



The Way I See it

By
Doug Ponder

Earlier this week, I started reading our local historian David Owens' new book "Before Consolidation: The Golden Age of Rockcastle County Basketball." The book has been released and will be distributed to those who preordered on Saturday at the library. There will also be copies for sale on the same day.

The book provides the history of Rockcastle County basketball before the consolidation into Rockcastle County High School which gave us the Rockcastle County Rockets. Before the consolidation, each town in Rockcastle County had their own high school and their own sports teams, which primarily consisted of basketball. Those sports teams included the Mt. Vernon Red Devils, Brodhead Tigers and the Livingston Blue Devils.

Owens has spent six years gathering pictures, news articles and written excerpts from people who lived during that era. With these materials, Owens portrays how the love by the coaches, players and fans for these three individual teams was just as strong as the love UK basketball fans have for their beloved Wildcats.

During this time period, basketball was king in Rockcastle County and the three high schools in the county obviously became bitter rivals. Certain pictures in the book also show how the gymnasiums of the three teams would be packed during their home games and you can visually see how the atmosphere was comparable to a miniature Rupp Arena.

Personally, I am thankful that David Owens edited this book because any other editor without a Rockcastle County connection would have likely changed the sentence structure and reworded the sentences from the excerpts people had submitted. Changing how these excerpts were worded would have totally changed

the personality of the book by removing the personal touches of each author.

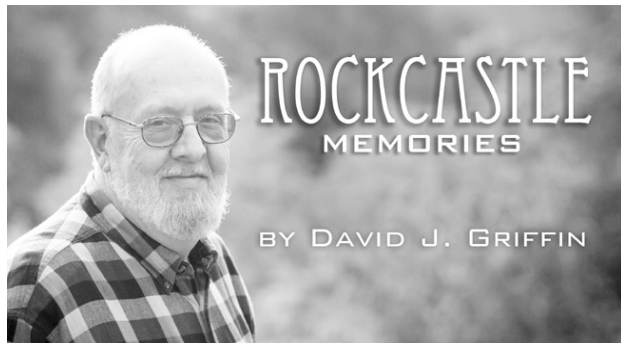
This book has brought on a wide range of emotions for me in so many different ways. Reading my grandpa Dell Ponder's excerpt about Livingston basketball brought a smile to my face. When I started reading what he had written I immediately went back to my childhood memories when all of the grandkids would be sitting with him on his front porch as he told us stories about his childhood, such as his first basketball having a knot on one side and when he would dribble it he never knew which way it would bounce.

While I was reading my grandpa's excerpt, it was like he was in the room with me and I could audibly hear him saying those exact same words from stories I have heard numerous time that never grew old.

The same was true for my late grandmother Shirley (Cummins) Caudill who was a Mt. Vernon cheerleader from 1951-1954. She made a scrapbook of the newspaper issues that had her picture in it and she also saved the news articles from when the Red Devils went to the Sweet Sixteen tournament in 1953. She would lay the scrapbook on the kitchen table as she flipped through the pages and tell us her story of every picture and article as if those events happened yesterday.

This book was organized and created for people to reminisce on days gone by of an exciting time period in Rockcastle County's history. For those who had the luxury of living in this time period, it will bring back those memories and for those of us who have heard our parents and grandparents stories from this time period it will bring back memories as well.

Either way, this book is guaranteed to bring back memories for every Rockcastle Countian in one way or another.



Life in the 50's was awfully good to me

I was having a conversation with a friend of mine who is considerably younger than I am, and he asked, "Were you all that much better off living in the 1950s?" My answer was a resounding yes, and I began to provide a few specific examples that I thought would illustrate my point. Some of you may agree; some may not. There are many perspectives from which to view such a question. But I believe that there are a few ways in which my generation had an advantage in those days of long ago.

My first thought was how much we made in the early 50's. The U.S. federal minimum wage was only \$1 per hour. While in high school, I worked several jobs, taking home a whopping \$8 per day – and I thought I was in "high cotton." I was able to drive my own automobile and to provide the fuel necessary to keep the streets of Mt. Vernon hot. I even had enough left to customize my own ride. (It is hard to believe but I am again able to drive one of those hot cars – my '54 Chevy!)

Speaking of driving, I reminded my friend that the cost of a gallon of gasoline when I was in high school was only 29 cents. Twenty nine cents per gallon! Today, that same gallon of fuel costs \$4.39. In those days, if anyone had suggested to my dad, who owned the Standard Oil station behind the Rockcastle County Courthouse, that fuel would be \$4.10 higher, he would have had a heart attack. For that meager 29 cents, he was able to provide air in your tires, water in your radiator, clean all of your auto's windows and check your oil. It was unheard of to forget to clean the windows or to ask if you wanted the oil checked. That was simply standard operating procedure. Today, you could never expect someone to check your oil or clean the windows, even at \$4.39 a gallon. As a matter of fact,

you really don't much expect there to be a person on hand at all!

When I was only eight-years' of age, I was allowed to walk about a mile to pick up a few grocery supplies. I remember being instructed to go get a loaf of bread. My mother gave me a quarter, and I could also get a RC Cola with the change. She did not worry about me being out of her sight. In those days, we rightly felt pretty safe. It was extremely rare to even hear a rumor about a child being accosted by an adult who might mean him harm.

As far as most of the groceries were concerned, we grew the majority of our own vegetables, and our yard was filled with chickens. And we had a hog lot.

In school, we were taught patriotism and Christian principles. We had prayer, pledged allegiance to the flag, and our teachers read to us from the Bible. When I began teaching in the early 60's, teachers worked for approximately \$5,000 per year. My first job in education paid \$5,800. I was able to purchase both a new home and a new Pontiac on that salary.

In my mother's home, we never had air conditioning. We just put screens in the windows and left our windows and doors open to let the cool night air come through. When we went to bed, we simply latched the screen door to keep animals out of the house. We knew everyone in the neighborhood, and we trusted them completely.

When we were playing in a neighbor's yard, we were disciplined by our friend's parents. We played baseball, football, basketball, hide and seek, mumble peg, and read comic books. It was just good old clean fun. We did not fear for our lives. In those days, there was no Internet, and we certainly never heard of video games. We played in the yard, and kids from all over the neighborhood gathered at one of

(Cont. to A4)

Points East

By Ike Adams



On July 8, I planted a row of bodacious sweet corn just shy of being 100 feet long. Brothers Keeter and Andy had visited over the previous weekend and Keeter had convinced me that I could plant mountain-er half runners and corn at the same time without having the bean vines smother the corn.

I usually let my corn get nearly knee high before I plant beans in it but I figured what the heck and what's to lose because the flying rats, also known as starlings, had already destroyed over half of my early corn crop.

So at every foot or so of row, I dropped two bean seeds and I believe it's safe to say that every one of them came up. In a few places the vines are so thick that it looks like they may have come up twice. We've harvested all the corn and never saw a blackbird in it because, I believe, the bean vines had it camouflaged. We wound up with as much corn from the one row as we did off three of the early crop.

By the time the corn was ready, I'd already picked one five gallon bucket full of beans and over the course of three weeks I'd picked three more. As with corn, what beans we don't eat and

squirrel away in the freezer we give to in-laws, out-laws, friends and neighbors.

After the corn was picked the bean vines got so heavy that the corn stalks broke over everywhere and an ear had been pulled so that now the corn is practically invisible and it looks more like a thick hedge row across the garden. Early last week, Loretta went out and picked a bushel basket heaped full and I got another bucketful. Lo has canned five quarts, frozen some and we've given both beans and corn to about everybody we know in three counties.

Well, actually, we took a mess down to Rufus and Phyllis Harrison in Laurel County last Saturday, so make that four counties.

Loretta had picked a lot of pods that were turning yellow thinking that I might save them for seed because she thinks they're not pretty enough to can but I don't save anything besides heirloom seeds that you can't find in the hardware or farm supply stores. The little handful of seed that I planted in July cost fifty cents and I had seed left over. It would take two hours of time and trouble to shell them out, dry them,

(Cont. to A4)

Strange... But True?

by: Tonya J. Cook



The Curse of the Kennedys, Part II

Last week, the subject of a curse that followed the Kennedys for a few generations, even until today, was noted. Some say it was due to some cursed gold coins Rose Fitzgerald-Kennedy's father found. Some say otherwise.

Others say that the curse comes from the other side of the family; the Kennedys, not the Fitzgeralds. The Kennedys were making illegal money from bootlegging. JFK's father, Joe Kennedy, ran an illegal bootleg operation for years. Some believe that the curse came from JFK's sister, Rosemary, that was given a lobotomy to help JFK's career. She died in a mental institution in 2005 after spending most of her life there.

Other than the four cursed Kennedy brothers, the curse touched those

closely connected to them. In 1956, Jackie Kennedy, JFK's wife, gave birth to a stillborn daughter (to be named "Arabella").

In 1963, she gave birth to a son, Patrick, who lived two days.

JFK's sister, Kathleen, and a male companion were killed in a plane crash in 1948. In 1964, JFK's brother was in a plane crash but survived. In 1973, Joe Kennedy II was in a horrific auto wreck. The same year saw Edward Jr. losing a leg to cancer.

David Anthony Kennedy died from a drug overdose in 1984. William Kennedy-Smith was charged with rape, but acquitted. Michael Kennedy was killed in a skiing accident in 1997. JFK Jr. was killed in a plane crash along with all aboard the small plane he was piloting in 1999.

These are some of the

(Cont. to A4)

Bittersweet Festival Pageant

Tuesday • October 1st • 7 p.m. • RCHS Auditorium

Meet the Contestants....



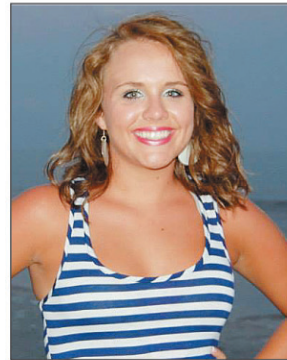
Abbey Eaton



Amelia Eversole



Brianna Burdette



Callie Asher



Carley Childress



Emily Ponder



Danielle McNew



Hope Dull



Kaleigh Noel



Lauren Burton



Rebekah Ponder



Sydney Lovell

Mount Vernon Signal

Publication Number 366-000

Periodical Postage Paid in Mt. Vernon, Ky. 40456
606-256-2244

Published every Thursday since November, 1887. Offices in the Mt. Vernon Signal Building on Main Street in Mt. Vernon, Ky. 40456. Postmaster, send address changes to P.O. Box 185, Mt. Vernon, Kentucky 40456.

James Anderkin, Jr., Publisher Emeritus

Perlina M. Anderkin, Publisher/Editor

Paige Anderkin Benge, Advertising Manager

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

In County - \$20.00 Yr. Out-of-County - \$27.00 Yr.

Out-of-State \$35.00 Yr.

e-mail address - mvsignal@windstream.net