

Allegheny Historical-Genealogical Society, Inc.

Preserving Allegheny's Heritage Since 1979



President Jeff Halsey
Vice-President Roy Hunt
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Volume 30, No. 2

June 2009

Bulletin No. 96

Allegheny County Courthouse Dedication - May 16, 2009

The Allegheny County Courthouse Dedication was held Saturday, May 16th. Speakers included County Commissioner Chairman, Ken Richardson, Susie Gambill, Judge Richard Doughton, Sparta Mayor John Miller, Judge Edgar Gregory, Judge Mitchell McLean, District Atty. Thomas Horner and NC Chief Justice Sarah Parker.

With sometimes stirring oratory, the speakers reminded the local audience just how important our county courthouse is to all of us.

Judge Parker: "...I bring greetings and best wishes from the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of North Carolina. For me to be able to share with all of you the dedication of this beautifully renovated building is indeed a high honor and privilege.



Mayor John Miller presents a proclamation of thanks & Key to the Town of Sparta to NC Chief Justice Sarah Parker at the Dedication of Allegheny Courthouse. Photo courtesy of ACTV.

"... certainly no one is more memorable in the life of the judiciary in North Carolina than the late Associate Justice, Carlisle Higgins. I am honored to be here in his home county to dedicate this courthouse this Saturday afternoon in the beautiful month of May.

"In reading the history of the courthouses that have stood sentinel over the law in North Carolina since colonial times, I recall a favorite short story by one of our state's great literary figures, Thomas Wolfe. In his story, *The Bell Remembered*, the fictional narrator speaks of a time when he was a boy, shortly after the Civil War, in the archetypal American town, Libya Hill- aka Wolfe's native Asheville.

"The boy's father was a judge in the days when our judges literally rode circuit and the boy reminisced about the colorful personalities who inhabited the innermost recesses of the courthouse and the steps outside. About the prominence in the community of the Courthouse, itself,

Continued Page 5

Sesquicentennial Calendar

Upcoming Events



There are many events planned this year. We hope to see you there!

June

- 20 - 11:00am - Go Skate Day Festival. Skateboarding demonstration, competition, music, food. Razors Edge Skate Park.
- Noon - Shrine Duck Race. Una's River Bottom, Sparta. Children's games, refreshments.
- 5:00pm - Spring Lawn Mower Race. Co. Fairgrounds.
- 22 - 6:30pm - Local Herbs. Allegheny Library.
- 26-28 History of Allegheny Play. 7:00pm Fri & Sat, 2:00pm Sun. Sparta School Auditorium.
- 29 - Blue Ridge Parkway History & People, Mindy DeCesar. Allegheny Library.

July

- 3-4 - Lions Club All-Game Horse Show 5:00pm Fri., 10:00am Sat. County Fairgrounds.
- 3 - 6:30-10:30pm - Dance at Crouse Park. Mixed Emotions band.
- 4 - 10:00am - Old-Timey Hillbilly Games for Children. Crouse Park.
- Noon - Community Picnic. Crouse Park.
- 2:00pm - 4th of July Parade. Downtown Sparta.
- After the Parade - Old-Timey Hillbilly Games for Adults. Crouse Park.
- 4:00-7:00pm - Piney Creek School All Years' School-Wide Reunion. Piney Creek School
- 6:00pm - Tailgate Party. Allegheny High School.
- Dusk - Fireworks Show. Allegheny High School.
- 5 - 2:00pm - Sparta School All Years' School-Wide Reunion. Woodruff Stadium, Sparta.
- 9 - 6:30pm - Drs. Cahn and Oliver. Allegheny Library.
- 10-12 - First Baptist Church 125th Anniversary Celebration 7:00pm Fri, Sat, 10:00am Sun. Sparta.
- 17-18 - Fiddlers' Convention 5:00pm Fri., 10:00am Sat. County Fairgrounds.
- 18 - 10:00am-4:00pm - Women's Work at Brinegar Cabin. Blue Ridge Parkway. Demonstrations of women's pioneer skills.
- 23-Sep. 26 - Mtn. Musical Instruments as Craft exhibit, Sparta Teapot Museum.
- 24-25 - 10:00am-4:00pm - Allegheny Quilters' Guild Show. Black Building, Co. Fairgrounds.
- Blue Ridge Mountain Fair 4:00-8:00pm Fri, 9:00am-6:00pm Sat. Crouse Park.
- 25 - 8:00am-4:00pm - Annual VFW Car Show & Cruise Out Parade NAPCO parking lot, Sparta.
- 27 - 6:30pm - History and Songs with Ricky Cox. Allegheny Library.

August

- 1 - 7:00pm - Miss Allegheny Pageant. Sparta School Auditorium.
- 3 - Storytelling & Mountain Music with Glenn Bolick 6:30p Allegheny Library, Sparta 336-372-5573
- 8 - 10:00am-4:00pm - Brinegar Days Celebration. Blue Ridge Parkway crafts and heritage demonstrations, historical programs.
- 13 - 6:30pm - Oldtimers Band, Ernest Joines & Friends. Allegheny Library.
- 15 - 9:00am-until - An Informal Gathering at Crouse Park. Native American Celebration
- 22 - 7:00pm - Demolition Derby. County Fairgrounds.
- 27-29 - Allegheny County Fair 6:00-10:00pm Thurs. & Fri.; 4:00-11:00pm Sat. Co. Fairgrounds.
- 29 - 7:00pm - Lawn Mower Race. Co. Fairgrounds.
- 8:00am - USA 10K Trail Championships. Laurel Ridge Moravian Camp, Laurel Springs.
- 31 - 6:30pm - Local Author Sam Shumate Speaks. Allegheny Library.

Get more info at: www.ac150.com and www.sparta-nc.com

Message from the President

Dear Members,

Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society has been honored with several collections in recent weeks. Betty Roupe let us scan and archive Mary Harless' scrapbook of the 1959 Alleghany Centennial Celebration. Faye Reeves brought in her own newspaper clippings of 1959 and Milly Richardson brought Hazel Cooper's scrapbook to share. Centennial Queen Betty Dolinger has donated her own scrapbook from the celebration.

Jane Landreth Wyatt let us scan slides that her father, Basil Landreth, shot during the Centennial Parade from atop the theater marquee. 42 Kodachrome images of an event from half a century ago, but looking like yesterday, have been added into our archive.

Hugh M. Boyer from Wilkesboro brought us an interesting collection also. He brought photos of his father, Hugh G. Boyer, several photos of his grandfather H.K. Boyer (lawyer, minister and founder of the Alleghany Star newspaper) and his grandmother, Myrtle Lee Cornett Boyer. Myrtle was originally from Elk Creek, Virginia and daughter of Judge George Washington Cornett. There are several photos of the judge in the collection but only one of his wife, Sarah Jean Gentry.

Sarah (Sally) Jean was the daughter of Colonel Allen Gentry and Rebecca Reeves Gentry from the Gap Civil area of Ashe County. That's not a typo. The Gentrys lived here when it was still Ashe County. Allen Gentry actually wrote the legislation that carved Alleghany from Ashe County. Unfortunately, Mr. Boyer had only one photo of the Colonel and Mrs. Gentry.

The total number of original, family photos Mr. Boyer brought (and donated!) to the Society is 183. Only a few are unidentified. Most of the individuals were identified on the back of the photos by Grandmother Myrtle Lee. The photos are an unbroken family record of the last 150 years. What a great gift for the sesquicentennial!

There is no way to quantify treasures like these, given to the citizens of Alleghany County. You really can't give someone a receipt for sharing their heritage. From snapshots of the 1959 parade to young girls' scrapbooks to photos of (arguably) the father of Alleghany and his descendants, these collections are each documentation of our history. We are indebted to each collector, caretaker and donor. On behalf of the Historical Society, thank you to everyone for these exciting and unexpected additions to our archive.



Hugh K. Boyer



Myrtle Lee Cornett Boyer



**Judge George
Washington Cornett**



Sarah Jean Gentry Cornett



Colonel Allen and Rebecca Reeves Gentry



Correspondence

This may sound funny but until now I thought the only Rufty's that lived on this planet were in Los Angeles, CA. I've lived in a lot of towns and states and looked in every phone book I got my hands on- NEVER found a Rufty. My father and uncle have passed away. The only thing I know is they're from North Carolina. My grandfather Jay Rufty is from Cabarrus, NC and the Ruftys came through Ellis Island from Germany or Switzerland. No wonder I couldn't find them all hiding in North Carolina. YOU WOULD HAVE MY GREATEST THANKS if you could point me to the site or person for a little HELP. Thank you.

Sincerely, Ted L. Rufty, 501 NW 6th St., Pendleton, OR 97801, tedrufty88@hotmail.com, 541-278-7920, in the evenings

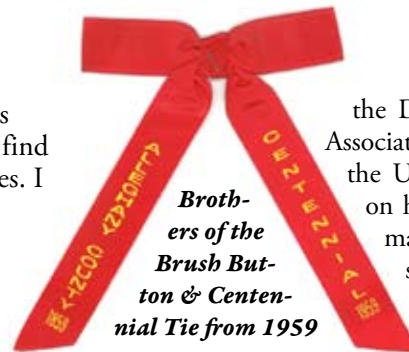
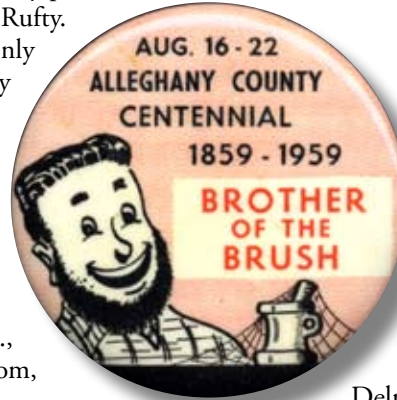
I am trying to locate information on my grandfather Jesse V. Ross. He was born in NC, he married Lucinda Pullum. His son was born in Greensboro NC. How can I find information? I have tried all the search engines. I know can you help me.

James Ross, 4400 20th St NE, Washington, DC 20018, yogi_418@verizon.net, 202-253-7095, in the evenings

Need to know general holdings of John Connely in 1798; that means "general" as in, near Ennice area. Have general clues as to property area, Crab Creek, etc. Sites mentioned are: Maid's (Mades) Knob, Glade Creek area, Crab Creek & Brush Creek Fork; across Gladly Fork into VA, Nathan's Ridge, Hammond's Mill Creek, Brushy and Crab Creek drainages. These were lands held by John Connely and I am seeking the general location now. Later acquired by Passmore, Higgins and Johnson Families. Also, where is the "early Little River Baptist Churchyard?" I have

a feeling this is all around Ennice? Thanks for any help.

Mary Jo Gohlke, 3848 Steve Lillie Circle, Stockton, CA 95206, MaryJo.Gohlke@ci.stockton.ca.us



Owned by Faye Reeves

I am looking for information regarding the family of Wes Cheek. The Cheek Family Chronicles listed the children. My daughter is trying to research the heritage of her father Joel Cheek who is deceased. In particular if there is any Indian blood (which we were always told) and how much. Is there a way we could find out this information? Thank you for your assistance.

Theresa Cheek, 4334 Southworth Road, Delphos, Ohio 45833, marie45833@peoplepc.com, 419-692-0585, in the mornings

I am writing on behalf of Dr. Maurie McInnis, the Director of the American Studies program and Associate Professor in the Art History department at the University of Virginia. She is currently working on her latest book, which deals with the visual and material culture of the slave trade in the South and, specifically, Virginia. As her research assistant, I wanted to contact you to see whether your society's special collections has any images or artifacts relating to the slave trade (for instance, we located a red flag in the Charleston historical society that was hung outside of auction houses to draw attention to the auction)? We are not so much interested in archival material at this time, but merely images or material culture. If your collection has anything that you think may be of use to us, I would appreciate hearing back from you.

Heather McMahon, 5057 Old Auburn Rd, Warrenton, Va 20187, hnm2f@virginia.edu, 434-249-3454, in the afternoons



Above, Left: Marines march down Main Street in the Centennial Parade, 1959. Right: N.B. Smith float in the Centennial Parade, 1959. Thanks to Jane Wyatt for letting us use her dad's photos. Photos by Basil Landreth

Items For Sale

The following items are available for sale, directly from the Society or may be purchased at the Alleghany County Public Library or at The Sparta Store across from the courthouse or at www.spartastore.com

HISTORY OF ALLEGHANY COUNTY, NC 1859-1976 - This 272-page book, which had been out of print for many years, was re-published by the Society in August 1999. It was originally published in 1976 during the Nation's Bicentennial. This book is not indexed. The book may be purchased from the Society for \$45, plus \$3 for shipping & handling, plus (for NC residents only) \$3.04 tax.

ALLEGHANY COUNTY HERITAGE - This 555-page book was published by the Society in October 1983 and is broken down into three sections: county, township, and community histories; over 700 family histories; and a 13-page pictorial heritage. This book is completely indexed. The book may be purchased from the Society for \$48, plus \$3 s&h, plus (for NC residents only) \$3.24 tax.

ALLEGHANY COUNTY CEMETERIES THROUGH 1986 - This 261-page book was published in October 1988 and contains burial data from nearly 300 family, church and community burial plots through 1986. The names are in alphabetical order with a code showing the location of the cemetery. The book may be purchased from the Society for \$15, plus \$2.75 s&h, plus (for NC residents only) \$1.01 tax.

ALLEGHANY ARCHITECTURE: A PICTORIAL SURVEY - This 101-page book was originally published in 1983 by the Alleghany County Historical Properties Commission. The book was re-published in May 2004 by the Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society. Jean Sizemore was the principal investigator and photos were taken by Brant Burgiss and Tammy Blevins. The communities covered are: Cherry Lane, Cranberry, Gap Civil, Glade Creek, Glade Valley, Piney Creek, Prathers Creek, Roaring Gap, Sparta, and Whitehead. Although architecture is the principal focus of the book, it contains much information useful to the family historian. This book is not indexed. The book may be purchased from the Society for \$30.00, plus \$3.00 s&h, plus (for NC residents only) \$2.03 tax.

ALLEGHANY COUNTY, NC MARRIAGES: 1849-1900 - This 354-page book was published in 1996 by local resident George Henry Latham. These marriage records are arranged alphabetically by the groom's surname, typically showing for each marriage the day, month, and year it took place; the groom's name, age, residence and the names of his parents; and the bride's name, age, residence and the names of her parents. An index of brides is also included. The book may be purchased for \$30.50 plus \$5 s&h from Heritage Books Inc., 1540-E Pointer Ridge Pl., Bowie, MD 20716. Their phone number is 1-800-398-7709. Their website is <http://www.heritagebooks.com>.

ALLEGHANY COUNTY COURTHOUSE ORNAMENT - This attractive, gold-colored metal ornament depicts the county courthouse, which was re-built following the fire of 1933. Profits from the sale of this ornament fund various activities of the Society. The ornament is available from the Society for \$11.21 plus (for NC residents only) \$0.76 tax; no shipping & handling is charged for this light item.

MARY'S MEMORIES - This 74-page book was published by Mary Lyon Harless in 2000 on the occasion of her 100th birthday. The book is a collection of stories and reminiscences about her long life in Alleghany County. It contains many photographs as well as illustrations by Arzetta Mimbs. The first printing quickly sold out and Mrs. Harless permitted the Society to re-publish the book. The book may be purchased from the Society for \$8.00, plus \$1.50 s&h and (for NC residents only) \$0.54 tax.

FOOT PRINTS ON THE SANDS OF TIME - This 75-page book, subtitled "A History of Southwestern Virginia and Northwestern North Carolina," was first published in Sparta, NC in 1900 by Dr. Aras B. Cox. Dr.

Cox was a physician and Methodist preacher who was born in Floyd Co., VA and later lived in Alleghany and Ashe Counties, NC. The book consists of historical and biographical sketches of the following counties: Carroll, Floyd and Grayson, VA; and Alleghany, Ashe, Surry, Watauga and Wilkes, NC. One chapter recounts the Battle of King's Mountain. Our Society reprinted this book in 2002, and it now includes an every-name index. The book may be purchased from the Society for \$15.00, plus \$2.00 s&h and (for NC residents only) \$1.01 tax.

1938 VIDEO OF SPARTA, NORTH CAROLINA - This 20-minute video, mostly in black and white (but some scenes in color), was filmed by Ben Reeves in downtown Sparta, at the Roaring Gap Fish Hatchery, and at the Alleghany Co. Agricultural Fair. Identified persons include Edwin Duncan, Alton Thompson, Glenn Nichols, Coy Richardson, Eltie Richardson, Preachers R. L. Berry and Howard Ford, Troy Irwin, Will Reeves, Virginia Reeves and son Bennie, C. R. Roe, F. H. Jackson, Floyd Crouse, Guy Duncan, Dr. Thompson, Duke Bledsoe, R. L. Doughton, Walter Irwin, Kyle Nichols, Lester Waddell, Jay Hardin, Sam Brown, Porter Collins, Rufus Doughton, and Ross and Earl Richardson. The video begins with Ben Reeves' trip to the 1939 Worlds Fair in New York, which makes an interesting contrast with 1938 Sparta. Includes a musical background. Available as VHS tape or DVD and may be purchased from the Society for \$11.00, plus \$1.50 s&h and (for NC residents only) \$0.68 tax.

RECIPES THAT RAISED US - This Paul Green Award winner (230 pgs.) is a memorial cookbook featuring favorite recipes of friends and family who have passed away. Proceeds from this book go to the building project of the Alleghany County Public Library. These books may be purchased from the Society for \$20, plus \$3.00 s&h, plus (for NC residents only) \$1.35 tax or (3) books for \$45.00, plus \$7.00 s&h, plus (for NC residents only) \$3.04 tax.

For items ordered from the Society, send your check, payable to Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, to the following address: Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, P.O.Box 817, Sparta, NC 28675.

All our items are available online at: www.spartastore.com

If you have interesting photos, old-timey family stories, local historical information (*or even a good tall tale*), consider letting us print it in this newsletter.

Contact us at:

info@ahgs.org or call **336-372-3002**. Website: **www.ahgs.org**

Membership Form

Please enroll me as a member of the Alleghany 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

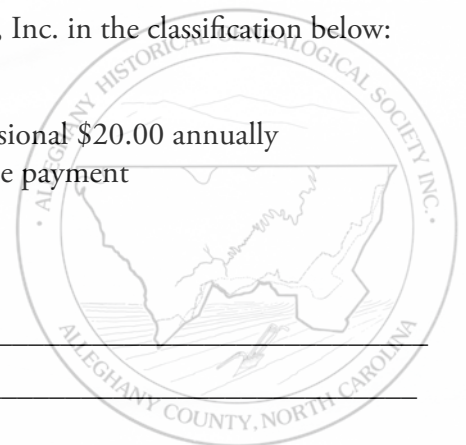
LIFE MEMBER \$100.00 in one payment

Enclosed is a check or money order for membership.

Please send membership card to:

Name- _____

Address- _____





Twin Oaks Hotel and Auto Dealership

Book excerpt by Carl W. (Bill) Irwin

Bill Irwin is the grandson of W. Carl Irwin- an authentic Alleghany entrepreneur.

Twin Oaks Hotel and Auto Dealership was the brainchild of W. Carl Irwin. W. Carl was appointed to the US Postal Service in 1916 and at that time had a Ford dealership in Stratford, North Carolina called Stratford Motor Co.

In the mid 1920's word came that two main roads (*both US Highways*) were to meet at a site three miles west of Sparta, NC at a point called Twin Oaks.

The new highway deemed "The Great Lakes to Florida Highway" or US-Highway 21 was to pass through Twin Oaks intersecting with US-Highway 221.

W. Carl was quick to see the potential of this merger. Acquiring land that would turn out to be on all sides of the two roads led to the building of the Twin Oaks Hotel & Garage.

The hotel building was on the Northeast side of 21/221 and housed not only rooms for rent, but also living quarters for the family. It also contained a store, an auto dealership (*Twin Oaks Motor Company*) and common areas.

The hotel lobby was the site for many dances and community functions. The lower section of the building housed a saw mill and wood working facility.

Guest rooms were located on third floor. Among the guest rooms were a full bathroom (1 bath for eighteen rooms) and a small dark room for the guests to have film developed. A telephone exchange was available in the building. The *Store* or *Tea Room* was used for a bus stop



Old Irwin Hotel at Twin Oaks, at the intersection of US Highways 21 and 221.

location.

Across the road from the hotel was a park and rental cabins. The park had small ponds and plenty of shade. Also, located in the park were large cages which regularly housed native wildlife for guests to view.

The rental cabins located beside the park were rented out on a daily, weekly, and sometimes on a monthly basis.

As people began traveling the "Lakes to Florida Highway," they would find a restful stop at a midpoint in their travels. At the Twin Oaks Hotel, they could not only fill-up their vehicles with gas, but a good home cooked meal would surely see them satisfied for the remainder of their travels or if they so chose, a good night's sleep in the guest quarters.

Although the Twin Oaks Hotel is no longer standing, the tradition for

serving hospitality continues through the generations.

A grandson of W. Carl Irwin owns the *Twin Oaks General Store* which is located on the opposite side of the 221/21 intersection from the original location of the hotel. The grandeur of the hotel may now be history, but the rich community fellowship continues at the general store. It is a gathering place for local residents as well as a great stop for visitors continuing on their journey.



AHGS is currently gathering information on businesses operating in Alleghany County, NC from 1859 to 2009 for an upcoming history book.

If you would like your business to be included, or would like to give information, contact us at: info@ahgs.org or call Imaging Specialists: 336-372-3002.

Courthouse Dedication- Continued from Page 1

and about the significance of the bell that announced the commencing of court sessions.

“Wolfe wrote, “I sometimes wonder if the people of a younger and more urban generation realize the way the courthouse bell- the country courthouse shaped the life and destiny for America, some sixty years ago. For as in Libya Hill, at any rate, it was the center of life of the community- the center of the community itself- for Libya Hill was first a county courthouse, then a town. A town that grew around the courthouse, made the square and straggled out along the roads that lead to the four corners of the Earth and for the country people, round about, even more than the people who lived in the town, the courthouse was the center of their life.

“Wolfe graphically describes the very smells of the crankly old courthouse and challenges

us to see as he did a gathering place not just for people, but a place epitomizing the essence of justice imperfect though it may be yet striving to the highest goals of our civilization.

“Wolfe continued, “And the courthouse smell was also like the smell of terror, crime and justice in America, a certain essence of our own life, a certain sweat out of ourselves, a certain substance that is ours alone and unmistakable.”



County Commissioner Chairman, Ken Richardson welcomes guests.

Photo courtesy of ACTV

...Today we dedicate not just a building but ourselves to that spirit. Let us conduct our affairs with the integrity, intellect and industry that the rule of law and cause of justice deserve and on which the survival of the civil community depends. This courthouse has stood for many years as a special place for the community. A symbol of our most cherished rights and freedoms. This building occupies a special physical place in Allegheny County and may it always occupy a special place in the hearts of her people.

“Again thank you so much for letting me be here today with you.”

Photos are taken from Allegheny Community Television’s DVD of the Courthouse Dedication. Photography by Charles Scott. These and other Sesquicentennial DVDs available online at www.spartastore.com. Visit ACTVs site at www.alleghenycommunitytelevision.com to learn more about this county educational project.



Special Superior Court Judge Richard Doughton introduces Chief Justice Parker.

Photo courtesy of ACTV

Excerpt from Allegheny Courthouse Dedication Program

The Allegheny Courthouse was originally built in 1910 by the B.F. Smith Fireproof Construction Co. of Washington, D.C. The building, nearing its centennial anniversary, however, was almost totally destroyed by a fire in January of 1933 that swept through downtown, Sparta.

Although the fire badly damaged the building, the back portion remained standing and only the front was destroyed. The fire apparently jumped the street when birds’ nests in the belfry of the courthouse caught fire from sparks blown across the street. However, the board sidewalks of the town have also been blamed for spreading the fire.

Floyd Crouse who practiced law in the county courthouse helped by throwing the county’s deed books out the window to save them.

It was rebuilt under the supervision of architect Harry Barton, in the Classical Revival style. If the current building lacks some of the grace and grandeur of the old building, it is because rebuilding funds were tight due to the Great Depression.

In December of 2005, work to modernize the building began. Renovations included a new roof on the facility and windows were replaced with double-paned, insulated aluminum units. The courtroom was updated with new carpet and paint.

A back stairwell was removed which created additional space that now includes the judge’s chamber, a renovated jury room, an additional conference room for attorneys to meet with clients, and new storage areas.



Allegheny Courthouse before the 1933 Sparta fire.



*W. Carl Irwin's
Stratford Motor
Company before
the move to Twin
Oaks. Story on
page 6.
Originals property of
Bill Irwin*

STRATFORD MOTOR COMPANY

Hord

Parts	Gasoline and Oils	Weed Chains
Service	Hessler Shock Absorbers	Supplies and Accessories
Station	Champion X Spark Plugs	Mechanical Department
	Racine Country Road Tires	Machine Shop, Experienced Mechanics.

*This newsletter is published quarterly by the Alleghany Historical-Geological Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 817, Sparta, North Carolina, 28675 Web: www.ahgs.org email: info@ahgs.org*

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