

Read all about it

Mayfield, Kentucky Messenger, Thursday, August 8, 2002:

# Book traces history

By **DARLENE EASTERWOOD**  
Messenger Staff Writer

*The Descendants of Josiah and Keziah Nichols Wooldridge and Their Ancestors* by Wright W. Frost may not sound like scintillating reading.

But some Graves County genealogy and history buffs probably would like to get their hands on a copy. The problem was the book was published in 1973 and after the author died that same year, no one knows how to get a copy.

The book traces descendants of the parents of Henry G. Wooldridge who had the 18-figure "strange procession that never moves" erected in Mayfield's Maplewood Cemetery.

The book details Wooldridge's ancestors back to Yorkshire England in 1743 and includes a chapter on and picture of the world-famous monuments.

The daughter of the book's author was in Mayfield this week to make connections to some Wooldridge kin and let local folks know that she has some copies of her father's book still available.

Marilyn Frost Bailey is related to "Uncle Henry," who commissioned the marble and sandstone figures be built before his death in 1899. Mrs. Bailey's



**WOOLDRIDGE BOOK SURFACES** — A book that traces the ancestors of the Henry G. Wooldridge, who commissioned Mayfield's famous monuments, is now in the hands of the author's daughter, Marilyn Frost Bailey. History and genealogy fans looking for the book written by Bailey's father in the early

1970s may have been frustrated in the search. Her father died in 1973 a few months after the book was published. Bailey was in town this week to connect with Wooldridge relatives and let people know she has copies of the book.

(Messenger photo by Darlene Easterwood)

great-great-grandfather was Henry's brother, Alfred N. Wooldridge, one of the men in that frozen procession.

Mrs. Bailey's connection to the Wooldridge's is on her mother's side, but it was her dad who wrote the book. It all started in 1969 when he and his wife came to Mayfield from their home in Knoxville, Tenn., to see the monuments.

Frost, an elementary school principal, had written a book on his own family genealogy. He was so inspired by the statuary that he decided to tackle a book on the Wooldridge family.

The book was started in 1969 and finished a few months before Frost died in 1973. During that time he and his wife traveled to Mayfield many times and interviewed Wooldridge descendants.

One tale surrounding the monuments is that one of the two young girls is that of Henry's long-dead lover, depicted as how she looked as a child. In interviewing the daughters of Henry's two great nieces (Minnie and Maud), Frost determined that they were the ones depicted in

the monuments. The romantic tale was debunked but the story is still told.

In fact, it was Frost's research and book that helped clear up several errors about the monuments that were even repeated on the old historical plaque at the cemetery, Bailey said.

The last time Bailey and her husband, Gary, came to Mayfield cemetery was 25 years ago. At that time the cemetery was shabby looking, there was an old chain link-fence around it and the marker had errors on it, she said.

"We were delighted when we came here this time to find the cemetery well kept, a new wrought-iron fence, and a new marker that had the errors corrected," she said.

Bailey lives in Atlanta but says she feels a strong connection to Mayfield and the monuments because of her relatives and all the work her father did to research the Henry Wooldridge family.

"The people in Mayfield have been so friendly, especially the people at the Chamber of

---

## Book

---

Mayfield, Kentucky Messenger: Thursday, August 8, 2002

---

### From page 1

---

Commerce and the Tourism Commission," she said. "We have gotten a wealth of information."

Bailey, an elementary school teacher, also likes to chat about her famous and eccentric relative and how he spent most of his fortune to immortalize those he loved.

"They said when he died, his assets were balanced out," she added.

She also tells how one of his nieces tried to dissuade him from having the life-size monuments built, saying he should save his money and be more concerned about the destination of his soul.

Wooldridge reportedly told her, "I don't know where my soul is

going, but my body is going to Maplewood Cemetery and I want to be surrounded by the people I love," she recounted.

Henry Wooldridge is the only family member buried in the area around the monuments, which includes statues to two hunting dogs, a fox and a deer.

Bailey's great-great-grandfather is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery in Huntsville, Ala.

On her return to Atlanta, Bailey plans to make a swing by there and see his grave and learn a little more about her relative included in her father's book.

Persons interested in the book can call her at (404) 255-2604, write her at Marilyn Frost Bailey, 1100 North Harbor Court, Atlanta, Ga., 30328, or e-mail her at [g2mbailey@earthlink.net](mailto:g2mbailey@earthlink.net).