

Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, Inc.

Preserving Alleghany's Heritage Since 1979



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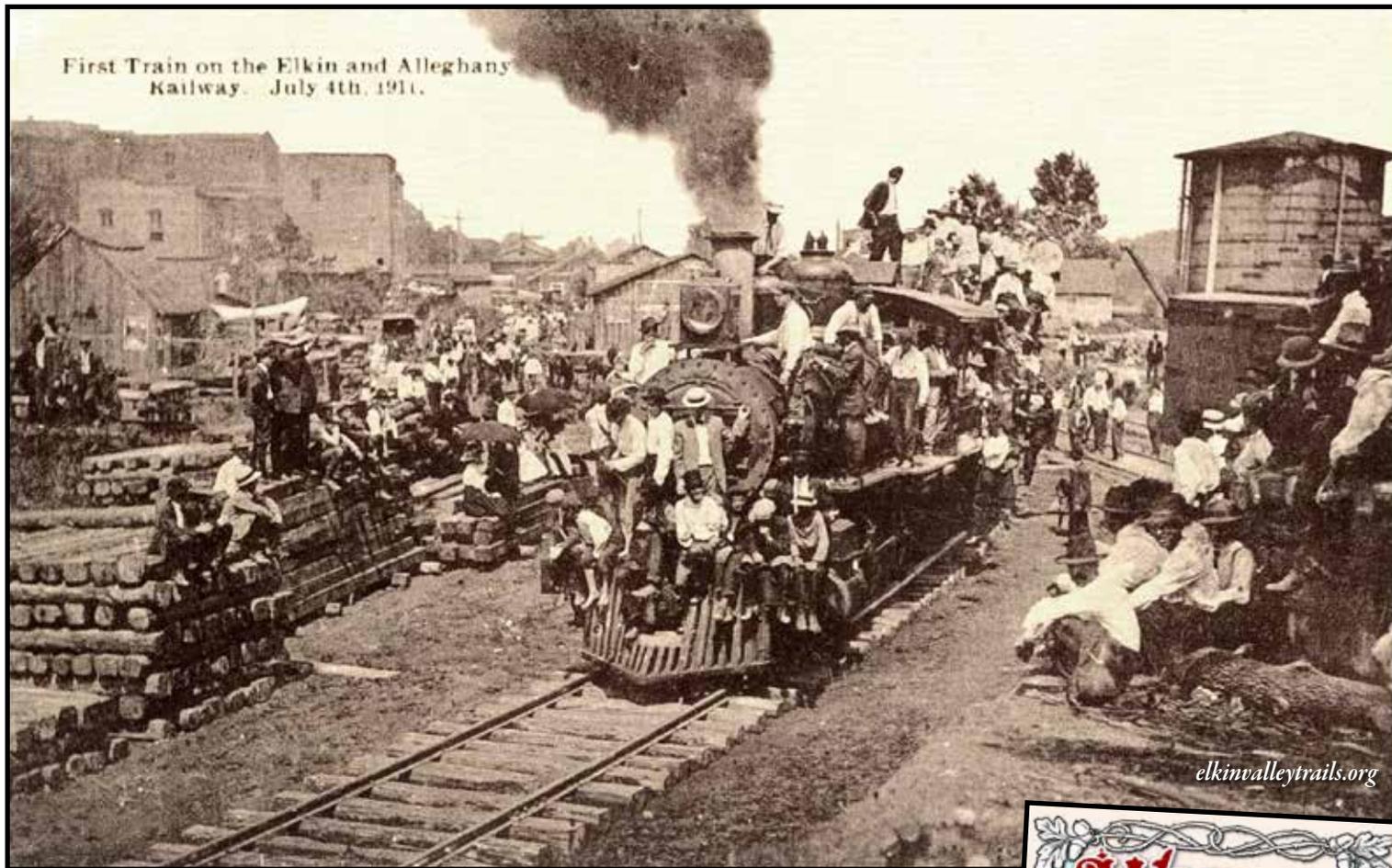


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The Elkin & Alleghany Railway



elkinvalleytrails.org

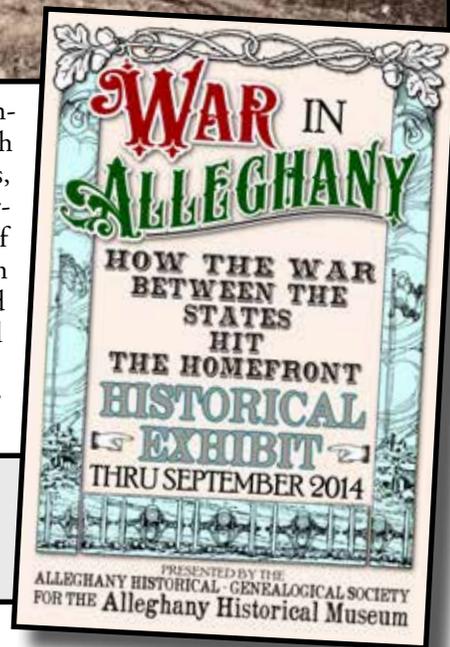
113 years ago the Elkin & Alleghany Railway Company launched an ambitious plan to bring a railroad from Elkin up the Blue Ridge, through Sparta and on to Bristol. Above is the scene in Elkin, just 10 years later at the inaugural run. The *Winston-Salem Journal* reported: "After the lunch the official speeches and ceremonies began. Among the prominent speakers was J. F. Hendren of Forsyth County, who praised Governor Rufus Doughton and Hugh Chatham for their promotion in building the railroad. To show their appreciation a gold watch was presented to Chatham by the people who lived along the right-of-way..."

"Governor Doughton, after also receiving a gold watch, said that he 'was interested in a

large increase in the development of north-western North Carolina- the country is rich in iron, copper, timber, livestock, vegetables, and especially rich in its industrious, enterprising and loyal people. This section of country across the mountains had long been chained to Virginia but now this will end and the trade will be brought to Elkin and towns of Winston and Salem..."

Information on the E&A from a new book by the Elkin Valley Trails Association- see more on page 6.

This summer, the Alleghany Historical Museum will highlight the Civil War in the Mountains. *Read an interesting account on page 7*



From the President

Alleghany Historical/Genealogical Society, Inc.
July, 2014

Dear Members,

This newsletter is one of sadness and joy as we say goodbye to one of our founding and faithful members, Mildred Torney. Mildred, along with Walter Johnson, Irene Wagner and another person met and drew up the papers to start our society. She served as an officer many times including president several terms. One of her greatest wishes was that we would have our own house (old home) on Main Street to use as a museum. Even though we don't have our own museum yet, we do have a space on Main Street. We haven't given up hope that we will find a house or other property that we can buy. We desperately need more space to have room for items that have been given to us and as a work space.

The joy is that we have had the opportunity to know this very special lady and that she is now with our blessed Savior.

We would like to thank Gary Felts on his very informative program at our last membership meeting from his trip to Costa Rica.

Don't forget to see if you can find Civil War artifacts or people who have them and would be willing to loan them to us for an exhibit in the museum.

Enjoy all the events going on this summer and come by our museum to see what has been added.

Sincerely,
Margaret

Milestones



*At right, standing, L to R:
Elizabeth Edwards Andrews,
Tommy Andrews, Mabel Andrews
Higgins, Jones Kent Andrews,
Georgia Andrews Warden and
Mary Andrews Upton.
Seated: James
Kent Andrews.*

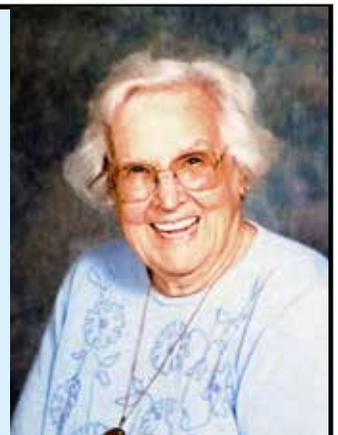
*↖ Mr.
Andrews'
wheelchair,
now on display
in the Alleghany
Historical Museum.*



No victim, James Andrews suffered from polio *and* taught school, raised a family, farmed for the war effort in World War II and operated a successful trucking company. His trucks hauled 10"x 10" rough cut, "export wood" down the mountain to Elkin and brought back the steel for the original New River Bridge on US 21-221. (Tommy and future wife Pat Hill Andrews brought this photo and the photo on page 3.)



Mildred Sturgill Torney, one of the founding members of the Alleghany Historical - Genealogical Society, and a dear friend to us all, passed away in May. Mildred served as AHGS officer and board member many times over the years. Among her many contributions: she suggested the memorial cookbook, *Recipes That Raised Us*, and it was her idea for the Society to undertake the current Alleghany Historical Museum project. But Mildred should be remembered most, for her encouragement of others, her positive ideals and her unwavering, Christian kindness to everyone she encountered.

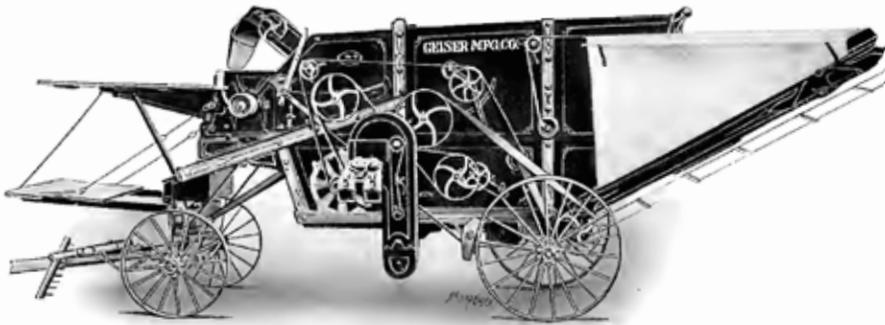


*At left: Mildred's parents, William Byrum and Laura Parsons Sturgill and five children. L to R:
Lena (Douglas), David Rex, Maude (Fitzgerald), Ethel (Phifer) and Mildred standing in center.*

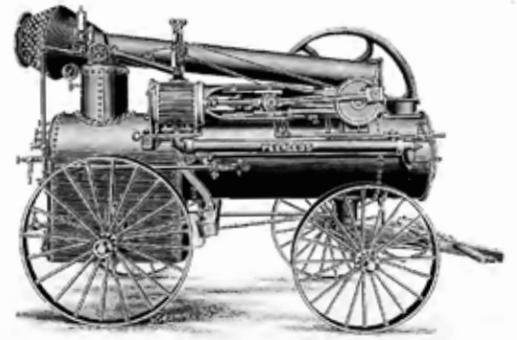
THE NOS. 4 AND 5 "GEISER" SEPARATOR.

Belt Side

(For Steam, Gasoline or Horse Power.



THE BEST GENERAL PURPOSE PORTABLE ENGINE BUILT.



The photo, below, belongs to Tommy and Pat Andrews. Mrs. Andrews' grandfather is Charlie Edwards- the young man in overalls and without a hat, standing second from the left. Mr. Edwards lived at New Hope, just below New Hope Church and about 5 miles from the Scottville post office.

As we often try to do, we looked online for additional information for the newsletter. We thought we might be able to identify the equipment models. After a long search, online, *(there were a lot of threshers over the years!)* we were able to discover the manufacturer. We found the illustrations, above, in the 1913 edition of the CATALOGUE OF GEISER "PEERLESS" MACHINERY at the archive.org website.

The threshing machine and steam engine were both made by Geiser Manufacturing in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania. The thresher, or "Separator" is a No. 4 Model with an optional "Telescoping Swinging Canvas Straw Carrier," or conveyor belt system *(not pictured above)* that allowed for the loading of straw directly into a barn loft. The carrier in the photo has been folded over the top of the unit for travel.

The Number 4 and 5 Separators were small compared to their Midwestern cousins, and more easily navigated mountain terrain. The Peerless Portable was likewise designed for "hill country...The "Peerless" is the only traction engine with fire-box boiler that retains the water on the crown sheet when pulling down hill or keeps the front end of tubes covered while going up hill... producing a complete circulation of the water from one end to the other in all parts of the water space."

Astoundingly, all our research was confirmed(!) when we read the testimonial, below, printed in the very catalog:

The Geiser Manufacturing Co.

Scottville, N. C.

Dear Sirs:—The "K" engine (15 Horse-Power) we bought from you has given good satisfaction and we are well pleased with same.

Yours respectfully,

SHEPPARD & ADAMS.



Inquiries

My name is Jeff Wesley and I am doing a family search on my relatives and I am running to a brick wall and was hoping someone has any information that they could share or direct me to someone who could. This is a shot in the dark. The person I am looking for is Josephine Newsome Saunders House from Scotland Neck North Carolina born 9/6/1885 died 5/16/1911. The following is all the information I have:

1) Josephine Newsome Saunders House- Born 9/26/1885 in Bertie, N.C., Married to Kenelm Leggett House 9/6/1905- first marriage for both. Josephine Newsome Saunders House died 5/16/1911 Scotland Neck, N.C., buried at the Scotland Neck Trinity Episcopal Church plot #B-95-1. Her death certificate lists J.C. Newsome from Bertie, N.C. as her father and her mother as Samfee Roese from Bertie, N.C. Another name I found that may be related is Rosa Saunders.

If anyone has any information on Josephine Newsome Saunders House and her parents please contact me. Thank you, *Jeff Wesley*, 734-424-9620, jeffwesl@yahoo.com



I am looking for the records on the Palmer family born in Alleghany and interred in the Allegheny cemeteries. *Tonda Stewart*, tondastewart@gmail.com



I would like pictures of headstones of Calloway Cox b Apr 18, 1857 d Dec 29, 1940, Flora Ellen Autery Cox b 1859 d 1945, Rose Cox Andrews b 1895 d 1971 they are suppose to be buried at New Haven Church of The Brethren Cemetery, Sparta, Alleghany County, North Carolina, USA Can you help? Truly appreciated, *Gail Holley Cox*, 375 Tarboro Road, Youngsville, NC 27596, 919-554-2137, gailcox54@hotmail.com

Our reply: I just so happened to post photos of these markers, June 16, to findagrave.com. The FindAGrave Memorial ID numbers for the Cox family are: Calloway - 44788268, Flora Ellen - 44161887, and Rose - 38412519

- *Claire Halsey*



Can anyone refer me to a Halsey family researcher or descendant of William "Bucky" Halsey and his second son Caswell? I am looking for the "proof" of their relationship. I have reviewed Land records, Halsey genealogies and have Rufus Clinton's books, but cannot find a record. I have the information Rufus submitted to the County History. Thanks for any help. *Carolee Dunivan*, 11445 Waterford Village Drive, Fort Myers, FL 33913, 708-890-7280, czupsich@gmail.com

Dear Ancestor

Your tombstone stands among the rest,
neglected and alone.

The name and date are chiseled out
on polished marble stone.

It reaches out to all who care,
it is too late to mourn.

You did not know that I exist-
You died and I was born.

Yet each of us are cells of you
in flesh and blood and bone-
Our blood contracts and beats a pulse
entirely not our own.

Dear Ancestor, the place you filled,
one hundred years ago,
spreads out among the ones you left
who would have loved you so!

I wonder how you lived and loved.
I wonder if you knew
that someday I would find this spot
and come to visit you.

-Walter Butler Palmer



Walter Butler Palmer (1868-1932) was from Prairie Center, Illinois. He was a family historian, a breeder of horses and he wrote the poem "Dear Ancestor" in 1906 while visiting the grave of his great grandfather, Ephraim Palmer (1760-1852).

On August 1 & 2, Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society is planning to host Alleghany Encampment – a Civil War event in Crouse Park in Sparta. It is expected to be an annual event set for the first weekend in August.

The J.E.B. Stuart Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp from Mt. Airy and other groups will be participating. We plan to invite other regional historical organizations to sell books and share Civil War history.

While there won't be a battle re-enactment, we hope to have live demonstrations of weaponry, cooking, drilling and other aspects of camp life-North and South.

Donations will be accepted for this fund raiser for the Alleghany Historical Museum.

To participate or for more information on Alleghany Encampment, please contact President Margaret Crouse (336-372-8260). For more information on Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, please visit our website at www.ahgs.org or contact us at P.O. Box 817, Sparta, NC 28675 or info@ahgs.org.



In Need of Perspective, a Chef Returns to Southern Roots

by John Wolfert

As I began to awaken from a dreamy slumber, I immediately picked up on the scents of country ham and something baking. It had to be made-from-scratch biscuits. Fresh-brewed coffee couldn't be too long in the making. With that thought, I was out of the sack and on my way to the breakfast table.

I made the eight-hour drive from Philadelphia to Sparta, North Carolina, the night before for my first visit in too many years. This is where my ancestors farmed and worked and where some of my family continues to live. I spent many of my summers here as a boy. Reconnecting with those relatives is what brought me here, along, of course, with the promise of authentic country cooking.

It's funny how a smell or a taste can trigger an old, nearly-forgotten memory. The aromas that stirred me this morning catapulted me back to breakfast at my grandparents' farmhouse, which was enough to swell my excitement for the day ahead. As a young boy, I picked brown-eyed susans along the dirt road that connected my grandparents' and great-grandparents' homes and presented them to my great-grandmother, who I found, predictably, sitting on the front porch, cleaning green beans or some other vegetable for the next meal. The plan was to visit the farm and see that spot again.

The fall breezes that had begun to coax summer out and on its way were also the catalyst for an internal shift in me. My thoughts were turning from the carefree to the reflective, and my appetite, more and more, was craving homey comfort foods. In retrospect, they also fueled my desire to make this trip south. I was looking for the warmth that usually comes with embracing one's past.

My arrival coincided with the start of the harvest season, when the long rows of corn are cut, the soybeans are pulled from the ground and the tobacco is hung to dry. At my cousin's winery in nearby Boonville, the first stage of fermentation was underway: The grapes were being picked from the vines and crushed.

Traveling through the countryside, I was struck at every bend in the road by the picturesque-simplicity of the various farms, as well as the everything-in-its-time mentality of the people who occupy them, even during one of the most active periods of the year. The high-pressure life of a chef and restaurateur that's become my existence back in Philly already felt completely foreign.

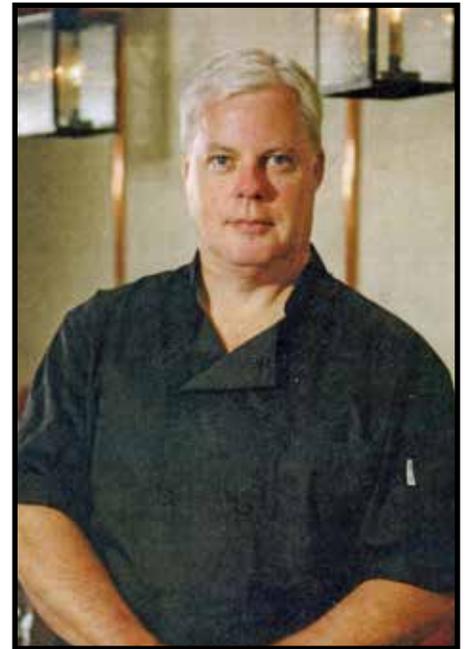
Once word of my presence got around, I was treated to the sincere, down-home hospitality that's often lost living in and around a major city like Philadelphia. At a gathering of relatives near our family farm, we caught up on each other's lives in between bites, the conversation as energetic—and endless—as the eating. The sprawling spread featured crispy fried chicken, those aforementioned biscuits, bacon and green beans, deviled eggs, homemade pickles and an endless procession of sides and casseroles, every one of which I tasted, of course. It was too long since I last ate like this. I couldn't take the chance that so much time would elapse before I did again.

For dessert: fried apple pies, born from a recipe that went at least as far back as the farm, as far as anyone present could remember. Never once was the recipe altered in even the slightest way, because, simply, the thought never crossed the mind of anyone who ever had a bite.

The day winding down, we tried to figure out who, exactly, was related to who, and how. In that moment, I felt deeply connected to everyone and everything around me: my relatives, the food, the landscape. And it all confirmed for me why I needed to make this trip, perhaps even more than I realized when I left Philly. In the

end, the good things in life remain pretty constant, which means that warmth and comfort are never too far away. The changing of the seasons made me seek them out, but they were there all along.

Returning home, I was refreshed and inspired. The holidays are nearing, and with them, more opportunities to reconnect and indulge in the comfort food that's rooted to so much of who I am, and always will be. 



Fried Apple Pie

For the dough:

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup shortening
(chilled, preferably)
1/2 tsp. salt
6-8 tbsps. cold water

For the filling:

2 pounds dried, sliced local apples
2 cups apple cider
1 cup sugar
1/2 tsp. Cinnamon

For frying:

2 cups oil or lard

Combine the apples, cider, sugar and cinnamon in a saucepan. Heat it until the ingredients simmer and the apples soften. Then, cool the mixture in the refrigerator. Drain the excess liquid and reserve the apples.

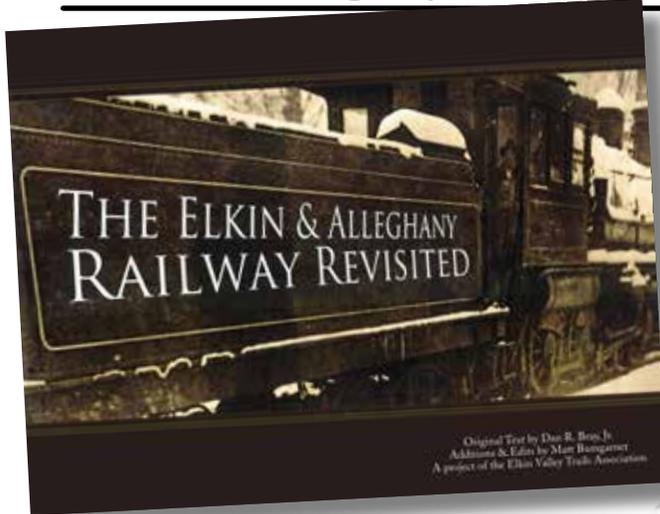
Next, sift together the flour and the salt. Cut in the shortening until there are small crumbs of shortening in the mixture. Slowly add only enough water as needed, mixing until a stiff dough forms. Split the dough into two balls and refrigerate for about 20 minutes.

On a floured surface, roll out the dough and cut as many four-to five-inch circles as you can. Spoon an ample portion of the apple mixture into the center of each. Then, moisten the edges with cold water, fold them over and seal them with the tines of a fork. Last, poke the top of each a couple of times with a fork.

In a skillet, heat the cooking oil or lard to about 375 degrees. Fry the pies a couple at a time until the crust is golden and starting to brown on both sides. Drain the pies on paper towels and sprinkle them with sugar while they're warm.

Serve them warm with your favorite ice cream. I've used sweet corn ice cream, but dulce de leche and vanilla are just as complementary.

The Elkin & Alleghany Railway Revisited



The Elkin Valley Trails Association is an affiliate of NC Rail Trails. EVTA oversees part of the Overmountain Victory Trail, the Yadkin River Trail Blueway, and is currently working on the E&A Rail Trail. The E&A Rail Trail will connect with the NC Mountains-to Sea Trail, at Stone Mountain and will be a "hike and bike" trail. It will follow the old railroad bed from downtown Elkin northward approximately 1 1/4 miles through the city limits to the city reservoir where it is planned to connect with single-track mountain-biking trails. Then the trail will join the Stone Mountain Trail (also under development) to the foot of the mountain in Wilkes County where it will connect with trails at Stone Mountain State Park).



Bill Irwin recently stopped in the office to show-off his newest treasure, a copy of the book, *The Elkin & Alleghany Railway Revisited*. Written by Dan R. Bray, Jr. with additions and edits by Matt Bumgarner, the book is a project of the Elkin Valley Trails Association.

Mr. Bray wrote the text for a senior project in 1974 and published it privately a short time later. More recently, he donated his original work to the Elkin Valley Trails Association, who worked to expand on the story. Mr. Bumgarner contributed his knowledge to the book as well - he is an expert in Western NC railroads and their history and is a director at the SE Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum in Newton, NC.

The book begins with a history of railroads in North Carolina, then focuses on the origins of the Elkin & Alleghany Railway Company.

In its plan to utilize prison labor to construct the railway, the company agreed to house, clothe, and feed the laborers and paid the state for their work in company stock. \$1000 of labor was paid with 10 shares.

From the book:

On July 7, 1911, the Elkin Tribune reported that:

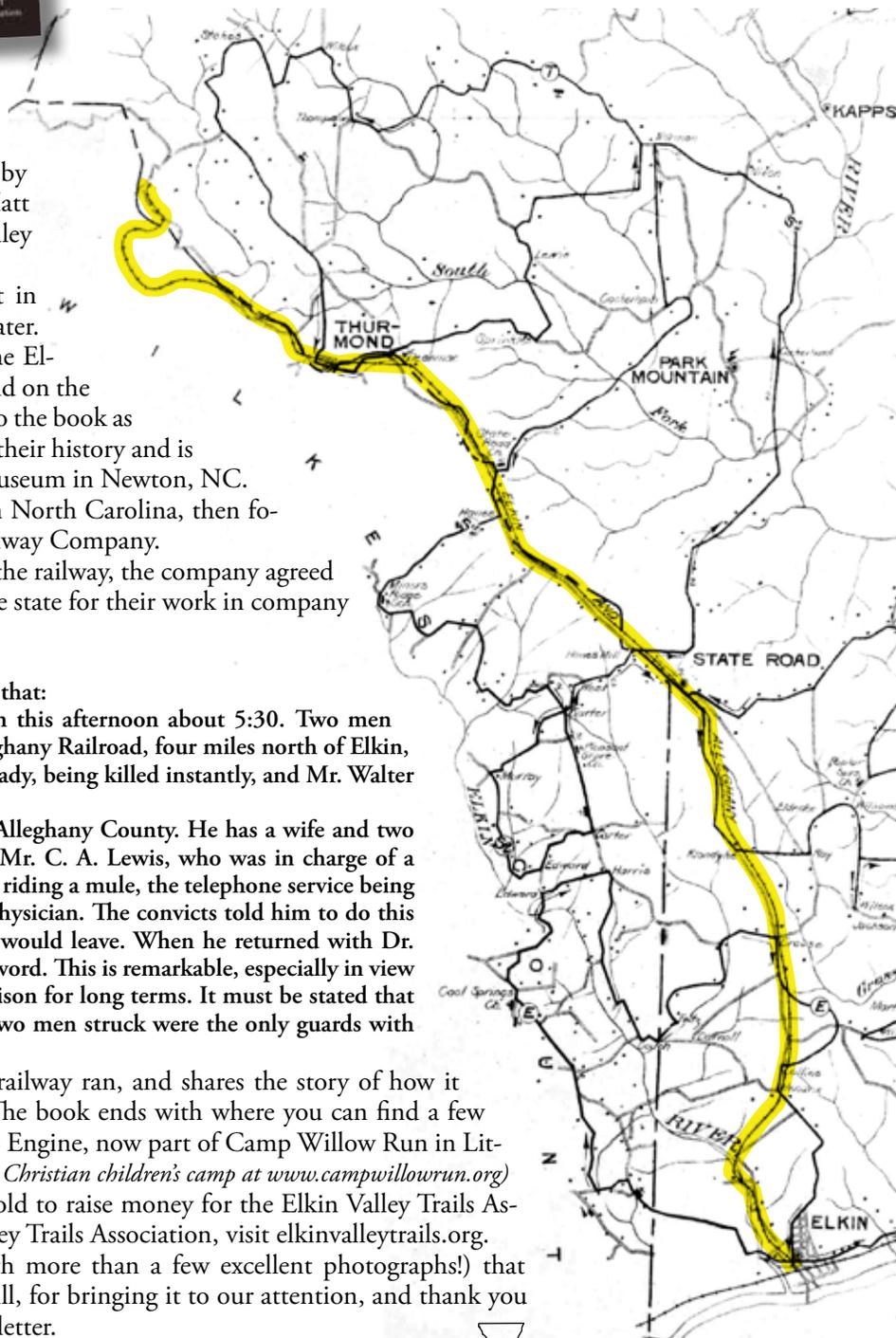
"A severe electrical storm visited this section this afternoon about 5:30. Two men guarding convicts at work on the Elkin & Alleghany Railroad, four miles north of Elkin, were struck by lightning, one, Mr. C. R. McGrady, being killed instantly, and Mr. Walter Simmons was seriously injured.

"Mr. McGrady's home is at Laurel Springs, Alleghany County. He has a wife and two children. Mr. Simmons lives at Roaring Gap. Mr. C. A. Lewis, who was in charge of a squad of twenty-five convicts, hurried to Elkin, riding a mule, the telephone service being out of order as a result of the storm, to get a physician. The convicts told him to do this and they promised him that not any of them would leave. When he returned with Dr. Ring, he found that every convict had kept his word. This is remarkable, especially in view of the fact that several of these men were in prison for long terms. It must be stated that the action of Mr. Lewis was necessary as the two men struck were the only guards with the squad."

The book continues, exploring the time the railway ran, and shares the story of how it ended, as well as a reorganization in the 1920s. The book ends with where you can find a few remnants of the railroad, including the E&A #100 Engine, now part of Camp Willow Run in Littleton, North Carolina. (*Get more information on the Christian children's camp at www.campwillowrun.org*)

The 74-page black-and-white book is being sold to raise money for the Elkin Valley Trails Association. For more information on the Elkin Valley Trails Association, visit elkinvalleytrails.org.

It's a very interesting, informative book (with more than a few excellent photographs!) that shares a story few are familiar with. Thank you, Bill, for bringing it to our attention, and thank you to EVTA for allowing us to include it in our newsletter.



The Civil War in Alleghany

by Doris J. Greene

Daniel C. Jones, (July 19, 1815 - June 9, 1903) and Caroline Caloway Jones, (May 4, 1812 - July 20, 1905) lived in the New Hope Community of Alleghany County in a two story house, constructed of hand-made brick.

James Calvin Jones, (April 18, 1840 - August 19, 1900) was the oldest of their eleven children. He fought in the Civil War and was wounded four times.

One time while he was home recovering from a wound, a Yankee prisoner was brought to the home to spend the night. He was to be hung the next day. After supper, while the guard and his prisoner sat in the parlor with the family, Calvin and his sister Martha, went into another room and talked of what was to become of the prisoner. They felt that his punishment was too severe.

Later that night, Calvin showed the guard and prisoner to an upstairs bedroom. While standing on crutches, holding a light for the guard to get the key in the lock, Calvin quietly dropped a key in the prisoner's hand.

The prisoner, whose name was Warren Cochran, waited until the guard was sound asleep, quietly dressed, unlocked the door and went across the hall to Calvin's room and asked what he should do. Calvin told him, "For God's sake leave here. All I ask is don't forget my name," and told him his name. He gave him a package of boiled ham and cornbread that Martha had prepared for him.

Next morning the guard was so angry, when he found his prisoner gone he would not eat his breakfast.

Calvin and Martha did not tell of their part in his escape until much later.

Fifty years later at the request of his father, who had died a few years earlier, Warren Cochran's son came from New York looking for Calvin and Martha and brought with him a book telling of the events of that cold February night in 1865.

Calvin died never knowing the prisoner made good his escape.

Martha had married Houston Waddell and was living near Scottdale, NC. He spent two weeks with the Waddell family and visited people and locations connected with his father's escape. He kept in touch with her, writing letters and sending gifts until her death.

After the War, Calvin married a neighbor girl, Mazie McMillian.

They built a home near the present New Hope Church. They had nine children, Arthur; Walter; Carrie; Laura; Rufus; Mack; Dan; Thomas and Jean.

He was the first elected sheriff of Alleghany County serving from 1864 to 1870.

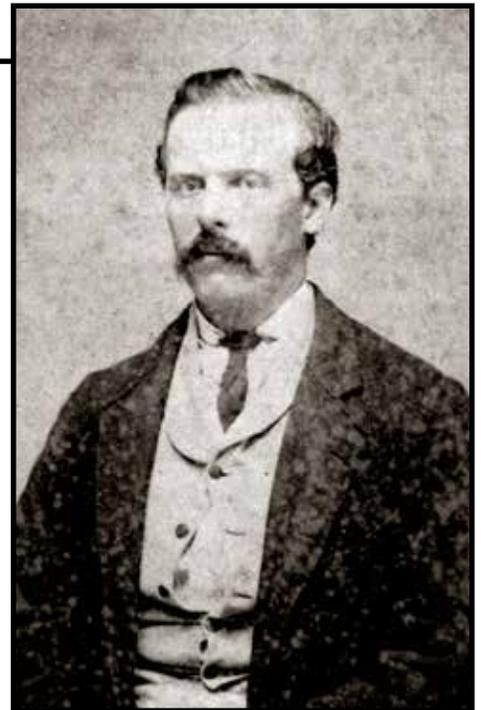
He was a farmer and merchant. His store was between his home and New Hope Church. He bought supplies for his store from Wilkesboro, N.C. and Marion, VA by horse and wagon. He bought sugar and flour by the barrel to be measured out. The first time he had bleached flour, his customers were afraid to buy it.

He was one of the organizers of New Hope Baptist Church, the first Missionary Baptist Church in Alleghany County. Calvin, Mazie, his parents, Daniel and Caroline, and a cousin, Allen and wife Nannie Jones, gave land for the first church yard and cemetery.

Later a son, Dan and wife Maggie, gave more land to enlarge the church yard and cemetery.

Calvin died August 19, 1900, while some of the children were very small. Mazie lived twenty more years, dying January 31, 1921. Both are buried in New Hope Cemetery.

Sources: Family Bible; book "Narrative of Certain Experiences of Warren Cochran in Civil War" by Warren Cochran; conversation with family members. From the book Alleghany County Heritage. 



James Calvin Jones

← A Rural Mail Delivery Route Map from before 1920 showing the E&A Railway corridor- very nearly the route US-21 follows, today.

↓ The E&A #100 2-8-0 Engine now in retirement at Camp Willow Run in Littleton, North Carolina. It was built in October of 1911 by Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Image is from their website.



↗ Elkin & Alleghany stock coupon belonging to Bill Irwin. Today it might have been worth around \$884. (If we understand the terms correctly: \$3 at 6% for 95 years and compounded monthly- gosh, I hate word problems!)



FFA CLUB AT PINEY CREEK HAS MANY MEMBERS. Reading from left to right: First row — Joe Wyatt, Bobby Estep, Colonel Brown, Charles Billings, R. L. Jones, Hugh Warden Halsey, Wayne Cleary; second row — James Finney, Wallace Collins, Jimmie Maines, Zane Woodie, Maynard Caudill; third row — Carlis Smith, Morris Cox, Rex Young, Farrell Horton, Bobby Estep, Robert Dean Cleary, Walter Lee Hampton; fourth row — Alton Baldwin, Herbert Douglas, Elwood Wiles, Cecil Newberry, Donald Sturgill; top row — J. D. Mabe, Raymond Rector, Wayne Williams, Burton Osborne. (Staff Photo by Paul Weston)

This photo was originally published in the May 20, 1954 edition of the Alleghany News and is included, here, with their permission. AHGS appreciates and values our relationship with the Alleghany News and its staff.



Okay, What is it? Is it some kind of mincer? A pitter? A kraut cutter? All I can say is that I wouldn't want to get my fingers caught in there. Kermit Pruitt has it in the Barber Shop window if you'd like a closer look.

Contact us with suggestions!

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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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