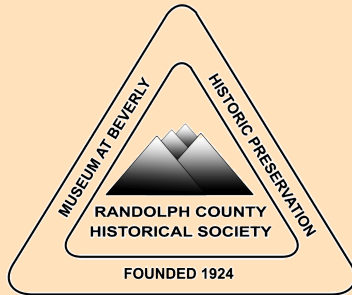


Newsletter

Randolph County Historical Society



FALL 2024

Vagabonds Program	1
Presidents Letter	2
Artifact Corner	3
AmeriCorps Update	4

Upcoming

RCHS Annual Meeting

Friday, November 15, 2024

6:00 Reception & Election

6:30 Program on Vagabonds

Darden Mill, 101 Railroad

Ave, Elkins

RCHS Banquet

Friday, January 10

Tygart Hotel

Save the Date!

Vagabonds Program

**For Fall Meeting
By Don Teter**

The annual general membership meeting of the Randolph County Historical Society will be held at the Darden Mill in Elkins on Friday, November 15. Reception will begin at 6:00 with a short membership meeting followed by a program at 6:30.

The speaker will be James Gardner, author of the book *A Chance to Breathe*, which relates the story of a 1918 trip through West Virginia by inventor Thomas Edison, naturalist and writer John Burroughs, automobile manufacturer Henry Ford, and tire tycoon Harvey Firestone. The itinerary included Leadmine, Parsons, Elkins, Beverly, the Cheat Mountain Club, and Bartow.

Gardner was born and raised in Akron, Ohio, and has been a practicing attorney for more than thirty years. His book is not just the story of those travelers, but also of Gardner's research journeys with his father, an engineer and longtime "Firestone Man," and retracing the route of the famous "vagabonds."



Thomas Edison, John Burroughs, Henry Ford, and Harvey Firestone on a water wheel at Leadmine, in Tucker County, West Virginia.

President's Letter

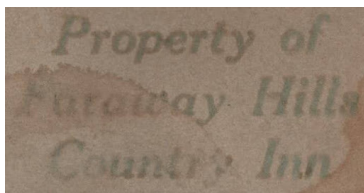
Nerd World and Bringing it Home By Don Teter

I have a bit of a weakness for used book stores. I always have my areas of interest in mind and tend to peruse the sections most likely to hold things that will capture my eye but often find things I did not even know I was looking for. I have shopped stores from Buckeye, West Virginia; to Fort Myers, Florida; to Omaha, Nebraska; to Moab, Utah; and many places between, nearly always stumbling across a few gems. For some reason my wife Debbie frequently tells me "You have enough books."

I am not alone in this fascination with experienced literature, sharing it with many others in "Nerd World." Not too long ago I mentioned this to a surveying acquaintance who noted a shared interest so strong that he and his wife had gotten married in a used bookstore in Winchester, Virginia. I immediately exclaimed "Blue Plate Books!", having shopped there a year or so earlier.

On that visit I had discovered one of those unexpected gems: "The Civil War Centennial Issue (Number Twelve, April 1961) of the Magazine of History and Biography" by The Randolph County Historical Society. Though I was intrigued I was also aware that we have a copy of that issue in our collection at the museum, so it was not really something I needed to rescue with a price of forty-five dollars. I returned it to the shelf.

But something else had caught my eye, causing second thoughts. Partially obscured by stains, stamped on the cover were the words "Property of Faraway Hills Country Inn", as seen in the close-up below.



Though I do not know if any scribe has ever recorded the tale, Faraway Hills was part of Randolph County History. According to the West Virginia Secretary of State's Online Data Services portal, Faraway Hills Country Inn was incorporated on August 10, 1962, by J.P. McManus and Cyrus S. Kump, with the corporation being dissolved on October 22, 1973. In December of 1972, the property had been conveyed from Faraway Hills Country Inn, Inc., to Faraway Hills, Inc. An attachment to the deed listed the furnishings in five rooms, and Schoolhouse rooms as well as three dining rooms. In 1974 the corporation conveyed the property to Eleanor McManus, the widow of J.P., with the deed including rights to the name Faraway Hills and "good will, rights to menus and food service techniques." I recall sadness in the community when the Inn was closed by about 1976.

My memories from back when I was in high school (our Elkins High School Class of '69 just had a 55-year reunion) are of Faraway Hills having a popular somewhat upscale restaurant located in a sprawling farmhouse on the old Staunton-Parkersburg pike near its intersection with Georgetown Road not too far from Beverly. Some of my classmates and other young men got their first real job experience waiting tables there, and I presume there are still some fond memories of that.

I spent a couple of hours in Blue Plate Books that day, returning to look at that magazine more than once, before finally deciding that it just needed to come home. It now occupies a place of honor on my overcrowded shelves, perhaps just awaiting the next chapter in its own saga.



Museum Facelift

The Blackman-Bosworth Store Building, originally built in 1824 of bricks hand-made by enslaved people, is the oldest commercial brick building in Randolph County. Now, 200 years later, this building's masonry has been repaired and repointed. The work was done this summer by "Bugs" Shourds of Cardemone Historical, funded by a Development Grant from the WV State Historic Preservation Office, and matched by organization funds and donations. This project, prioritized for the RCHS Centennial, follows other priority repairs in recent years, such as roof replacements and installation of climate control for the building. Hopefully this special building, and the Randolph County Museum that calls it home, will be preserved for another 100 years!



RCHS Banquet

In January, 1925, the newly formed Randolph County Historical Society held a banquet at the Tygart Hotel. In our ongoing commemoration of the Society's Centennial, we are planning a banquet with program on January 10, 2025 at the newly re-opened Tygart Hotel. The program will feature the history of the hotel and the architect who designed it. While the cost for this banquet will likely be more than the \$1 per plate charged at the first one, we are sure the excellent menu will be worth it! Mark your calendar now, and stay tuned to future communications for ticket reservations.

Artifact Corner

by Tucker Hampton

This 42 inch tall, hourglass-shaped cast iron coffee mill, can be seen in the Randolph County Museum main exhibit. It features a hopper at the top, capable of holding several pounds of coffee. The two 25-inch diameter wheels, equipped with handles, drive the grinding mechanism, while a wooden drawer at the bottom collects the ground coffee. Typically painted in red or green, the mill is adorned with decorative decals, and the brass wheels proudly display the company name. The hopper lid is topped with a cast iron eagle finial. Weighing about 140 pounds, this coffee mill is a striking piece.



One of the most popular coffee mills from the mid-19th to early 20th century, the Enterprise Coffee Mill was produced by the Enterprise Manufacturing Company, founded in Philadelphia in 1864. This company was a leading manufacturer of both large and small coffee grinders, producing heavy-duty models for grocers, retailers, and wholesalers.

As many rural Americans lacked the means to grind their own coffee, these mills were sold to general stores to meet consumer demand. The Enterprise store grinder was manufactured from 1886 to 1898 and marked the company's first venture into coffee production, becoming one of their most successful products. Following this success, Enterprise developed a variety of household grinders that could be wall-mounted, versatile enough to grind not only coffee but also cornmeal, cereal, and bone meal.



These coffee mills were commonly sold to grocery stores as a convenient way to grind coffee and became a status symbol for rural grocers. Their vibrant colors and decorative designs made them eye-catching attractions, especially as coffee gained popularity among consumers. For many rural

Americans, access to coffee mills was limited, making the Enterprise coffee mill a sought-after item. As its popularity soared, so did consumers' appetite for coffee.

Compared to Europe, America was relatively late to embrace the coffee craze, which began to gain traction in the late 18th century. In 1798, Thomas Bruff, Thomas Jefferson's dentist, produced the first American coffee grinder and mentioned in a letter to Jefferson in 1801 that it could grind a pound in just 4½ minutes. Today, the Enterprise Coffee Mill is a valuable collector's item. Some collectors still use them to grind coffee, while others display them as beautiful pieces of craftsmanship.

AmeriCorps Update

By Tucker Hampton

Hello, my name is Tucker Hampton. I'm excited to serve as the AFNHA AmeriCorps member for the Randolph County Museum and Camp Pioneer through the 2024-2025 year. I moved to Elkins in early September from Marietta, Ohio. Marietta is a small yet historically significant town in early American history, so naturally I feel right at home here! I've already learned so much about this area, and I look forward to discovering even more.

I graduated from Marietta College in 2022 with a Bachelor of Arts in History, focusing on Museum Studies and Human Geography. I also minored in Legal Studies. After college I worked as a lineman, secretary, and a substitute teacher. I'm hoping to get into graduate school next year for Library Science. I value the diverse experiences I've gathered in my career. During my first month in this role, it has been incredible; I've learned so much. I'm eager to continue my work at the Randolph County Museum and Camp Pioneer. I'm grateful to my supervisor, Carolyn Channell, for her invaluable support in helping me get started.



There is so much for me to learn and accomplish this year, and I look forward to all the experiences that lie ahead!

Support Randolph County History!

Please join or renew your membership in the Randolph County Historical Society. Your tax deductible dues and donations support the Randolph County Museum, and the preservation of our county's history.

**Randolph County
Historical Society**

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