

# Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, Inc.

*Preserving Alleghany's Heritage Since 1979*



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



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## Alleghany County Citizens win Awards from NC Society of Historians

The Sesquicentennial is drawing to a close, but we have more successes to report. Alleghany Historical - Genealogical Society has won a Joe M. McLaurin Newsletter Award from the North Carolina Society of Historians in Elizabeth City on October 10. The NCSH also gave local artists June Furlow, Avin Joines and Janice Alexander Paul Green Multimedia Awards for their work on the Sesquicentennial jigsaw puzzles.

Imaging Specialists won 6 multimedia awards, a Garland P. Stout Publishers Award, and the Presidents Award for their work for the 150th anniversary.

Ernest Joines also won a multimedia award for his collection of Alleghany Musicians Past & Present that he compiled as a fund raiser for the year's events. The music collection is for sale (along with t-shirts, puzzles and photo albums) and is scheduled to be available at *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*- a Smithsonian sponsored exhibit at the Mt. Airy Museum in the spring.

County Commissioner Chair Ken Richardson, who attended the award banquet said, "Alleghany County was well represented here, today."

*Story continued on page 7*



LtoR: Claire, Sharon & Jeff Halsey - Imaging Specialists, Elizabeth Sherrill - NCSH President, Ernest & Agnes Joines and Betty & Ken Richardson.



## Attention Alleghany Ambassadors!

The Society is currently accepting nominations for a new award with which we will try to honor deserving recipients. The certificate reads: *This is to certify that (recipient's name) has extraordinarily influenced, in a positive way, family, neighbors, visitors to our area, or the world at large, by word or by deed, and has, by improving the quality of one or many lives, enriched all our lives, therefore, is, indeed, an example for us all, and has been named Ambassador of Alleghany Heritage and Culture.*

Anyone who has lived or lives in Alleghany can be nominated for the award and we will probably give out several each year to honorees or their descendants. The idea is to recognize people, who, throughout the course of their lives have been or are examples to the rest of us. Call it good citizenship, southern hospitality or just being a good influence, we all know it when we see it.

Not the most famous, necessarily, but the most influential. Got somebody in mind? Contact us!



One of Kermit Pruitt's customers brought an interesting item into the barbershop, recently. An actual telegram describing the Hillsville Shootout sent the morning of the tragedy, March 14, 1912! One version of the story begins on Page 2.

## Message from the President

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Dear Members,

We are almost through with the Sesquicentennial Celebration in Alleghany County. It has been a busy year, but an interesting one, and I think the year's focus on our history has sparked a lot of people's imaginations.

We have been steadily receiving donations (and promises) of artifacts, photographs and documents for our archive and to display, someday, in our museum. The idea of a historical museum is also gaining support in the community.

AHGS has always had a special relationship with the library. Proceeds of our memorial cookbook, *Recipes That Raised Us*, have been faithfully donated to the library building fund as we sell them. We will benefit from the new library, by having research and display space, there.

Along with the library, we have also been exploring ideas with the Sparta Teapot Museum- ideas of cooperation between our groups to coordinate exhibits and programs.

After all, each of our groups have overlapping interests.

The Historical Society looks back at our heritage. We preserve the past, for future eyes and ears.

The Library does some of that and they are keepers of the intellectual property of the region and beyond.

The Art museum, with its new focus of craft and design works with ideas of beauty and functionality, sometimes from our past and sometimes looking entirely forward.

How could we separate our history from our art, our music, or our stories and why would anyone ever want to? All our groups have their interests- their focus. But each of these interests added together make up a large part of our culture.

By cooperating, we and our patrons can look back and forward, outside and inward and learn something from every angle.

Jeff Halsey

November 21, 2009

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# Shootout at Carroll County Courthouse

*An interesting version of events in Hillsville from Wikipedia:*

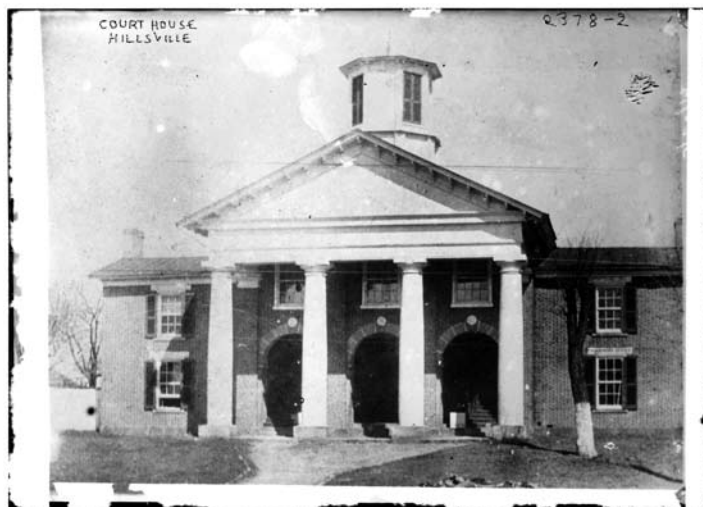
Floyd Allen was born in 1858 and spent much of his life living in Cana, below Fancy Gap Mountain in Carroll County, Virginia. A fixture of the community, he was noted for his quick temper. He and his brothers were very close, and were known to fiercely defend each other when the occasion called for it.

As the Allens were proud Democrats in a county which had voted for Republicans since the end of the American Civil War, they were frequently on poor terms with county authorities. Floyd was once sentenced to a \$100 fine and one hour in jail for wounding his cousin, but refused to go, saying that he "would never spend a minute in jail as long as the blood flowed through his veins".

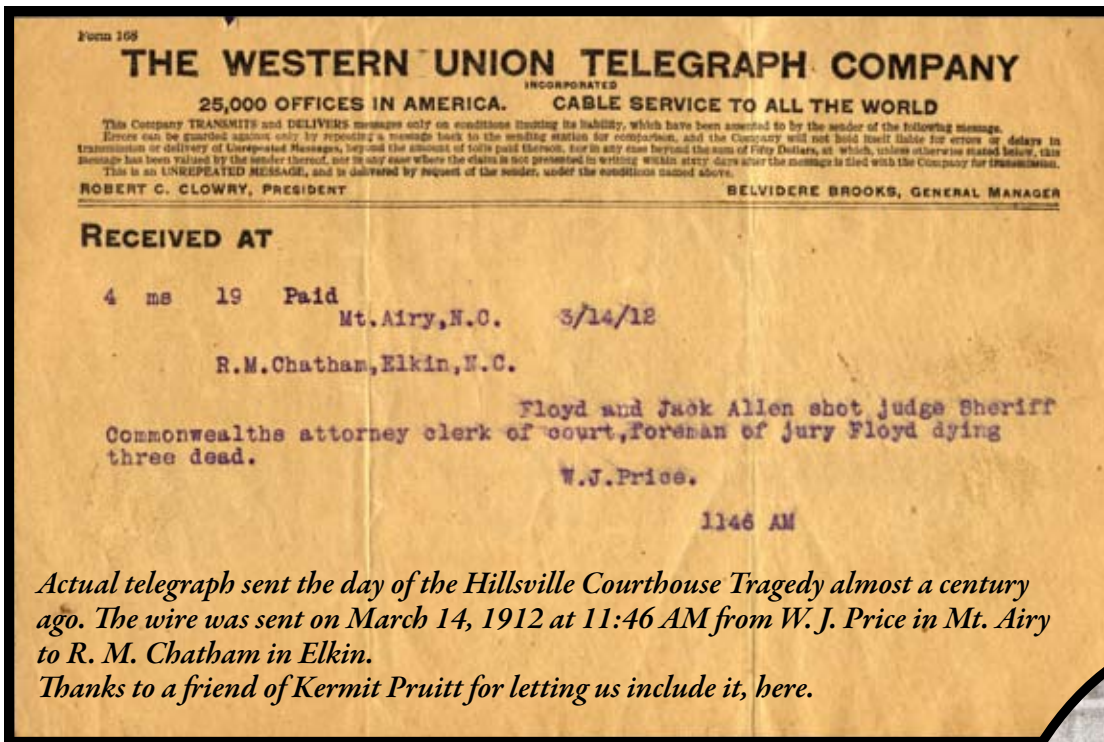
Despite Floyd's run-ins with the law, he was requested to serve as a deputy countless times by Carroll County officials.

One night in December 1910, one of Allen's nephews, Wesley Edwards, kissed the girlfriend of Will

Thomas at a corn shucking bee, which led to Thomas picking a fight with Edwards. The two men began an altercation during a church service the next morning. As a result of the fight, Wesley and his brother Sidna were charged with a misdemeanor. However, Prosecutor Foster changed the charges to seven felony indict-



**Hillsville Courthouse between 1910 and 1915**  
*From a glass negative in the Library of Congress- George Grantham Bain Collection*



**Tragedy in Carroll County Court Room Follows Conviction of Floyd Allen For Complicity in Escape of a Prisoner After Penitentiary Sentence Is Pronounced by Jurist Mountaineers Begin Fusillade of Bullets and a Triple Murder Follows In the Hall of Justice**

*(Headline from Roanoke Times, March 15, 1912)*

*Actual telegraph sent the day of the Hillsville Courthouse Tragedy almost a century ago. The wire was sent on March 14, 1912 at 11:46 AM from W. J. Price in Mt. Airy to R. M. Chatham in Elkin. Thanks to a friend of Kermit Pruitt for letting us include it, here.*

ments. Rather than face arrest, the two men fled to Surry County, North Carolina, where they were soon captured; they were returned to Virginia and sent to Hillsville to stand trial.

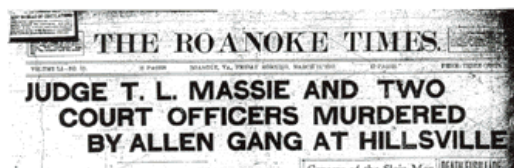
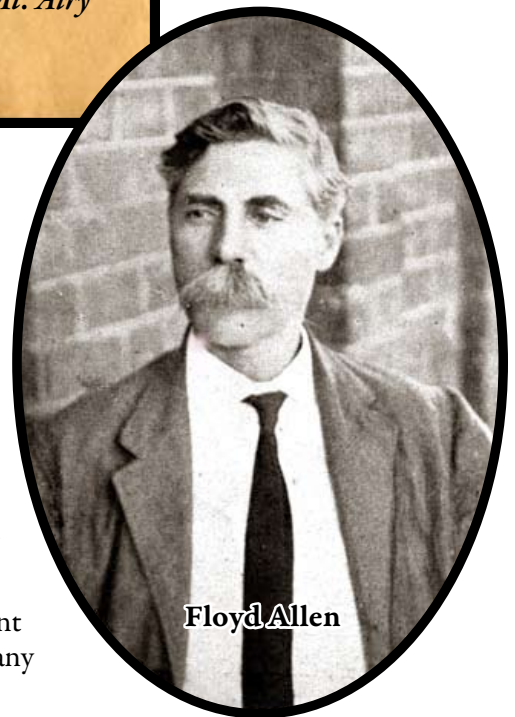
For their return, the men were bound to the back of a buggy with their feet dragging behind them. On the way to the courthouse, the buggy carrying the men passed by the store run by Floyd's brother Sidna. Floyd reportedly ordered that his nephews be released or transported like men, not animals. When the sheriff's deputy, Thomas Samuels, refused to comply, Allen pistol-whipped him. Whether he then took his nephews, or whether they were then released by the deputy, is not clear; what is known is that Floyd delivered them to the authorities himself, later that week, and that both boys served brief jail terms for their actions.

After close to a year of delays, Floyd was finally brought to trial for the incident on March 12, 1912. Fearful of his reaction and having received death threats, many officials of the court armed themselves.

When Allen was convicted of rescuing prisoners and sentenced to a year in jail (there was no fine), he is reported to have stood and said, "Gentlemen, I ain't a'going".

Accounts differ as to who actually fired the first shot. Some claim that Allen initiated the confrontation by pulling a gun in court- others say it was Dexter Goad, Clerk of Court who shot at Allen. This caused Sidna Allen to return fire along with Floyd's son, Claude. The Commonwealth's Attorney and deputy clerk responded with more gunfire, prompting a volley from two of Floyd's nephews and five deputy sheriffs stationed in the courtroom.

When Floyd fell, wounded, he landed on top of his lawyer, David Winton Bolen, who is reported to have said, "Floyd, they are going to kill me shooting at you!" The shooting continued out of the courtroom and down the street as the Allens tried to flee.



The judge, the county sheriff, the prosecutor, a member of the jury, and a witness were killed in the crossfire; seven were wounded, including Floyd and Sidna Allen. Floyd, wounded too badly to flee, spent the night in the Elliott Hotel accompanied by his eldest son, Victor, who had not been involved in the shootout.

*Story continued on page 6*



## 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 online at [www.spartastore.com](http://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) \$3.49 tax. **\$51.49 total**

**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) \$3.72 tax. **\$54.72 total**

**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) \$1.16 tax. **\$18.91 total**

**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) \$2.33 tax. **\$35.33 total**

**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 \$12.00, plus \$3.00 s&h, plus (for NC residents only) \$0.93 tax; **\$15.93 total**

**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) \$0.62 tax. **\$10.12 total**

**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) \$1.16 tax. **\$18.16 total**

**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 tape begins with Ben Reeves' trip to the 1939 Worlds Fair in New York, which makes an interesting contrast with 1938 Sparta. The tape 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) \$0.85 tax. **\$13.35 total**

**RECIPES THAT RAISED US** - This Paul Green Award Winner (230 pages) 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) \$1.55 tax **\$24.55 total** or (3) books for \$45.00, plus \$7.00 s&h, plus (for NC residents only) \$3.49 tax. **\$44.49 total**

All our items are available online at: [www.spartastore.com](http://www.spartastore.com)

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

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- \_\_\_\_\_

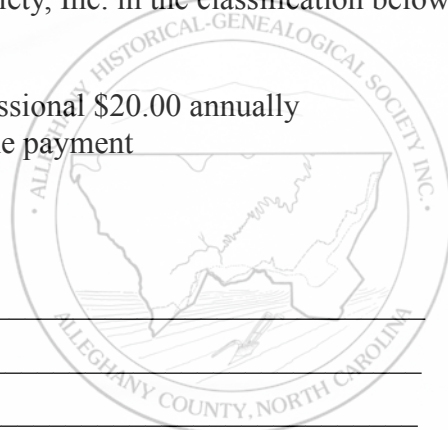
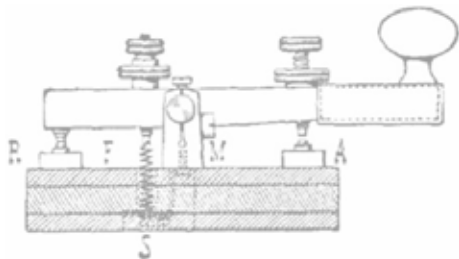




Photo taken at Wytheville Jail in April of 1912. Front row, L-R are: Claude, Floyd and Victor Allen, Sidna Edwards, Friel Allen and Byrd Marion. Sidna Allen and Wesley Edwards were still on the lam at the time. Detectives are back row, L-R: Richard Horgan, Ernest Baldwin, Hugh Lucas, Elmo Brim and Charles Patton.

In that time, Virginia law held that when a sheriff died, his deputies lost all legal powers, so Carroll County was left without law enforcement by the shooting. Recognizing the need for immediate action, Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney S. Floyd Landreth sent a telegram to Governor William Hodges Mann which read:

*"Send troops to the County of Carroll at once. Mob violence, the court. Commonwealth's Attorney, Sheriff, some jurors and others shot on the conviction of Floyd Allen for a felony. Sheriff and Commonwealth's Attorney dead, court serious. Look after this now."*



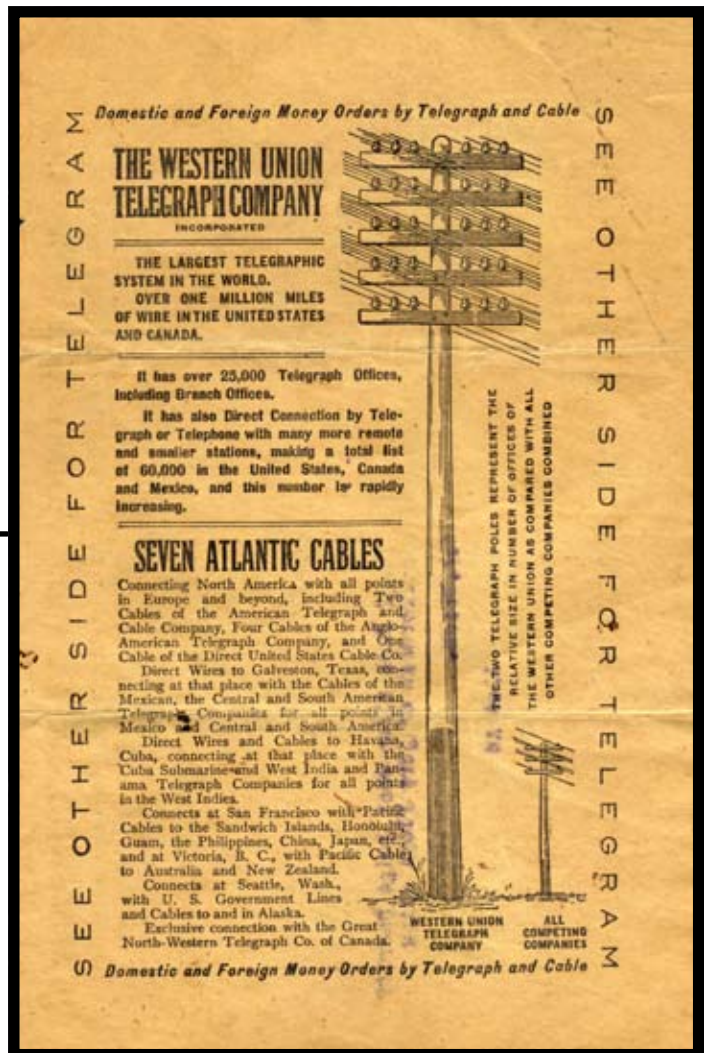
To the right is a view of the back side of the telegram. Even in 1912, you could send messages and money to the corners of the globe. Note that there were "Over one million miles of wire in the United States and Canada" alone, and seven Atlantic cables.

*And you thought Al Gore invented the Internet!*

Mann immediately called on the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency and, within a month, all parties were in custody, save for Sidna Allen and Wesley Edwards. The two men fled to Iowa, where they would eventually be betrayed by Edwards' girlfriend.

For their roles in the shooting, Floyd and Claude Allen were sentenced to death by electrocution for killing Commonwealth's Attorney Foster. Sidna Allen received a total of 35 years in prison after five trials; Wesley Edwards drew 27 years, while Sidna Edwards and Friel Allen were sentenced to 18 years each. All four men were eventually pardoned. Victor Allen, Barnett Allen and Burden Marion, a neighbor, were acquitted.

*-From Allen Family Index on Rootsweb and the Blue Ridge Institute & Museum websites. For more information go online to: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ggracie/allenindex.html> or go to: <http://www.blueridgeinstitute.org/ballads/allensnews.html>*





*Alleghany Awards- Continued From page 1*

TJ Worthington talks about the collection on the website, *Traditional Music of Alleghany County*, (<http://sites.google.com/site/tradmusicalleghany/>)

“When he began collecting, he had enough for 2 cds. While these two were being put on cd by Bobby Patterson in Woodlawn VA, Ernest had gathered enough more for a 3rd cd. He continued to find more and made a 4th. The collection is all-inclusive, old-time, bluegrass, country and gospel. It covers the spectrum of mountain music played by Alleghanians...

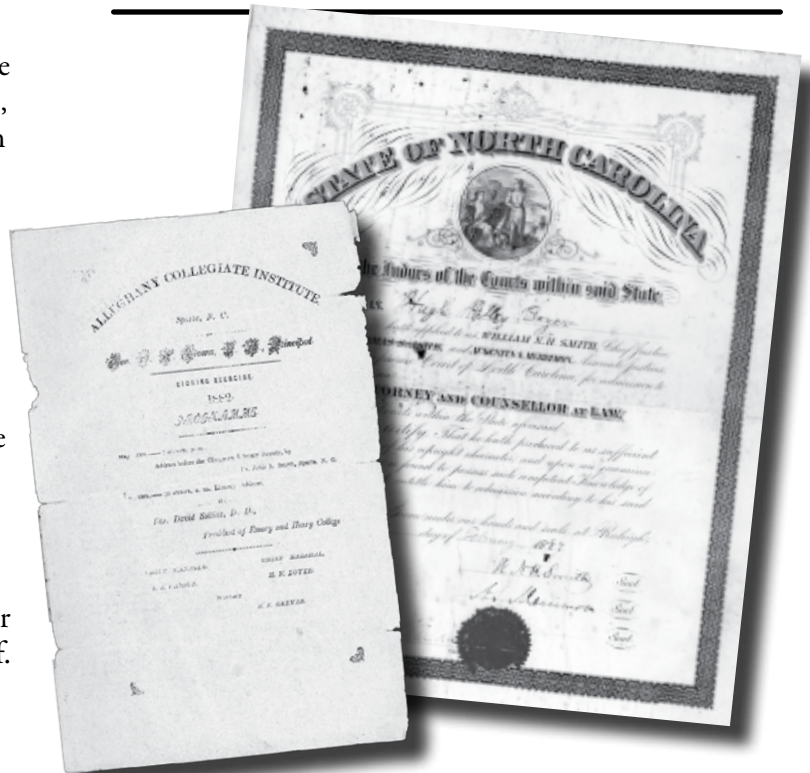
“If you can only buy one, the first one would be it. It has Dave Sturgill picking old-time banjo Sourwood Mountain. The Rise & Shine Band. It has gems all over it. All are loaded with gems, but the first one has the first picks a collector would go for; Fred Roupe, Jr Maxwell, Kilby Reeves, Art Wooten, Bertie Dickens, Lynn Worth, Del Reeves’ first recording. It includes the first recordings by musicians of this county, the Red Fox Chasers and Ephrim Woodie & The Henpecked Husbands. It even has music from the Hillbilly Show, the once a year comedy event Agnes Joines directs. The project was funded by the committee for the 150th year celebration of Alleghany County as a county unto itself. Ernest spent several months gathering the music and did it right. Only Ernest could have made this inclusive a collection. He’s been in the music world since he was a child, actually born into it, being a Pine Swamp Joines. He has played and sung gospel music as much as he has bluegrass and old-time. Ernest playing Foxchase with his one-man band on *I’ve Got A Secret* in 1961 is included.”



**Ernest around 1961 with nothing better to do.**

Congratulations to Ernest for one of the best ideas of the Sesquicentennial.

The music and other winning commemorative items are still on sale at the Alleghany Jubilee, Imaging Specialists and Buxton Abbey or online at [www.spartastore.com](http://www.spartastore.com).



**H.M. Boyer has sent us another couple of interesting documents for the archive. Shown above is H.K. Boyer's 1887 law license and the "Closing Exercise 1882 Programme" for the Alleghany Collegiate Institute. Names included in the program:**

W.R. Harden,	Sparta	M.M. Parks,	Sparta,
J.H. Smith,	"	C.A. Doughton,	N.C.
J.R. Vaughan,	"	A.M. Edwards,	Sparta
Freddie Harden,	"	L.P. Vaughan,	"
		G.L. Edwards,	"
Miss Annie J. Hawthorn,	N.C.	J.B. Smith,	"
" Eddie V. Edwards,	"	H.C. Carson,	N.C.
" Charity A. Edwards,	"	O.M. Smith,	"
" Sallie J. Mitchell,	"	H.A. Tarter,	VA
" Frelove Reeves,	Texas	H.K. Boyer,	N.C.
" Mary J. Rouse,	VA	A.L. Reeves,	Texas
" Lydia E. Cox,	"	T.J. Carson,	N.C.
" Sue B. Parks,	"	E.F. Reeves,	"
" Flora D. Reeves,	Texas	E.W. Vaughan,	VA
" Lillie E. Doughton,	N.C.		
" Laura A. Parks,	"	T.J. Carson	Chief Manager
" Mollie B. Vaughan,	Sparta	H.K. Boyer	Chief Marshal
		E.F. Reeves	Secretary

May 17, 1882, Dr. John L. Smith of Sparta gave the address before the Clingman Literaray Society.

May 18, Literary Address by Rev. David Sullins, D.D. President of Emory and Henry College.

## *Dedication to Alleghany County - My Home*

*The rain softly falls on our N.C. hills,  
The fog slowly drifts to resemble a shroud,  
The trees are all dressed in their bare branches,  
stretching high into the clouds.*

*The winter is mild,  
The animals - wild,  
The birds are seeking a nest,  
The ground is damp,  
The sky is wet,  
And everything's quiet and blessed.*

*I love the woods and valleys and hills,  
I love the streams and rocks and rills,  
I know not why I love these hills,  
(It can't be just the daffodils!)  
I feel God very close to me,  
this is where I'm supposed to be!*

*Pauline Meals  
2-22-99*



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P.O. Box 817, Sparta, North Carolina, 28675 Web: [www.ahgs.org](http://www.ahgs.org) email: [info@ahgs.org](mailto:info@ahgs.org)*

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