

Bonnet Festival

Just south of the farmhouse are the Big Shoal Cemetery and the remains of the once-popular Big Shoal Primitive Baptist Church. Active from 1826-1917 the church was regionally famous for its annual spring meeting on the second Saturday and Sunday in May. This large and highly anticipated meeting was known as the "Bonnet Show" or "Bonnet Festival" where women of the county would show off their finest and newest spring bonnets.

Area merchants were all too happy to profit from this 80-year local tradition. Many business owners left Liberty in February and March each year and traveled to Philadelphia to purchase "fine goods" including lace, silk ribbons, straw bonnet forms, and completed bonnets ready for wear. As river and train travel improved, bonnets from Paris became available by way of St. Louis and the Missouri River.



Liberty Tribune, 1933

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