

**Officers for 2005/2006:**

Bill Dean– President 727-9372  
Alex Gabany - Vice President 727-8995  
Neil Richardson – Vice President Fund Raising & Special Events 727-5972 and  
Editor  
Ellen Mills-Pauley – Secretary 757-7189  
Oedia Cyrus – Treasurer 727-3196

St. Albans Historical Society  
404 4<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
St. Albans, WV 25177

Spring 2006

- 1906 Statistics
- Mohler House
- Midland Trail History
- Carter G. Woodson School History
- 2005 History Hero

**WV HISTORY HERO  
From St. Albans for 2005/2006**

**2006 Margaret Williams** of St. Albans was nominated as a WV History Hero at the West Virginia History Day at the State Capitol on February 16, 2006. Margaret has been an active member of the St. Albans Historical Society for more than 15 years. Ms. Williams also provided a number of articles for the *History of St. Albans* book, which was published in 1993 and served on its committee to gather articles and photos. She always volunteers to work the Morgan Kitchen Summer Open House and it's Fall Festival and also volunteers for Open Houses at the group's Historical Society Building, as well as other events by that group. Nominated by the St. Albans Historical Society.

**St. Albans  
Historical Society  
Newsletter - Spring 2006**

**JUNE PICNIC**

The June picnic is on Saturday, June 3 at 6:00 p.m. at the St. Albans City Park at Shelter #1. This is the first shelter on the left. Bring your favorite picnic dish, plus your drink and plate & utensils .



The election will also be held for President, Vice President of Special Events and Treasurer. We also need to fill the 1 yr. remaining term of Secretary. Ellen Mill Pauley is unable to complete that term.

**Morgan Kitchen Fall Festival**

Last year's Fall Festival at the cabin was so successful, we will have another one on Saturday, October 7. We will be joined this year by several other groups around town to celebrate the first annual "St. Albans Founders Day" that weekend.

From Friday thru Sunday, there will be (tentative) Historic Tours, Open Houses of historic buildings & displays, Main St. gatherings, Historic Play at City Park, a dinner/dance at the St. Marks Episcopal Church, Signage erected and much more. More later.

**Dues are Due**

2006 Dues are now due if you have not paid. They are \$10 per year per family or \$7.00 for an individual. Give your money to our treasurer, Oedia Cyrus.

**Historic Sidewalk Tour**

The St. Albans Historical Society will sponsor a Historic Walking Tour at noon on Saturday, May 20. It will begin on Old Main Plaza at noon. The free tour will go along the historic district of Main St. and then to Eighth Ave., site of many magnificent homes and observing six individual properties on the National Register. Canceled in case of inclement weather. This is an excellent chance to pick up some unique information and history about these buildings and the Historic District.

**2006 Meeting Dates / Activities**

(All meetings are at the Wm. P. Burdette Memorial Building at 404, 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. - 2:00 p.m.  
All meetings are on **Sundays** unless otherwise stated)

**May 20, 2006** - Sidewalk Tour

**June 3, 2006** - (Saturday picnic 6 pm)

**June – August** – Morgan's Kitchen Open House each Sunday 2 – 4 pm

**September 10, 2006** - Regular Meeting

**October 7, 2006** Morgan's Kitchen

Fall Festival 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**November 12, 2006** - Regular Meeting

**December 2, 2006** - (Christmas Homes Tour) 6 - 9 p.m.

**Books for Sale:**

We still have several copies of books we have published that are available:

**NEW**

- Bicentennial of the Burning of Fort Tackett, 1790 – 1990  
By Bill Williams - \$5.00

\*\*\*\*\*

- "Tribute to Jennie Hughes"
- "The Growing, Booming Years of St. Albans" - \$5.00
- "Tornado Remembers" - \$5.00
- "Historical Sketch of St. Albans, WV – 1938" - \$5.00
- "St. Albans Historic and Architectural Survey" - \$5.00
- "St. Albans History - \$50.00

**Historic St. Albans Video**

We have sold over 100 copies of the "History of St. Albans" video. If interested in getting a VHS (\$15) or DVD (\$20), stop by McGee's Office Supplies where they have some for sale. Pass the word.

## Mohler/Mckown House

819 Pa. Ave. – ca. 1900.

**Wm. E. Mohler/Mckown House**, also known as Hill Grove, was built by the prominent lumberman and civic leader Wm. E. Mohler in 1900-1901. He also owned the Mohler Lumber Co. and built the first water works in town. During WWII, up to 95 women were housed here. They worked at the Naval Ordnance Plant in South Charleston. This house is the only true Queen Ann style house in town with its rounded turret, ballroom and elaborate chimneys setting it off and its large rounded porch. Currently owned by Laurie McKown. This house was placed on the **National Register of Historic Places** in 1988. *(Sale is pending 5-2006)*

*Note: A phone conversation by Neil Richardson with Mrs. Betty Kenna was held on June 8, 2005. Mrs. Kenna was a daughter of Col. Walter Phillips, the son-in-law of Wm. Mohler. She called to get Laurie McKown's (owner) phone number to see if she and her family could visit her family's old home place.*

*She told the story of how her grandfather, Wm. Mohler, had a ball for his daughter's (Reba Hereford) 16<sup>th</sup> birthday that lasted until 1:00 a.m. The elders of Mr. Mohler's church, 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church, mentioned to him later that the party lasted into the Sabbath and was not allowed, according to the Bible. No further balls were held in the magnificent 3<sup>rd</sup> floor ballroom after that. Mrs. Kenna also mentioned how the grand piano was installed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor in the house as it was being built. It is still there. Reba Reeves Mohler Hereford was married to a son of C. D. Hereford (W. Donald Hereford) and the union ended in divorce. Reba later moved to Oklahoma and then California*

*Betty Kenna's father, Col. Walter Phillips, was Chief of Staff at Pearl Harbor when it was attacked on December 7, 1941 and Betty said that she was also there. She also said that she is now 80 years old, which would have made her approximately 16 when the attack occurred.*



1911 Photo of the Mohler House

By: Neil Richardson 6/2005

## History of the Midland Trail

By Neil Richardson

January, 2006

Many of you have traveled on Kanawha Turnpike in South Charleston. Did you know that it was part of the first road through the Kanawha Valley? Originally an Indian Trail, George Washington ordered it to be cleared in 1790 and made into a road. He realized that settlers were traveling west and need a good road. It was finally completed through the Kanawha Valley in 1820. It was then named the James River and Kanawha Turnpike (thus Kanawha Turnpike...and Kanawha Terrace in St. Albans). This road was used by stagecoach, horse and buggy and was even used for cattle and hog drives. Inns and taverns were common along its route for overnight stays.

During the Civil War, both Union and Confederate troops traveled this road. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, it was more commonly called the Midland Trail. Today it is mostly part of U.S. Route 60, except where newer roads have bypassed the older routes, like in South Charleston and St. Albans. This road was designated Route 60 in 1926 and originally went from Virginia Beach to Missouri. Today Route 60 ends in Arizona.

The Hawks Nest State Park museum was built in the 1930's by the CCC and the pictures and drawings in the museum about the Midland Trail are from the 1930's and have never been updated. It is much like going back in time. The Midland Trail is designated a "National Scenic Byway", much like the National Road through Pennsylvania. This road was originally a toll road, with tolls collected every several miles to help with its maintenance when the road was mostly dirt and stone. Some of its tolls were: 25 cents for a wagon and driver, 6 ¼ cents for a man on a horse, 5 cents for a man walking, and 3 cents for a hog.

To give you an idea of traveling on the Midland Trail before the Civil War, Mollie Hansford of St. Albans wrote in her memoirs (1.) about a trip she took in the late summer of 1854, the day of her wedding, from St. Albans to Winchester, Va.. She said "We traveled from Coalsmouth in our hack to Malden on the first day". She visited her uncle there who worked in the Salt Furnaces. The 2<sup>nd</sup> day, Mollie and her husband traveled to another uncle's place opposite Paint Creek, where he operated a tollgate. The 3<sup>rd</sup> day they finally made it to Gauley Bridge, and the 4<sup>th</sup> day they stayed at Tyree's Tavern, or half-way house, at Ansted. (This house still stands near Hawks Nest State Park along the highway). The 5<sup>th</sup> night they made it to Lewisburg, Va. and the next day arrived at the "Old White" at White Sulphur Springs, where they stayed several days. (This must have been their honeymoon).

The next stop for the night was Hot Springs, Va. and from there they went to New Market on the "macadam road". Mollie said "This was the best road I ever saw, smooth and as solid as a floor. We traveled fast." The 8<sup>th</sup> day traveling (not including a few days at the "Old White") they stopped at Mt. Jackson, Va. for the night and, finally, after traveling in a buggy for nearly 2 weeks, they arrived in Winchester, Va. (today a 5-6 hour drive or 1 hour in an airplane).

My Great-great grandfather, Juell Richardson, also wrote of his travels on the Midland Trail in 1866 from Augusta County, Va. to Charleston with his family after purchasing land at Dutch Hollow, in Dunbar. They traveled with a covered wagon with all of their possessions in a wagon train and mentioned that they had to switch teams of oxen between wagons to get them up the inclines at Sewell Mountain.

While all of Mollie Hansford's travel was not on the Midland Trail, most of her travels were. So....we can see that this early Indian trail became one the most important roads in America...the Midland Trail.

### References:

- "Recollections of Mollie Hansford", edited by Bill Wintz
- Midland Trail Association brochure
- "The Dutch Hollow Richardson's", by Jesse Richardson

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

### Here are some of the U.S. statistics for the Year 1906:

The average life expectancy in the U.S. was 47 years.

Only 14 percent of the homes in the U.S. had a bathtub.

Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone.

There were only 8,000 cars in the U.S., and only 144 miles of paved roads.

The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.

The average wage in the U.S. was 22 cents per hour.

The average U.S. worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year.

More than 95 percent of all births in the U.S. took place at home.

Ninety percent of all U.S. doctors had no college education.

Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

Canada passed a law that prohibited poor people from entering into their country.

Five leading causes of death in the U.S. were: 1. Pneumonia and influenza 2. Tuberculosis 3. Diarrhea 4. Heart disease 5. Stroke

Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school.

Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at the local corner drugstores.

Back then pharmacist said, "Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health."

### MORGAN KITCHEN OPEN HOUSE VOLUNTEERS - 2006 (Sundays from 2-4 p.m.)

DATE	NAME
May 28 (Memorial Day)	Neil Richardson
June 4	Bill & Carol Graley
June 11	Alex & Nona Gabany
June 18 (Fathers Day)	Bettie Burdette & Margaret Williams Bill Currey, D. D. Duffield ?
June 25	Paul & Oedia Cyrus
July 2 (Holiday)	Jack Gessel, Richard Milam
July 9	Bill Dean
July 16	Bill Currey, D. D. Duffield
July 23	
July 30	Tom & Dawna McKeny
August 6	Glade Little
August 13	Hughes & Carolyn Booher
August 20	Bill Currey, D. D. Duffield
August 27	Bill & Linda Troutman
September 3 (Labor Day)	Bill & Carol Graley

## Carter G. Woodson School

There were actually two schools in St. Albans named the Carter G. Woodson School. The first school for black students had its beginnings in 1912 at Pennsylvania Avenue in St. Albans in what is now the American Legion Hall building. It was named the Carter G. Woodson School. There were also two other black schools in town, Roland Hayes School in Amandaville, and Roseville School on Rosedale Drive. All three of these schools were closed in the spring of 1933 when the county school system was established. The students were transported to the new school in eastern St. Albans called Stop 16 School, due the trolley stop located there

From 1933 to 1940, it was called Stop 16 Elementary School, with grades one through six. The new masonry school had two floors with four classrooms. The first principal / teacher was Joseph Kinney. In the fall of 1940, the junior high was added and the name was changed to Carter G. Woodson Elementary and Junior High School, with grades seven through nine added. The building was enlarged to include a gymnasium / cafeteria and more classrooms. There were less than 200 students in grades one through nine during those years of existence.

The black school ceased to exist in 1956 due to integration of black and white students in the same school. The last principal at Carter G. Woodson School was Charles Preston. The name was then change to McKinley Junior High School, and some students from St. Albans Junior High began attending there.

Former student, Eugene Washington, remembered that athletics, including basketball and football, was a big part of the school. "Homer W. Price was the coach," he said.

Carter G. Woodson students also enjoyed plays and carnivals, girls took home economics and boys took industrial arts in grades seven, eight and nine. The school year ended with a prom, class day and commencement. During the school's years of operation, students were taught culture, integrity, diligence and awareness of self-esteem. Also, the school gained special recognition in various fields of endeavors.

"Even though Carter G. Woodson School no longer exists, the memories and heritage will never be forgotten by these who passed through her walls," Washington said in a 2006 interview in the Metro West.

The school is named after two distinguished Americans, both with ties to the Kanawha Valley. Carter G. Woodson, known as the "Father of Black History," holds an outstanding position in early 20th century American history. Woodson authored numerous scholarly books and founded Negro History Week in 1926 (precursor to Black History Month). Born to former slaves in Virginia, 1895, a twenty-year-old Carter entered Douglass High School in Huntington, WV, where he received his diploma in less than two years and in 1912, he received his Ph.D. in history from Harvard University. He served as dean of Howard University and WV State College.

William McKinley became the 25<sup>th</sup> U.S. president in 1893. McKinley actually resided in the Kanawha Valley and Charleston in 1863 as he served in the Union Army as a lieutenant during the Civil War at Ft. Scammon atop Ft. Hill in Charleston. His second term came to a tragic end in September 1901 when he was assassinated by Leon Czolgosz.

4-2006 by Neil Richardson

References: "St. Albans History", 1993 and "Metro West", Charleston Newspaper, Feb. 15, 2006.

