



Photo by Payton McCormick



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Wilbarger County Historical Museum

The Wilbarger County Historical Museum, located in the old county jail, opened in March 2015 to give visitors an entertaining and fascinating look at the county's history and heritage. Preston Cary serves as the museum's curator.

The original building was constructed in 1912, with an addition added in the 1930s. Rewiring was required to bring the building up-to-date. Along with the electric system, each room in the building also had an individual cooling system installed.

Cary said that the March 27 date was chosen for the opening because that was the date that Vernon was named in 1881, after having originally being named Eagle Flat.

Cary said he's been pleased with the reaction people have when they first enter the museum, located at 1826 Cumberland Street.

"People can't believe it," he said pointing to comments in the guest register. "People are writing that it's 'fantastic,' 'awesome,' 'I can't believe this is here,' and 'I learned so much about my hometown.' People's reaction has been very enthusiastic."

Visitors can find memorabilia from almost every business ever located in Wilbarger County, he said. Cary spent many years searching and bartering for his huge collection of local

memorabilia, which brings plenty of "ohhs" and "ahhs" as visitors discover the scope of the items displayed. At present the museum is only displaying about a third of its artifacts. Cary said the plan is to continue to add items and rotate the displays to keep it interesting for repeat visitors.

The museum was able to use a \$15,000 grant from the Vernon Tourism Committee to finish remodeling efforts that allowed it to open. Among modern features is a new handicap accessible bathroom. The bathroom is self-lighting, coming on when the door opens and automatically turning off.

A long-term goal is to open a genealogical and historic research room as well.

Regular hours for the museum are 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday thru Thursday.