

Allegheny Historical-Genealogical Society, Inc.

Preserving Allegheny's Heritage Since 1979



President Jeff Halsey
Vice-President Roy Hunt
Secretary-Treasurer Irene R. Wagner

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Allegheny County Begins Sesquicentennial Celebration

Historical Event at the Courthouse

The Allegheny County Sesquicentennial Committee hosted the Kick-Off Event for our year-long Sesquicentennial Celebration at the Allegheny County Courthouse February 12, 2009, at 6:00 pm. The Library's Black History Month presentation, by entertainer, Mike Wiley, *The Story of Emmitt Till*, preceded the Kick-Off, which began at 7:00.

Charity Gambill-Gwyn was the MC and Judge Richard Doughton, Sparta Mayor John Miller, Elizabeth Sherrill, President of North Carolina Society of Historians, and County Commissioner Chairman Ken Richardson spoke.



Robert Lee Doughton, one of Allegheny County's historical leaders remembered at the Sesquicentennial event.

The speakers outlined the history of the county, the town, and prominent founding families, as well as the importance of recording personal histories.

A reception catered by Cater-U and the Arts Council followed at the Allegheny Jubilee. Several of the people who attended the Kick-Off were dressed in old-timey costumes. Area musicians played old-time mountain music throughout the reception.

For information on upcoming events or to get involved with the Allegheny County Sesquicentennial Committee, please contact the Sesquicentennial Committee or visit ac150.com.



Allegheny Cheese factory photo from Johnsie McIntyre's family collection. Possibly at Piney Creek or Twin Oaks. What do you say, readers?

Sesquicentennial Calendar

Some Upcoming Events in 2009



This year, the Sesquicentennial Committee is working with groups to help promote smaller celebrations as well as planning large day- or week-long events.

February

28 - 5-7pm - Poor Man's Supper at Sparta/Allegheny Fire Dept. \$5

March

14 - Woman-less Beauty Pageant - Sparta School Auditorium

April

25 - 5-7pm - Poor Man's Supper at Laurel Springs Fire Dept.

May

11-15 - 7pm nightly - Macedonia Church Revival - William Scott, speaker.

30 - 10am-2pm - Old Fashioned Brush Arbor Day at Allegheny Fairgrounds. Covered dish on the ground. Special singing and music and preaching. All churches are invited to participate.

31 - June 6 - 7pm nightly - Old Fashioned Tent Revival in the Old Charleston Forge Building parking lot behind the bowling alley.

June

13 - 5-7pm - Poor Man's Supper at Piney Creek Fire Dept.

20 - Youth Day at Razor's Edge Skate Park

26-27 - 7pm - The History of Allegheny Play - Sparta School Auditorium

Add your event at: www.ac150.com

Message from the President

Dear Members,

As a project of the Sesquicentennial, Sparta Mayor, John Miller, has asked a committee to help identify 150 of the most influential natives of Alleghany County- one for each year of our history. The nominees don't necessarily have to be the rich or famous. They just have to have influenced the history of the county.

Juanita Bryan, Charity Gambill-Gwyn and I are working on this (some have already said) unenviable project. Some say impossible.

The project is only to honor folks. Obviously we can't include everyone. And no two people will have the same list.

AHGS members are helping to build the list of names. You can help by sending in your own nominations. We don't know what form the final list will take, perhaps a book with biographies, anecdotes and photos. Possibly just a too numerous or controversial list of names that can't be distilled down.

Whatever form it ends up in, we will all have learned something in the process- personal histories of the people who helped build our county.



With help from the Alleghany Historical Genealogical Society, the Sesquicentennial Celebration Committee has re-printed the first edition of the Alleghany Star, a paper which was started in 1889, by H.K. Boyer and A.S. Carson.

The entire Volume 1, Number 1 paper is included, along with news stories from other area papers that have occurred within the last 120 years.

This publication was the first fund-raiser for the County's Sesquicentennial project. We are selling them for only 50¢. In addition to news stories, the interior of the paper features advertisements for businesses around today, but that are styled in an antique look.

Pick up one (or several) of these papers the next time you're in town. (or go online to: www.spartastore.com) And be sure to support the Sesquicentennial by supporting the advertisers!

We would like to enlist the help of anyone who wants to be a part of identifying these names. Everyone can contribute something to this project- from our Senior Citizens to our High School Seniors.

We're supposed to learn from our history, not shy away from it. I hope we have more than 150 names in the end. I hope we have 1500 names and stories to consider. What better legacy can our fathers and mothers have than we want to honor too many of them?

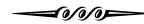
Ever the teacher, Mr. Miller has given us an assignment and the only way to fail is to turn in an incomplete.

Got a name to throw into the hat?

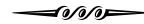
Shame on you if you don't!



We are now collecting recipes, photos and stories for Volume Two of *Recipes That Raised Us*.



We are working with Alleghany Community Television on an idea for a historical show. More information in the next newsletter.



This year is going to be a doozy. For event info, go to: www.ac150.com or www.ahgs.org. Hope to see you at the next meeting!

Jeff Halsey
February 15, 2009



Alleghany Star Office in Sparta presumably around 1889. Note that the sign is just being hung. Original in AHGS Collection.

Correspondence

Terry Underwood of Loyall, Kentucky is requesting information on the Phipps Family.

Jehu and Lucy (Austin) Phipps' children, Sarah J., Thomas, Cynthia, and Samuel Ewell, were born in the New River area of the North Carolina. Samuel Ewell and Frances Phipps had made their way to Morgan County, Kentucky by 1900. Mr. Underwood is descended from Samuel Ewell and Frances Phipps.

The entire request for information can be found online at ahgs.org. Mr. Underwood's contact information is: Terry Underwood, P.O. Box 952, Loyall, KY 40854, (606) 664-2284

Carla Collins is searching for a photo of the old Sparta Baptist Church that was destroyed by fire in 1940. Their 125th anniversary celebration is in June. If anyone has one, please contact Carla at the church- 372-8446 or the Society.

We are still collecting stories and photos of Alleghany Businesses from 1859 through 2009. We've decided to add School and Church histories as well. Get your story in asap so you're not left out!

Dave King is "trying to find out the cemetery my g gr mother-in-law is buried in. Have photograph of tombstone but no information concerning the cemetery name or location. Interested in Moxley, Douglas(s) and Crouse family histories. Most of my wife's (Moxley) family removed to Harford County Maryland during the late 1910s."

Contact Mr. King at: Dave King, 606 Main Street, Delta, PA 17314, daveking56@clearviewcatv.net

The Society is gathering recipes, stories and photos for Volume Two of our memorial cookbook *Recipes That Raised Us*.

I am seeking a copy of *The Sturgill Family History* by David Andrew Sturgill and Mack Howard Sturgill. Can you help me with this request?

Thank you.

Mary Eleanor Spencer, 824 Bonnie Drive, Lakeland, FL, 33803-1902, jspencer58@tampabay.rr.com, 863-683-4213, Best Time to Call: 12n - 5pm

ROARING GAP HOTEL, THE IDEAL SUMMER HOME FOR

Tourists, has established for itself, a name that is known from ocean to ocean. Its situation is equalled by few and excelled by none. Its cuisine this year will be under the personal direction of an experienced caterer. An abundance of ice was harvested during the winter and stored at Hotel. The house has been thoroughly renovated and nicely painted. Many conveniences have been added of modern style. A Telephone line is now in operation. This gives you connection with Elkin, N. C., station on the Southern, and Marion, Va., on the Norfolk and Western. Fine livery accommodation can be had at Hotel.

HOTEL.

THE BUILDING is three stories, with a capacity of more than two hundred. The rooms are well furnished and equipped with fire places, using wood as fuel. Broad, commodious piazzas and balconies. Magnificent grounds for Tennis, Basket Ball, Cycling and other sports. An elegant drive-way has been surveyed. An up-to-date Bowling Alley has just been completed. The table supplied daily with the best the country can afford, with pure milk and butter from the Hotel Farm. Trout fishing near Hotel is elaborate.

A String Band has been secured for the entire season. Weekly dances

will be given every Wednesday night. An elegant dance hall is near completion.

TERMS:—\$2.00 per day; \$8.75—\$10.50 per week; \$25.00 per month.

SITUATION.

ROARING GAP HOTEL is situated on the highest point of the Blue Ridge, at the corner of Wilkes, Surry and Alleghany counties, overlooking the historic Yadkin Valley, and the most magnificent landscape on the continent of America. Towns of more than fifty miles distance can be seen with the naked eye.

Its altitude is 3,300 feet. It is comparatively free from heavy fogs and daily rains that are so common at Blowing Rock and other places of greater elevation. Dew never known to fall. The climate in Summer is as perfect as can be found in the world. Mineral water on the grounds equal to the best in the United States. The noted Spring of the United States can be reached in a few minutes walk.

POINTS OF INTEREST.

ELKIN, SPARTA, Gap Civil, Stone Mountain. The Bull Head, and Signal Station, are the principal peaks. The deepest Gorge of the Blue Ridge is

found near the Hotel. Its depth is more than 500 feet. A beautiful waterfall pours into this Gorge. Near this is the Famous "Lover's Leap" where love was once quelled by one fatal leap. Black Tom's Lair is another point worthy of notice.

Trains leaving Greensboro at 8.15 a. m.; Winston-Salem, 9.45 a. m., arrive at Elkin 11.49 a. m. Carriages and buggies will meet you at station and carry you to Hotel, 15 miles in three hours. Leaving Hotel down the Mountain is but two hours drive to Elkin where East bound train brings you to Greensboro by 7.00 p. m.

☞ Summer Rates on all roads to Elkin.

Livery Rates From Elkin to Hotel.

Carriage for single passenger, - - - \$2.00
Carriage for two or three, - - - 1.50 each
Carriage for three or five, - - - 1.25 each
Carriage for five or more, - - - 1.00 each
Children under 10 years of age, half price.

Trunks, 100 pounds or less, - - - 50 each
Trunks, 100 to 150 pounds, - - - 75 each
Trunks, 150 pounds and over, - 1.00 each
Small baggage, no charge.

For further information, address,

W. A. FOIL, Laurel Branch, N. C., "Roaring Gap Hotel."

Or, Charlotte, N. C., "Arlington Hotel."

ROARING GAP HOTEL,

LAUREL BRANCH, Alleghany Co., N. C.



THE MOST PLEASANT SUMMER RESORT IN THE SOUTH.

Open From June 1st to October 1st, 1899.

W. A. FOIL, Proprietor.

Advertising card for the Roaring Gap Hotel, from Bill Irwin's family collection. Notice that over a century ago, they directed their marketing to some of the same areas we do today. Leave Greensboro at 8:15AM, travel to Elkin via train, and in three short hours, you're up the mountain to your destination! Understandably, just two hours back down. The Points of Interest includes Signal Station and Black Tom's Lair. Contact us if you can shed light on these locations.

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 the Alleghany County Chamber of Commerce:

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 230 page book 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

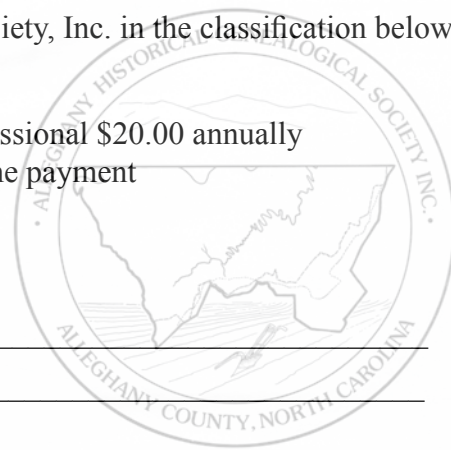
LIFE MEMBER \$100.00 in one payment

Enclosed is a check or money order for membership.

Please send membership card to:

Name- _____

Address- _____



A History of Troutman Shirt Company

Book excerpt by J. M. Sturgill

J.M. Sturgill was employed by Troutman Industries, starting January 8, 1951 until 1972.

Just by chance Troutman Shirt came to Sparta as told by Mr. H. J. Brown: He was passing through Sparta and stopped to buy gas. A service station attendant saw Troutman Shirt Company credit card and he asked Mr. Brown why he didn't open a plant in Sparta. Mr. Brown replied if someone would send him some information on the town he just might do so. Mr. Brown soon got his information in the mail and a local committee was set up to negotiate the coming of Troutman Shirt to Sparta.

Troutman Shirt Company came to Sparta in 1949. The company was owned by brothers L. A. Brown and H. J. Brown. Sparta was their first branch plant and manufactured blue chambray work shirts. As part of the plan Mr. Dorace Bare and his brother Hiram Bare of Laurel Springs built the plant adjacent to a building they owned on the corner of Grayson Street and Highway 18. Troutman Shirt leased the buildings and later purchased them. With their own saw mill they sawed the lumber for the plant.

In the late part of 1951 the company decided to start a line of work pants in Sparta. The colors were khaki, grey and green matching shirts were manufactured in Troutman and Mooresville, NC.

I had the privilege to work with one of the best pattern makers in the business. Mr. Clarence Rufty of Sunnyside, GA. From his set of drafts we made the first set of hard back patterns. These I used to make long markers for the cutting department. By the beginning of 1952 we were in full production on pants only. By 1955 there was a need for more production of work pants. By now Sparta's employment

was approximately 100 employees. Everything was running smoothly in Mooresville and in a few months the first unit was producing enough to meet sales demands.

While working in Mooresville I learned that serious consideration was being discussed to move Sparta's production to Mooresville.

Things had begun to deteriorate in Sparta and labor turnover was very high. I asked Mr. Pat Brown to not close the plant, because the employees were good hard working people, and only needed to be treated fairly. He told me that the problem was being investigated and not to worry. Later in the summer there was a change in management and I was asked to come back to Sparta as manager. I accepted the job and was well accepted by the employees.

Things settled down and the company was soon on a positive roll. By 1954 thru 1957 the plant's production was exceeding 1250 dozen per week and employment exceeded 150.

By the end of 1957 plans were being made to manufacture men's and boy's casual slack and walking shorts. Mr. Pat Brown came to Sparta one day and asked me to go with a drive with him. I had no idea where or why. He drove to the location of the Sparta Lions Club softball park. He said he needed to build another plant to manufacture casual wear and would like to do so in Sparta, because of the outstanding record the Sparta division had.

He could purchase the Lions Club property and build there but only if I would manage it for him. He also told me I would have 100% say as to how many people I needed to staff for supervisors and other key positions. The final decisions for Sparta to have another plant rested on my shoulders and it would be a huge step. I accepted the job. We then drove to Northwestern Bank and Mr. Brown signed a note for funds to purchase property and build the plant.

By December 1957 construction of the new plant had been



Production at Troutman, later Atwood Inc., Sparta, NC.

completed. The first phase was moving the old plant production to the new plant. The old plant was used for warehouse. The new plant was called plant 1. To complete the new plant a line of men's and boy's casual slacks and shorts was started. At this time the plant would operate in the name of Atwood Inc. Atwood was the middle name of Mr. L. A. Brown. By 1958 employment exceeded 350 employees. In March 1959 plans were made to reopen the old plant as plant #2. It received a new paint job inside and outside with a new brick masonry front on end of plant at Highway 18. All of the wiring and plumbing had been left in tack so the transition moved very quickly. The employees were happy to be back on their old home court and making work pants. This move provided more room at plant #1 for more needed casual wear production. By the end of 1960 employment at both plants was approximately 475. Call this bragging or whatever but the decisions of the company and the dedication of a wonderful group of loyal employees. Great things were happening for the company, the employees, Sparta, Alleghany and surrounding counties...

I resigned in February 1972 due to health problems. I was able to leave my job with a wonderful group of well staffed people to carry on the work. The work they continued to perform was more than outstanding...

December 19, 2001 the plant #1 property was sold to Alleghany County. It now houses Wilkes Community College, the Blue Ridge Business Development Center and JobLink.

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

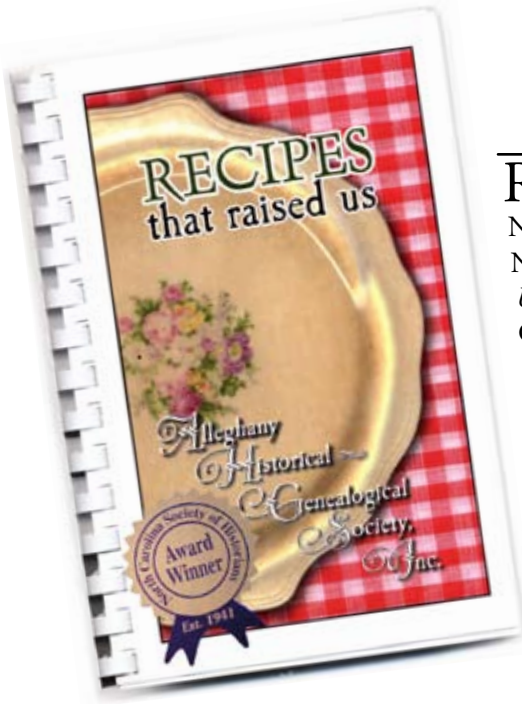
If you would like your business to be included, or would like to give information, contact us at: info@ahgs.org or call Imaging Specialists: 372-3002.



Original Sparta Plant, eventually named Plant #2

Cookbook Wins Prestigious Award-- and More!

Icing on the cake!



Representatives of the Allegheny Historical-Genealogical Society traveled to Hickory, NC Saturday, October 11, 2008 to receive the Paul Green Multimedia Award from North Carolina Society of Historians for their memorial cookbook, *Recipes that Raised Us*. AHGS compiled the book in 2007 and have donated all proceeds to the Allegheny County Public Library for their building fund. The book, now in its second printing, has generated approximately \$7500 in sales to date.

In her letter to the Society informing them of the award, NCSH President Elizabeth Sherrill stated:

“...It is in this paragraph that I am ‘supposed’ to print an excerpt from the judges’ collective comments; and, usually those comments are very straight-forward. In this case, however, I must tell you that, while the recipe book received



NCSH award banquet attendees (l-to-r) Irene Wagner, Paulene Jolly, NCSH President Elizabeth Sherrill, Roy Hunt, Claire Halsey & Jeff Halsey

raving reviews, one judge stated, ‘I had a problem with this entry. Due to the fact that the book contains such wonderful photographs, exceptional historical data, in an unusual manner, I ended up BURNING the Old Fashion Molasses Stack Cake listed on page 135! There’s nothing worse than the smell of burned molasses on the bottom of one’s oven! And, I felt the eyes of Ms.

Ennice Greene glaring down at me from Heaven as I put down the book in order to scrub up the terrible, sticky mess. The book should come with a warning: Don’t read it while using it! It is difficult to put down ... until it’s too late.’

“Thank you so much for your expertise and dedication with regard to perpetuating the history of your county via such an unusual method. Also, thank you for the smiles that you have created that you are not even aware of!”

As an added bonus, the NCSH chose our organization to receive their entire 2008 collection of award winning North Carolina historical books! Mrs. Sherrill traveled to Sparta on February 12 to present the collection at our Sesquicentennial Kickoff. The collection consists of the best of the best in NC history- 59 award winning books and 39 editions of newsletters and journals.

(Editor: We are proud to accept them, and we thank the NCSH for a great addition to our public library, where everyone can enjoy them!)

For more information on the North Carolina Society of Historians, please visit their website at: www.ncsocietyofhistorians.org. Elizabeth Bray Sherrill, President, NCSH, PO Box 93, Sherrills Ford, NC 28673-0093. Cookbooks are available in Sparta at the Allegheny County Public Library, Buxton Abbey, Victoria’s Tea Time, Imaging Specialists, or online at www.spartastore.com. The price is \$20 each or \$15 each for 3 or more.



Award winning collection received from North Carolina Society of Historians. For the entire list, go to: www.ahgs.org.



Alleghany County Courthouse after the 1933 fire that caused an estimated \$18,000 in damages to the town of Sparta. County records were rescued, however, and are a rich resource available to researchers, today. This rare photo shows the building after cleanup and ready for reconstruction. Thanks to Hugh W. Halsey for allowing us to publish it here.

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

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