



NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1993

MARCH MEETING

On Wednesday, March 17, 1993, Russell L. Bonasso will speak before members of the Harrison County Historical Society at 7:30 p.m. in the Stealey-Goff-Vance House. He will tell the history of the Bonasso family that emigrated from Italy to the West Fork River Valley during the early years of the twentieth century. Members of the family have long been active in business, civic, and social circles of Harrison and Marion counties. Russell Bonasso for years was associated with the Louis A. Johnson Veterans Administration Medical Center in Clarksburg and retired as executive assistant of the chief of staff.

APRIL DINNER MEETING

The annual dinner meeting of the Society will be held at 6:30 p.m. on April 22, 1993, at Raymon's Restaurant, 336 East Pike Street, Clarksburg. The speaker following the dinner will be Thomas J. Koon, president of the Marion County Historical Society. He will speak on aspects of Marion County history. In 1992 Marion County, formed in 1842 from northern Harrison County and Southern Monongalia County, celebrated its sesquicentennial. Mr. Koon is executive director of the Marion County Historical Society Museum located in downtown Fairmont and is president of the Fairmont chapter of AARP.

During the business session of the meeting, officers for 1993-1994 will be elected.

MAY MEETING

Mr. Jeff Wyne will speak at 7:30 p.m. in the Stealey-Goff-Vance House on May 19, 1993. Mr. Wyne is proprietor of the Stonewall Jackson Book Shelf in Clarksburg. He will speak on the life of Stonewall Jackson and his own experience in collecting and dealing in books. Interested in the War Between the States, Mr. Wyne belongs to the local Civil War Round Table and is a member of the Harrison County Historical Society.

ANNUAL PICNIC

The annual picnic of the Society will be held in the garden of the Stealey-Goff-Vance House at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 16, 1993. Members are requested to bring a covered dish; the Society will furnish drinks.

THE COLLECTION

Acquisitions:

Miner's cloth cap and oil-burning light worn by a miner who worked circa 1913 in a Clarksburg-area coal mine; brass carbide miner's light. Gifts from Mr. Robert Charles, East Aurora, NY.

Miner's dinner bucket, circa 1930. Gift of Jack Sandy Anderson.

Museum Hours:

The museum will be open to visitors on Friday from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. May through Sept.

JULIA DAVIS ADAMS

We members of the historical society are diminished by the loss of Julia Davis Adams who died at age 92 on Saturday, January 30, 1993, in the Jefferson Memorial Hospital at Ransom near Charles Town, West Virginia.

Julia Davis Adams was the author of dozens of novels, plays, memoirs. *LEGACY OF LOVE* tells of her years of growing up in Clarksburg in her grandfather's house which stood on the corner of Lee Avenue and South Third Street and overlooked the courthouse and the business district of Clarksburg. After World War I when her father served from 1919 to 1921 as U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Julia Davis left Wellesley college and taking with her a cousin, Katy Watson, lived in the U. S. Embassy in London. *THE EMBASSY GIRLS* published last fall by the West Virginia University Press tells of the enthusiasm and excitement of two young American girls as they enjoy "a glittering show" of royal receptions and garden parties, country life at great houses, Parliamentary openings, visits to Oxford and Cambridge, the regatta at Henley, racing at Ascot and Epsom, dances and balls and new friends of both genders. Following her tour in London, Julia Davis visited India as a guest of the Viceroy. In *THE EMBASSY GIRLS* the author successfully recaptures the style of an American Embassy circa 1920, the social work of Great Britain after the end of World War I and the eons of a vanishing order in Britain and in India. William Leonhart, a retired career U.S. Ambassador who reviewed the book said, "Miss Davis' sharp eyes observed them all [happenings in Britain] and illuminates them today in the remarkable prescient recollections."

Home to Julia Davis Adams was always her grandfather's house in Clarksburg, where her father practiced law in the first decade of the century and her grandfather McDonald's farm near Charles Town, WV, where as a child Julia Davis spent summers. She eventually purchased the McDonald Farm and lived there in later years. She never refused an invitation to visit Clarksburg.

In 1974 when Julia Davis was Mrs. Charles Pratt Healy and living in Princeton, NJ, she came to speak at the annual dinner of the Society held in the Sheraton hotel. She was back again in August of the same year for a luncheon marking the fiftieth anniversary of "John W. Davis Day" celebrated in Clarksburg in August 1924 when John W. Davis returned to Clarksburg to be notified officially that he was the candidate of the Democrat Party for President of the United States.

When she came to Clarksburg in recent years Julia Davis Adams was the guest of Frank Maxwell and his wife Susan in their home in Goff Plaza. She spoke at Waldomore during the celebration of the Bicentennial of Harrison County in 1984. Senator Jennings Randolph sparked a luncheon held at the Clarksburg Country Club in August 1984 in observance of the sixtieth anniversary of "John W. Davis Day." Julia Davis spoke during the program following the luncheon. She accepted an invitation to speak at the annual April dinner of the Society in 1991, but illness sent her to the hospital and President Jack Sandy Anderson spoke in her stead. In the last two years, too frail to make public appearances, Julia Davis Adams has two times returned to her beloved Clarksburg to visit in the home of Frank and Susan Maxwell.

In recent Julia Davis Adams edited diaries of her father into a book which is being published by the West Virginia University Press and is scheduled to be released for sale at the end of March 1993. She was busy at work in recent months rewriting THE SHENANDOAH which she wrote earlier for THE RIVERS OF AMERICA SERIES. She was shortening the text and writing in a style for the book to be published as a children's book.

Funeral services were held Thursday, February 4, 1993, at the Zion Episcopal Church in Charles Town. Julia Davis Adams recently remarked to Society President Anderson that although she had a gravesite and a grave marker near those of her father John W. Davis in a cemetery in New York, she had decided to be interred in the cemetery with her mother and her people near Charles Town.

PUBLICATIONS

All copies of **THE HARRISON COUNTY** by Henry Haymond have been sold. The Society does not plan to reprint the book.

Harrison County Historical Society has the following books for sale:

Davis, Julia. **LEGACY OF LOVE**, \$22.00.

Early, Margaret Holt. **HOLT-BENNETT FAMILY** (with supplement), \$10.00.

(to order, send check to Harrison County Historical Society, P.O. Box 2074, Clarksburg, WV 26301).

James & Law Co., 217 West Main St., Clarksburg, WV has for sale Julia Davis' **THE EMBASSY GIRLS**, \$25.00. The store will handle the book containing the diaries of John W. Davis as soon as the book is released.

SOCIETY BUSINESS

A year ago with grant funds matched by the Society, the first step in restoration of the Stealey-Goff-Vance House was completed. Workers stabilized the foundation of the house. The second phase of the restoration will be to point the bricks on the exterior of the house. A grant for this work is on hold until the Society comes up with its share of the cost.

At the moment volunteers are busy preparing the museum for spring opening. Society members appreciate those who help make the museum function and keep the grounds of the property presentable. Board Member Don Higinbotham telephones and then brings Neva Myers to the Stealey-Goff-Vance House when the interior needs cleaning. Mrs. Myers makes the rooms sparkle and delights in her work. She identifies with the artifacts as if they were her own which indeed they are since she resides on Willis Avenue in Bridgeport and every item in the public museum is associated with the lives of Harrison County natives. For years Russell Messenger of 529 1/2 West Pike St., Clarksburg, has mowed the grass at the property. No one needs call him: he knows when the grass needs to be cut. With Messenger's dependable help and Board Member Russell Riethmiller's trimming of the hedge in the front of the property, summer is a delight in the garden of the museum.