

Mr. and Mrs. John S. Webb, Old Timers, Write from Louisville

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The Mountain Eagle

WHITESBURG, LETCHER COUNTY, KENTUCKY.THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1955

Mr. and Mrs. John S. Webb, Old Timers, Write From Louisville

Since the days of our long retirement, seriously thinking and often meditating over the past years and with bold courage looking with determined eyes into the future, we humbly hope, into a brighter and better day; I have spent a good portion of time and some expense in viewing and studying a close chronological and biographical research of the different generations of the people who to-day inhabit the beautiful broad acres of Kentucky. More especially, you might say, of eastern Kentucky on down into our native hills, naturally, down into our own native hills-our kith and kin, our own blood.

This very fine generosity as presently given we old people only passes this way once in a lifetime and we should all take off our hats to the present day management of The Mountain Eagle with all its fine force even - down to the "bootblack." Personally, we should highly appreciate one employee there, Mr. Parnel Johnson and family as we must think his very fine wife has always been a strong inspiration to him as well as his nice little family to the untiring efforts of them back in the home. I must recall and mention here the many, many times I have walked into this humble, little "print shop" in the lower end of town and see our brother and the youthful "Parnell" - even in the night time - scrambling with the type, with "foggy" heads and faces and hands all splotched with printer's ink. At all times, though, there was a bright glow of light to even help to brighten the gloomy shop. The light and brightness flowing from their eyes even extended into all the outside world to help cheer the heart of millions.

All the past with its memories have always spoken melancholly to this boy - even from my early youth. I have often felt that being too tender-hearted has been a great handicap to my efforts over the years - even in general business or church work. Yes, all the past has been quite sacred to me and I can hardly go further without mentioning our dear brother, the late Nehemiah Mark Webb, the former owner and first editor. During his long illness and confinement he automatically become Editor Emeritus of this fleet bird - the king of the air, all the broad space of oceans and even the elements above us. I can vividly recall many of the groans and turmoils encountered by this blessed soul in giving birth of existance to this very fine newspaper. It was back in the gloomy days of 1906 - you can imagine. After spending more than twenty years of early life in research of knowledge and education and teaching in the common schools of Letcher County he decided to become a newspaper editor and ventured out in that direction. After getting well financed the problem for a name was the next question. Previous to this The Pound Gap Enterprise had come into being in the head of the river country and died

Media Objects for Jason Lewis Webb

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Jason Webb

Attached to in this tree



Benjamin Webb
1785 - 1867



James Franklin Crittenden Sr Webb
1737 - 1825



Jason Lewis Webb
1820 - 1903



John Webb
1695 - 1774




John Webb
1661 - 1711



John S Webb
1877 -

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in its morning. After a few days of thinking and consulting us all he come

out with The Mountain Eagle - a more suitable name couldn't have been thought out. The first copy flew off the press on August 8, 1906. Its been flying ever since.

Doubtless SOME of our generations to follow might be thoughtful enough to grasp a clipping from these pages in order for their children's children to know who they are as time rolls on and on. My friends, this is not what we stopped here for. We have a task to perform.

However, under every besieging condition and circumstance, we MUST go forward. Suffice to say: early in the seventeenth century, John Webb, a twelve-year-old boy, living in the coast town of Southampton, England, reprimanded by his family over attending school soon boarded a west-bound ship for the New World.

There is very little question in my mind but what most of the Webb generation was thus carried into the New World. Our great-great grandfather, James Webb, was with Washington at Valley Forge. After the revolution he migrated through Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee into the hills of Kentucky. He, too, having adventurous blood for a time fell in with his cousin, Daniel Boone, and for some time was apprentice engineer in helping blaze out The Old Wilderness Trail on Boone's second visit into the wilds of the southeast Kentucky mountains. It was this same James Webb who accompanied Boone on his third visit as they strolled in a more eastern direction which led them through The Breaks of Sandy, up Elkhorn Creek and down the north fork of Kentucky River to mouth of Boone's Fork. In camping there was the time Boone carved his name and date on the big historical beech tree with a large flint. The big chip was later cut out and taken to Washington city and placed conspicuously in our National Museum. The writer has often looked upon this chip. The tree blew down and decayed in my memory.

On this journey great-grand father James spied and married a Kentucky beauty. He was one of the first deacons of old Oven Fork Church. His remains sleep in the little cemetery on the little hill (doubtless unmarked) across from the present Eolia School. Our father, the late Jason Lewis Webb, was born March 3, 1820 near the old home cemetery at Mayking. He was one of the large family reared by grandfather, Benjamin Webb and grandmother Jane Adams Webb, who are resting in our old cemetery now, (unmarked). Also all the older sons and daughters of grandfather lived and reared very large families in the environs of Mayking. Their generations have helped populate Kentucky and many other states and countries. Our father was one of the old Webb's who reared two separate families. Will state here, while I'd like to unravel and expand on and on but space, time and expediency will not permit. He reared 16 children to manhood and woman- from each family having died in infancy. I am the fifteenth child and eleventh son of the family of eighteen and among the youngest of our mother's family (the second family). All of this family grew up, married and reared families in the same section of Letcher with the exception of brother "Rob" - Robert S. Webb, now nearing his eighty-seventh year of 3929 Los Angeles 62, Calif.

I was born in a log cabin at what is now Sergeant, Ky., about 1875. Only got a slight glimpse of the eighth grade by attending part of three, four and five months terms of school mostly under the tutorship of our older brothers. At the age of sixteen I spent my first whole dollar in the teacher's examination, merited a certificate and kept my first school at Franks Creek School close up to the Big Black in 1893 and almost in the shadow of the old lonesome pine later made quite famous in John Fox's "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine." The late James P. Lewis, our school superintendent paid us one fine visit with many compliments.

Incidentally, I was boarding with Uncle Ambrose and Aunt Nancy Taylor. Aunt Nancy was the only whole sister of Dr. M. B. Taylor who was hanged for murder at Wise, Virginia on Oct. 10th, 1893. The day passed on as if nothing was happening. Young Sylvan Tyler, age 25 was my student and in school that day.

At the age of twenty-one I married Sillar M. Jenkins, daughter of Arch and Jennie Craft Jenkins on Sept. 2, 1897.

and Jenny Craft Jenkins on Sept. 3, 1897.

Our first born was a sweet little girl, Lida Verna. God in his wisdom saw best to waft her little spirit into the mystic realms of Heaven on Friday morning, Nov. 16, 1899, while her little body (dust) will sleep in peace on the little knoll overlooking the Kentucky River at Thornton cemetery until the second coming of Christ, the Savior of the world and then be freed from the grave and take its flight to heaven and be with God and all His glory with multitudes in peace forever and forever. Our second, a son, Leon P. Webb of 2053 1/2 Oak View Road, Ashland, Ky. He answered the call to duty in both World Wars and carried on with credit to the AMERICAN SOLDIER.

My second and living wife was Eliza Collins, daughter of the late Elisha Collins, Sr., and Sarah Grayson of Tennessee, of Camp Branch (Letcher County). The history of our Collins generation was well compounded in a recent letter by our friend and relative, John W. Collins of Isom. Here's our individual family in rotation: Lettie Jane Keys, 305 Tuxedo Ave. Indianapolis 1, Ind.; Viola Crase ??43 Kahlert Ave., Louisville, Ky. The late Robert S. Webb, Jr., who died in University of Virginia Hospital, Charlottesville, Va. April 10, 1949 after a serious brain tumor operation and living 80 hours in an iron lung - artificial respiration. Love1 G. Franklin, Route 4, Box 896, Louisville, Ky. Lorraine Proffitt, 3128 Adams St., Indianapolis, Ind. Irene Jacobs, Rt. 10, Box 590, Louisville, Ky. Ocilla Lawson, Route 10, Box 284, Louisville, Ky.

We can boast of 22 grandchildren and fourteen great grandchildren. In all with the in-laws there's about fifty in our family. Like Sam Henry's bullet - it's going right on and on. As to my professions they're almost numberless. Over the past sixty-two years I've really been places. But I'll try. Starting as a teacher, farmer and gardener. Four times a merchant, logger, trader and contractor and carpenter. Was commissioned postmaster at Sergent, Ky., Nov. 20, 1894, resigned in 1897. Appointed postmaster at Thornton in October, 1918 and resigned in March, 1926. Also both my wives were postmistress at Ola, P. O., now Thornton. July 1, 1934, I took over a foreman's position from the U. S. Department of Interior with the newly organized Civilian Conservation Corps at Camp Four in the Mammoth Cave area of Kentucky. My experience for more than two years in that position, showing the boys through the big caves at the termination of their services, help getting the big rock off the Indian mummy in a newly discovered area down deep in the cave, climbing up Jacobs ladder and squeezing through Fat Man's Misery and scrambling over the rocks, rills and hills would be a story within itself. Later in life I held a number of other government positions by appointment.

In May, 1907 I connected with the Primitive Baptist Church by experience and baptism and have lived up to the old faith once delivered to the saints and feel like THAT faith has carried me over a great many heartaches, troubles, trials and tribulations and am looking forward in that same tried and true faith to waft me safely into the arms of my blessed Savior who come to the earth at the command of God to live and died on the tree of the cross for the sins of all men and women. (?) Was elected representative from the old 97th. - Floyd, Knott and Letcher - district of Kentucky along with Governor A. O. Stanley in 1915 and served two terms under his political leadership - 1916 to 1920. We enacted much valuable legislation - laws - still used and appreciated by the people of Kentucky. There, I learned of the great discrimination (wrongs) the Democrats have imposed on the good people of Kentucky all through the past in the way of re-districting legislatively and senatorially as our staff constitution directs - they swear to it (?) During World War II - 1943 to 1945 - I was employed in office work in Louisville, Indianapolis and Detroit. Was closely connected with Chrysler Corporation in Detroit in connection with security department in the only job in that city making the atomic bomb and after its completion peace was signed August 13, 1945.

In making this little (?) write-up, I know I cannot do full justice to our people and the reading public without making a little mention of my career as a direct house to house salesman. Death in our family and

career as a direct house-to-house Salesman. Deaths in our family and

having to buy monuments for our departed dear ones prompted me to start selling marble markers to our relatives, friends and neighbors which later created East Kentucky Marble Agency in 1905. From this time to breaking out of World War I we set marble markers to thousands of graves in Kentucky, West Virginia and old Virginia. During this time, naturally, I was welcomed into the sacredness of a great many homes and shed many tears with occupants of many weeping homes. Was always welcomed on my returns with "Come right on in."

Since 1905 I've been rather professional as a salesman direct-selling house to house and business to business. Have been very successful in this line of work. I have sold everything worth while from moonshine to automobiles and Maytags. Have rattled door bells, used my knuckles till they got sore and pocket knife to roust 'em out within millions of homes in West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee and Ohio as well as the cities of Indianapolis, Cleveland and Detroit and the Dominion of Canada. Have mailed orders out to customers all the way from California to New York. Just recently sold an order of Knapp Shoes to a regular Knapp shoe wearer connected with National Dairies here in Louisville and mailed them to his home address in Long Island. Without boasting in the least I must think I've been in more separate homes than any living man. Would have to guess a million dollars have passed through my fingers - but didn't stay long. Over the past fifty years I must think this noble, fast-flying, patriotic bird has set sail over every ocean, stream and land under the canopy of heaven, sometimes carrying good and sometimes bad news. Yes, it has flown into millions of homes, soothed our wounded soldiers and brought heavenly smiles on the face and eased the aching heart of our dying soldier sons. It has perched by the holy bible in many homes as mother lisps her evening prayer in behalf of her sons and daughters who have crossed the threshold of their humble home thinking where is our wondering child tonight. Now, let us pray.

Respectfully submitted,

-Mr. and Mrs. John S. Webb
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 DavidWarrenHenry added this on 7 Jul 2010

from THE MOUNTAIN EAGLE, Whiteburg.
