

# Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, Inc.

*Preserving Alleghany's Heritage Since 1979*



President . . . . . Roy Hunt  
Vice-President . . . . . J.M. Sturgill  
Secretary . . . . . Irene R. Wagner  
Treasurer . . . . . Lucy Roe

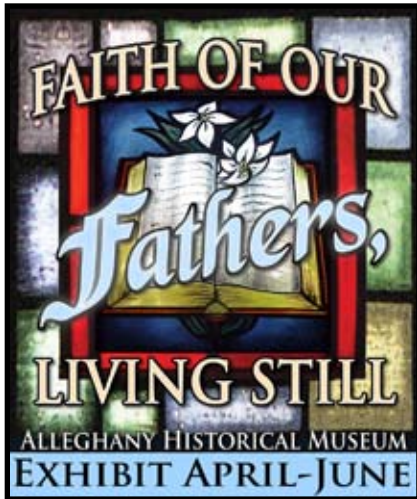


Volume 33, No. 2

June 2012

Bulletin No. 106

## Alleghany Historical Museum News



For the second quarter of 2012, the museum is featuring Alleghany's churches, congregations and customs in an exhibit called, "Faith of Our Fathers, Living Still." The theme was arguably our most popular to date, with around thirty area churches and organizations bringing histories and items for display.

School groups from Glade Creek Elementary and Blue Ridge Christian School visited the Museum in May.

The Museum continues to grow

*Continued on page 2- Museum*



*Baptising in the Little River, Whitehead Community in the 1950s.*

## What You're Missing at the Museum

The old pulpit from Piney Creek Methodist, currently in the front window at Alleghany Historical Museum, supports a "Superfine Edition" Bible published by Nelson & Phillips in 1873. The Bible was owned by the family of W.K. and Mira Parks Holbrook.

Washington Kelly Holbrook lived and reared his family in Sparta. He was born November 1850 and married Mira Adelaide Parks on on January 16, 1876 in Sparta. She was born May 16, 1858. They had a home on Main Street in Sparta, next door to the home of Robert Hackler. W.K. operated a harness and saddle shop in the '80s and '90s. He advertised "Ladies and Somerset saddles a specialty." W.K. died May 26, 1897 and Mira died February 6, 1935.

The eight children of W.K. and Mira were Ora Blanch, Callie Mae, Julius Cleveland, Lola Belle, Maggie Lee, David Bower, and Rufus Vance. Sadly, Ora Blanch, Callie Mae, and another infant son all died at the age of 2 or younger.



## New Acquisitions for the Museum

The Appalachian Cultural Museum, which opened in 1989 and closed in 2006, has given us a few pieces from their collections. Alleghany Historical Museum asked for and received a Mason & Hamlin "Baby" Reed Organ, a butter mold, and a red, white, and black blanket. ACM has returned some items to the original donors, kept a couple of exhibits to display in other locations at ASU, and distributed remaining items between regional museums. We're sorry the Museum closed, but are glad we're able to help show these pieces, and keep them out of indefinite storage.



## From the President

---

As president, I would like to thank the members who are able to make our monthly meetings. Our Society continues to expand with growing involvement.

The Museum Committee members are getting geared up to start the next display which will feature the History of Music in Alleghany. The sooner we get display materials to the committee the faster things will move forward, so help spread the word.

June has gotten here pretty fast this year, lots of things to do on the outside of the home and it seems like the more you do, the more there is to do. Hope each and every one of you all have a nice and safe summer.

Our recent success is due to the efforts of many dedicated members who give freely of their time and talents. Thanks, again, to everyone.

Respectfully,  
Roy K. Hunt

## Museum News

---

*Continued from Page 1*

in popularity and was featured in a segment of *North Carolina Now* recently.

Heather Burgiss of the NC Public Television series, visited the museum for an interview. No stranger to the Blue Ridge, Heather and her family have been coming here for years. Her father-in-law is Sam Burgiss, cousin of Tom and nephew of Doc Burgiss.

# NORTH CAROLINA NOW

The episode aired May 1st and is (tentatively) scheduled to re-air on *North Carolina Weekend*, June 28. The entire episode is available for viewing online at the UNC-TV site (our segment starts about 5 minutes in.) Or visit [www.ahgs.org](http://www.ahgs.org) and follow the link. Thanks, Heather, for giving the museum this valuable, statewide exposure!

We encourage everyone to stop by the Alleghany Historical Museum at 7 North Main Street in downtown Sparta. Hours are 10am - 5pm Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Admission is free. Phone-336-372-2115.

## In Memory

---

*Ross Dean Richardson passed away on May 9 at the age of 86. Mr. Richardson worked for the National Park Service as a Blue Ridge Parkway Ranger for many years before his retirement. In honor of Mr. Richardson's many years of public service, we're including an article originally printed in the September 7, 1967 Alleghany News - almost 45 years ago.*

Ross Dean Richardson, sub-district ranger of the Doughton Park sub-district on the Blue Ridge Parkway, was recently honored for his outstanding performance of duties during his tenure with the service. Before a group of fellow employees and friends at the Bluffs maintenance area, superintendent James M. Eden presented Ranger Richardson with a "quality increase" in his salary in recognition for his many years of outstanding public service on the parkway.

Mr. Richardson started his federal service with the U. S. Army. In 1948 he came to the park service as a seasonal ranger and has since served as a fire control aid, park warden, forestry-aid, park ranger and at present sub-district ranger, all on the Bluffs district of the parkway. During the past year he has served as acting district ranger for several months of limited manpower and high fire danger. This he has done on several occasions in the past and as always with a high level of performance.

Mr. Richardson is a native of Alleghany county, born in the community of Whitehead where he resides today and enjoys his hobby of raising Angus cattle. His wife, Betty, and their four children join him in active participation in community and church affairs. He is chairman of the board of deacons and president of the Men's Brotherhood, a very active organization in the Baptist church.



*Ross Dean Richardson*

In presenting this award, superintendent Eden said, "The quality of your work has long been recognized, so it gives me great pleasure to be able to show our appreciation for your continuing dedication and high performance of duty by presenting you with this quality increase. Congratulations to you on a well deserved award."

*Reprinted with permission from the Alleghany News.*



*From Paul and Cornelia Reeves:*

*Primitive Baptist Ministers - L. to R.*

*Back Row: 1. J.A. Moxley 2. Johnny Williams 3. Ken Roberts  
4. Cage Roberts 5. Shelby Atwood*

*Middle Row: 1. J.D. Vass 2. M.D. Laroo 3. Jim Cane  
4. Ben Martin*

*Front Row: 1. Smith Webb 2. Troy Kilby 3. Tom Craft  
4. Commodore Collins*

*Standing at door: unknown*



*Liberty Baptist Church by Dena Richardson Alspaugh, on display in Alleghany Historical Museum through June.*

*Postcard depicting the old Sparta Methodist Church. This building was destroyed by fire December 1, 1945.*

*Submitted by Lucy Roe.*



Find all our books online at: [www.spartastore.com](http://www.spartastore.com)

Or contact the Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society:

Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 817, Sparta, NC 28675.

[info@ahgs.org](mailto:info@ahgs.org)

336-372-2115

[www.ahgs.org](http://www.ahgs.org)

## Saving the Family Bible

*Timely Advice from Professional Conservator and Bookbinder, Max Marbles*

Cherish your human connections. A family Bible is a valued volume handed down through a family, in which each successive generation records information about the family history, births, marriages and deaths.

Family Bibles, like everything else, suffer the passage of time. Many family heirloom Bibles and books are in extremely poor condition. The biggest threats to a Bible are heat, humidity and light. There are usually many other forensic signs of usage such as: food and debris in the gutters; ragged ear-marked pages from heavy use; hair braids to corsages stuffed between pages; pencil and pen notes in the margins; torn and bumped covers; papers and photographs spreading the pages; and the general rubs and abrasions. Some of these venerable giants have simply been worn-out by loving prolonged use.

Generally, family Bibles were bound with calfskin leather. Due to radical changes in book production techniques, earlier Bibles tend to have the longer-lasting leather, while later versions bound in more caustic and acidic leather can become powdery and tattered. Additionally, there are examples in the late Victorian era of cloth bindings with cheaper paper for Bibles purchased as a poor families' option.

The typical family Bible published between 1840 and 1900 was 12 x10 by 4 inches. In the early period, the family Bible covers were flat with little, if any, embossment. Family Bibles produced from 1870 are often deeply embossed and have panels stamped in gold.

Papers in earlier Bibles are made of cotton, linen or a mix of the two. These type fibers are very long lived. For example, a pure linen paper can last over 500 years. At the beginning of the industrial revolution, paper used for pages was mass-produced from pulps using tree fibers and harsh chemicals.

That is why the quality of materials tends to preserve the older paper in better condition and make later Bibles' paper more brittle.

Nineteenth century Bibles often use several different types of papers; such as one kind for illustrations and another for text. For example, the illustrations, the title page and interleaving tissue, text paper, family record pages, and the back, heavy paper lined board where photographs were inserted may all be different sorts of papers. Mid-1800's Bibles tend to be single columned content where the later

Victorian volumes are double columned. Turn of the century Bibles often have glossaries, maps and illustrated sections in the front of the book.

Linen thread and hide glue were used to bind the Bibles. Hide glue is acidic and only good for about a hundred years before it becomes brittle. It is common to see the spine of an older Bible parting as the glue shrinks and separates from the paper. A leather cover, paper and glue materials bound together properly can last for centuries; however, if one element fails, the whole Bible will fall apart under the shear weight of itself.

With the ingredients of leather, cotton, hide glue and linen in its composition, the Bible is an interconnected organic system. The great enemies, heat, humidity and light, do more to age and breakdown the substances in Bibles than most anything else. However, there are ways to preserve and protect your family Bible.

Nothing lasts forever, at least in a physical form. Family Bibles, after 100 years, almost always need the preservative services of a professional bookbinder. With the proper restoration and conservation, this heirloom can reasonably last another 100 years. Select a good conservator and your family will enjoy and treasure your family Bible for many more generations.

### How can one save and prolong the life of a precious heirloom Bible?

#### Never:

- Store a Bible in the basement, garage or attic
- Set a Bible upright without lateral support
- Leave a Bible opened for prolonged periods
- Expose a Bible to sunlight or harsh lighting
- Keep a Bible in either a humid or dry environment
- Expose a Bible to extreme temperatures

#### Do:

- Keep a Bible at room temperature 68 to 72 degrees
- Store a Bible flat, but kept so that its form is not canted
- Maintain humidity as close to 50 percent as possible
- Preserve the Bible in an archival box
- Store the Bible in the center of the closet (not the floor in case of flood and not on top in case of fire).
- Keep the Bible family records updated with a note inside the front cover with recognizable names
- Choose a responsible guardian to transfer the Bible to when you are ready
- Invest in restoration and preservation by a professional bookbinder

*www.maxmarblesbookbinder.com*



## Help Support the Society

---

If you're thinking about charitable giving this year, consider the Allegheny Historical-Genealogical Society and the Allegheny Historical Museum. The Society is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations are tax-deductible.

Ongoing projects for preservation of Allegheny history and culture include:

**Allegheny Historical Museum** – Preserving and presenting artifacts and information relating to Allegheny County history and heritage. We are currently looking for a suitable, commercial building downtown, with display space and parking, efficient environmental control and security.

**Allegheny Memories** – Television series of interviews (paid for by sponsors) of older citizens with ties to Allegheny County.

**The Digital Archive** – We have several photographic collections promised for our proposed archive:

- **The Allegheny News Photo Collection** – photographic coverage of county news events, sports and celebrations in the 1980s, before the newspaper converted to digital photography. Entire rolls of negatives, including thousands of published and unpublished images.
- **The Blue Ridge Sun Photo Collection** – archives of the newspaper's photographic coverage of events spanning the entire 18-year history of the newspaper (June 1979-September 1997). Entire rolls of negatives, including thousands of published and unpublished images.
- **Thelma Davis Collection** – entire catalog of Mrs. Davis' portraits made at Thelma's Studio in Sparta, NC, in the early 1940s. Multiple, large format negatives for each of approximately 400 sittings.
- **The Allegheny News Online Archive** – 13 years of online articles from 1999 through 2011.

Museum donations, book sales and member dues cannot alone pay for the expenses and maintenance of our Museum and collections. These projects benefit the citizens of our county and represent an incalculable resource for historians, genealogists and individuals.

Our long-term financial plans include grant campaigns, gift shop and book sales and aggressive fundraising drives.

The Museum will not be successful without the participation of everyone. Every individual and family should feel 1) comfortable to give or loan items for display, 2) secure in having their objects in our care and 3) welcome to visit.

**AHGS needs financial support, also.** We urge you to follow the example of our ancestors by coming together to help the entire community. Volunteer your time, talents and financial resources to help preserve our unique heritage. Where else will future generations learn about traditional life along the Blue Ridge and the New River?

Allegheny has a rich history. The story of the mountain people began many generations ago, but we have long memories and in the retelling, well, we're just getting started!



## Allegheny Memories

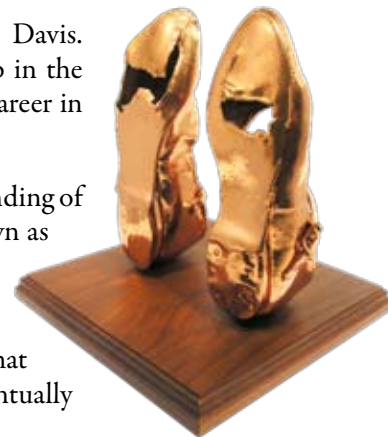
---

*Allegheny Memories* has another television episode in production, featuring Thelma Davis. Thelma was interviewed by her daughter, Sharon Davis Hamilton about her life- growing up in the county, traveling to New York to study portrait photography, her studio and her subsequent career in teaching.

Mrs. Davis was the first special needs teacher in the county and was instrumental in the founding of Allegheny Group Homes and ADVP, Adult Developmental Vocational Program, locally known as ADAP. Their website is [www.acgh.org](http://www.acgh.org).

Mrs. Davis has given a pair of shoes, to the Society, that she replaced for one of her students on a very snowy day in the 1960s. She exchanged the young girl's worn shoes and wet socks that day with a new, warm and dry set, paid for by the school system. She kept the old shoes and eventually had them bronzed for posterity. The simple display is a poignant reminder that we should all, "Go and do likewise."

In an added surprise, Mrs. Davis has given the Society access to her entire catalog of portrait images. The collection includes hundreds of photographs made at Thelma's Studio in the early 1940s.



*The tattered shoes that were replaced by a kind and observant teacher.*

## Inquiries

---

Seeking images of Roaring Gap 1930's especially a medical clinic operated by WC Davison, first dean Duke Med School. Thanks, **Conrad Fulkerson**, 742 Robert Gentry Rd., Timberlake, NC 27583, 919-604-0617, Best Time to Call: 8a - 12n, [conrad.fulkerson@duke.edu](mailto:conrad.fulkerson@duke.edu)



I am looking for information about the Halsey family of Piney Creek. Obits, news articles etc. Also would like to know if any of the original houses are still standing.

William Halsey born 1760 in New Jersey moved to Piney Creek at some point. Died 1830.

William "Bucky" Halsey born 1789 d 1849.

Caswell Halsey born 1818 d 1905.

John Reed Halsey 1840-1871 (fought in Civil war).

Robert Lee Halsey born 1867 in Piney Creek and then at some point moved to Kansas.

William Halsey 1760-1832 is the son of William Halsey & Rhoda Smith born 23 March 1760 in NJ. He died 21 Feb in Piney Creek, married: Rachel Cobb.

William and Rachel are buried in the William Halsey Cemetery on Phipps Dairy Road. They had a son: William.

William Halsey 1789-1849. He was born at Piney Creek, married: Juda Peak. They had a son: Caswell.

Caswell Halsey 1818-1905. He was born at Piney Creek 17 April 1818, married: Mahala McMillan. They had a son: John Reed.

John Reed Halsey 1840-1871. Born in Piney Creek, Civil War Soldier, married Mary Polly Dixon. They had a son: Robert Lee.

Robert Lee Halsey 1867-1952. He was born in Piney Creek. His father John Reed died young - he may have been raised by grandfather - Caswell, at some point he moved to Kansas and Oklahoma, married Clara Ellen Senter, had a sister named Virginia.

We would love to visit Piney Creek at some point (possibly spring 2013) and are very interested in visiting the locations where they lived and graves. Thank you, **Lori Halsey**, 5105 South 247th Street West, Goddard, KS 67052, 316-794-7644 Best Time to Call: 5p-9p, [lori.halsey@yahoo.com](mailto:lori.halsey@yahoo.com)



I am looking for my Hall ancestors. Emmett Hall was married to Millie Church. Millie died in 1930. I have not been able to find Emmett in any census records, but Millie names her husband as Emmett Hall in her death certificate and all of their children name Emmett Hall as their father in their death certificates. The children's names were: Mary Emeline, James Elbert, Newton, and Moncie Victoria. Any help regarding this family would be greatly appreciated. Thanks! **Debbie**, 8065 Green Orchard Rd., #T2, Glen Burnie, MD 21061 [deborahshinn@aol.com](mailto:deborahshinn@aol.com)



I'm researching a book about copper mining in northwest NC. One of the mines is the former Peach Bottom Mine in Alleghany Co. Do have any information and/or photos about the mine?

I have written extensively about the Virginia-Creeper train, and all of my local-history books are sold at the gift shop of the Museum of Ashe County History.

Thank you, and I am looking forward to hearing from you. **Doug McGuinn**, 147 Little Laurel Rd. Ext. Boone, NC 28607, 828-264-6949 Best Time to Call: 12n - 5p, [dougmguinn@gmail.com](mailto:dougmguinn@gmail.com)

**6 AHGS Newsletter** June 2012

Do you have a record of William D. Fisher, Avg. 1812 Statesville, NC? Looking for parents and connection to German-speaking people of North Carolina. **Hal Lewis**, 757 Remintong Drive, Northton, NC 14120



I'm trying to research my Mom's genealogical records. She was born in Chocowinity, NC. She went to P.S. Jones High School in Washington, NC back in the 1960's. How do I go about finding an old P.S. Jones High School year book from that year? Do you think the library might have copies on film?

Any information will be appreciated.... thanks. **C. L. Martinez**, [Lavaughn99@aol.com](mailto:Lavaughn99@aol.com)



**Bonnie Holman** of Denver, Colorado, has information on William Whitehead and Cynthia Edwards. She is their great-granddaughter. Her phone number is 303-988-5009.



### SILVER FAMILY REUNION GEORGE SILVER, JR (1753 – 1839) Revolutionary War Veteran

A Silver Descendant Family Reunion will be held July 28, 2012 at the Bandana Community Center on Highway 80 (Sam Gouge Road) in Bandana, NC. **Til Tillery**, (336)288-4663, [ctillery2@triad.rr.com](mailto:ctillery2@triad.rr.com)



The North Carolina State Archives and State Library have a fantastic online collection of genealogical resources, called the *North Carolina Family Records Collection*. It currently has over 1600 North Carolina Bible records, books, photographs, and manuscripts and is growing all of the time. You can search or browse this collection here: <http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/dimp/digital/ncfamilyrecords/>.

Also, as we add to this collection, we're putting some of our manuscripts on flickr, a photo sharing site, and asking folks to help us transcribe them so the information will be more accurate when searched. It's easy – you just have to type what you see in the description field below the image.

The flickr site, with more information, is here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/statelibrarync/sets/72157627124710723/>. If you or others you know would like to help us on a regular basis, please join our mailing list by emailing [digital.info@ncdcr.gov](mailto:digital.info@ncdcr.gov) and putting "Transcription volunteer" in the subject line.

Thank you for your help in sharing this information in any way you can. Please let us know if you have any questions or comments by emailing [digital.info@ncdcr.gov](mailto:digital.info@ncdcr.gov).

**Lisa A. Gregory**, *Digital Projects Liaison, Digital Information Management Program, State Library of North Carolina, NC Department of Cultural Resources, 4643 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4640, Phone: (919) 807-7468, Fax: (919) 733-1843, <http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov>*

# What's ~~New?~~ Old



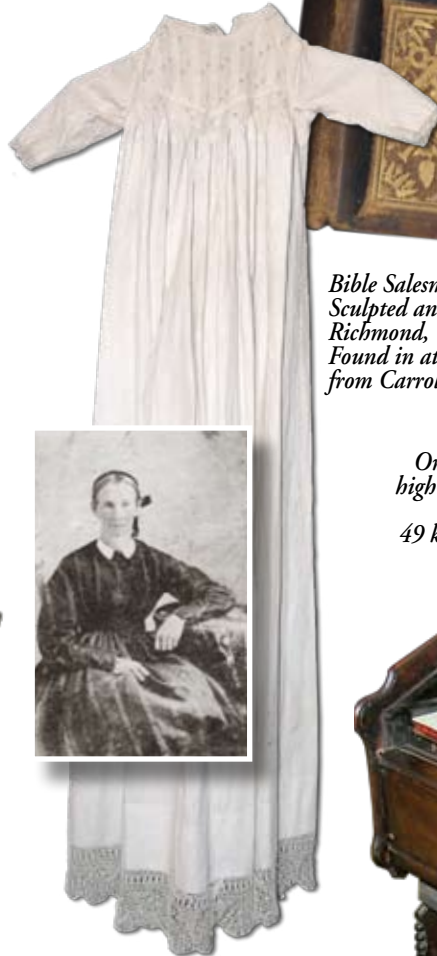
Foot washing bowl and towel from  
Cherry Lane Union Baptist Church



*Bible Salesman's Sample-*  
Sculpted and gold embossed leather cover by B.F. Johnson & Co.,  
Richmond, VA. 1886. 12 3/8" h. X 10" w. X 2 1/8" thick.  
Found in attic of old Lena Gentry House.  
from Carroll and Margaret Crouse



Glass "Ball-and-Claw" foot  
piano stool from Piney Creek  
Methodist Church.



Baptismal Dress made by  
Jane Carson Hawthorne  
1862-1902. Mrs. Hawthorne  
and her husband John T.  
originally attended Little River  
Primitive Baptist, but moved  
to Elk Creek Primitive Bap.  
Church after Little River passed  
a resolution excluding anyone  
who had joined the Masonic  
Lodge.

From Appalachian Cultural Museum:  
Mason & Hamlin "Baby" Reed Organ- introduced in 1881-  
Originally intended to be a children's instrument but because of its  
high quality and low price it became very popular for use in summer  
homes, churches, and schools.  
49 keys and twin foot operated bellows with a knee operated volume  
control. 32" tall, 34" wide, 12-1/2" deep.



Typical water bucket with  
communal dipper for drinking.

Got an idea for the Museum or Newsletter? Add your suggestions to these projects! Send or bring in your old photos, stories or items for loan. The theme for the next quarter is MUSIC. Do you have instruments, recordings, photos or anything pertaining to music from our area? Let's work together to make this the best exhibit yet!



*Photos of the current Shiloh United Methodist Church built in 1954 and the preceding building built in 1905. Note the clean hills in the distance compared to today. Shiloh Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1838 and a building erected in 1853 was also used as a schoolhoous. Several terms of court were held there after the county was formed in 1859, before the courthouse was built in Sparta. Photos submitted by Evelyn Hash.*

*Remembering Alleghany for Over Thirty Years*

Alleghany Historical-Genaeological Society, Inc.  
P.O. Box 817  
Sparta, NC 28675