



## Cumberland Homesteads Tower Association

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[www.cumberlandhomesteads.org](http://www.cumberlandhomesteads.org)

### **The Tower at Cumberland Homesteads- the first 80 years**

1. 1938-1939- the tower is constructed by Homesteaders, CCC, and WPA workers according to a design by Cumberland Homesteads (CH) architect Wm Macy Stanton. It is 80 feet tall, built with both quarried and field stone, used for project offices and contains a 50,000 gal. water tank.
2. 1947- the Fed leaves to focus attention on WWII and donates 27 acres (tower, school, water tanks) to Cumberland County; estimated value at that time was \$500,000. HHS uses tower for classrooms until 1962.
3. Tower was used by CMSP and some businesses for storage. It was poorly maintained, vandalized to a major extent, and became home to creatures and vermin.
4. late 70s-1980- concerned homesteaders organize Cumberland Homesteads Tower Association (CHTA) to preserve the tower and tell the CH story, including how 251 families, an entire County, and a rural plateau region were brought out of the Great Depression.
5. 7.1.80- CHTA obtains a 99- yr lease on the Tower from CCBOE to operate a museum in the tower- a tribute to the sacrifices of Original Homesteaders.
6. 7.1.84- Tower Museum opens on 50th Anniversary Celebration of CH.
7. 8.8.88- the Tower, remaining houses and other structures, and Cumberland Mountain State Park (CMSP) are approved for listing on The National Register of Historic Places as Tennessee's largest National Historic District.
8. 1984-94- CHTA launches major effort to raise private funding to do extensive repair/replacement of windows, floor, fixtures at the Tower.
9. 7.18.94 Cumberland County Commission passes resolution to provide "up to \$10,000" to repair Tower. These monies allowed major renovation, accessibility for disabled, new wiring, refinished floors.
10. a \$20,000 pink granite monument is funded by contributions from 2nd and 3rd generation homesteaders to honor 1st generation (Original Homesteaders).
11. 9.04-CHTA holds 1st Apple Festival at Tower grounds.
12. County Commission grants \$5000 and \$4750 to help CHTA with AF expenses.
13. 1.2.2011- Tower Museum hosts Smithsonian Exhibition **Journey Stories** to major acclaim. Related publicity helps to put the Tower Museum on the national map.
14. 5.12.2014- Tennessee Historical Commission Marker 2C27 is erected in front of the Tower at a cost of \$1457 to CHTA ( \$300 from VEC Grant, other \$ from donations).
15. 2013-16- CHTA uses its limited resources and persuasive powers to do repairs of top windows, some siding boards that allowed lightning rod to fall over. Landscaping was supported by personal donations. Several local craftsmen have donated time and materials to assist in times of need.

#### A few notes of interest-

- a- in the last year of complete visitor record, the Tower had more than 10,000 visitors (counts AF) from 50 states and 10 other countries (as many as 16 some years).
- b- the Tower has hosted weddings, celebrations of life, receptions, and gatherings of various groups, including Plateau Ham Radio Club, Cumberland Trail Riders, and others.
- c- the Tower consistently ranks in the top 5 attractions for visitors to Crossville and Cumberland County as does CMSP, part of our National Historic District.
- d- TN History for Kids (Bill Carey) listed CH Tower Museum in its Top 5 places for students to visit to learn TN history. Carey has provided a Virtual Tour of CH on THK website.