

# New exhibit looks at Tennessee's manufacturing history

By Amy McRary

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Some 80 items — from a woven coverlet to Little Debbie snack cakes to a fender section of a 3D-printed car — illustrate the march of Tennessee manufacturing in a new Museum of East Tennessee History exhibit.

History looks at 254 years of manufacturing across the state in the exhibit on display through Feb. 1, 2015. The museum staff created “Made in Tennessee: Manufacturing Milestones.”

Divided into seven time periods, the exhibit traces how Tennesseans lived and worked through the decades as their state moved from agriculture to industry. Starting in 1760 and continuing through 2014, “Made in Tennessee” shows how the state’s economy was influenced by wars and their aftermaths and changed by advances from railroads to electricity to technology.

The exhibit begins with the 18th-century pioneer story when families lived by self-sufficiency as it shows items that include flex and spinning



STAFF PHOTOS BY AMY MCRARY

Blue Ridge pottery and Worth baseball equipment are among the some 80 items that help tell the history of manufacturing in Tennessee. The new exhibit “Made in Tennessee: Manufacturing Milestones” is at the Museum of East Tennessee History.

## MADE IN TENNESSEE: MANUFACTURING MILESTONES

**What:** Exhibit traces state’s manufacturing from 1760 to now

**Where:** Museum of East Tennessee History, 601 S. Gay St.

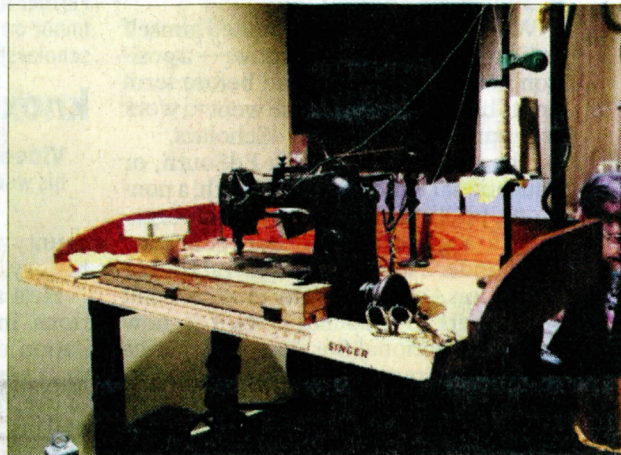
**When:** Through Feb. 1, 2015. Museum open 9 a.m.-4 p.m. weekdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, 1-5 p.m. Sunday

**Admission:** \$5 adults, \$4 senior citizens, free children age 16 and younger; free Sunday for everyone

wheels and hand-forged nails. It ends with Tennessee’s current status as country’s top state for automotive manufacturing. Among the exhibit’s newest items is a fender

section from the downtown Knoxville Local Motors’ 3D printing microfactory.

Throughout the exhibit are items created in the state, shown with stories



Longtime Knoxville Glove Company worker Margaret Newcomb used this machine for decades at the plant. The machine is part of the exhibit “Made in Tennessee: Manufacturing Milestones” now at the Museum of East Tennessee History.

about their companies. Some firms no longer exist, others continue while still others have merged or changed names.

One large case is devoted to the food, from Knoxville’s JFG Coffee, Bush Beans and White Lily Flour to Chattanooga’s Moon Pies to Lynchburg’s Jack Daniels and Tullahoma’s George Dickel whiskeys. A 19th-century red and beige coverlet by

Maryville Wooden Mills is shown near Chattanooga Medicine Company laxatives and tonics from the same era.

“Blue Ridge” dinnerware made at Erwin’s Southern Potteries is displayed next to a baseball bat and small 1920s-era ball made by Tullahoma-based Worth Inc. There’s a Major League note attached to another item, a baseball jersey from

Cookeville’s Wilson Sporting Goods. New York Yankee great Mickey Mantle would wear only the uniforms by Wilson, said Museum Curator of Exhibitions Adam Alfrey. Pencils from the Musgrave Pencil Company in Shelbyville are stacked in a nearly 5-foot tower by a museum volunteer.

Some “Made in Tennessee” artifacts came from collections of the museum and other area museums. Some were borrowed from companies, individuals or bought on eBay.

The exhibit was funded by an educational grant from the ALCOA Foundation to honor ALCOA Tennessee’s 100th anniversary. The museum plans to tour “Made in Tennessee” but the larger part of the display dedicated to ALCOA won’t travel. The museum hopes other locations that show the exhibit will use the same idea to dedicate part of the display to an industry in their area, said Alfrey.