



# The Friends of Mountwood Park Newsletter

Winter 2022 Issue Vol. 13, No. 1

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## **Friends of Mountwood Park Officers:**

Peggy Squires, President  
Melody Crawford, Vice President  
Carolyn Naylor, Secretary  
Mike Naylor, Treasurer

*Friends meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month  
at 6:30 pm.*

*Our mailing address is:  
PO BOX 2094  
PARKERSBURG, WV 26102*

## ***Happy Valentine's Day!***



**Quote from Oprah Winfrey**  
"Be thankful for what you have; you'll  
end up having more. If you concentrate  
on what you don't have, you will never,  
ever have enough."

## ***Calendar of Events***

***April 16***

***Easter egg hunt***

***September 23 -25***

***Volcano Days***

## ***Letter from Our President Peggy Squires***

Here we are starting a New Year. Covid is still an issue but we are hoping to have our events at the Park this year. At this time the Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for April 16; the date of Woof Fest date will soon be decided, and the Park is planning Volcano Days for September 23,24, and 25<sup>th</sup>.

In January, Miss Woof Fest Kailee Nutter did a great job representing us at the West Virginia Fairs and Festivals Pageant. She has been there for us at other events.

The Park has been a popular place for families to spend time outdoors. Trout stocking at the lake is in full swing. In addition, the lake is scheduled to be dredged this summer.

Come over and go fishing or hiking with your family!

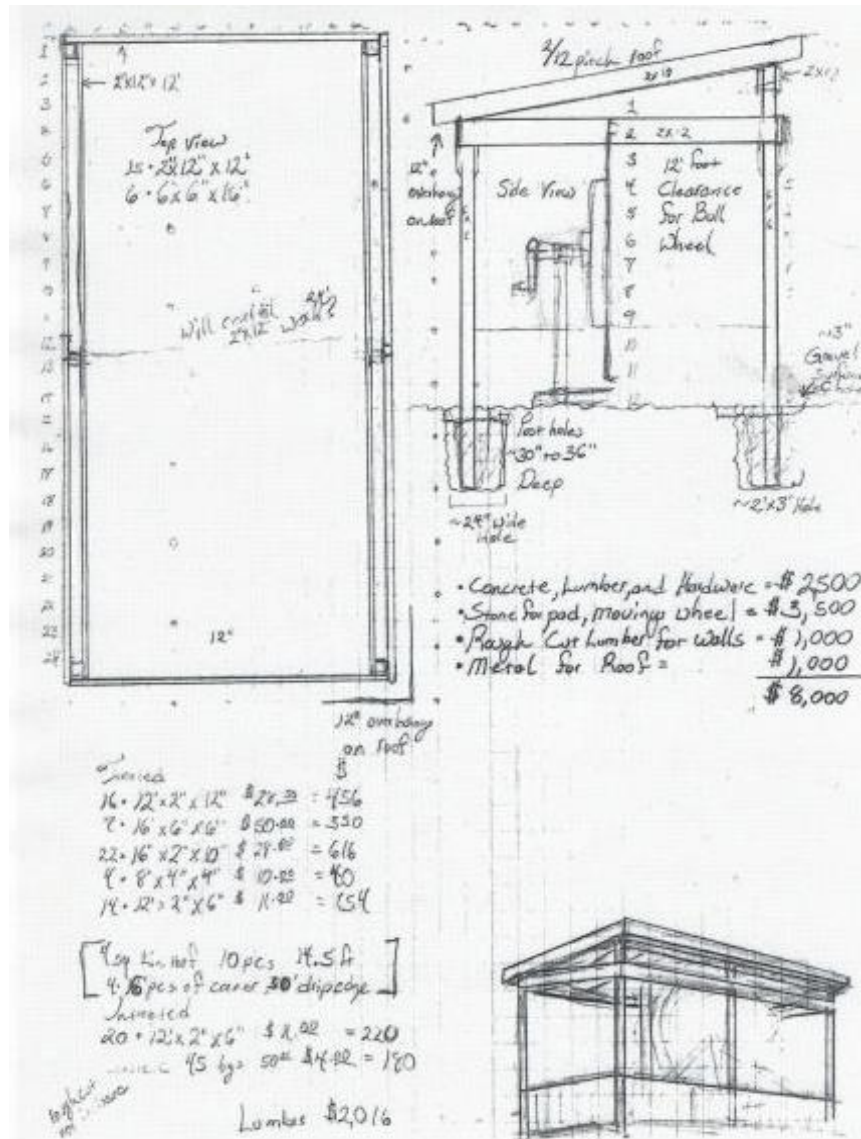
# Museum Display Shelter

By Mike Naylor

John Hyde, the Park's maintenance supervisor, has drafted plans to build a shelter for the bull wheel beside the museum. It will be located at the left rear corner of the museum.

The shelter will be 24 feet wide, 12 feet deep and 12 feet high and have a green metal roof, matching the other Park buildings. It will be on a gravel stone pad and constructed of rough-cut lumber. Before construction of the shelter begins, the wheel must be moved to the stone pad.

We are hoping to place other large items in the shelter. Paul Reese, descendant of a prominent Volcano family, is donating two band wheels from an endless cable system.



## Volcano Episcopal Church



**By Mike Naylor**

The Volcano Episcopal Church was dedicated in May of 1871. It was built for \$2,500 with W. C. Stiles, Jr. and D. C. Mudge leading the project. It was near "Quality Row."

## Grace Episcopal Church



The church was moved from Volcano to Kenova, WV in 1894. Later the church became the United Methodist Church of Kenova, West Virginia. This picture was taken in 1910. *(Picture submitted by Stanley Wood.)*

### *Quotes about Life*

**LET IT GO** -- Never ruin a good day by thinking about a bad yesterday. *Unknown*

**BE YOURSELF** – What others think of you is none of your business. *Unknown*

## ***Leonard S. Sprouse, Coal Digger and Family Man***

**By Carolyn Naylor**

Between 1840 and 1920, the Sprouse family name could be found in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Scotland. In 1840 there were 15 Sprouse families living in Virginia. This was about 50 percent of all recorded Sprouse's in the United States. In 1840, Virginia had the highest population of Sprouse families. *.(President Lincoln didn't proclaim that West Virginia would be recognized as a state until June 20, 1863.)*

Leonard S. Sprouse (sometimes shown as William Leonard Sprouse) was born in 1853, in the Collins Settlement District of Lewis County, Virginia (now West Virginia), the son of a farmer, Fleming Sprouse and his wife Eliza (Bonnett) Sprouse

When Leonard was 22 years old, he married Mary Jane Baxter (age 20) in Ritchie County, West Virginia. In 1873, the year Leonard and Mary Jane married, Volcano was the center of oil production in West Virginia.

Although a lot of people were making a lot of money, Leonard wasn't one of them. He made his living as a coal digger, working hard for little pay, Even coal miners who had been on the job for years rarely made more than a few dollars each week—one 1902 account claimed a daily salary of \$1.60 for a 10-hour shift. Fortunately for the Volcano coal miners, they were paid in United States Currency, not scrip, or tokens that could only be used in a company run store.

Leonard had to work in conditions that were dark, wet, and very dangerous. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was common for the miner to fill a basket or small wagon full of coal and then drag it along roadways as small as 16-inches in height. They had to make several runs down to the coal face and back to the surface again. There was no sick leave or health insurance to help them should Leonard get hurt or sick.

A wife of a miner was responsible for keeping house and raising the children. She therefore had to help tackle the financial struggles of the family. It would have been necessary for Mary Jane to be creative in maintaining their home and feeding their 13 children. She probably had a garden, had a few chickens, and perhaps a milk cow she tended to help put food on the table.

Leonard and Mary Jane must have been good parents because they successfully raised their children who grew to be adults and went out in the world to work and start families of their own. Their children were:

1. **Allie Viola Sprouse** was born in 1872, at Petroleum, Wood County, West Virginia. On April 11, 1892, she married William Nash. Allie died in 1965.
2. **Homer Columbus Sprouse** was born on April 25, 1874, in Ritchie County, West Virginia. He married Cornelia Bell Mahaney (1879 – 1941). Homer passed away in 1931; Cornelia, 1941. Both are buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery in Deerwalk.

*On August 4, 1879, at 4 am, the citizens of Volcano woke up to the cries of "fire". The town was on fire. The town people didn't realize the town would slowly change as the oil started to diminish and their*

*friends and neighbors would begin to leave. In addition, 1879 was also the year an oil pipeline was completed from Volcano to Parkersburg.*

- 3 Cora Belle Sprouse** was born about 1881. When she was 22 years old, she married George T. Davis in Washington County, Ohio. Cora died in June 1923 and is buried in Union Cemetery in Columbus, Franklin County, Ohio.
- 4 David Frank Sprouse** (1882 – 1992).
- 5 David Bolinger Sprouse** was born in Volcano, Wood County, West Virginia on August 7, 1884. When David was 21 years old, he married Lillian (Lillie) Reed DeMoss (age 17) on October 17, 1905. Lillie was the daughter of Nathaniel and Phoebe (Hawk) DeMoss. Lillie gave David nine children. David was 69 years old when he died on December 2, 1953. Prior to his death he had retired as an oil well pumper. Lillie was 92 years old when she died on January 27, 1981. Both are buried at Pleasant Hill cemetery at Deerwalk, West Virginia.

*Parkersburg State Journal, August 8, 1884--VOLCANO, W. Va., August 1—Hot, dry and dusty, times hard, and the very best prospect for the hardest winter ever seen in these parts; corn, grass and all the fall crops burnt up with no fruit and but half the hay crop, a few early potatoes. Wheat and oats will be the only feed for the next twelve months (or you may say fifteen). Many farmers are at this early date feeding their stock hay and will be obliged to purchase western hay before the winter is over unless we soon get rains, of which there is no prospect at this writing. The great matter in buying feed is the want of funds to pay and surely times are blue—with good indications of bluer. Water in many localities is scarce and people and stock are now suffering.*

*The streams are nearly all dry and none of them have running water—now and then a deep hole affords a little water. I see in riding around several places where they are digging wells, this being a good time to be sure of permanent water should they be so fortunate as to tap a stream now.*



(L to R, Front Row) Charles DeMoss holding the hand of Vernon (Buss) Edward Sprouse; Lillian Reed (DeMoss) Sprouse holding John Calvin Sprouse; Pearl Irene (Mink) Sprouse; David Bolinger Sprouse; John R. (unknown); and Homer Columbus Sprouse. (Back Row, L to R) Andrew (Andy) DeMoss, Asa (Unknown), Maud DeMoss, and Seth DeMoss. (Photo taken in 1915.) (Photo submitted by Melinda Sprouse & Marvin Sprouse.)

6 Lizzie Sprouse was born in West Virginia in 1885. Date of death unknown.

7 Jessie Sprouse (1886 - 1915)

*Daily State Journal, September 14, 1888* –Leonard Sprouse has taken a job of coal digging in Ohio and expects to be away all winter.

8 Elizabeth Ann Sprouse was born November 17, 1888, in West Virginia. Elizabeth was 23 years old when she married Bert Morrison (age 22) in Parkersburg on July 20, 1910. Elizabeth was 76 years old when she died on February 28, 1965 in Borger, Hutchinson County, Texas.

- 9 **Charles Elmer Sprouse** was born in 1889 in Bern, Athens County, Ohio. Date of death is unknown.
- 10 **Annie L. Sprouse** was born in Virginia in 1891. Date of death unknown.
- 11 **Bertha Jane Sprouse** was born in June 1893, in Ritchie County. When Bertha was 25 years old, she married Willard Smith (age 27) in Parkersburg, on March 24, 1920. She died in 1958.
- 12 **Rupert W. Sprouse** was born in Virginia in 1894. Date of death us unknown.
- 13 **Ella Amanda Sprouse** was born at Petroleum, Ritchie County, West Virginia on April 29, 1895. (A delayed birth certificate was issued showing her father's name as Leonard Ward Sprouse.). Ella married Lee Roy Hobbs, of Wood County, son of Charles Dow Hobbs and Estelle Elizabeth Hobbs. Lee Roy was born on September 28, 1899, in Wood County. Ella was 90 years old when she died on May 22, 1985, in Cushing, Payne County, Oklahoma. Lee Roy died at Cushing on January 22, 1977. Both are buried in Fairlawn Cemetery at Cushing.

Leonard was 63 years old when he died at Petroleum on June 15, 1915, of dropsy. Mary Jane was 73 years old when she died at Parkersburg on January 24, 1924. (Dropsy is an old term for the swelling of soft tissues due to the accumulation of excess water. Today the patient might be told they could have edema to congestive heart failure.)

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☺ Your interest in Mountwood Park is appreciated and your comments and inquiries are always appreciated. Below is how you can get in touch with the Park:

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