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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SMITHSONIAN COMING TO COWAN March 10 through April 21, 2012

Cowan Railroad Museum will explore the professions and the people that sustain American society when it hosts “The Way We Worked,” a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition on display March 10 through April 21, 2012 at the Cowan Center for the Arts Theater.

How have jobs changed over the past 150 years? What careers were available to people in 1880? What companies have come and gone? We invite you to stroll through Franklin County history with some bullets gathered by Sally Hubbard from issues of the *Franklin County Historical Review* (FCHR).

General **Edmund Kirby Smith** believed that the South had become a separate nation, with George Washington’s image on its seal and July 4th its national holiday, so that resistance to authority from the North constituted revolution (legal), not rebellion (dishonorable). He believed the South was being invaded by “northern hordes that would deprive us of our liberty, that they may enjoy our substance” and did not doubt the South’s ability to preserve itself, until August of 1864. In charge of volunteer regiments from the South, he described middle Tennessee soldiers as good rifle shots but intractable soldiers ... and east Tennessee soldiers as disloyal to the core. The independent people of the mountains had no sympathy for plantation society. Painfully aware of the military significance of the Cowan tunnel, he ordered it and the Elk River bridge to be destroyed (which did not happen). Kirby Smith delayed surrendering his post until after Robert E. Lee surrendered; he exiled himself to Cuba and finally took an oath of amnesty in Virginia in 1865. (FCHR Vol. 24, No. 1, 1993)

The Franklin County **Census of 1850** reports how people made a living, their education, and their longevity. By order from most to least, primary occupations were as follows: Farmer, blacksmith, laborer, merchant, carpenter, wagon maker, minister, teacher,

physician, hatter, cabinetmaker, lawyer, miller ... and the end of the list includes one of each: architect, sheriff, druggist, tinsmith, postmaster, silver plater, court clerk. There were 29 people in the county older than 80. Seniors in high school, 135 boys and 91 girls; seniors in college, 20 boys and 5 girls. Of the 10,130 residents of the county that year, 188 had been born in Ireland and worked on track and tunnel crews. (FCHR, vol. 11, No. 2, 1980)

The Tennessee Legislature enacted the **Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad** in 1845 and construction on the tunnel was well along before work on rails began. The tunnel and the rail to Nashville were complete when the first Cowan Depot was erected in 1852. After the War, the line was renamed the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railroad. As freight cars became larger, the tunnel had to be bored out, and the roof and eaves of the Depot cut back (1960). The Cowan Beautification Commission purchased the existing Depot (built in 1904) from the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, and moved it in 1976 across and farther from the rails, for use as a Museum.

Additional locomotives called pushers were and still are employed to push heavy trains up the steep grade in the tunnel. Trains continue to shake the Mountain; residents of Sherwood Road near Sewanee both hear the horns and feel the vibrations for several minutes as trains pass below. (FCHR, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1980)

“The Way We Worked” has been made possible to Cowan Railroad Museum by Humanities Tennessee.

“The Way We Worked,” an exhibition created by the National Archives, is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and State Humanities Councils nationwide. The United States Congress has provided support for Museum on Main Street.

For more information call Pat Underwood at 931-962-2356 or check the website at www.Smithsonian.CowanRailroadMuseum.org

Promoting integrated enlightenment in Cowan and surrounding Middle Tennessee.