

## First Quarterly Meeting—2012

The Monroe County Historical Society will meet Sunday, March 11th, 2012 at 2:00 P.M. at the Library in Union. Rodney Graves will present the program, speaking about the WV State Farm Protection Act. Rod will discuss the enactment of the program in Monroe County, what it was meant to do, and how it has worked to date. A primary focus will be on the historical importance of the program and how it maintains an agricultural economy and lifestyle.



Rodney Graves is a native of Kentucky, a graduate of Berea College, and has lived in West Virginia since his retirement from the Air Force in 1983. He has worked as a dairy farmer and has been active in local and statewide civic organizations, most recently as President of the Monroe County Planning Commission as well as being a charter member of the Farmland Protection Board.

## Work on Old Brick Church Resumes

After several years of struggling to raise enough funds to resume work on the Old Brick Church, our State Senators, Miller and Wills, have come up with a Community Participation Grant totaling \$10,000. This is being combined with a number of similar grants provided by Delegate Crosier for work on the front steps of the church. The steps have settled badly over the years and large chunks of the concrete have broken off

altogether. Frankly, these massive steps have become a real safety hazard. Lowell Rose, a local contractor is doing the work, and has begun by breaking up the old steps and pouring footers for the new.

In addition, the church has been placed on the Endangered Buildings List by the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia (PAWV). The Society has participated in a press conference concerning the plight of these buildings at History Day which was held at the State Capitol on February 23rd. The work that still needs to be done on the church is considerable, including resurfacing the columns, tuck pointing the external brick



and stone work, rebuilding the 36 foot high belfry and steeple complex, not to mention the interior which was also damaged in the storm of 2006. We appreciate all the support that the local and former Monroe Countians have contributed over the years, and are determined to complete the restoration of this beautiful, historic building.

## A Carriage House for Union?

The Monroe Historical Society owns some wonderful horse-drawn vehicles which are currently stored at the Sweet Springs Resort. Because the fate of Sweet Springs is in question, we have decided to build a “carriage house” for them, probably in Union. These vehicles include a spectacular omnibus that was used to transport tourists in the 19th century between Sweet Springs and White Sulphur Springs. Also included in the group are two well-restored surreys and a sleigh. The inspiration for the design of our proposed building is the Conestoga Wagon House adjacent to North House, the home of the Greenbrier Historical Society, in Lewisburg. This building is a rustic one with windows to allow the public to view the wagon and other relics at any time of the day. The construction of our carriage house will be an ambitious project and we will be seeking donations of additional carriages for this museum as well as money!



“Monroe County’s Omnibus”

## MCHS Seeks Genealogy Help

Every year the Society receives inquiries from descendants of families that crossed the Allegheny Mountains in the 18th Century, settled here for a while



and then headed west. Until now, we have not provided an organized service for the folks that are now tracing their roots back to our county. The

courthouse is a marvelous repository of unpublished, but well-curated records, and the Historical Society has over one hundred genealogy books on individual families of note in this area. We need volunteers to guide visitors to these resources as well as to do research for folks that are unable to visit the area directly. If you have the time and interest to engage in this work, please contact Fred Ziegler at [frednbarbara@frontier.com](mailto:frednbarbara@frontier.com) and your name will be listed on our website.



**Monroe County Historical Society**