

COFFEE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AUGUST 2026



Society News

We had a wonderful turn out for our 250th celebration of the founding of our country on July 4th. There were crowds of people who came to tour the courthouse and the museum. Then the patriotic ceremony held at “the Church at 117” was special. Appreciation and thanks go to Sandra McMullin Bennett for leading and coordinating our 250th Celebration and all of our sponsors.

Beat the heat and attend our Membership Picnic indoors on Saturday, September 12 starting at 1:00PM at the Community Room in the Coffee County Administrative Plaza. The address is 1329 McArthur St., Manchester TN. The Coffee County Historical Society will supply meat, drinks, and tableware. We ask attendees to bring a dish to share.



Our speaker will be Mr. Louis J. “Jody” Baltz III. His presentation is “Bragg’s Evacuation of Tullahoma June 28-July 4, 1863. He will use contemporary reports, diaries, letters and accounts to create detailed troop movement maps extending from Manchester to the Cumberland Mountain.

Our November membership meeting will take place on November 14, 2026, at 1:00PM. Our speaker will be Ms. Kim King, Commander of the VFW Post 10904.

Contact Information

Email: CCHS1969@att.net

Phone: 931-728-0145

Address: 101 West Fort Street, Box 2,
Manchester TN 37355

Webpage: CCTNHS.org

Facebook: Coffee County Historical Society

Officers and Directors:

President: Larry McIntosh

Vice President: Jeff Haley

Corresponding Secretary: Lori Amos

Treasurer: Frances Simmons

Assistant Treasurer: Butch Niederhauser

Office Manager: Connie Hunt

Museum Curator: Bonnie Gamble

Publications Chair: Nathan Havenner

Directors: Sandra McMullin Bennett,

Brent Parsley and Beverly Vetter

New Sponsors

Thank you to our new Sponsors whose generosity allows us to continue our work and provides resources free to our community.

Diamond-Clark Carden; DOT Foods

Platinum-Baker Brothers Drug Store

Silver- Coffee County Bank

**Gold- Bush Insurance; Al White
Motors**

Donations of Yearbooks and Artifacts

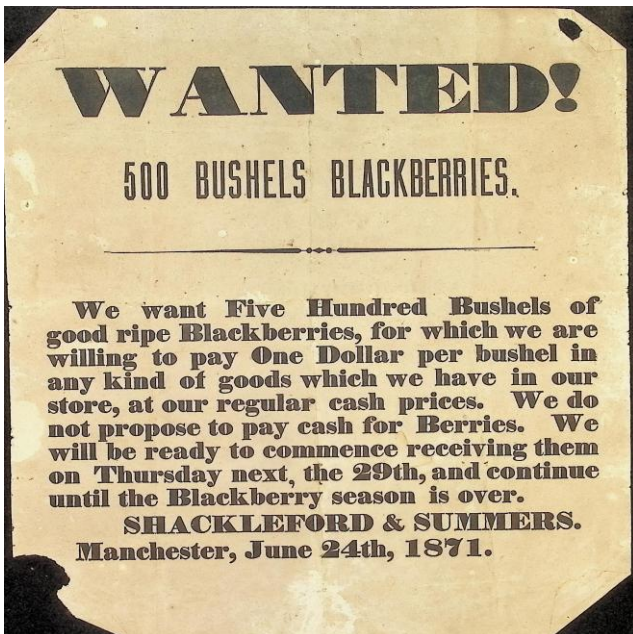
It is wonderful how many people are interested in preserving and sharing our local history by donating or bringing by items for us to digitally scan. Our collection of Coffee County Yearbooks now starts our at 1923 and includes several handmade year books from the 1930s and 1940s. You do not have to relinquish ownership of an old yearbook because we have an overhead scanner that can record and save these digitally for future generations. These yearbooks will provide us with information for a new Coffee County High School museum exhibit that we hope to have ready in the next several months. If you have an item from Coffee County High School from 1920-1945, we would welcome the chance to display it as part of our upcoming High School exhibit.

We also received a donation of a collection of documents and papers related to the Samuel Kasserman family who immigrated to Middle Tennessee in the 1850s. Mrs. Judy Phillips researched this collection and wrote a detailed family history and why these papers made their way to Manchester and the Coffee County Historical Society.



Volunteers

The Coffee County Historical Society only operates because of the great people who volunteer on a weekly basis. There is no paid staff and the dedication of our volunteers is what keeps our doors open. A huge thank you to all of these wonderful people and to Connie Hunt who has the responsibility of scheduling and herding all of us volunteers. If you have some time to spare Tuesday-Saturday from 9:00am-1:00pm, then we can find something you would like to do.



Blackberries were an item in demand in the summer of 1871. I suspect many a youth were sent out to pick in exchange for \$1 per bushel worth of goods.

The Kaserman Family

By Bonnie Gamble and Judy Henley Phillips

Volunteering at the Coffee County Historical Society provides so many opportunities to learn new and fascinating stories about the history of Coffee County. One such opportunity occurred one Saturday as I examined some items donated to CCHS that had not yet been organized and recorded in our collections. I found an old worn leather pouch that contained papers and receipts dating all the way back to 1847. I looked up the name from the 1857 receipt of Samuel Kaserman on Ancestry. I noticed he was born in 1807 in Switzerland and emigrated to the United States. The vast majority of papers all dealt with business conducted in Winchester, Franklin County. I decided the best person to research these papers in the pouch was Judy Henley Phillips. She is the Archivist for Coffee County, but more importantly she is also a long-time researcher and volunteer at the Franklin County archives.

Judy Henley Phillips, to my amazement, not only put the papers in order and in archival folders but wrote and printed a whole family history of the Kaserman family and connected them to the Phillips family here in Coffee County. This account is now located at the Coffee County Archives, the Coffee County Historical Society, and the Franklin County Archives. She also remembered an old article in the Franklin County Historical Society publication about the Kaserman family! The following is a short summary of their history and connection to Coffee County.

Samuel and his wife Maria emigrated in 1838 to Tuscarawas County, Ohio and lived off and on there until the 1860s. Samuel had a son John, daughter Mary, and daughter Elizabeth. Samuel and his John both fought in the Civil War with the Union Army. John contracted pneumonia and was advised to move south for his health. Franklin County will become popular with Swiss immigrants as the landscape reminded them of their home country. On January 23, 1868, Samuel purchased a 280-acre farm with a four-room house about four miles from Winchester. He was able to put a down payment in gold of \$2,000 and a lien on the farm for the balance of \$4,000.

The education of John Kaserman's children led to the construction of the Kaserman school in 1870 on Winchester/Belvidere Road at the Faris Chapel intersection. John brought the first sawmill and furnished the land, lumber, and most of the labor for the first sawn-lumber rural school house in Franklin County. The school, however, burned about 10 years later. A cemetery was set apart by the school house and became the Kaserman Cemetery. The Kaserman farm stayed in the family until 1917. Samuel Kaserman died July 1, 1882.

There is a Special Collection located in the Hoskins Library at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville concerning the Kaserman family. John Kaserman is credited as acting for several companies to encourage Swiss families to emigrate to Franklin County. He was a leader in Franklin County agriculture and given credit for bringing the first mowing machine, first reaper, first grain drill, and first windmill to the area. His farm named Lucerne Farm (after Lucerne Switzerland) was known as the first to successfully grow alfalfa and also for their high-quality Angus cattle. John became a stockholder and director in the Bank of Winchester and a board member of the Winchester Normal College.

How then did these papers come to Coffee County? John and Maria Anna Kaserman had eight children. The youngest was a daughter named Hulda born in January 1873. She married on January 21, 1901, James Porter Phillips in Franklin County. James Porter Phillips was born on March 19, 1876, in Hillsboro, Coffee County to Robert Lackey Phillips and Eliza Ann Farrar. James Porter Phillips went into partnership of John Kaserman and operated an investment firm that also operated as a "Co-Operative Immigration Agent" for the Nashville Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway. James Porter Phillips and wife Hulda had one son John Otto "Jack" Phillips who was born in 1903 at Coffee County. James Porter Phillips, Hulda and his parents are all buried at the Hillsboro United Methodist Church Cemetery. James Porter Phillips and wife Hulda both died in 1950.

John Otto Phillips married Florentine Holmes in Miami, Florida. Newspaper clippings of their wedding describe John Otto Phillips as the son of a “pioneer family” in Tennessee. John Otto Phillips became an attorney in Miami after he graduated from Yale and Vanderbilt. John Otto Phillips and wife Florentine were also buried in the Hillsboro Methodist Church Cemetery. John Otto Phillips died in 1980 and wife Florentine died in 2000. The couple had a son named John Otto Phillips Jr. who was born in 1935 and died in Florida in 2022. He married Jo Allen Rogers from Coffee County who died in 2017. John Otto Phillips Jr. is buried in Hillsboro Methodist Church Cemetery and his wife Jo Allen Phillips is buried at Rose Hill Memorial Garden.

Our gift of papers then came from the Phillips family connection from John Otto Phillips Jr relatives. His mother Florentine was a well-known and active citizen of Manchester for decades. More complete genealogical information of the Kaserman family and detailed description of the papers found in the leather pouch are in the extensive research done by Judy Henley Phillips in her published “The Keserman-Phillips Family of Coffee and Franklin Counties Tennessee”.



Donated Kaserman leather pouch of documents

Photo by Eddie RapidPhoto