



The Way I See it

By
Doug Ponder

Mother Nature was apparently having some mood swings this past week as the weather consisted of a severe ice storm last Friday all the way to severe thunderstorms on Wednesday.

But as we all know, last Friday's ice storm was one of the most horrific ice storms our county has seen in years. The storm wreaked havoc on the county's roadways and covered the majority of the roads with approximately a half-inch of ice, making travel extremely dangerous.

As reporters we always want to be the first on the scene of an accident so we can catch everything while it is happening. As the old saying goes "a picture is worth a thousand words." This is especially true at a weekly newspaper. Instead of simply writing about every event that happens in the county, we also want to provide pictures to attract our visual audience.

However, I also want to point out that I vow to never take pictures of the bodies of people who have died or are seriously injured as a result of an accident. For these cases, I always make sure they can't be seen in the pictures I use. Although it's legal for reporters to take such pictures, I personally believe it is morbid and unnecessary. I myself have lost loved ones in tragic accidents and I would have been furious if any news media outlet showed my loved ones dead bodies in their pictures or videos.

So on Thursday night, I paid close attention to the latest weather news and knew there might be some freezing rain in the morning that could possibly lead to slick roadways. Anytime this occurs, you can always count on an accident to happen so I kept my scanner on in order to catch it when it happened.

When I woke up around 7:30 Friday morning, I noticed the scanner had remained silent all night and I was astonished to discover it was above 32 degrees and only misting rain. However, about an hour later everything changed.

Emergency responders were paged out to their first wreck around 8:30 last Friday morning when a tractor trailer rolled over an embankment on southbound I-75 at the 70 mile marker. After that wreck, the scanner rarely stopped for another 36 hours as wreck after wreck was called in by people who were driving on the county's icy roadways.

I had never seen anything like it and I immediately began to think of those people who had no choice but to travel on the icy roads. Some people were having medical emergencies while some people still had to travel to work because they

couldn't take the day off.

Salt trucks with the Rockcastle County Highway Department and state highway department also kept sliding off the roads while trying to salt the roadways. I even learned that state highway worker Earl "Big Earl" Blanton had slid his salt truck off the roadway. This news floored me because if Big Earl can't keep a salt truck on the road then the roads are obviously extremely slick and impossible to drive on.

With the fierce ice storm that covered our county, I know Rockcastle County EMS, road crews, police departments and volunteer fire departments were extremely busy during the ice storm. After talking to a lot of our emergency responders and highway workers this past week, I believe they did everything they could during the ice storm. Truth is no one can drive on ice. Good drivers can drive in snow but no one can drive on ice.

I am glad the temperatures rose on Saturday and melted the sheets of ice off the roads. From now on I would rather have snow than see us all go through another severe ice storm.

With that being said, it's obvious that Mother Nature is definitely living up to the old saying of "If you don't like the weather in Kentucky, just wait five minutes and it will change." So after having weather ranging from ice storms to severe thunderstorms all in one week, I think it is now time for some clear sunshiny days!

An Old-Time Witch Tale: The Historic Bell Witch?

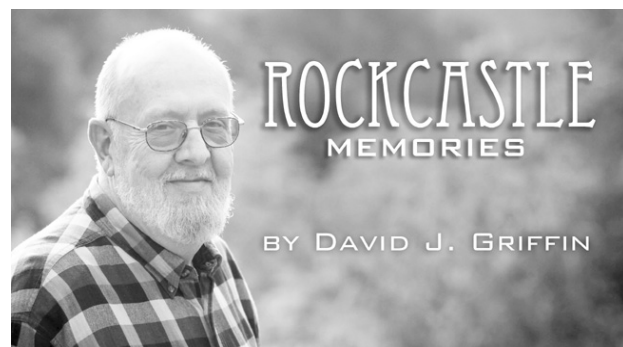
by: Tonya J. Cook



An Old-Time Witch Tale: The Historic Bell Witch?

Many years ago in 1782, John Bell married Lucy Williams. They were from North Carolina but moved to the Red River area of Robertson County, Tennessee. Robertson County is in the north-central portion of the state and borders Kentucky. They had a thousand-acre farm where they built a house. They lived there with their children: Jesse, John Jr., Drewry, Benjamin, Ester, Zadoc, Elizabeth, Richard William, and Joel Egbert. The family grew and prospered in spite of "our family trouble", as they called it.

The "trouble" was they were tormented by a witch. The true origin has been lost to history but it is said to have begun like this, in the words of the witch: "I am a spirit; I once was very happy, but I've been dis-



The nostalgia of a wood-burning fire

Yesterday, Kathy and I decided to have dinner at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant in Mt. Sterling. As we were escorted to our seats, we passed by the huge fireplace that was roaring with a wood fire. I silently hoped we would be seated close to the fire so that I could smell the aroma and hear the logs popping as they burned. Sure enough, we were seated in front of the fire and that suited me just fine. The smell reminded me of the fires that my grandfather built each winter day in his Warm Morning stove.

When I was small, I loved following my grandfather (Pop) as he gathered kindling for his huge Warm Morning stove. Pop had a knack of creating a fire that would last the entire night—even when the weather outside was frigid. We needed it, too, because the winds whipped around our small house atop a hill in the Pine Grove section of Rockcastle County. The task seemed to me to be an art form to him. I would watch closely. He explained what he was doing so that I would learn to build such a fire when I was older.

I will never forget the smell of Pop's Warm Morning Stove. That big old stove had a large window in the upper door through which Pop carefully placed his split wood. As the fire burned, the flames could be seen dancing inside the stove. You could watch the

fire from all around the living room. He always pulled his cherry rocker up close to the stove, purportedly so that he could keep an eye on his fire.

My experience with fire building was put to use on many occasions when as a boy, joining my young friends in the woods near our home. Kenneth Hansel and I often took night walks, and we selected a rocky place in the woods near Big Fill Cave to build our campfires. I think he loved to sit around a fire as much as I did. For some reason, I recall one night when several other boys who lived in the area joined us. That time we were on a ridge near the Carter home, all of us watching as the dancing embers flew away into the night sky.

On another occasion, I remember being in the cave area with my older brother, Al, and lots of his friends from Mt. Vernon First Baptist Church. They built a huge fire and spent the evening telling ghost stories for the younger children who were also in attendance. I sat on a cold rock near the fire, listening to the eerie stories. I was proud of my big brother that night because he, too, could build an awesome fire. I suppose Pop must have also taught

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Points East

By Ike Adams



Since its start-up, early last autumn, The Paint Lick Community Arts Center has hosted a few events that its founders, Hal and Yvonne Davis call "An Evening With----".

Community members and out-of-town guests provide dessert plates instead of buying tickets. We sit around for half an hour or so and visit over coffee, tea and cookies and then we listen to an artisan talk about his or her work or we listen to local musicians do their thing.

The center only has seating for 64 guests, but it can accommodate up to 75 if the overflow doesn't mind standing and leaning against the wall, or sitting on the floor. And that's what happened at both of the musical events Loretta and I have attended.

The first one featured my neighbors, Lewis and Donna Lamb, who are usually performing somewhere in Berea two or three times a week when they aren't the road someplace in Europe or Asia.

Lewis Lamb is internationally famous for his unique, Appalachian fiddle style and his daughter, Donna, who accompanies him on guitar, has also gained international recognition for her magnificent vocal delivery of old time mountain ballads.

Needless to say, the "sell-

out" crowd that showed up for "An Evening with Lewis and Donna Lamb" came as no surprise. That Bell Jack-son, one of the best claw-hammer banjo pickers I've ever heard, was sitting in with them was icing on the cake.

However, a couple of weeks ago, Loretta commenced insisting that I confirm that our names were on the guest list for the coming Friday's "Evening with Sam Gleaves and Friends." Frankly, I'd never heard of Sam Gleaves and I was not particularly curious as to whom he kept company with, but the fact of the matter is that there's not a heck of a lot to do if you want to hang out in Paint Lick on a Friday night.

All Hal Davis had told me was that Sam was "an up and coming mountain musician" a student at Berea College and a member of the school's Bluegrass Ensemble. That was more than enough to pique my interest.

Imagine my complete surprise when we walked in and found 60 of the 64 seats already taken, with Lewis and Donna Lamb sitting in the middle of the front row. Loretta scurried to get us two of the remaining seats near the very back of the room while I grabbed our drinks and snacks.

By the time Hal and

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turbed and made unhappy. I am a spirit of a person who was buried in the woods nearby and the grave was disturbed, by bones disintegrated and scattered, and one of my teeth was lost under this house. I am here looking for that tooth." Yet another account is that the spirit claims to be "a spirit from everywhere; heaven, hell, the earth; am in the air, the houses, any place, any time; have been created millions of years." These accounts can't be verified but there are a number of native tribal burial grounds in the area.

The first of the unusual disturbances was an episode when John Bell fired a shot at a strange dog-like creature which vanished. The children soon began to see strange creatures. Sounds soon followed; unseen knocking, flapping wings on the ceilings, gnawing like rats, chains dragging, and heavy objects hitting the door. The source of the sounds couldn't be found. The spirit physically abused some of the children by hitting, pinching, and pulling their hair. It had a great compassion for their mother, Lucy, saying she was the "most perfect woman living" and even cared for her and sang to her while she was sick.

Evidently, the witch despised her husband, John. The witch always referred to him as "Old Jack Bell" and blasted him with curses,

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