

# Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, Inc.

*Preserving Alleghany's Heritage Since 1979*



President. . . . . Margaret Crouse  
 Vice-President . . . . . J.M. Sturgill  
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The "Round House" at Mouth Of Wilson, Virginia, built in 1874 by Dan Idol, who moved to Missouri just ten years later. The house was later home to T. E. Duncan who was hired by Col. McMillan to run the mill on Wilson Creek. Mr. Duncan held the position of foreman for almost 70 years, according to the book, *Grayson County: A History in Words and Pictures*, editors- W. J. Fields and Jene Hughes (available from the Grayson County Historical Society)

Daniel Christian Idol, *above left*, (1841-1951) was a carpenter/contractor who eventually became an editorial writer when his son bought the *Cass County Democrat* in Harrisonville, Missouri. *Photo courtesy Charles Idol.*



Carlisle Higgins - Alleghany Lawyer, US Attorney and North Carolina Supreme Court Justice. Judge Higgins' story begins on page 3.



*Japanese Prime Minister Hideki Tojo at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, also known as the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, convened on April 29, 1946, to try the leaders of the Empire of Japan for war crimes. Carlisle Higgins served as Assistant to the Chief Prosecutor.*

*United States Library of Congress*



The old Alleghany Motor Co., founded by Duke Bledsoe, Sr. and Ben Reeves. This image, courtesy of the National Park Service, is found on the new website, *Driving through Time: The Digital Blue Ridge Parkway.*

## From the President

Dear Members,

I sincerely hope that your summer is off to a good start. I think after the wet, cool spring we had, we were all looking forward to warmer temperatures and sunshine. Now we are wondering how we are going to get everything done that we are planning for the summer and fall. It promises to be a very good season with all the activities that are scheduled through different venues in the county.

The Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society and Historical Museum are having a good year so far. The current exhibit in the museum is *Whittle and Stitch* so if you haven't seen it but would like to, we invite you to come in Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Soon we will be placing musical instruments, pictures, etc., in the exhibits as we get things brought in to emphasize our heritage in music. The music exhibit was so popular last year and a lot of people did not get to see it so we want to give another opportunity for them to enjoy some of our music history. We want to thank everyone who helps in any way with our exhibits by bringing items in.

Our *Alleghany Memories* has been growing, thanks to Reba Evans, chairperson and her committee and of course, Charlie Scott with Alleghany Community Television and the Marine League. Thank you, Judy Billings, for purchasing a television with a DVD player that we can use in the museum to play the DVDs made for this project.

If you are not a member of our historical society, we encourage you to join. The dues are \$20 per year or \$100 lifetime. We meet monthly at the Alleghany Library on the fourth Sunday of each month at 2:30 p.m.

Enjoy your summer and come in to visit the museum.

Respectfully,  
Margaret E. Crouse  
President, AHGS, Inc.

## Inquiries & Announcements

For more information please visit the Inquiries page at [www.ahgs.org](http://www.ahgs.org).

Hi, I'm researching the courthouse fires of 1933 and 1986. Were there any deaths associated with either fire? Regards,  
K. Grigg, Charlotte, NC, [kkg405@gmail.com](mailto:kkg405@gmail.com)

Looking for any info on James W. Hodges married a Sarah in c.1890. They are on the 1900 Allegheny NC census. They lived in Grayson/Carroll County VA also.

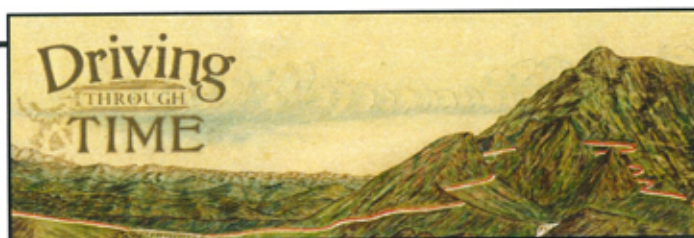
I would like to know if this lady would possibly be the widow of Nathaniel Wilson, b.1812 NC, m.1881 VA, d.1883 VA. She was married in Allegheny in 1868 to Ephraim Murry. Her maiden name was Sarah Frances "Fanny" Redd, daughter of William Thomas Redd and Mary Jane McCann Redd. Any and all info would be greatly appreciated! *Cindy Akers, Phone: 540-230-2050, Best Time to Call: 12n - 5p, 1200 Arthur Lane, Christiansburg, VA 24073, [galndixie@aol.com](mailto:galndixie@aol.com)*

### SILVER FAMILY REUNION GEORGE SILVER, JR. (1753 - 1839)

A Silver Descendant Family Reunion will be held on July 27, 2013 at the Bandana Community Center on Highway 80 in Bandana, NC. Contact Til Tillery, (336)288-4663, [ctillery2@triad.rr.com](mailto:ctillery2@triad.rr.com)

We are looking forward to seeing everyone. Silver News Blog - <http://georgesilvernews.blogspot.com>

If you have information, photos or donations for our upcoming exhibit on Mountain Music, contact the Museum at (336) 372-2115 (If unanswered, leave a message) or email us at [info@ahgs.org](mailto:info@ahgs.org)



Find over 1000 photos of the Blue Ridge Parkway in Alleghany County, online, at *Driving Through Time: The Digital Blue Ridge Parkway*. The site is at: [docsouth.unc.edu/blueridgeparkway](http://docsouth.unc.edu/blueridgeparkway) and covers the Parkway in North Carolina from its roots in the 1930s through today. The Park Service hopes to soon cover the history of the Parkway in Virginia, also.



Also, check out the new Blue Ridge Music Trails site at: [www.BlueRidgeMusicNC.com](http://www.BlueRidgeMusicNC.com). This new site is a preview of an even bigger, dynamic, interactive site that will feature everything you want to know about "Music, Artists and Traditions of the Mountains and Foothills" of North Carolina.

There is a companion book called *Blue Ridge Music Trails* by Fred C. Fussell with Steve Kruger. The book is softcover, 6"x 9", 182 pages and includes a CD containing 26 songs by musicians profiled in the book. The book and CD together are just \$20 and are available at The Sparta Store.

Published by the NC Arts Council in association with the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area and the North Carolina Folklife Institute.

## Carlisle Higgins

*Alleghany Lawyer Impacts State and World Events - from Alice Doughton's article in Alleghany County Heritage.*

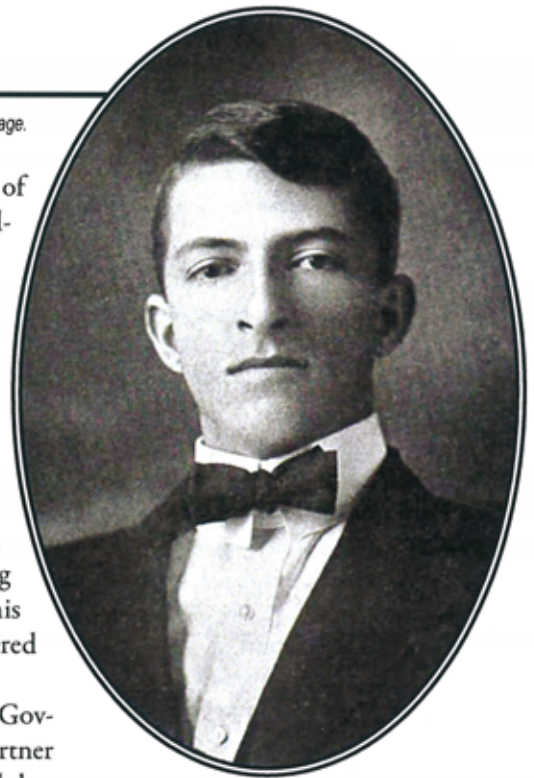
Carlisle Wallace Higgins was born October 17, 1887, in Ennice, N.C., the son of Martin and Jennie Bledsoe Higgins. Carlisle began his education in a one-room school-house near his home.

He possessed an active imagination and a capacity for leadership which at times made life difficult for schoolmasters. In fact, one wrote to his parents "The limited facilities of this school are inadequate to deal with your son Carlisle," after which he dropped out of school.

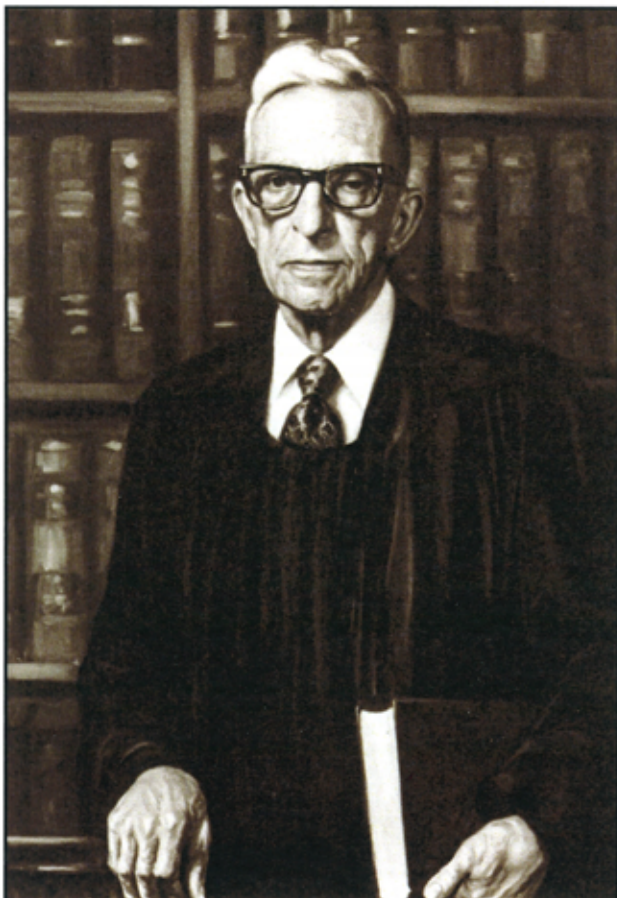
He spent his time profitably- raising and trading cattle and sheep. When his father sent him to Bridle Creek Academy to renew his education, he incorrectly reported his birth date as 1889 instead of 1887 so he would not appear to be older than his classmates. He graduated from the Academy in 1908, entered UNC, graduated in 1912 and received a law degree in 1914. He found in the University one of the great and enduring loves of his life- the athletic program. He was a fine athlete himself, but learned to his chagrin that a summer spent playing semi-professional baseball in Virginia had rendered him ineligible to participate in varsity sports.

Upon receiving his law license, he returned to Sparta to work with [Lieutenant] Governor Rufus A. Doughton. Never did a young lawyer have a greater teacher for his partner nor a quicker opportunity to put into practice all that he could learn. Years later he said that Rufus Doughton was the kindest man he ever knew.

In 1916, he married Myrtle Bryant of Bridle Creek, Virginia, a music teacher who for many years played for functions in Sparta. Two children were born of this union: Carlisle Jr. (Buck) and Mary Cecile. Carlisle served his county and state well, beginning with enlisting in the Army in World War I, representing Alleghany County in the State House of Representatives in 1925 and the State Senate in 1929. In 1930, he was elected Solicitor of the old 11th Judicial District composed of Ashe, Alleghany, Surry, Forsyth, Rockingham and Caswell Counties. As Solicitor, he prosecuted more than 9,000 cases. During his term as Solicitor, he lost thirty pounds and developed ulcers, but his dockets were current at the end of his term.



*Carlisle Higgins in the 1912  
UNC Chapel Hill Yearbook*



**"All our statutes are written in plain English... but the meaning often depends on the listener. For example, the words "clean out the hen house" are plain English, yet they mean one thing to a chicken thief and something entirely different to a poultry farmer."**

**-Justice Carlisle Higgins**

In 1934, he was appointed United States Attorney for the Middle District of North Carolina and in 1935, he moved his family from Sparta to Greensboro. In 1945, he was chosen to go to Japan as Assistant Chief Prosecutor for the Allied Powers in the prosecution of General Tojo.

In 1952, he managed the successful campaign of his law classmate, William B. Umstead, for Governor. In 1954, he was appointed to the Democratic National Committee. On June 8, 1954, he was appointed Associate Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court where he served 20 years and four months. During this time, he wrote 1140 full opinions and 51 dissenting opinions, never hesitating to advocate changes when he thought prior court decisions were wrong. He was once asked by one of his elders in the Court how many time-honored precedents he was going to try to change, to which he replied "Everyone I think is wrong." He once remarked he "had but little respect for status and none at all for quo."

He commanded great respect from colleagues on the court for his common-sense approach to cases.

*continued on page 6*

*This painting of Judge Higgins hangs in the Justice Building in Raleigh, just outside of the Supreme Court Meeting Room.*

## Account of the 1940 Flood

*The following letter describing the great flood of 1940 was submitted to The Declaration in Independence by Gid "Chub" Cox, who, then, lived in Tulsa, Oklahoma.*

Dear Mr. North, I saw something in your paper sometime back concerning the 1940 flood on New River. I am enclosing some of the things I remember happening in case you might want to use it. It taught me to always look for high ground when selecting a home site. The top of Fox Knob would be an ideal spot.

My family lived at the "Round House" at Mouth of Wilson located on the side of the hill just above where Wilson Creek empties into New River. We had lived there about five to six years, moving from the Potato Creek community so my brother and I could attend high school at Oak Hill Academy. My mother, Mattie Duncan Cox, grew up in this house and was living there during the flood of 1916. The river was always a threat but usually went on small rampages that caused some inconveniences, but few major problems. The rain had been coming down steady for some time when we got the 1940 flood.

As I remember, the river started rising pretty fast during the day before it got into our house that night. As my parents felt as though we were in for a real flood, I was told to drive our '38 Ford and take a visitor at our house to my granddad's house at "factory town" so they would be safe from the flood. My uncle, Britt Duncan, rode back to the Round House with me to help move furniture, etc. out of the house.

On the way home after crossing the high bridge over Wilson Creek coming off Highway 58, I had to cross a small wooden bridge that spanned a branch running into Wilson Creek. The bridge had side rails but only the top rail was visible. Uncle Britt got out of the car and waded across the bridge and assured me that it was OK to drive across as the bridge was still in the proper position. There was very little current against the bridge as the river had Wilson Creek backed up and the creek had the branch backed up.

As I drove across I felt my back wheels drop as I cleared the bridge. And looking back, I saw the bridge float off down the creek toward the river. The weight of the car jarred the bridge loose.

Yes, I did have to change my underwear, but not then as we had plenty of work ahead of us. I drove around the bank to-

ward our house, but found the road was flooded before I could reach the house. I parked the car on the highest spot along the road and walked around the side of the hill to the house for instructions. Help came from the Worth Paisley and Glenn Halsey families with large ropes which they used to tie the car to some trees above the road so hopefully the river could not wash it away. Luckily, the water only reached within a few feet of the car.

As darkness came, the rain continued and we kept moving everything we could from the first floor to the second floor. Then the lights went out and we had to maneuver in the dark. The river kept coming up and then after water came in the first floor, we started taking things up on the hill behind the house, trying to get it protected under some outcropping of rocks. It was a sad, muddy, wet mess.

As the sun came up the next morning the rains had stopped and there we were with everything soaked, belongings scattered all over the hill and water within six inches of the second story roof. I was tired and hungry and I knew Aunt Winnie Halsey was a dandy cook so I walked over the hill to her house and she put on a real feed and sent me home with some dry clothes and a full stomach.

In the immediate area, our neighbor's house 1,000 yards upstream washed away, and our garage and some cabins went down the river. The late "Pat" Halsey and I sat on the Round House roof and watched everything that would float go down the river; barns, sheds, haystacks, some with chickens on the roof. It was a very sad time but we were thankful no lives were lost. Since my mother had weathered two floods at the Round House, she was ready to move back to Potato Creek away from that ole river and we did.

A week or so after the flood, my dad and mother drove me to Mars Hill College in western North Carolina to enroll in school. We traveled through West Jefferson, Boone, Banner Elk and Spruce Pine and really saw the widespread damage the flood had done to roads, bridges and the valleys in the mountains of North Carolina. Richard Petty would have had problems on these roads. It is a beautiful river and there is no better pacifier than relaxing near the river and hearing the water as it makes its way downstream over and around the rocks.

Some unusual happenings have been credited to me in and around this river, but the Lord knows they can't all be true. ☺



*The Round House, today, still perched between the New River on the left and Wilson Creek on the right.*

## 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.

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.

Here are the new giving levels and benefits for donations to the Society.

	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 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. Unfortunately, Life Membership is not cumulative. To become a life member, one must pay \$100 at any one time.



### Membership Form

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

- Individual**
- \$20  Member
- \$100 - 499  Historian (*Life Member*)
- \$500 - 999  Patriot
- \$1000 - 4999  Pioneer
- \$5000 - 84999  Mountaineer
- \$85000+  Mary Harless Society

- Student**
- \$15  Student Member
- \$20  Student Historian

- Corporate**
- \$100 - 499  Small Business
- \$500 - 2499  New River
- \$2500+  Blue Ridge
- Allegheny Memories Sponsor**
- \$200 per episode

New  Renewal

Enclosed is a check or money order for membership.

Please send membership card to:

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

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

## A Name You've Heard Of and a Civil War Story You Probably Haven't

From the book, "Who Fired The First Shot?" ©1963 by Ashley Halsey, Jr.

It was during the 'cold war' between the Federal Government and the seceding states. Southern artillerymen at Charleston continually tested their guns, usually taking care to aim well clear of the frowning fortress under the Stars and Stripes. To citizen soldiers in the Iron Battery, unaccustomed to heaving about heavy cannon, the toil of endless drills seemed pointless. One night, a twenty-three-year-old private remarked that he was "tired of this nonsense-there will be some fun in the morning."

Shortly after dawn, when the battery went through all the empty motions of firing, an eight-inch columbiad suddenly roared out while aimed at the fort. The solid shot screamed across the water at Sumter. It struck, according to one version, just to the left of the 'sally port' or main gate. The garrison manned its guns- this is a matter of official record- and prepared to reply to further shelling. Instead, the Iron Battery commander rushed over in a small boat under a truce flag to apologize for "the accidental shot."

The shot was no accident. I can say that with certainty, for the man who loaded the gun during the night was my grandfather, E. L. Halsey of Charleston. Grandfather was not the patient type. The explosive gesture seemed entirely representative of his feelings. If action was what he wanted, he soon got it. Transferring from harbor defenses to horse artillery, he became first lieutenant and then captain of a battery which fought in 143 battles and skirmishes from start to finish. Of the unit's original

147 men, only twenty-three answered the final muster. At the surrender they cried as they kissed their cannon good-bye. Grandfather broke his saber and kept his revolver.

...Never, however, did he make any public statement about his attempt to start the Civil War a month ahead of time with the shot that hit Sumter in March. Possibly, having become a veteran soldier, he realized what a breach of discipline his prank represented. When an account of it was published many years ago, my Uncle LeRoy, who lives at Stone Mountain, near Atlanta, recalls that grandfather "was not pleased at it."  
- Ashley Halsey

A member of Hart's South Carolina Battery artillery company in an article written for the *Charleston News and Courier* of August 25, 1893, speaks of Captain Halsey: "...He loaded the gun that threw the first ball fired by the Confederacy, (the Star of the West was fired on by State troops,) against the United States flag, and he commanded the battery that fired the last shot."



Edwin Lindsley Halsey

South Carolina Governor Wade Hampton speaking of Hart's South Carolina Battery *Southern Historical Society Papers - 1878*:

"Their guns were the first to flash for Southern independence, and they were literally the last guns that fired in the defence of Southern liberty," in a skirmish near Raleigh, N.C., just before the surrender of Johnson's army. The battery on that occasion was commanded by Captain Halsey.

## Carlisle Higgins

Cover Sheet to the opening statement of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, given by Carlisle Higgins in his official capacity as Assistant Prosecutor. The sixty-seven page document can be found, online at the Virginia Historical Society, website:

<http://vhs4.vahistorical.org/star/x.starmarc.html>.

The statement concludes:

"The evidence now to be presented ...will show that events which led to war between Japan on the one hand and the United States and Great Britain on the other, were but the foreseeable and natural consequences and culmination of the plots and plans in which the accused... were engaged. The rapid conquest of Manchuria, the exploitation of her natural resources, the push into and exploitation

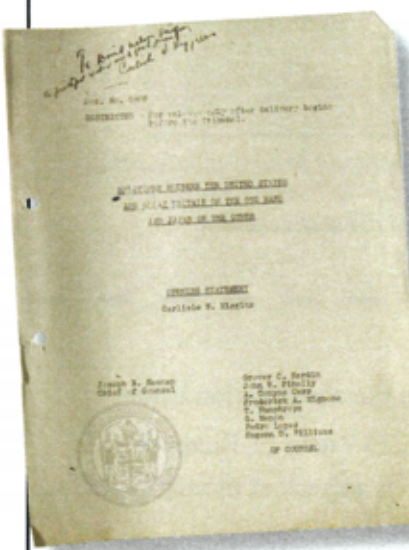
of North China and the attempt to conquer all of China, were studied and calculated moves on the part of the accused. The preparations on and fortifications of the Mandated Islands, the occupation of French Indochina, the armed invasion of Siam, were but milestones along their pathway to war. Pearl Harbor and Singapore were but tactical objectives. Grand strategy called for all of China, the Philippines, East Indies, Australia, New Zealand and India."

Continued from Page 3

He was a big-game hunter and an exceptionally accurate shot with a rifle. A very few years before his death, he killed a groundhog from more than 750 yards, despite the fact that in 1929 he lost his left eye when a splinter flew into it.

For all his toughness, Carlisle Higgins had a gentle side which showed particularly in his relationship with children. He easily established rapport with children of all ages. He received awards from many law groups and his office walls were filled with plaques and citations. He was a Mason, maintaining membership in the Sparta Lodge.

On October 17, 1977, on his 90th birthday, he was honored with this statement "as a spinner of yarns, he has no peers and as a true and loyal friend, he is unexcelled; that his spirit and gentle warmth at once develop those whose fortunes bring them into his circle; that it is altogether fitting that the Superior Court of the county in which he now resides take cognizance of the many contributions to the many people ...who have so benefitted by his life."



As we stated on page 3, Carlisle Higgins' law partner and mentor was R. A. Doughton.

Rufus Alexander Doughton was born in Laurel Springs on January 10, 1857, the son of J. Horton and Rebecca Jones Doughton. Rufus Doughton's younger brother, born six years later, was the future United States Congressman, Robert Lee Doughton.



Rufus A. Doughton



Susan Parks Doughton

Rufus attended the Independence Academy in Virginia and, in 1880, he received a law degree from the University of North Carolina. He began his law practice in Sparta, and followed the profession until the day of his death on August 17 of 1945.

In 1883 he married sixteen-year-old Sue B. Parks, the daughter of James and Cynthia Gentry Parks. James Parks was prominent in local mercantile, civic and political circles; his wife Cynthia became something of a Civil War heroine when she arrived, on horseback and alone, at the scene of the Battle of Killian's Springs where she tended the wounded and, noticing an abandoned mail pouch, calmly picked it up and carried it to the Post Office at Gap Civil.

Mr. Doughton was elected to the N.C. House of Representatives in 1887 and in 1891 he was elected Speaker of the

House. In 1892 he was elected Lieutenant-Governor, but he returned to the House in 1903, serving several additional terms from that date to 1933.

In 1923 he was appointed State Commissioner of Revenue, resigning in 1929 when he was appointed State Highway Commissioner. He also served for 57 years on the Board of

Trustees of the University of North Carolina. He was the first president of the Northwestern Bank. In delivering his funeral eulogy, Hon. Josephus Daniels (*then, editor of the Raleigh News and Observer, who was appointed by Woodrow Wilson to serve as Secretary of the Navy during World War I*) said "...if you would see a memorial to Rufe Doughton, look around you." Tangible memorials included his portrait hanging in the court room; the State Historical Marker standing in front of his law office on the Alleghany Court House lawn, the Doughton Bridge spanning New River at the state line and the Doughton Building at Appalachian State University dedicated in 1966 to him, his son Kemp and his brother Robert.

Sue and Rufus Doughton had two children, Kemp and Annie.

Annie Rebekah Doughton, was born in Sparta in March of 1886 and attended Greensboro Woman's College. When she came home to Sparta she married Sidney J. Thomas of Virginia.

The couple lived most of their lives in Alleghany, much of it at Twin Oaks, a lovely old country house and farm which had belonged to Annie's grandmother. The house and the oak trees are gone but the surrounding community is still known as Twin Oaks.

The Thomases had one daughter, Susan Matilda, Mrs. Charles Wilson Myers, of Richmond, Virginia. Susan's twin daughters, Rita and Angelia, are both graduates of Peace College and both still live in Sparta.

Rita married John F. Woodruff, who became County Superintendent of Schools and helped found the Alleghany Education Foundation. Angelia is married to John H. Miller, who was principal of Sparta Elementary School and is present Mayor of Sparta. - Mary Cecil Bridges in *Alleghany County Heritage*.



Josephus Daniels speaking outside the State, War, and Navy Department, Washington, D.C. - Flag Day, 1914. Woodrow Wilson and William Jennings Bryan are seated at the left side of the platform.



*Charles Pugh brought us this great photo that is marked, simply: "The "Boarders" at Oak Hill Academy Va. 1901-02."*

*We would love to hear the story behind the dramatic effort in the front row.*

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www.imagingspecialists.net - To see back issues of this newsletter, go online to www.ahgs.org.

*Remembering Alleghany for Over Thirty Years*

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