



The Friends of Mountwood Park Newsletter

Summer 2025 Issue Vol. 16, No. 3

News Flash: The Volcano Museum at Mountwood Park will be open every Saturday from 11 am to 2 pm; Sunday from 1 pm to 4 pm.

Hello Summer!



Photo taken by Carolyn Naylor

Officers of The Friends of Mountwood Park

Peggy Squires, President
Rose Russell, Vice President
Dina Braniff, Secretary
Mike Naylor, Treasurer

Our mailing address is:
FRIENDS OF MOUNTWOOD PARK
PO BOX 2094
PARKERSBURG, WV 26102

You can contact Mountwood Park by calling (304) 679-3611.

Letter From our President

It is a busy year. First, I want to thank the volunteers for the work they have put in at the museum this past year. Special thanks go to Mike and Carolyn Naylor for their contributions and endless visions and work at the Museum. Also, many thanks go to Jeremy and the Park Staff. It truly takes a village to make things work and come together. Again, many thanks to everyone who has helped.

The museum addition will soon be open and please note a change in our hours on Saturday from 1-4 to 11-2. Sunday will remain 1-4 at this time. This is the same time as our Farmers Market on Saturday, Watch for changes on Facebook and our website friendsofmountwood.com. The 2026 calendars are for sale at the museum. The cost is only \$6.00.

Adventure Camp will be held July 21-25. It is for children 9–12-year-olds, and will

be from 9 am to 12 during that week. The fee is only \$50.00 for the week and will include many fun outdoor activities. They will be involved in too many activities to list, but a few of the activities are herpetology, fishing, hiking, creek exploration, building a bird house, and archery. This is a fun and active Camp. Registration forms are on our website. If you prefer, you may call the Park or me at 304-679-3914.

Woof Fest Event will be September 14. This event is a dog carnival and is fun for dogs and their owners. Watch our website and Facebook for more information. The Miss Woof Fest Pageants will be held at WVU-P on August 10 on stage at 4:00 pm.

We have added a memorial Brick walk to our Dog Park. If you wish to purchase a memorial brick in memory of your pet forms are available on our Website and at Park. If you prefer you may call me at 304-679-3914.

The Parks big event, Volcano Days will be the last full weekend in September.

Exciting things are happening at Mountwood Park. Stop by and visit.

Peggy Squires, President Friends of Mountwood Park

"To leave the world better than you found it, sometimes you have to pick up other people's trash."

Bill Nye

Gifts to the Museum

We want to thank Mrs. Linda Bush and her son Bryan for donating to the museum a photograph of several men on the roof of the Thornhill mansion. They also gave us a poem written on August 7, 1898 by Russell A. Bush. For your enjoyment, the poem is printed below. For those of you familiar with Volcano, you will probably see some names you have heard before.

"The stars were bright, the night was still,

As I walked up the Dollman hill.

A murmur wandered through the trees,
And yet could not be called a breeze.

More like a sound from days of yore,
With voices from a far off shore.

And in a reverie sublime,
My mind swept back thru years of time.

'Til once again a lad uncouth,
I walked the pathways of my youth.

From turnpike and across the bridge,
Then up this hill to Progress Ridge.

With pudgy face and dirty nose,
And dried mud stuck between his toes.

This spirit me the past bestowed,
Walked by my side along the road.

The sun beamed down, it now was day,
The years rolled back had fled away.

There was Uncle Lyman working hard,
And all the girls out in the yard.

And Granddad Cooley I could see,
On his bench beneath the cedar tree.

While over on the other hill,
Sam tilled his acres with a till.

And Mr. Wines assumed the load,
Of keeping up the county road.

Miss Dessie used the golden rule,
In teaching pupils at the school.

Bud Issaac Cox, a humble man,
Who feared the Lord and worked the
land.

While just a little ways below,
The Eplers made their sawmill go.

The Polings moved so much around,
'Twas hard to tell where they'd be found.

Frank Chapman with a friendly face,
And children all around the place.

All this I saw in time that's gone,
The spirit me and I moved on.

I heard the ringing of a bell,
And saw the children rush pell mell,
Into the school house and I knew,
That on that day I was there too.

I was afraid to take a look,
I'd broken all the rules in the book.

So, what a sad thing it would be,
If I should have to snitch on me.

Lafe Miracle, the patient one,
The kids all o'er his place did run.

Ne'er once did his good humor wane,
To try to get them to refrain.

Then there was Uncle Charlie Hewitt.
Just ask him anything he knew it.

And it was quite well known by all,
Son Rufus he was good at ball.

On out the road in weather nice,
Past Uncle Billies paradise.

There Grandpa Dunlap, his son Will,
And Burris with the old grist mill.

And all his children, girls and boys,
Who romped and played with lots of
noise.

And when they all sat down to eat,
The table measured fourteen feet.

The road back out past Altons led.
Tobacco drying in the shed.

Around the bend and on before,
To where George Gearhart kept his store.

There he, quite cool and dignified,
The merchant prince of countryside.

I saw daddy Gearhart tall and spare.
Aunt Jemima with her silver hair.

Old Kersey Johnson hale and sound,
But double jointed all around.

And Mrs. Epler bless her heart,
Worked hard and more than done her
part.

Lee Varner passed me with a sack,
Of corn, two bushels, on his back.

A rider neared me with some speed,
Dan Farnsworth on his snow-white steed.

I turned there and I traveled back,
Along an old familiar track.

And by the power given me,
To change the tide of times great sea,
The sun sank swiftly out of sight,
And it was prayer meeting night.

I went in quietly, set down.
The organ played, I looked around.

There David Duerr and Mr. Long,
Who in the church were stalwarts strong,
And Cecil Schrader, Don, and Guy,
Pug Chapman in a seat nearby.

And this I know is quite untrue,
But Seward Bush he was there too.

Ralph and Lester Dunlap, Coleman Cox,
And Earnest with his curly locks,
And others as it well should be,
That lived in the community.

Then when the services were done,
I went on back the way I'd come.

The John Bush home emerged to view,
I knew the reverie was through.

For not on time can one depend,
And even time sometime must end.

The spirit in me walked on before,
Up to the house and through the door.

A rushing sound the air did fill,
I stood alone on Dollman's hill.

A murmur wandered through the trees,
And yet could not be called a breeze.

More like a sound from days of yore,
With voices from a far off shore,
That oft surge back to you and me,
From out a vast eternity.

871898
Russell A. Bush"

*"Happiness is when what you
think, what you say, and
what you do are in
harmony."*

Mahatma Gandhi

Registration Open for Friends of Mountwood Park Adventure Camp!

By Dina Braniff

Registration is open for the Friends of Mountwood Park Adventure Camp. The camp will be from July 21-25 from 9 am to noon. Camp will be held rain or shine.

The camp is for children 9 to 12 years old. Only 14 spots are available. Cost is \$50.00 for the week.

This is a physically active camp and your child will probably get dirty. Please have your child dress accordingly. Bring an old pair of tennis shoes or water shoes, and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Flip Flops and bare feet are not permitted.

Some of the planned activities for camp includes:

- Building a bird house with the guidance of Bob Zellny.
- Discussing the skills dogs possess to find lost humans. Tyler County Search and Rescue will conduct demonstrations so the children can see the dogs using their skills.
- Discussing reptiles and amphibians. The Appalachian Herpetological Society will also lead them on a search to find these animals we share the world with.
- Learning about entomology, bees, butterflies, and pollinators.

- Learning about archery. The Mountain State Sportsmen's Association will lead the campers in this activity.
- Learning about conservation and respect for our natural resources while having fun! Each camper will receive the book "Nature's Best Hope" written by New York Times bestselling author Douglas W. Tallamy.

Registration forms for Adventure Camp are available at the Mountwood Park Administration Building or at the Volcano Museum at Mountwood Park.

Please complete and return your registration form to:

The Friends of Mountwood Park
P.O. Box 2094
Parkersburg, WV 26102.

Your check should be made out to The Friends of Mountwood Park.

"What is the use of a home if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?"

Henry David Thoreau

Dog Park Memorial Walk

By Mike Naylor

The dog park at Mountwood Park has been improved with the addition of a memorial walkway constructed by Park staff. This will reduce muddy shoes and paws!!



This provides an excellent opportunity to remember your furry friends who have passed. You may purchase one of the plain bricks and have it customized to honor your pet.

More details can be found on our website:

<https://FriendsOfMountWoodPark.com>.
Then click on CONTACT.

“Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need, but not every man’s greed.”

Mahatma Gandhi

Volcano Oil and Gas Boomtown Comes Alive at Volcano Museum

By Carolyn Naylor

Have you ever wished you could travel back in time, even just for a day? Thanks to our dedicated members and volunteers and to Mountwood Park’s employees, Bill Edwards and Loren Sillaman and Park Director Jeremy Cross, you can step back in time to visit - in miniature- the oil and gas boom town of Volcano.

Friends commissioned local modeler Jimmie Bee of Parkersburg to construct a 4-foot by 11-foot replica of Volcano. The model is 5-feet tall at its highest point.



Photo taken by Jimmie Bee

Jimmie did an excellent job although his task was difficult because there are few photographs available and lots of conflicting information. However, he was able to make several structures exact replicas; others are his best estimate. The buildings and trains are true to scale but he had to condense the mountains

and scenery to fit the space available at the museum.



Photo taken by Jimmie Bee

Jimmie wanted to do more than build a model of Volcano and its structures. He wanted to show what life was like in 1870. To achieve this, he added mini-scenes of steam powered drilling, an oil derrick after a gusher, and derrick after a blow-out, Bellas Cemetery on the ridge, torpedo and nitroglycerin storage area and wagons.

While visiting the museum, you can learn about the newest technology of the time, the endless cable system.

It has been quite a journey for the Volcano museum, beginning in 2012, in a one-room cabin. Now it is 2025 and many changes have taken place. Two additional rooms, filled with photos and artifacts, have been added to the original room. There are many outside displays such as a wheel house and historical signs, an oil derrick, and other artifacts for you to enjoy.

We were able to realize our dream for the museum, thanks to the volunteers who worked weekends to keep the museum open, all the people who made financial donations just because they liked what we were trying to do, and those who donated artifacts and pictures. We also must thank the Park Director Jeremy Cross and his employees for all the support and encouragement they gave us.

Hope to see you at the museum!

"Be happy with what you have and are, be generous with both, and you won't have to hunt for happiness."
William E. Gladstone

Museum Summary

By Mike Naylor

We had 150 visitors visit the museum through the end of May. For the same period in 2024 we had 98 visitors. The



Photo taken by Susannah Lowden.

new room, particularly the diorama, and the Farmers Market have fueled the attendance increase.

We gave a "sneak preview" of the new room

to Linwood Lowden, the “Godfather” of Volcano. He was very pleased. Make no mistake, Linwood has been a major contributor in preserving Volcano’s history and legacy!!

In 2010, Linwood, Carolyn, and I walked through the Volcano hills. It was very informative and tiring! I still remember essentially crawling up the hill to check out Bellas Cemetery. Linwood and Carolyn are conducting an easier tour of Volcano than we experienced. (Note: Photo by Susannah Lowden.)

*“One small positive thought
in the morning can change
your whole day.”*

Dalai Lama

Park Torpedo Refurbished and is Back in Place

By Carolyn Naylor



The Federal Industrial Services volunteered to restore the torpedo at Mountwood Park.

In May, Pifer’s Towing and Recovery brought to the Park a small crane to lift the torpedo off its stand and load it on a trailer. They then took it to Federal Industrial Services on Route 50 where it was sandblasted, cleaned, repaired, and repainted.

Most of the work was done by Michael Rowh, president of Federal Industrial Services. Sherman Williams in Vienna donated the paint and Danser Incorporated in Davisville donated their time and service to get the torpedo ready.

The torpedo is part of a memorial honoring the service of the submariners who served in World War II, especially the crew of the USS Cisco SS 290. Its 76 officers and men were killed on September 28, 1943, in an anti-submarine attack by enemy ships and aircraft. The memorial also lists 52 submarines lost during the War, noting that the vessels 374 officers and 3,131 men aboard are “Still on Patrol.”

Annual Easter Egg Hunt at Mountwood Park

By Dina Braniff

On April 19th, children ages 13 and under came to the Park carrying a basket, a pail, or a bag to collect Easter eggs.



Twenty-five children won an Easter basket, filled with candy and other prizes. One child won a stuffed Easter rabbit.

Many volunteers contributed to make this event a success. We want to thank Mountwood Park staff, Woof Fest royalty and their coordinator Wendy Williams. We also want to thank the volunteers who showed up Saturday morning to help put all those eggs out: Brianna Brodie; Bill Butler; Bill Edwards; Gretchen and Lew Hill; Carolyn and Mike Naylor; Donna and Jeff Richards; Rose Russell; Peggy Squires; and Bob Zellny

In addition, we must thank the residents at the Colonial House and Harmoney Ridge who helped stuff all those eggs.



Our Woof Fest royalty all dressed for the occasion. Our royalty is under the direction of Wendy Williams.

The volunteers and parents, and especially the children, appeared to have a good time. When everybody is leaving with big smiles, the children are excited and chattering nonstop, we did something right. Those smiles reminded us that all the work that was done was appreciated and had value.

Do Things that Make You Forget to Look at Your Phone.

Michael West, Volcano Blacksmith, and Oil Producer

By Carolyn Naylor

Michael West's life began in Midsomer Norton, Somerset, England on August 6, 1845, the day he was born to George West and Susanna Knowles West. His journey would become full of change beginning when his parents decided they could make a better life in America.

Leaving their friends and family behind, the family, along with 9-year-old Michael, left Liverpool, England and



arrived in New York City on the ship F. A. Palmer on August 14, 1855.

Although they survived the trip, Susanna died the following year in Washington County, Ohio. It would not be a surprise if the trip to America played a part in shortening her life. The trip would have taken days—the average number of days at sea for most immigrants was 45. They would have endured a lack of space and privacy. The food probably was not very good. Several passengers probably suffered from sea sickness and other diseases.

The 1860 census shows that Michael (age 14) was living with his father and step-mother Rebecca in Grandview, Washington County, Ohio. Also living in the household were Samuel (12), Anna (11), George (8), James (5), Robert (2), Susan E. (1), and Joannah Chambers (10).

During the Civil War, Michael, age 19, joined Company E of the 18th Regiment of the Ohio Infantry for one year. He mustered in on April 1, 1865. Michael was lucky--the War was almost over. The 18th's duty from January 1865 to April 1865 was at Chattanooga, Tennessee, and then Fort Phelps until July. Then guard and provost (military police) duty at Augusta, Georgia. He mustered out with the company at Augusta, Georgia on October 9, 1865, by order of the War Department, and discharged at Columbus, Ohio, October 22, 1865.

Sometime in 1870, apparently Michael left his family and moved from Ohio to West Virginia because his name appears on the census for both states. In the West Virginia census he is shown as living in the Walker District working as an engineer. According to Linwood Lowden in his book *White Oak, West Virginia Alias Volcano*, Michael was living in the Longmoor Hotel at Volcano.

Michael married Mary Elizabeth Beabout (age 22) in Washington County, Ohio on April 25, 1872. Mary gave Michael nine children:

1. James William West, born in Ritchie County, West Virginia on September 6, 1872.
2. Aletha West, born in Walker, Wood County, West Virginia on September 13, 1874.
3. Rebecca Margaret West, born in Walker on November 11, 1877.

4. Charlotte Phoebe (Lottie) West, born in Ritchie County, on December 13, 1880.
5. Mahala Elizabeth West, born in Volcano on March 8, 1883.
6. George Francis West, born in Ritchie County, on October 7, 1885.
7. Harry Burt West, born in Walker on February 23, 1887.
8. Leora Valerie West, born in Walker on November 21, 1890.
Note: Leora must have been a twin because there is a record showing that on November 21, 1890 there was born *a no name West* child of Michael West (contractor) and Mary West.

Michael supported his family working as a blacksmith. After the BIG Volcano fire in 1879, he had the courage to purchase a lease from the Volcanic Oil and Coal Company. This would not be the last lease he purchased.

The Parkersburg State Journal, May 4, 1893—WHITEOAK

"It is reported that Mike West will take charge and run the Gatton lease. He will move his family so as to be near and give his immediate attention. The house is the one built by the late Daniel Hines and is an elegant home with all conveniences and adjoining the lease."

Michael was only 58 years old when he died on April 30, 1904. He was survived by his wife Mary and eight grown children, all residing in Volcano.



Mary Elizabeth West, wife of Michael West.

The State Journal (Parkersburg), May 2, 1904—

“FUNERAL AT VOLCANO

The funeral of the late Michael West, of Volcano, occurred yesterday afternoon at his residence at that place. Mr. West was one of the pioneer settlers in this section and was well known by all of the old residents of the county. He was a prominent oil man and had a large number of producing wells at the time of his death. He also owned considerable property in this city. The funeral was largely attended, there being a number of Parkersburgers present, and the interment was made at the Ellis Cemetery.”

(Note: Ellis Cemetery is incorrect. Michael is buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Parkersburg.)

After Michael died, his son George assumed the responsibility of the West lease, later called the West Oil Field Company.

The Parkersburg Sentinel, August 11, 1934

“MRS. MARY E. WEST CLAIMED BY DEATH

Mrs. Mary Elizabeth West, aged 85, widow of Michael West, died at 9 o'clock this morning at her home, 1112 George Street.

Mrs. West was born in Washington County, Ohio, February 3, 1849 and was united in marriage to Michael West April 25, 1872. To this union nine children were born, seven of whom survive her. One son and one daughter preceded her in death.

The surviving children are J. W. West of this city; G. F. West of Petroleum, W. Va., H. B. West of Tucson, Ariz., Mrs. R. M. Burk, Mrs. D. C. Reece and Mrs. E. C. Linger, all of this city; and Mrs. M. M. Lee of Eaton, W. Va.

Five brothers, one sister, 28 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren also survive.

Funeral services will be held Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock from St. Andrews Methodist Episcopal church, with pastor, Rev. J. Elbert Wells, officiating. Interment will be in Mount Olivet cemetery.”

In 1964, their son George sold the rights to the CHAUQ Oil Company of Houston, but they then had to hire him to continue operating the cable system.

Schedule of Events

The museum is open every Saturday from 11 am – 2 pm and Sunday, 1 pm - 4 pm.

July 21 – July 25

Adventure Camp (Friends of Mountwood Park) - *For questions, contact Peggy Squires at 304-588-9148.*

September 14

Woof Fest (Friends of Mountwood Park) Mountwood Marina
12 noon – 4 pm
For questions, contact Peggy Squires at 304-588-9148.

September 20

Mountwood 10-Mile Challenge Trail Race

September 26 -28

Volcano Days

Mountwood Park Meetings

Friends of Mountwood Park meetings are usually the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm at the Stiles Administration Building. If you are unsure about the time and place, please check our Facebook page. If you are a member and if we have your current email address, you should receive a meeting notice. If you have any questions, please call or text Peggy Squires at 304-588-9148.

**Wood County Parks and Recreation
Board (Mountwood Park)** meet on the
3rd Monday of each month, 6 pm, at the
Stiles Administration Building.

Editor: Carolyn Naylor

Contributors: Jimmie Bee, Dina Braniff,
Carolyn Naylor, Mike Naylor, and Peggy
Squires

Proof Reader: Rose Russell

*“Keep your face always
toward the sunshine, and
shadows will fall behind
you.”*

Walt Whitman

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