

# Historical Society to Add Library with Expansion

By Thad Requet

Thanks to the donations of many, the vision of a few and the drive of one person, Shelby County has one of the nicest and most comprehensive historical societies around. That one person with the drive is Kathleen Wilham.

Wilham has the drive and the vision that has made the historical society stand out as one of the best for a county of this size. And at this time, she is in the process of making it better.

With the purchase of the Grille 109 restaurant building in 2017, it made for a natural expansion. Wilham is planning to turn that particular structure into a library for the facility.

Right now Kaser is getting down and dirty. He has had to deal with moisture issues and has put in a sub floor for building. They will be putting in new ceiling fans as well. She said they also plan to put new front windows and insulation throughout to tighten the building up and make it more efficient.

She said the time-line was slowed a little with the work they had to do on the floor.

Wilham noted that Ransom Chapin and his mother Linda Chapin have also helped with work on the building. She also said that the buildings will match each other in looks on the

outside.

The library will house historical records, genealogical records and pictures. Wilham already knows where she plans to have tables set up. Filing cabinets and bookcases will be brought into the library wing.

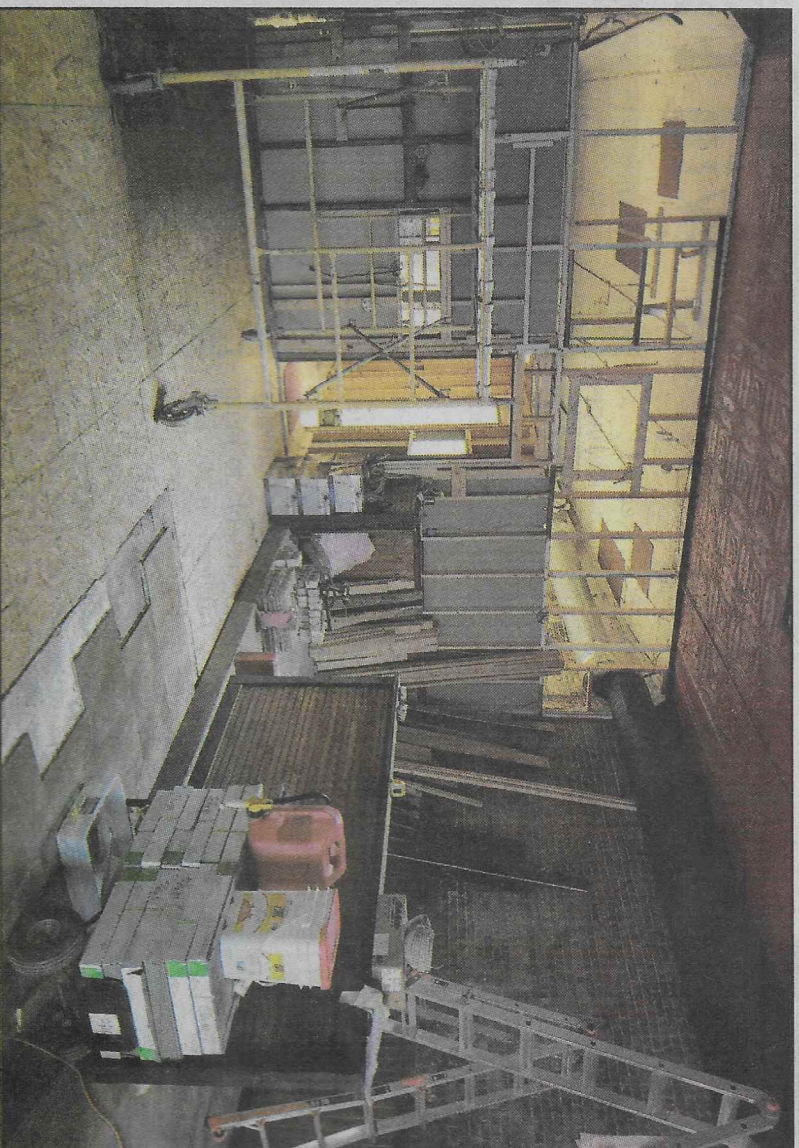
With the addition of the library, it will allow Wilham to display more items in the original part of the facility. She said many of the sports artifacts from upstairs will be brought downstairs and put on display where it will be more convenient to see.

Wilham said the newspace per display room will be in the northeast room of the library section. She said they have made the two restrooms in the old restaurant into one big restroom with a one level floor.

She also noted that across the hall on the southeast part of the library wing will be the Roy Neff room. Wilham explained that Neff gathered school records, church records and cemetery records. All of those records will be in that room. There will be a storage room in the far southeast corner of the wing.

Wilham said that this should be the final expansion for the historical society.

Getting the building ready is one thing, but then the process of making the move to the new building is the next



Jerry Kaser of Bethel has been busy making renovations and improvements to convert the old Grille 109 Restaurant into an addition to the Shelby County Historical Society.  
*Photo by Thad Requet, Shelbyna Weekly*

step. "It's a never ending job, but it's a fun job. It's a challenge," she explained.

Wilham talked about a collection of records from a Bethel that she started in 1972. It will be on display for people to see.

Even with the new wing for the library, Wilham said she will not have any trouble filling it up, plus she will still be very full in her original facility.

Wilham said she has had so many archives and collections that have been donated

to the historical society from so many different people, some from the area, and others from out of the area who once lived in Shelby County.

Wilham said that a lot of the shelves that they are going to move are actually on wheels which will make for a much easier move.

The Shelby County Historical Society is excellent and is going to get much better and more accessible soon.

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