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JULY 21, 2015

Georgia Museum of Agriculture Installs New Turpentine Exhibit in Macon

TIFTON – A new exhibit in Macon from the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College highlights the role that pine trees and turpentine had in the history of agriculture in the state of Georgia.

Located in the lobby of the Georgia Farm Bureau headquarters on Bass Road, the exhibit is open to visitors at no charge. On display through early 2016, the exhibit is part of an ongoing partnership between the Georgia Farm Bureau, the Museum, and ABAC.

The newly installed exhibit spotlights the history of Georgia’s naval stores. Turpentine camp artifacts, rosin barrels, a tree-cutting technique for collecting rosin called cat faces, and various tools are on display. The centerpiece of the exhibit is a collection of the original portraits of the winners of the Miss Gum Spirits of Turpentine pageant dating from the mid-1940s through the mid-1960s.
Polly Huff, assistant director and curator at the Museum, said that in days gone by the members of the American Turpentine Farmers Association gathered in Valdosta for their annual convention on the third Wednesday in April each year. Choosing from 10 contestants, each sponsored by one of the Association’s Board of 10 directors, the members selected the annual Miss Gum Spirits of Turpentine Queen.

The exhibit also includes manuals from the American Turpentine Farmers Association containing important historic information, meeting minutes, and curious historical tidbits shedding light on the industry.

Previous Museum exhibits in Macon at the Georgia Farm Bureau headquarters have included a tobacco exhibit and several exhibits on cotton.

For more information on this or other traveling exhibits, interested persons can contact Huff at phuff@abac.edu.

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