



The Friends of Mountwood Park, Inc.

P. O. Box 2094, Parkersburg, WV 26102

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Photo from WVtourism.com

SPRING IS ALL ABOUT A FRESH START!

Friends of Mountwood Park Officers

Peggy Squires, President

Rose Russell, Vice President

Carolyn Naylor, Secretary

Mike Naylor, Treasurer

Forget to Pay Your Dues?

If it slipped your mind and you forgot to pay your dues, don't worry because it isn't too late. You can pay now by sending a check, payable to The Friends of Mountwood Park to the address shown in the above letterhead. Dues are \$20, single, or \$25, family. Remember your dues are tax deductible and the money is used to help us have events such as the Easter Egg Hunt, Adventure Camp, and our Woof Fest Festival.

*“Some old-fashioned things
like fresh air and sunshine,
are hard to beat.”*

By Laura Ingalls Wilder

Letter from Our President

We have been busy bunnies filling eggs for the April 8 Easter Egg Hunt, beginning at 11 am.

I have to thank all our helpers and donors: Mountwood Park, Harmony Ridge, Colonial House, and of course, the members of The Friends of Mountwood. A special thanks to the members who went beyond what was expected by donating money, candy, stuffed animals, games, books, and Easter baskets. This year, we will have 50 Easter Baskets and thousands of eggs for the children. Please be there early because at 11 am the signal will be given and it will be over quickly. If you are late, your child will be disappointed.

We took the Crazy Quilt to Jackson's Mill and had it documented. It will be in the Museum this summer so plan to stop by and see it. We will be open on the weekends from 1 pm to 4 pm. More information will be available later.

If you are interested in volunteering a few hours at the museum, let Mike Naylor or me know. If we all volunteer for a couple hours, it will be easier for everyone.

There are many new additions for the museum this year with the donation of the Wheel House and other items displayed inside and out.

We are working on scheduling a date for Woof Fest. Right now, it appears it will be in September. We will let you know as more details develop. Adventure Camp will be from July 24 through July 28. We have a Grant from Little Kanawha RC&D which will be a big help.

Come and join us! Our meetings are open to the public and are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month. Watch our website for time and place.

See you at the park. Peggy Squires

What a Fun Day

By Rose Russell

On Friday, March 17, 2023 Dina Braniff, Peggy Squires and Mike and Carolyn Naylor and I turned up at Jackson's Mill Assembly Hall for the "quilt authentication" scheduled by Dina. At 10:00 the "quilt experts" prepared the story of the beautiful crazy quilt given to the Friends of Mountwood Park by Mrs. Mary Jonas a few months ago.

They measured, had a good look at the quilt and photographed it all with gloves so as not to damage the materials. The quilt will reside at the Mountwood Park Museum when we open for this season. Come and take a look.



Above is Mike Naylor, Carolyn Naylor, Dina Braniff, Rose Russell and Peggy Squires.

After that, Dina stayed at the Hall and the rest of us went to lunch at the Thyme Bistro and toured The Museum of American Glass in Weston. Food was great and the museum was fun and interesting. One of my favorite things was the magnificent glass doll house which took 3 years of planning and 650 hours to build.

So you may ask, what exactly is a "quilt authentication"? Every quilt has a story and the West Virginia Quilt Documentation Project is collecting these stories and storing them in the West Virginia archives. The Quilt Inex is an extensive database and our information is now stored there. Go to

quiltindex.org and check it out. Thanks Dina.



“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.”

By Margaret Atwood

Shrinking Thornhill

By Mike Naylor

For at least 15 years, I labored under the notion that Thornhill mansion had 25 rooms. This is wrong!

A bit of history discovered at the WVU Regional History Library reveals that Thornhill had 14 rooms, plus a bathroom. Following is the breakdown of rooms:

- Bathroom (bathtub only)
- Third floor ballroom
- Kitchen
- Dining room

- Parlor
- Library (480 books)
- Bedrooms

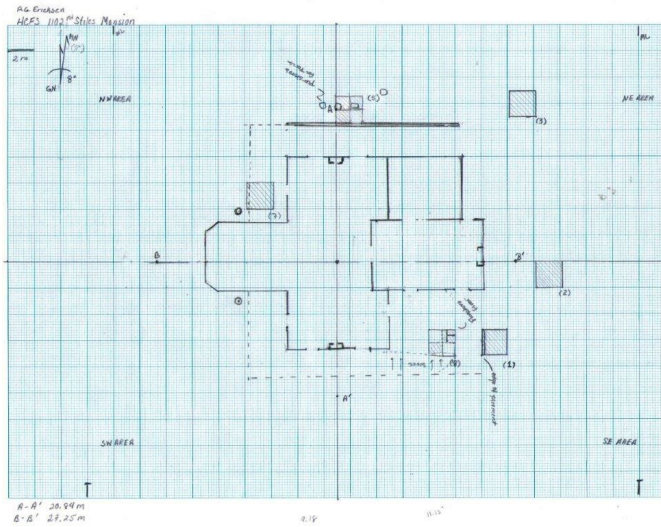
It is not clear how many bedrooms there were. It was a growing trend for affluent couples of the 1800's to share a bedroom, although many couples still maintained separate rooms. The one fact about the bedrooms that is correct is, there were ten sets of furniture. This does not reveal much since many children of this era shared a bedroom. My best guess is, there were seven to nine bedrooms.



As one entered the foyer, there was a double staircase, one on the left and another on the right. If you went up these stairs, you would find yourself on the second-floor landing. At the rear of the house, there was a staircase for the servants to use to go to the bedrooms. There was a dumb waiter to the third

floor for the dances and other events hosted by the Stiles family.

Below is an archeological drawing of the Thornhill ruins that was prepared by Dr. Annette Ericksen. Dr. Ericksen came with her class from Little Hocking College to conduct archeology digs at the Thornhill ruins.



Thornhill and the Demise of Volcano

By Carolyn Naylor

While glancing through the book “*WHERE IT ALL BEGAN*” by David L. McKain and Bernard L. Allen, Ph. D. I discovered the information below about Thornhill.

According to a piece in *The State Journal* in February 1884, the population in Volcano had dropped to less than half of what it was in 1881. Business was at a

standstill, the times very dull, and the future bleak.

A month later another windstorm destroyed between 75 and 100 derricks in the Volcano Field. The next month, *The State Journal* correspondent noted the pessimism in Volcano. In June it was announced that Michael Bean, a coal miner, had moved his family from Volcano to Malden, in the Kanawha Valley, to engage in the coal mining business.

Finally, in September, the *Cairo Democrat*, sensing the continuing demise of Volcano, suggested that William Cooper Stiles, Jr., convert Thornhill into a resort. The newspaper correspondent said that the water flowing from the well near Thornhill farm was equal to the White Sulphur Springs of the Greenbrier or Jordan’s Springs in Frederick County, Virginia. He suggested that the water be analyzed and published to the world like that of Germany and Switzerland. He thought the residence would become one of the State’s best resorts.

I feel sorry for Mr. Stiles. He must have felt his dream of an enduring oil town was slipping away. It may have hurt a little more because, while things were bleak in Volcano, the future looked bright for both Marietta, Ohio and Parkersburg because of the deep drilling.

David Bolinger Sprouse & Lillian Reed (DeMoss) Sprouse

By Carolyn Naylor



In photo is: (L to R, Front Row) Charles DeMoss holding the hand of Vernon (Buss) Edward Sprouse; Lillian Reed (DeMoss) Sprouse holding John Calvin Sprouse; Pearl (Mink) Sprouse; David Bolinger Sprouse; Thomas Sprouse; and Homer Sprouse. (Back Row, L to R) Andrew (Andy) DeMoss, Asa Sprouse, Maud DeMoss, and Seth DeMoss. (Photo provided by Melinda and Melvin Sprouse.)

David Bolinger Sprouse was born in Volcano, West Virginia, on August 7, 1884. He was the son of a coal miner, Leonard Sprouse and his wife, Mary Jane (Baxter) Sprouse. As a child, David probably learned how life could be tough by observing how hard his parents had to work. Working in a coal mine was very hard work that unfortunately paid very little. His mother probably had a garden and some animals she took care of, in addition to looking after the children and home. I doubt there was running water into the home

which means somebody had to be responsible for carrying water to the house for cleaning and cooking. The children probably had to help with this chore.

When David was born, his parents were trying to get through a drought and think about what they were going to do when winter came. The *Parkersburg State Journal* (August 8, 1884) reported that a hard winter was expected and that the corn, grass and all the fall crops had burned up. There was no fruit, only half the hay crop and a few early potatoes. It also reported that water in many locations was scarce and the people and their stock were suffering. The streams were nearly dry.

When David was 21 years old, he married Lillian (Lillie/Lilly) Reed DeMoss (age 17) on October 17, 1905. Lillie was the daughter of Nathaniel and Phoebe (Hawk) DeMoss. Lillie and David were successful in raising eight children to adulthood. The children are named below.

1. **Vernon Edward (Buss) Sprouse** was born on January 31, 1909, in Wood County, West Virginia. When Vernon was 25 years old, he married a Volcano girl, Cora Alice Todd on July 14, 1934, in Parkersburg. Cora gave Vernon 11 children. Vernon passed away in September 1974.
2. **Pearl Irene (Mink) Spouse** was born on September 22, 1910 in Wood County, West Virginia. Pearl married Gail Bert (Deke) West and they had a son, Gail Edward (Gage) West. Pearl was only 50 years old when she died of a heart attack at her Broadway Street home on October 31, 1960. She is buried in Parkersburg at Sunset Memory Gardens.
3. **John Calvin Sprouse** was born in Petroleum on April 12, 1912. When John was 33 years old, he married Clara Juanita Knight (age 20) on March 12, 1946. Clara was the daughter of Okey and Erma Knight. John and Clara had three children. John passed away in 1982.
4. **Clyde Lewis (Jiggs) Sprouse** was born in Petroleum on May 1, 1916. Clyde, age 26, married Verona Alice Jenkins (age 19) on May 30, 1916. She was the daughter of W. F. and Alice Jenkins of Eaton. Clyde and Alice had six children. Clyde passed away in 1986.

5. **Mildred Louise Sprouse** was born on August 28, 1917, in Walker District. On September 4, 1947, Mildred (age 20) married **Harold Freshwater**, the son of Charles and Loetta (Hendershot) Freshwater. Harold worked at a local shovel manufacturing company. Mildred died on April 28, 2018, and is buried at the Shiloh Cemetery at Valley Mill. Prior to her death, Mildred had retired from the Western Guidance Center (now Westbrook) at Parkersburg.



6. **Mary Alice Sprouse** married Ava D. Jenkins. They had two children: Billy Joe Jenkins and Patricia Jenkins.

7. **David Franklin (Frank) Sprouse** was born in 1931. When he was 22 years old, he married Donna Jean McPherson (age 21) at Clifton Forge, Virginia on March 15, 1952. David and Donna had five children. David died in 1992.

8. **Francis Marie Sprouse** was born in Wood County on March 25, 1927. On April 12, 1944, she married Raymond Artie Davis (age 19) the son of Ephrain and Effie Davis of Waverly, West Virginia. Francis and Raymond had three children. Francis was buried at Evergreen North Cemetery.

Prior to retirement, David worked in the oil fields as an oil well pumper. I had to go online to see what an oil well pumper's duties were. Oil well pumpers were key members of a well operation and did not need any formal education.



Well site. Photo provided by Linwood Lowden.

David probably started working at the lowest paying job and worked his way up the ladder. To be promoted to oil well pumper, he had to show he had the right mixture of experience, knowledge, and skill. He also needed to have good hand dexterity and the ability to manage others and needed to be detail oriented. His job was to assure that the wellheads located in the fields were properly maintained and working efficiently. He logged data and checked gauges and performed minor repairs. He obviously had work ethics and understood the satisfaction you get from doing a job well and being able to take care of your family.

David was 69 years old when he died on December 2, 1953 at Eaton. Lillie was 92 years old when she died on January 27, 1981. Both are buried at Pleasant Hill cemetery at Deerwalk, West Virginia.



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304-679-3611**

Schedule of Events

**Museum Opens for Season
Hours: 1 pm to 4 pm
Saturday and Sunday**

**Easter Egg Hunt – Saturday, April 8
11 am. For children through age 13.**

**Adventure Camp – July 24 – July 28
9 am to 12 noon**

Volcano Days – September 22, 23 & 24

**Mountwood Fishing Derby
Woof Fest Festival**

**Remember, even on your worst
day, you would be a great
volunteer.**

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Rose Russell, and Peggy Squires
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*Failure is an opportunity to
begin again more
intelligently. Henry Ford*