

# 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



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*Carl Irwin (center) in his Twin Oaks store in 1936. The Spartan Theater poster tacked to the post is for the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers movie, Follow the Fleet, which came out in February of '36 and the Vaudeville poster is for a show, Friday, May 1st. May 1st was on a Friday in 1936. At right (in the suit) is a salesman and to the far left is daughter Rose. The girl in the white dress is unknown. The sign just above the pinball machine says, "If You believe in credit, Loan me a Dollar!" The photo is from Carl's grandsons, Bill and Bobby Irwin.*

The exhibit thru January is called *Country Stores, The Heart of our Communities*. Kermit Pruitt brought us this door panel made in 1929 for display. Look for more items on page 8!

## Awards from NC Society of Historians

Saturday, October 20th, the annual awards banquet of the North Carolina Society of Historians was held in Mooresville, NC. AHGS and Alleghany County were well represented this year: Our newsletter won its fourth **Joe M. McLaurin Newsletter Award**, and the Alleghany Historical Museum won an **Evelina D. Miller Museum Award**.

AHGS member Claire Halsey was awarded a **Paul Jehu Barringer, Jr. & Sr. Award of Excellence** for her genealogy work and AHGS board member Jeff Halsey was named the **NCSH Historian of the Year**. (The Halseys publish this newsletter.)

*Cont'd on page 4 - Awards*



*Does Uncle Sam have ties with the Blue Ridge?  
 See page 5 and 6 in honor of Veterans Day 2012.*

## From the President

Here we are in full swing of the last of 2012. This means Christmas is just around the corner.

The museum committee has done a great job getting the museum ready for the exhibit called *Country Stores, The Heart of Our Communities*. We have lots of great pictures of store buildings from all the different communities of the county and even some of their contents. Times have sure changed in what people needed and what the stores carried.

I would like to thank each and every one for all the hard work that has been put forth to make this year a great one. Thanks !!

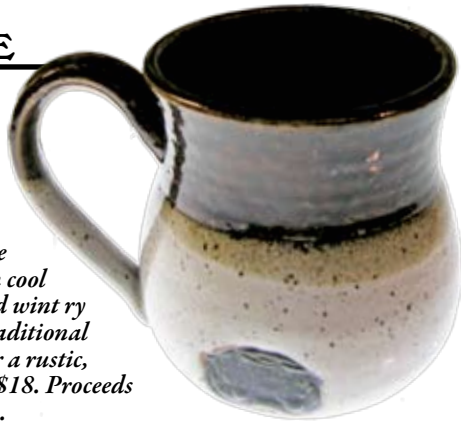
AHGS President  
Roy Hunt



*Another of Bobby Irwin's family photos of Grandfather, Carl Irwin's Twin Oaks store and gas station. This shot (made before the hotel was built and when US-21 was brand new!) is easily recognizable. The road north to Independence is just out of the photo at left. The building was across the road from the present site of Twin Oaks General Store.*

## NOW ON SALE

AHGS has commissioned Jessie Simpson of Pottery By Jes to handcraft these beautiful 16 oz. mugs to raise funds (and interest!) in the Alleghany Historical Museum. These cups are perfect for hot beverages on cool mountain mornings or cold wint ry evenings. They feature a traditional chocolaty brown glaze over a rustic, creamy white and are just \$18. Proceeds go to help run the Museum.



*A longtime favorite of genealogists, Alleghany County Cemeteries Through 1986, was temporarily out of print this summer.*

*The 268 page, 8.5" x 11" soft-cover, book is again available with a new look.*

*The content is the same, but new page numbering, thicker paper and spiral binding have enhanced this already useful resource.*

*The book is \$27 at the Sparta Store or at [www.spartastore.com](http://www.spartastore.com).*

## Society Events

### SPAGHETTI SUPPER

AHGS held a fund raising spaghetti supper at Sparta United Methodist Church Friday, October 12. Many Society members, supporters, friends and neighbors came out to donate to the Society and Museum, and enjoy a meal together.

The event made over \$1100 for the daily operation of the Museum. Thank you to all who helped make the event a success, whether you donated money, time, efforts, or food. We all succeed when we work together.

Thank you for being a part of the event!



### DOCENT PICNIC

On Saturday, Sept. 29, board members of the Alleghany Historical - Genealogical Society hosted a Museum Volunteer's Appreciation Event at the Alleghany County Public Library.

Honorees (pictured above) included: (seated, left to right) Roy Hunt, Pauline Jolly, Irene Wagner, Una Lindh, and Hilda Felts. (standing, left to right) J.M. Sturgill, Nancy Hunt, Lucy Roe, Agnes Joines, Margaret Crouse, Mae Evans, Sandy Woodie, Lois Landreth, Nancy Hall, Margaret Ann Aycok, Joyce Speas, Reba Evans, and Gary Felts. The volunteers received Certificates of Appreciation that declared each "Ambassadors of Alleghany Heritage and Culture."

(Not pictured): Bob Atwood, Karen Atwood, Carole Conrad, Wilma Foster, Hugh Halsey, Rosamond Joines, Steve Mitchell, Milly Richardson, Ross Wagner, Patty Wingler, Allen Wood and Carolyn Young.

We sincerely appreciate the time and energy these volunteers give in service to the Society and Museum. Thank you all!



# Allegheny Historical Museum Needs Your Support

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.

**Our book sales and member dues cannot alone pay for the expenses and maintenance of our Museum and collections.** Our long-term financial plans include grant campaigns, a museum gift shop, book sales and aggressive fund raising drives. We are working to move to a larger facility that will allow us room to operate a gift shop where we will sell locally produced items that have a connection to area history. We also plan to have space for historical and genealogical research and resources like the projects described on page 2.

Below is a chart outlining new giving levels and benefits for donations to the Society.

**AHGS truly needs your financial support.** We urge you to follow the example of our ancestors who came together to build schools and churches that benefitted the entire community. With your help, we can ensure that future generations have an accurate picture of life- the traditions, the values and the history of those who lived along the New River and in the Blue Ridge Mountain region.

As we grow, AHGS archival projects will serve the citizens of our county and will provide an incalculable resource for historians and genealogists. **We ask that you consider a donation** of your time, talent or financial resources to help preserve this rich and unique heritage.

	CORPORATE				STUDENT		INDIVIDUAL					
	Small Business	New River	Blue Ridge	Sponsor of Allegheny Memories	Student Member	Student Historian	Member	Historian	Patriot	Pioneer	Mountaineer	Mary Harless Society
Membership Card							X	X	X	X	X	
Student Card					X	X						
Newsletter	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X
Book Discount of 10%					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Christmas Discount										X	X	X
Certificate	X	X	X					X	X	X	X	X
List in Annual Report in Newsletter						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
List as Donor on Website (ahgs.org)	X	X	X					X	X	X	X	X
Logo on ahgs.org			X	X								
Link on ahgs.org	X	X	X	X								
Listed on Allegheny Memories				X								
Listed on Sponsor Board in the Museum		X	X						X	X	X	X
Mary Harless Society Card												X
Private Event at Museum			X								X	X
Special Recognition for Quarter										X	X	X
Donation Amount	\$100-499	\$500-2499	\$2500+	\$200 per episode	\$15	\$20	\$20	\$100-499	\$500-999	\$1000-4999	\$5000-84999	\$85000+

Please Note: Giving levels and benefits listed above are for annual amounts. Donors listed on the Museum Sponsor Board will be listed at their cumulative total. So, a donor who gives \$100 per year will be listed on the Sponsor Board at the Patriot level after 5 years and at the Pioneer Level after ten years of consistent giving.



## Membership Form

Please enroll me as a member of the Allegheny Historical-Genealogical Society, Inc. in the classification below:

New  Renewal

Individual \$10.00 annually

Business, Institutional or professional \$20.00 annually

Sustaining \$ 50.00 annually

LIFE MEMBER \$100.00 in one payment

Enclosed is a check or money order for membership.

Please send membership card to:

Name- \_\_\_\_\_

Address- \_\_\_\_\_

Internet and traditional research aren't mutually exclusive - a lot of the time you can find information in a book that isn't online yet, or a connection that someone else made in the past, that you haven't yet pieced together yourself.

AHGS Vice President J.M. Sturgill recently donated a copy of *Sturgill*, written by Dave Sturgill and cousin Mack Sturgill in 1983 to the Society. Dad talks about how Dave's brother, Sid, would always call my great-uncle Bob, "Cousin," to tease him. And Bob would always argue back that they weren't related. So, I figured some ancestors of mine (and Uncle Bob's) would be in the book.

I flipped through, looking for my group of Halseys and I quickly found the right page. The family of Rebecca Sturgill, who married Lewis Hamilton Halsey, was listed. Their oldest son was Robert Franklin Halsey (incorrectly listed as "Robert Francis Halsey"). Robert married Elizabeth Francis or Frances. She was the daughter of Eli Francis & Mahala Anderson, which I already knew. We've found Eli's lineage back pretty far, but not Mahala's.

I kept reading the page, and saw that a sister of Robert's married a brother of Elizabeth's. (Martha Ann Halsey married John Francis.) So, I realized something that should have been obvious - Eli & Mahala had other children! And that they should be listed in the 1850 census. I looked for them at [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org), and, of course, there they were. I have names of their children, and a new starting point. If someone is researching their other children, they might have information on Mahala Anderson's parents.

In looking for this information, I also found an image of the marriage certificate for R. F. Halsey & Elizabeth Frances, daughter of "Ely and M. Frances" from Jan. 1872 "the ninety-fifth year of American independence."

It's interesting to see what turns up when you're looking for something in particular. I might never find a marriage record for Mahala and Eli - they were married sometime before 1840 as their oldest son, Freeland, is 10 in the 1850 census. According to *Marriage Records of Ashe County, North Carolina, 1801-1872* (compiled by Minnie Patrick Osborne and Jeffrey C. Weaver for the Ashe County Historical Society), [neurivernotes.com](http://neurivernotes.com), prior to 1868, it was "perfectly legal to be married and have no written record of the event." But, "after Reconstruction and the North Carolina Constitution of 1868, a written record should have been made and is probably preserved."

So, you might not find exactly what you were looking for, but chances are you will find something awesome that you haven't seen.

Thanks to J.M. for sharing his copy of *Sturgill* with us, and to the late Mr. David Sturgill, who wrote the book and supported the historical society during his life.

If you have a (short) update on your genealogy research you'd like to share, send it to [info@ahgs.org](mailto:info@ahgs.org) and we'll include in an upcoming newsletter.

## An Inquiry

Judy Crouse Bicknell is looking for information on Jonathan Osborne, who may be the father of Elias Osborne. These Osbornes are from Alleghany County, NC, and Grayson County, VA. They lived during the late 1700s and early 1800s. She thinks that Jonathan might be Elias' father, but has not found definitive data. If you have information or are related to this family, please contact Ms. Bicknell at [jctimetraveler@gmail.com](mailto:jctimetraveler@gmail.com).

## Awards

Continued from page 1

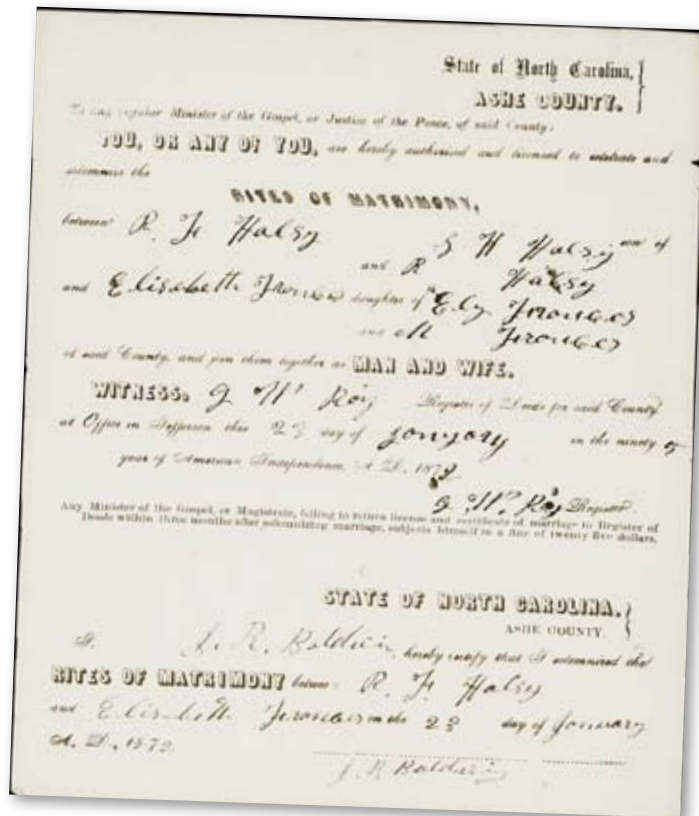


Along with the awards shown here, the North Carolina Society of Historians made our Society a gift of the winning books from 2012 for our museum collection.

Jeff and Claire Halsey also received a **Willie Parker Peace History Book Award** for the latest book in their history series, *Regimental History of the 61st NC Infantry* (published last fall) about Alleghany County men in the Civil War. The Halseys gathered text, photos, battle maps and battle summaries for the book; laid out and re-set the text; and optimized the photos for the book which is now available on-demand from Star Route Books and The Sparta Store.

The first book in Dr. Suzanne Mellow-Irwin's series for children, *The Stratford Oaks Tales* was also honored. Dr. Mellow-Irwin received a **Clark Cox Historical Fiction Award** for the story and Zach Hamm won a **Paul Green Multimedia Award** for his artwork.

If you know of projects you think deserve recognition, nomination forms and guidelines for submissions are located on the NCSH site, [www.ncsocietyofhistorians.org](http://www.ncsocietyofhistorians.org).



License and certificate of marriage for R.F. Halsey & Elizabeth Frances

**Find out what happened “today,” every day!**

Working in conjunction with the North Carolina News Network, the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources has unveiled a project that focuses on “This Day in North Carolina History.” A link on [www.abgs.org](http://www.abgs.org) will take you to brief essays posted daily at [nchistorytoday.wordpress.com](http://nchistorytoday.wordpress.com).

From North Carolina leaders, to figures in the arts, to important dates, to historical happenings from the mountains to the coast, “This Day in North Carolina History” tells North Carolina’s story every day.

Contributors include the Office of Archives and History, the Division of State Historic Sites, the State Library of North Carolina, the North Carolina Arts Council and the NCPedia project.

Find links to this project in the header bar, under “Resources” on the sidebar and on the Links page of [www.abgs.org](http://www.abgs.org). Visit and bookmark the page. It’s a great site to see the latest news from the past.



*Photos from James Hicks*

and go on War Bonds tours, which he of course readily agreed to. Hence the picture. He was very proud of his portrayal and continued to do so until his later years.

“It may interest you to know there was an article in the Alleghany News dated 31 May 1979 that had a life story of Luther. If you read the article just be aware that not all of it is completely accurate, but for the most part it is.

**1940 Census Searchable at [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org)**

The 1940 Census images were released on April 2, 2012 and it is now available and completely searchable at: [familysearch.org/1940census](http://familysearch.org/1940census).

Some people say that all of the relatives they have listed in the 1940 Census are already known. Or at least the names and relationships are familiar. Even if that’s true, there is still information that can be learned by searching the census.

For instance, you might have distant cousin lines that the family has lost touch with. By searching for great-uncles or great-grandparents, you may find names of additional relatives who were born between 1930 and 1940. Then, you can search their name with their parents’ names, and the word “obituary” on Google.

Recent obituaries- usually indexed online- may list these forgotten relatives. After you find a name and town, a quick search on [whitepages.com](http://whitepages.com) will give you a phone number and address.

Call or send a letter, and you and your cousin are back in touch! Visit [familysearch.org](http://familysearch.org) and search your family names to bring your cousin lines “up to date.”



**Martin Luther Hicks**

1895-1978

Martin Hicks was a neighbor to J.M. Sturgill when Mr. Hicks passed away in 1978. Mr. Sturgill told us this fascinating story of “the first Uncle Sam” and brought his obituary and a letter written by Mr. Hicks. (*see page 6*) We were able to contact James Hicks, a nephew who lives in Walkertown, for photos and details of this fitting Veterans Day story. According to James:

“As to the story behind the Uncle Sam designation, according to family lore and legend Luther had gone to Hawaii at some point just before the Pearl Harbor attack, where he worked as a barber. He stated that he was in the vicinity of Pearl Harbor at the attack and I also have a copy of his discharge from the Hawaiian Territorial Guard which indicates he enlisted in that unit in 1941 and his occupation was a barber, so all of this checks out.

“According to what the family remembers him telling, he announced right after the Pearl Harbor attack that he would not shave his whiskers until we had whipped the ‘Japs.’ So he began growing out his whiskers. Pretty quickly folks began to remark that he looked a lot like Uncle Sam and at that point he came to the attention of the folks selling War Bonds. Those folks asked him if he would be willing to dress the part



and go on War Bonds tours, which he of course readily agreed to. Hence the picture. He was very proud of his portrayal and continued to do so until his later years.

*Cont'd on page 6 - “Hicks”*

Marine Combat Photographer, Bobby Irwin, left, and Navy SeaBee, Bill Irwin, right, both stationed in Vietnam—less than a mile apart! Neither knew the other was there until Grandfather Carl Irwin wrote them.



Bobby and Bill Irwin are great supporters of the Historical Society and the Museum. Bobby is the subject of an upcoming *Alleghany Memories* program that AHGS produced in cooperation with the Marine Corps League Walter Frank Osborne Jr. Detachment 1298. Commandant, John Irwin, interviewed Bobby, J.T. Pardue, Bill Sebastian and Charles Pugh for some very interesting episodes. Watch for each on Alleghany Community Television.

“...Luther has several interesting points in his life; service in Texas and Mexico chasing after Pancho Villa, service in World War I, being presented with the key to the City of Winston-Salem (which I am in possession of) and other such.

To the editor:  
I have always been proud to be American and to walk in the shadow of Old Glory, and with admiration, to the Star-Spangled Banner” when played at the close of the day; when all God’s things should come to rest, with the golden notes from the bugle telling us that all is well.

It has been along way back home for soldiers that went away to fight in foreign wars; and many still sleep in the good earth in foreign lands — not for gain or riches, but loyalty to God and country. To this we stand.

We have been told that we are the richest country in the world and riches must be guarded well. Then why should we send our young men to hell for a few oil wells. I believe in war when nothing else will do. But why, O why, must we send just a few, when it is everybody’s duty.

Gallant memory has walked with me along the path towards the everlasting sunset that I shall see someday. But, O God, let me pray, that I will never be a part or a witness to condemning a soldier that we have sent to hell for a few oil wells.

Martin Luther Hicks  
321 Olive St. Hot Springs, Ark.

“...Luther was perhaps the most colorful member of that particular generation and I am sure he would be gratified to know he hasn’t been forgotten. I assure you I am!”

If you’d like to contact James Hicks send us an email at [info@ahgs.org](mailto:info@ahgs.org) and we’ll pass along his contact information.

*This undated letter-to-the-editor clipping brought in by J.M. Sturgill, gives an impassioned, unvarnished plea on behalf of our fighting men. Though it was written before 1978, Mr. Hicks’ opinion could well have been given today.*

**From Mr. Hicks’ obituary**

SPARTA – Mr. Martin L. Hicks, 82, of Sparta, died Monday morning in Alleghany Memorial Hospital in Sparta. Funeral services will be conducted Thursday at 1:00 p.m. at the Church Funeral Home Memorial Chapel with burial in the National Cemetery in Salisbury, N.C. The Rev. Donald Mimbs will officiate. Mr. Hicks was born in Wilkes County November 1, 1895, to Vance and Ommie (M)iles Hicks. He was the original Uncle Sam and was a veteran of three wars receiving ten medals for his service. He also served as Chaplain of Port in Honolulu, Hawaii. He was a member of the American Legion for 50 years, the V.F.W., and Liberty Grove Baptist Church in Wilkes County. He was also the author of several short stories and legends and numerous articles. Surviving are his wife, Mrs. Ollie A. Hicks of the home; three sisters, Mrs. Gertrude Sale of Winston Salem, Mrs. Ruby Baugham of Roanoke Rapids, and Mrs. Larcy Moran of Salisbury, Md.



Claude William Andrews



*Above is the draft card received by Claude William Andrews who died August 28, 1944 from wounds received in action in WWII. Brought by his sister, Dorothy Andrews Smith.*

# What's ~~New?~~ Old



*Kermit Pruitt loaned us this Jiffy-Way egg grading scale and Parade comb display. The Unbreakable combs, appropriately loaned by our town barber, were affordable and a challenge to boys everywhere.*

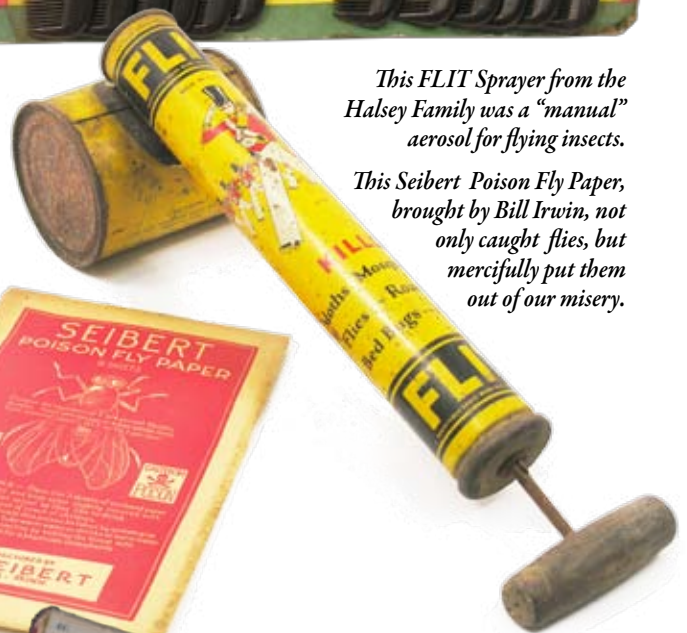


*Farmers Hardware brought this enamel picnic/camp set including plates, bowls and cups for four with a stew pot. The lid is a fifth plate with a wire carrying handle.*



*This FLIT Sprayer from the Halsey Family was a "manual" aerosol for flying insects.*

*This Seibert Poison Fly Paper, brought by Bill Irwin, not only caught flies, but mercifully put them out of our misery.*

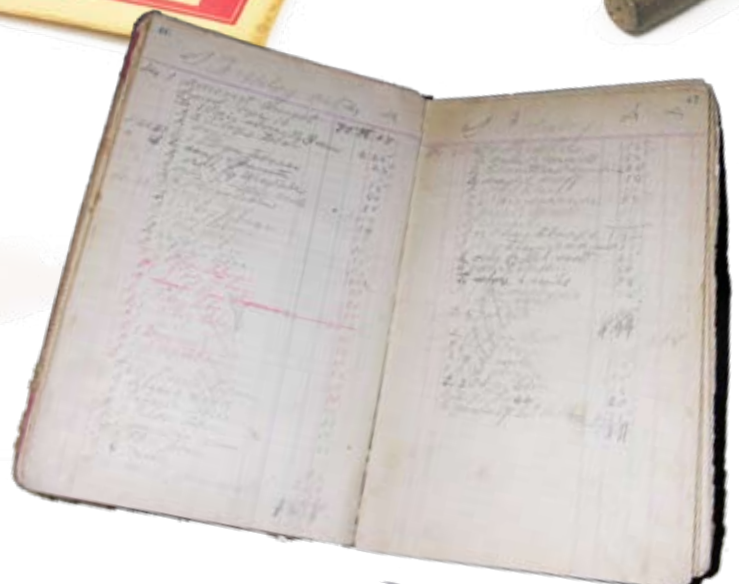


*Kermit Pruitt also loaned us this Log Cabin Syrup Bottle from his extensive collection.*



*At left is a Brighton #2 fruit and lard press on loan from Farmers Hardware.*

*On the right, is George Washington Halsey's ledger book for his store. On loan from Sara McMillan.*





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. Better yet, join AHGS! Help preserve Alleghany History!

### Shotgun Offense?

The boys don't have face masks or high tech pads but, surprisingly, in the films, both teams utilize a modern "shotgun" style snap and exhibit healthy passing games.

### Sparta Football in 1944

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**Line, left to right-** James Estep, Leff Hinchler, George R. Crouse, Rex Richardson, Herbert Caldwell, James Poole, Carroll Edwards.

**Backs, left to right-** Jim Davis, Bill Sexton, Chessie Gentry, Andy Mack Royall.

**Background, left to right-** Referee, Al Crader with Assistant Coaches, Hopper and Emerson Black.

Elkin vs. Sparta November 3, 1944, Final: Elkin 7, Sparta 2 . This photo belongs to Bobby Irwin who made it available to ISI along with films of the game, that are currently showing on Alleghany Community Television. This and other programs will soon be available for streaming at: [alleghanycommunitytelevision.com](http://alleghanycommunitytelevision.com)

*Remembering Alleghany for Over Thirty Years*

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