OF THE OLD HIGH SCHOOL DONATED TO THE MUSEUM**

In August, Joyce Ray Patrick presented the Museum with a beautiful painting of the old Wilson High School as it appeared in the 1950's and 60's and it is now prominently displayed. She had commissioned Rick Popple of Lilbrun, Georgia to paint the high school from a small picture she had. The painting also includes a large "Wilson Eagle" and a flag. She then obtained permission from the artist so that we could have prints made from it to be sold in the Museum Store. We now have 5x7 prints available as well as notecards with the picture on the outside and blank on the inside. We thank Joyce immensely for this beautiful donation; if any of you are interested in obtaining a print or notecards, please contact us for further information; they would make beautiful gifts.

## **THE MUSEUM'S WEBSITE**

For those of you who have not found us yet on our most informative website, go to [www.wilsonhistoricalmuseum.org](http://www.wilsonhistoricalmuseum.org) and have some fun reading all about us! Since its appearance over a year ago, it has generated much interest from people all over the United States that have or had connections to Wilson. We have received many requests through the website e-mail for genealogy information which we have been able to provide; we have received membership dues from it as well as memorial gifts and donations; we have sold and mailed Museum Store merchandise (via PayPal) to many, and the list goes on. Needless to say, we have Susan and Chris in Kansas City to thank for this wonderful website. Also, as Mindy continues to extract obituaries from the newspapers, names of the deceased are added to the website's list once the obituaries are added to the Museum's collection.

## **DONATIONS, DUES, MEMORIAL GIFTS, ETC.**

No newsletter would be complete, would it, without reminders that we are always looking for new members and money! In the information provided herein, George, as Chair of the Endowment and Museum Boards, will address the status of our Endowment and our yearly expenses. I would like to share with you ways in which you can help.

First, if you are receiving this newsletter as a friend or donor, but you are not a member, we welcome you to become such. All dues money is used toward our on-going expenses.

Secondly, all memorial gift money -- as well as gifts made in honor of someone -- go directly into the Endowment; gifts made to either of those are listed in two separate albums and are on prominent display in the Museum. Amounts of the donations are not shown -- only the name of the person being memorialized or honored and the name of the donor(s). Once a donation comes in, you will receive an acknowledgement from us that can be used for tax-purposes; also, a notification is sent to the family of the person being memorialized or honored -- again, no amounts are shown -- only your name and address as the donor. If there are questions about those, please let us know.

As for other donations, they can be designated for some specific purpose or they can be non-designated. A form is included that covers dues and the various kinds of donations. Also, this serves as a reminder that dues are now due and payable for the year 2011; of course, if you become a lifetime member, you will never have to think of paying your dues again!

## **OFFICERS AND BOARDS**

At our election held on December 1st, the following officers were elected by acclamation:

### **Society Officers**

President: Carole Gandy Pinches  
Vice-President: Anna Cumpton (to fill Carl's shoes!)  
Secretary: Farah Bazzrea  
Treasurer: Bill Miller

Museum Board (one member elected every three years):

Orval Segroves

Endowment Board (one member elected every three years):

Anna Cumpton (to fill Carl's shoes!)

By virtue of their positions and as specified in our By-Laws, Carole Pinches and Bill Miller automatically serve on both of those boards. In addition to Orval, Anna Heath is on the Museum Board, and in addition to Anna Cumpton, Maudine Herrell sits on the Endowment Board. George Pinches is Chair of both Boards.

In addition to our officers and board members who attend our meetings, the following are also vital to our existence -- these are the members who faithfully attend our meetings and help in a multitude of ways -- we couldn't do without them: Maxine Clark, Peggy Herrin (she serves as our reporter, but that is not an elected office), Juanette Miers, Mindy Taylor, Nita Segroves, Vivian James, Ella Herell, J.C. and Billie Kerr, Barbara Burris and Wilma Miller.

And now, I have asked George to reflect on his dreams for the Museum.

**DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE MUSEUM**

Through the years I have watched the Museum grow from a dream to become a very successful reality. In 1998 when we first met we had nothing -- except our dreams. Now we own two very nice buildings -- the Museum proper and the Museum Annex. We have grown and have an extensive collection that features many artifacts from Wilson and the area. We have also grown our genealogy and obituary files as well as our Wilson historical information so they are now a very impressive and important part of the Museum's resources. In addition, we have grown our Endowment from nothing until today its value is about \$140,000, and we have a very well-done web site that has generated greater visibility for the Museum.

All of this could not have been accomplished without the dedication of all of our volunteers and the many other individuals and organizations who have supported us through the years.

While it's great to reflect on what we have accomplished, what about the future of the Wilson Historical Museum? What dreams do we have to make the Museum even better and to ensure its long-term viability? *My personal dreams are to:*

*Build a sizable addition that connects the present Museum to the Annex. This would involve: (1) moving the entrance to the Museum from its present location to a new location in the addition -- about half way between the two present buildings; (2) finishing the exterior of the addition in brick to coordinate with the present Museum building, and bricking the Annex so it has the same appearance as the addition; (3) relocating the office from the present Museum building to a new location in the addition; (4) having a lot more*

display cases installed, as well as more bookcases for our Museum library; and (5) landscaping the exterior in front of the addition, adding security for the Museum, and ....

*Continue to expand the Endowment.* The Wilson Historical Society and Museum is an all-volunteer organization -- we do not receive support from the city of Wilson, the state of Oklahoma, or any other entity. Thus, what we accomplish is a direct function of our ability to attract outside financial support. The purpose of the Endowment is to provide for the financial integrity of the Museum -- to help pay for supplies, pay the insurance and utilities, pay other on-going expenses, and do any maintenance or repairs that are needed. While we bring some funds in through sales from the Museum store, donations by individuals and memberships in the Wilson Historical Society, these sources do not begin to provide sufficient funds to run the Museum.

A general rule of thumb is to withdraw 3-4% of the value of the Endowment in a year -- that way the principal of the Endowment keeps growing and should keep up with inflation. In 2010 -- for the first time -- we started taking withdrawals from the Endowment to help with expenses. Taking a 3% distribution in 2011 means the Endowment will supply \$3,000 to \$4,000 to help meet operating expenses. But, our current operating expenses are three to four times that much. Thus, both presently and in the longer-term we need a much larger Endowment -- to meet the expenses associated with the present, and hopefully expanded, Museum.

*I have shared my dreams -- but I stress they are strictly my dreams. We would love to hear what your dreams are for the future of the Wilson Historical Museum!*

### **IN CLOSING**

Having written probably more than you have time to absorb during this busy holiday season, I will bring this newsletter to a close by saying that as always we appreciate your support whether monetary or by donations of artifacts, your comments (positive and negative -- we learn from the negative which is important), and your continued interest in this endeavor. The Museum is for you and yours to enjoy and we certainly invite each and every one of you to stop by for a visit anytime you are in town. We are open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and can be open other times if we have advance notice.

One last parting thought -- we will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Museum in November 2011. At the present time we are considering some type of event probably on Saturday, November 5th. Mark your calendars for that date and we will be back to you in plenty of time with details of the celebration. We will look forward to seeing many of you then, if not before.