

# Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, Inc.

*Preserving Alleghany's Heritage Since 1979*



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



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## A TRIP TO THE MUSEUM Special 100th Issue

### Alleghany Historical Museum Opens Its Doors with 2010 B.R. Parkway Exhibit

The Alleghany Historical Museum has arrived. This special issue of our newsletter will (hopefully) introduce you to our growing collection and to the idea behind the project. Even though we are new, the collection on display is only the “tip-of-the-iceberg.” New items are being pledged daily.

If you have an item to display, don't think your only option is to donate it. The museum will gladly take loans. Our objective is not to build a huge collection of expensive items but to collect priceless knowledge of our past and share it with all.

Everyone will be represented here. From great men to great-grandmothers, every family should feel welcome to participate.

The museum is open Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, 10am to 5pm, across from the courthouse.



*US Congressman Robert Doughton, Alleghany native and Parkway advocate.*



*Una Lindh brought this photo of her father, Glenn Richardson, (fourth from left, with book.) He was a surveyor on the Blue Ridge Parkway and a supervisor of the Civilian Conservation Camp at Laurel Springs. Help identify the others in the photo. A larger print is on display in the museum.*

*Betty Walker, spotless and ready for work at the Bluffs Coffee Shop in Doughton Park.*

*Patty Wingler brought us this group from Glade Valley School on the way to a picnic on the Parkway. Less than luxurious accommodations, but what kid wouldn't want to ride along?*



## John Moxley of Grayson County - Parkway Worker With Local Ties

John was the oldest of ten children born to the union of John Lennie and Nancy Evelyn Cox Moxley and was born March 14, 1911, in Grayson County, Va.

During John's formative years, the family lived on their farm near Independence, Va., and "across the river" on another family farm. Later they lived in Premier, W. Va., where he and his dad worked in the coal mines. They left W. Va. the last time in 1930.

John worked on the Skyline Drive at Skyland, Va., in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia near Luray, during 1933-34. President Roosevelt came to visit the camp and John was always proud of a picture he had of the President. A copy of the picture is shown in the display at the Historic 1908 Courthouse in Independence, Va. The President's son, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., autographed the photo at the BRP 50th Anniversary celebration.

John and his dad, Lennie Moxley, worked on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Alleghany County, N.C. in 1936-37. They boarded at the home of another John Moxley near Laurel Springs, N.C., and they would return home on week-ends. John drilled the first hole in the Ice Rock to secure the dynamite in order to blast the rock out.

John married Rheba P. Phipps of Piney Creek, N.C., September 28, 1940. John worked on the Guard Force at Dublin and Rheba worked in the office. John served in the U. S. Navy during World War II in the South Pacific. John returned home to his wife and they lived on their farm near Independence, Va. John milked dairy cows, raised beef cattle and burley tobacco. They had one daughter, Bytha Lynn Moxley, who owns and operates the family farm today.

*Additional information that may be of interest:* John Cox, Hardin Cox, David Cox, Isom Cox and Samuel Cox were brothers who lived in the Grayson County area. Their sister, Margaret (AKA: Peggy) married Charles Horton Doughton and they were the grandparents of the Honorable Robert A. Doughton of Alleghany Co., NC, who played a very important role in establishing the Social Security System and the building of the Blue Ridge Parkway. John Cox was the great-great-grandfather of Bytha Lynn Moxley.

by Bytha Lynn Moxley



*Bluffs Coffee Shop, July 4, 1952. Dean Richardson Collection*



*Group at Cumberland Knob in 1946. Dean Richardson Collection*



*John P. Moxley who drilled the first blasting hole at the Ice Rock.  
Photo from Bytha Lynn Moxley*

*Note: We accidentally mis-numbered the last issue of the newsletter as #100 and apologize for any inconvenience. Editor*

## Dean Richardson: Alleghany's Own Steward of the Blue Ridge

Dean Richardson took off the uniform of the United States Army and quickly replaced it with the uniform of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Though thrilled with the new duty, the young Richardson could not have known how it would transform his life. Nor could he have foreseen the impact he would have on the Bluff District. As the years rolled by, Ranger Richardson's



*Dean Richardson at the aptly named Ice Rock on the Blue Ridge Parkway- January 3, 1984*

passion for and belief in the vision which was the Blue Ridge Parkway, made the man the embodiment of the purest form of that vision. "Richardson, who has more than 30 years service on the Blue Ridge Parkway, was recognized for his firm, but fair impartiality, his enthusiasm and the many favorable relationships he has developed with parkway neighbors, visitors and co-workers," reported The Alleghany News in October of 1979.

That is, perhaps, to say the least. Richardson became the heart, soul and face of Bluff District, his piece of the spectacular National Park. As its most ardent advocate and ambassador, Richardson touched the lives of countless NPS people who served stints in his district. He brought the vision and the experience to life for countless visitors, many going away with a love for the Parkway that lasted their lifetime and was passed to their children. Though a dedicated husband, father, cattleman and Baptist deacon, a big part of Richardson's heart belonged to the Parkway. Twenty-five years after hanging up the uniform, Dean's passion and dedication are very much alive, his heart still thrilled by the sweeping vistas, the natural glory that unfolds with each new day.

As a grateful nation prepares to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the beginning of construction on the Blue Ridge Parkway, it is fitting that Richardson's story be retold. He was there in the early days, when parts of the Parkway were still under construction, parts were gravel. He was there when the completed Parkway joined the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, when the Lynn Cove Viaduct was dedicated and when the 50th Anniversary was celebrated at Cumberland Knob in 1985.

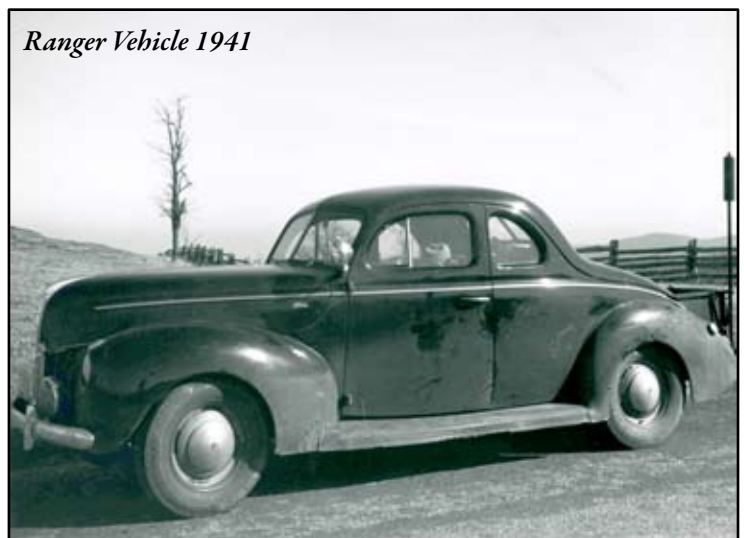
Growing up about 20 miles from where ground was broken at Cumberland Knob, Richardson watched with awe as the roadbed snaked through his community. Times were hard, jobs scarce and the news of a government road being built thru the mountains nothing short of a miracle. Many of the men in the county worked building the road, which was an amazing feat not only to boys like Richardson, but to all in Alleghany.



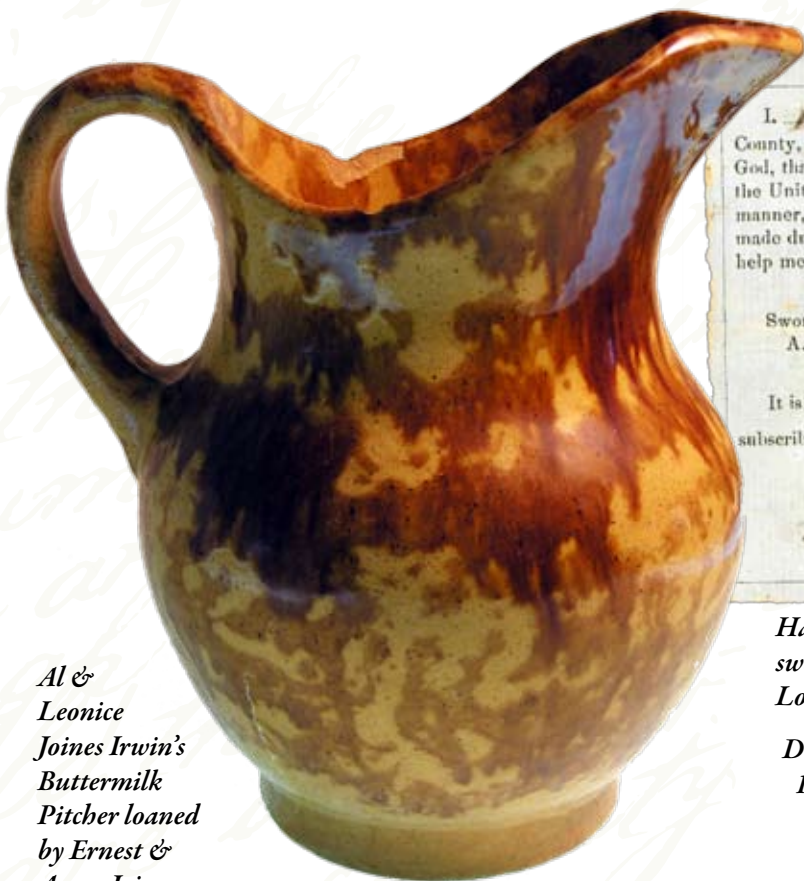
*Dean Richardson's uniform on display in the Alleghany Historical Museum*

by Milly Richardson  
excerpted from 2010 article

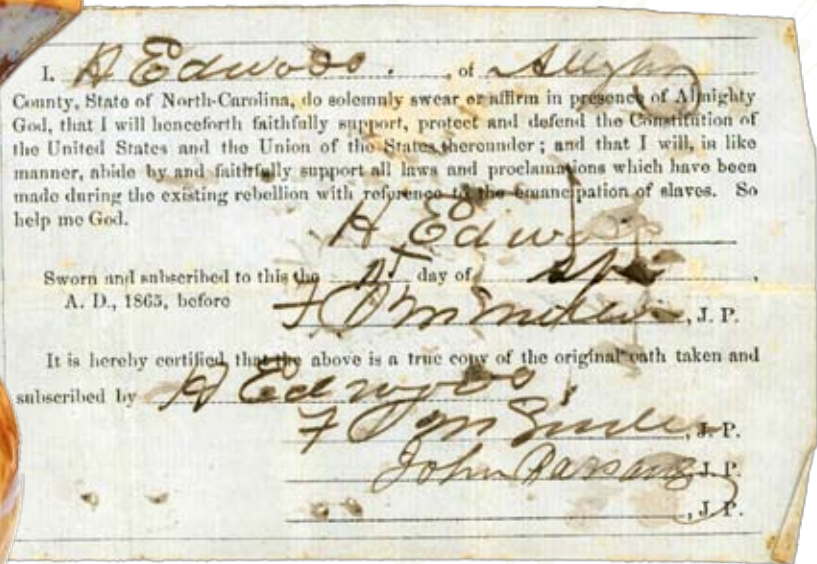
*photos from Dean Richardson's personal collection*



*Ranger Vehicle 1941*



*Al &  
Leonice  
Joines Irwin's  
Buttermilk  
Pitcher loaned  
by Ernest &  
Agnes Joines.*



*Haywood Edwards' repatriation document with which he swore allegiance to the Union after the War Between the States. Loaned by Una Lindb.*

*Dr. Posey Leff Choate who was born Dec. 20, 1889 and died May 16, 1961. Dr. Leff Choate practiced here for 52 years. Loaned by Marie Thompson*



*Wax medallion seal attached to 1785 land grant to Micajah Pennington. Donated by Lois Landreth.*

*Dr. Grabow  
"presmoked" pipes  
loaned by  
Patty Wingler*



If you have items to loan or donate, stories to tell, photos to display or add to the database, or if you just want to volunteer, contact us at [info@ahgs.org](mailto:info@ahgs.org). The Museum Committee would love to hear from you. Got an idea for a display? Give us a call!

Contact Pauline Jolly at (336) 363-2282, leave a message at 336-372-2115 or email us at [info@ahgs.org](mailto:info@ahgs.org).

If you've been thinking about giving this year, please consider the Historical Society. The Alleghany Historical - Genealogical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, so all contributions are tax deductible.

If you'd like to volunteer or contribute to the Alleghany Historical Museum, contact us at:

**Alleghany Historical - Genealogical Society**  
336-372-2115, P.O. Box 817, Sparta, NC 28675.

### Books For Sale

**HISTORY OF ALLEGHANY COUNTY, NC 1859-1976** - 272-pages not indexed - \$45,  
S&H \$3 NC residents \$3.04 tax.

**ALLEGHANY COUNTY HERITAGE** - 555-pages indexed - \$48, S&H \$3 NC residents \$3.24 tax.

**ALLEGHANY COUNTY CEMETERIES THROUGH 1986** - 261-pages - \$15, S&H \$2.75  
NC residents \$1.01 tax.

**ALLEGHANY ARCHITECTURE: A PICTORIAL SURVEY** - 101-pages not indexed -  
\$30.00, S&H \$3.00 NC residents \$2.03 tax.

**ALLEGHANY COUNTY, NC MARRIAGES: 1849-1900** - 354-pages indexed - \$32.00 plus \$4  
S&H from Heritage Books Inc., 100 Railroad Ave., Ste 104, Westminster, MD 21157 1-800-876-6103  
[www.heritagebooks.com](http://www.heritagebooks.com).

**ALLEGHANY COUNTY COURTHOUSE ORNAMENT** - Gold-colored metal ornament depicts  
the county courthouse. \$11.21 NC residents \$0.76 tax; no shipping & handling.

**MARY'S MEMORIES** - 74-pages Published by Mary Lyon Harless in 2000 on the occasion of her 100th  
birthday. \$8.00, S&H \$1.50 NC residents \$0.54 tax.

**FOOT PRINTS ON THE SANDS OF TIME** - 75-pages Subtitled "A History of Southwestern  
Virginia and Northwestern North Carolina," first published in Sparta, NC in 1900 by Dr. Aras B. Cox. Indexed.  
\$15.00, S&H \$2.00 NC residents \$1.01 tax.

**1938 VIDEO OF SPARTA, NORTH CAROLINA** - 20-minute video, by Ben Reeves - Trip to the  
1939 Worlds Fair in New York, with 1938 Sparta. VHS tape or DVD \$11.00, S&H \$1.50 NC residents \$0.68  
tax.

**RECIPES THAT RAISED US** - 230 pages Memorial cookbook \$20, S&H \$3.00 NC residents \$1.35  
tax or (3) books for \$45.00, S&H \$7.00 NC residents \$3.04 tax.

Find all our items online at: [www.spartastore.com](http://www.spartastore.com)

Or to order directly from the Society, send your check, payable to Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, to:

**Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 817, Sparta, NC 28675.**

[info@ahgs.org](mailto:info@ahgs.org)

336-372-2115

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### 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

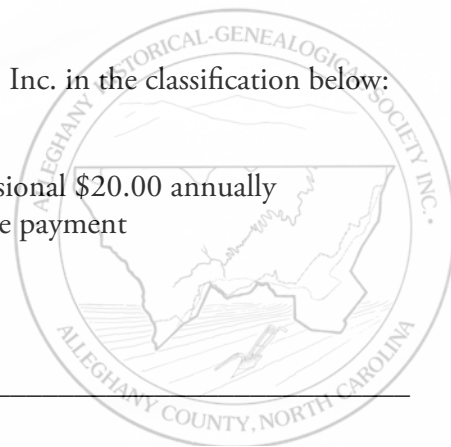
LIFE MEMBER \$100.00 in one payment

Enclosed is a check or money order for membership.

Please send membership card to:

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

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



# My Biography

By Mary Esther Lyon Harless

She asked me to write my biography! Well, I guess I know more about myself than anyone else, so, here goes the epistle.

On October 23, 1900, 'the frost was on the pumpkin and the corn was in the shock' when the stork decided to leave a baby girl with Elza and Sarah Jane Lyon, at Traphill, North Carolina. They, having no other children, were delighted! Baby was named Mary Esther in honor of her grandmother, Mary Brown. This greatly pleased the Browns!

Little Miss Mary reigned alone - petted and pampered for over three years when that old stork brought a cute little blonde tyrant who dethroned her.

Having a firm-willed Mother, the two siblings soon found out a few things to do and many things not to do.

Then the family moved to the Dr. Hugh Hanks farm, two miles south of Sparta, North Carolina. This became the permanent home of the family. This is the home of the writer today, over ninety years later.

The nearest school-house was over a mile away. Snows and bad weather kept children from attending the school regularly, but the mother diligently taught her girls when stranded.

Our parents wanted us to have a good education. In the early teens we moved to a little house which Daddy built near the private Presbyterian school at Glade Valley, North Carolina. Here we enjoyed the many advantages offered there. Finishing with this school in 1920, we had further training in the field of school teaching. After all this work and study, I only taught four schools. By marrying an Internal Revenue Officer, (Grant M. Harless), in 1923, I willingly changed to the work of a secretary to my husband.

Years passed by, change took place. "The sky has not always been blue, neither has it always been overcast."

My greatest pleasure was watching my precious son growing up from a baby to early manhood. Then World War II came along. He volunteered to serve his country. Being wounded in action twice, he came back to the United States on a hospital ship. For several years our lives were devoted to his care. On the morning of his death, his Daddy suffered a devastating stroke which caused him to be an invalid for fifteen and a half years.

Since 1984 I have been alone, as to family, facing what life has to offer.

My Church is a great comfort to me. "It is everything to me." The study of the Bible is a joy. If I could live my life over it would be fully dedicated to my Creator.

Amen

## Information Given

Mary Esther Lyon, born October 23, 1900 at Traphill, NC

Daughter of Elza and Sara Jane Brown Lyon

Sister - Mattie Lyon (Cleary)

Permanent home, Sparta, North Carolina

Educated at Glade Valley Presbyterian School (private)

Married Grant M. Harless in 1923

Quit teaching to work with husband

Son, Grant M. Harless, Jr., born in 1925

Son, Grant M. Harless, Jr., wounded in World War II

Son died on April 30, 1969, and husband suffered stroke

Husband died June 5, 1984

Mary Esther Lyon Harless at old home October 23, 2000

This is an excerpt from Mrs. Harless' book, *Mary's Memories* that is for sale by the Society.

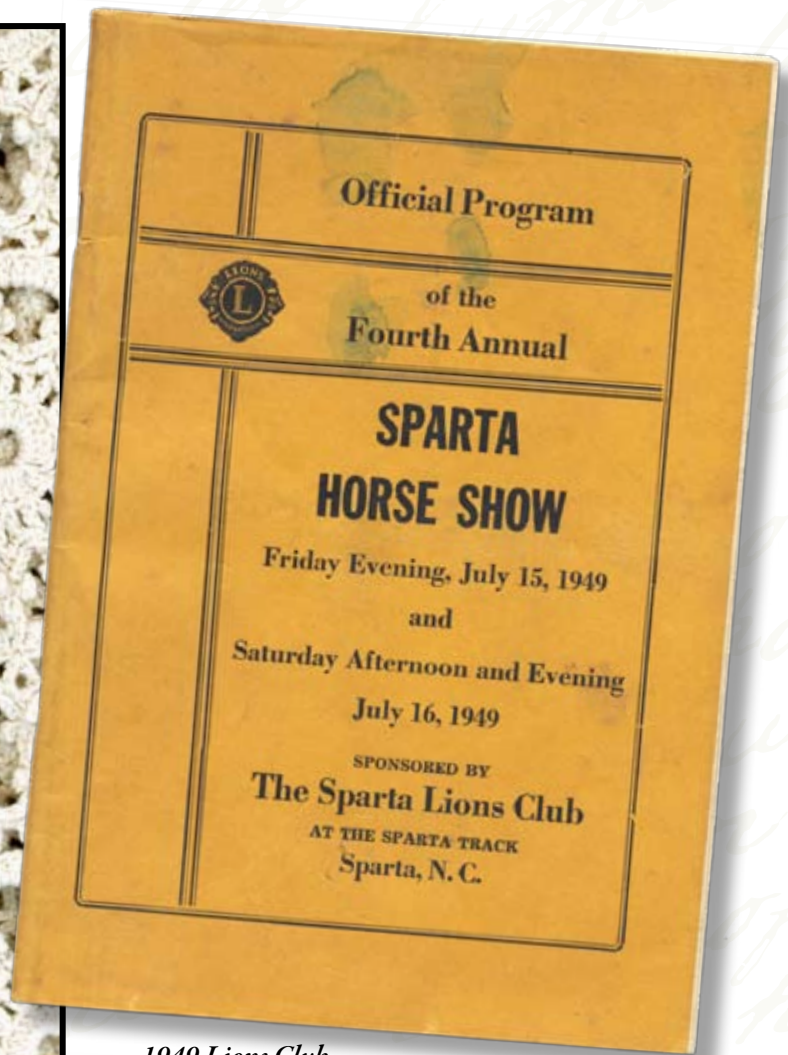


*Mary Lyon Harless, whose generous gifts helped make the Alleghany Historical Museum a reality.*





*Tablecloth crocheted in 1920's using tobacco twine by Mrs. C.R. Roe Sr., loaned by Lucy Roe.*



*1949 Lions Club Horse Show Program loaned by Jane Wyatt.*

*Muzzle loader & powder horn donated by the Dave Sturgill family.*



*Civil War era powder flask on loan from Mildred Torney.*

*Coonskin cap on loan from Jeff Halsey. Raccoon shot by Great-Uncle Ray Halsey, pictured.*

*Floyd Warden's fox hunting powder horn on loan from grandson, David Jolly.*





National Park Concessions, Inc.  
Photography by W. Ray Scott

*Photo given to the Alleghany Historical Museum by Lucy Roe and taken by Park Service photographer, Ray Scott. It is a Northeast view from the Parkway toward Sparta with Saddle Mountain and Bullhead Mountain on the horizon.*

*Remembering Alleghany for Over Thirty Years*

Alleghany Historical-Geological Society, Inc.  
P.O. Box 817  
Sparta, NC 28675