



# The Mountain Eagle.

*Clips from available Mountain Eagle pages since 1907.*

## THURSDAY APRIL 30, 1925

With the new road now finished, the travel time from Whitesburg to Blackey has been reduced to 58 minutes, down from the four hours it took not long ago by horseback.

Consolidated Fuel Company at Elsiecoal is looking for coal loaders to hire.

According to the sheriff's settlement for 1924, 388 Letcher County men over the age of 55 were exonerated from paying the county poll tax.

South East Coal Company's Seco mine is expected to greatly increase its coal mining and coal shipments this month as compared to months past.

With the City of Whitesburg experiencing an outbreak of whooping cough, health officials are being called upon to take action to prevent the spread of the dangerous malady.

Remembering the late snow-storm of May 19, 1894, *Mountain Eagle* editor and publisher Nehemiah M. Webb writes: "At that time the hills were as green as in July, and on seeing the heavy snow on that day many people went to be declaring that the end of time was near. In a day or two after the snow was gone, the sun came out as warm as ever and, aside from the broken timber in the hills, practically no damage was done to growing plants or fruits."

"Hindenburg is the biggest word in the headlines of the daily newspapers, and readers will be reminded of the terrible days of 1917 when our boys were pouring shot and shell into the Germans and teaching them some dear lessons," *Eagle* editor and publisher Webb writes. "Last Sunday, Field Marshal von Hindenburg was elected president of the Republic of Germany. President Hindenburg is 78, too late to do much harm."

Work has started on the Mayking-Haymond highway. The old road will be open to the public until late this year, but there will be a few stretches where the old route will be obliterated.

Hotel operators tell *The Eagle* that business is getting better as men traveling here now wear smiles instead of the frowns they did some weeks ago.

White Star Transportation Company of Fleming has filed an application with the state highway commission to operate a one-car transportation service from Whitesburg to Blackey and return.

First National Bank of Whitesburg is paying four (4) percent on certificates of deposit.

## THURSDAY MAY 3, 1945

First Lieutenant Josilee Vest Callahan, Whitesburg, has been awarded the Bronze Star Medal. The 26-year-old nurse was chief surgical nurse at an American air base in Russia when German planes attacked the station. While the raid was still on Lt. Callahan rushed to the aid of a wounded soldier and assisted at an emergency operation that saved the soldier's life. A volunteer, Lt. Callahan is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Heddie Vest. She went to Russia in April 1944 and assisted at the first operation ever performed at an American hospital in Russia. When she and another nurse visited Moscow, they discovered they were the first American nurses who have ever been to the city.

The land known as the Mayking Golf Course has been subdivided and sold to some of Letcher County's leading citizens. One of the tracts on the point was bought by Jim Hunsucker of Sergeant. The site where the Country Clubhouse was located was sold to J.M. Sims of Neon. The property originally belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Polly.

Technical Sergeant Carl Smallwood, 28, of Whitesburg, was wounded by a German sniper's bullet while advancing with his infantry unit near Koblenz, Germany. Smallwood is now recovering at the 128th General Hospital in England. "Our mission was to clear several miles of a highway which was still held by the Germans," Smallwood, a platoon sergeant, said from his hospital bed. "I was hit when we were about 25 yards from a roadblock which was being held by Nazi SS troops." It was the second time that Smallwood, who was awarded the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster, was wounded in action. The first occurred in November 1944, when he was hit by enemy shrapnel. Sgt. Smallwood entered the Army in November 1939. He is a son of Daisy L. Smallwood of Whitesburg.

# Letter describes hard time traveling here

By JADON GIBSON

Gen. O. O. Howard, of Gettysburg fame, is given much credit for the founding of the burgeoning Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee. The general and his close ally Dr. E. O. Guerrant founded many schools and churches in the mountain area.

Here is a letter written by Grace Guerrant to her sister Anne during a trip with her father to the mountains in the late 1800's.

"Dear Anne: Papa promised to take me with him the next time he went into the mountains to preach. We started on the 10th of July. We took the Kentucky Union Railroad at Lexington. We passed between big cliffs that were hundreds of feet high on both sides of the road.

"Many of the mountains have dome-like rocks on top, bigger than a church. They are spectacular. I saw a large rock with a tree growing right on top of it.

"The river is lined with beautiful flowers including ivy and laurel. I saw men cutting oats with a big scythe with something like fingers on it. Papa called what they were doing cradling. After a couple days they had to continue with horses and two buggies.

"Mr. Little, a friend of my papa's, and his niece, Kate Patrick were traveling with us," she continued in her letter. "Kate will be helping with the singing. Papa brought a little Estey organ which is tied on behind the wagon.

"As we traveled up the creek we had to get out and help the wagon down the rocky stair-steps in the road. We arrived at a place where we saw several bare-footed ladies. One lady was wearing shoes but no stockings. Another lady must have been an old maid as she had a dress on that was shorter than mine.

"The mountains are very steep but have corn growing on the sides nearly to the top. It is so steep they must plow them sideways rather than up and down. We see coal



**Dr. E.O. Guerrant was responsible for the founding of many churches and schools in our area of the Appalachian mountains. The letter from his daughter Grace is very interesting and gives excellent insight to their travels and their findings at the time. The letter also explains how difficult it was to travel through eastern Kentucky.**

mines sticking out of the mountains all along the road. Sometimes we rode over solid beds of coal.

"I've seen the biggest trees imaginable growing along the creeks and rivers, and we saw a big boy who had only a shirt on. Most of the men go barefoot but they seem very clever.

"I thought for a while that we had traveled on bad roads, but I later found that we were just beginning. Three men went along to cut trees and roll logs and rocks out of the road. The roads are made up of

big rocks, logs, steep banks, deep holes, and splash-dams. I thought our buggy would be smashed all to pieces.

"The horse pulled one trace in two and a big rock broke a spoke out of the buggy. Sometimes we had to walk and climb. The roads were so bumpy we couldn't keep our hats on. Sometimes I bumped papa and sometimes he bumped me. It was so funny.

"Papa got a man to lead the horse around a big tree on the mountain

while he and another man held the buggy. The horse got strangled and the man cried out, 'Here's a dead horse.' It scared me nearly to death, but they finally got the horses up.

"It was very steep going down the mountain. Mr. Little jerked back on the horse causing him to fall down with the buggy on top of him. Papa and some men got the buggy off of the horse. Then the buggy got loose and ran down the mountainside and broke the shaft. It was very hard work for them to get the buggies, horses and everything to the bottom of the mountain.

"I've never seen so much in my entire life. Every day seems like a week long. Papa calls it my vacation trip. It took us five hours to go seven miles because Papa and Mr. Little had to walk, lead the horses, and roll the logs out of the way.

"We finally arrived, and papa is preaching in the little schoolhouse on the bank of the river. Most of the people walk to church and it is crowded at 10 a.m. and at 4 p.m. Miss Kate Patrick and I play the little organ. It is the first one ever used here in a worship service.

"Twenty-five people have been saved. One was a 70-year-old man and another was a pretty, little girl. We are going to take dinner to church and have an all-day meeting on Sunday.

"We went swimming in the river one evening and had lots of fun. It is very cool and quiet in the mountains.

"When you get tired and want a vacation you should come to the mountains. The people will be glad to see you. They are as clever as can be. Good-bye, Your Sister, Grace."

*Jadon Gibson writes from his home in Harrogate, Tennessee. His writings are both historic and nostalgic in nature. He wishes to thank Lincoln Memorial University, his alma mater Alice Lloyd College and the Museum of Appalachia for their assistance.*

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A report has been received from the War Department that Private First Class Paul Pigman of Whitesburg, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Pigman, was slightly wounded in Germany on April 9.

Corporal Clyde Caudill, formerly of Jeremiah, was reportedly slightly wounded in action while fighting in the war overseas.

The bodies of Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini, his young mistress, Claretta Petacci, and other fascist leaders executed with them have been removed to a morgue in Milan, where they lie in rude, wooden coffins.

The replacing of caps on empty soft drink bottles is no longer necessary as a war material salvaging measure, according to J.B. McAuley, proprietor of the Nehi Beverage Company of Neon. Consumers are still requested to return empty bottles promptly since the supply is barely sufficient for current production needs.

Mrs. Emma Brashear of Blackey has been notified by the War Department that her son, Private First Class Ralph Brashear, is a prisoner of the Germans. He had been missing since January.

Mrs. Lois Campbell of Blackey has been notified by the War Department that her husband, Private First Class Arthur Campbell, was seriously wounded in Germany on April 7.

Sergeant Ottis Frazier is home at Defeated Creek on a 30-day furlough after being wounded in the foot while fighting overseas in Belgium and Germany.

Private First Class Virgil Blair, 23, of Jeremiah, is now recovering at the 52nd General U.S. Army Hospital in England after being wounded in the right leg by machinegun fire. "During the heavy attack on Prum, the Jerries permitted one company to get through before opening up with their artillery," said. Pfc. Blair, who has been awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Purple Heart to signify the second time he has been wounded in action. "As my company advanced the Germans countered with a terrific machinegun attack. I was hit in the right leg as I sought cover. Luckily, our squad escaped with minor casualties."

William Berry, son of Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Berry of Cromona, has been wounded in Germany and is now recovering in an Army hospital.

Private First Class Raymond Gibson, 20, of Colson, was awarded the Purple Heart after being wounded in the right shoulder by bazooka fragments during fighting in Hurtgen, Germany. "We were driving the Germans out of Hurtgen," said Pfc. Gibson, "and they were shelling us with everything they had. I jumped

into a hole, but my head and shoulders stuck out. A bazooka shell exploded and I was hit by fragments in my shoulder." Pfc. Gibson, a former coal miner for Consolidation Coal Company at McRoberts, was evacuated to a hospital for treatment.

U.S. Army Major Marcus W. Adams has been awarded the Bronze Star Medal for heroic achievement in combat. On August 27, 1944, Major Adams was assigned the mission of establishing a strategically important roadblock to protect the right flank of the 3rd Battalion while fighting in France. The Army's citation for the medal says, "After the block was organized under the skillful supervision of Major Adams, the enemy launched a savage assault in an attempt to smash the position. He valiantly exposed himself to direct small arms and tank fire in order to observe hostile installations from the window of a nearby house. Without a thought for his personal safety he fearlessly remained in position and, from his vantage point, directed accurate fire on the enemy troops. Throughout the day, he braved machinegun and sniper fire to check on the positions of his men and to encourage them in repelling the attack." Major Adams is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Wash Adams of Whitesburg.

## THURSDAY APRIL 28, 1955

The Whitesburg City Council has voted to build a modern sewage disposal plant for the town. According to Mayor Arthur Banks, the new hospital that is near completion, will contribute \$60,000 to the project. Banks, who did not put a price tag on the project, said the cost of the new plant would equal only about two soft drinks or a package of cigarettes daily.

O.C. James, valedictorian of the graduating class of Fleming-Neon High School, has been given the Annual Award of the Reader's Digest Association for students who by their successful schoolwork give promise of attaining leadership in the community. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Tip James of Jackhorn.

Mickey Mantle Clemons is the name of the new son born to Mr. and Mrs. John Clemons of Letcher.

The two-door, six-passenger Buick Special Sedan, Model 48 is on sale at Kyva Motor Company in Whitesburg. Add \$81.70 for a heater and \$92.50 for a radio and antenna.

## THURSDAY APRIL 29, 1965

Work has begun on a 2.7-mile relocation of KY 15 just west of Whitesburg.

Arthur Bates of Roxana, is reported to have killed the first copperhead of the season in his front yard.

Students representing the Beta

Club of Fleming-Neon High School will appear on "Classroom Quiz" on television station WCYB. The group includes Anna Laura Caudill, James Earl Gibson and James Gregory Bentley. Stanley Loren is an alternate.

## THURSDAY MAY 1, 1975

Thirty foreign diplomats have arrived in Letcher County to discuss local problems with 30 county residents. The diplomats are here under the auspices of the Travel Program for Foreign Diplomats, Inc. a nonprofit agency which sponsors annual tours for representatives of foreign countries.

In response to Letcher County Judge Estill Blair's removal of the county's legal advertising from *The Mountain Eagle*, an editorial says, "Policies of *The Mountain Eagle* will not be changed in the slightest by the presence or absence of legal notices. We have weathered many other boycotts and political attacks in the past, some from true masters of the game, and we'll manage this time. And we will continue to report the news from the courthouse, whether they like it in the sheriff's office and judge's office, or whether they don't."

Flooding in Neon is the worst since 1957. Damage is estimated at \$150,000.

## WEDNESDAY MAY 8, 1985

Letcher County's unemployment rate dropped nearly five percent from February to March 1985, but it was still the highest in the state. The county's jobless rate was 20.5 percent, down from 25 percent in February.

An editorial in *The Mountain Eagle* warns of a collapse of the American economy unless President Reagan and the Congress take action to protect American jobs from foreign competition. "Should Appalachia coal miners go back to \$1 an hour wages to compete with Colombian miners," says the editorial. "Must the U.S. abandon mine safety standards, give up on strip mine reclamation, forget widows' and orphans' benefits and miners' pensions and shove black lung victims out to die without care so that the American coal miner can compete with coal from Colombia, or coal produced in near-slave conditions in South Africa?"

Blackwood Theaters Inc. of Coeburn, Va., announced the new Whitesburg Cinema at Ermine will open to the public May 16, 1985. "Code of Violence" starring Chuck Norris and "Rustler's Rhapsody" will be the first movies shown.

## WEDNESDAY MAY 3, 1995

The Letcher County Board of Education voted unanimously to reject a two-year agreement proposed

by state education officials to keep state managers in charge of the local school system until June 1997.

The nine-hole Raven Rock Golf Course has opened. The golf course was built by TECO on a reclaimed strip mine site.

"I guess the little winters are starting," writes Ice correspondent Sara C. Ison. "Seems every time something blooms, when it starts to shed we have a cool spell."

## WEDNESDAY MAY 4, 2005

Letcher County native Dr. Shelby J. Proffitt was named to the Kentucky Aviation Hall of Fame Class. Dr. Proffitt is the deputy program executive officer for Air and Missile in Huntsville, Ala. She was a member of Wernher von Braun's space team, and held key positions with NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center and with the U.S. Air Force. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Proffitt of Whitesburg.

Dr. Sam Quillen Jr. of Neon was sworn in as a board member by Letcher Circuit Judge Sam Wright at the Letcher County Board of Education regular meeting. Quillen replaces former board member Elisa Bentley, who resigned from the board in late February.

Special Letcher Court Circuit Judge Stephen Combs has ordered a new trial for Delania Fields, who was convicted of manslaughter for the 1998 death of her infant daughter. Combs's ruling is the result of a hearing held to determine whether Fields was entitled to a new trial because she received ineffective assistance from her previous attorney.

## WEDNESDAY MAY 6, 2015

The leader of Alpha Natural Resources is warning of more layoffs after the company's first quarterly revenues were lower than expected.

Operators of the four public water systems that serve Letcher County are expected to wait for instructions from state officials before lowering the amount of fluoride added to local drinking water supplies. It's the first change since the government urged cities to add fluoride to water supplies to prevent tooth decay more than 50 years ago.

Officers with the Whitesburg City Police Department will begin using body cameras this week when answering criminal complaints. The cameras cost \$900 each and were paid for with the city's special tax on the sale of alcoholic beverages.

A bronze statue of Colonel Harlan Sanders, who developed Kentucky Fried Chicken, will be unveiled in Corbin on August 5. Work on the statue is being done by Louisville sculptor Raymond Gras.