

William Loranzo Crawford

William Loranzo Crawford, known to one and all as “Bill,” is a true local treasure. There is likely no one else alive today who knows more about the families, places, and stories of Jackson County and the region than Crawford. Born on May 10, 1935, he grew up in Jackson County and has lived here all his life. From a young age he took an interest in learning about family history from his grandparents. Over time that interest grew to include as much mountain lore and culture as he could find. A fifth-generation graduate of Western Carolina University, Bill has used his education not only in his 36 years working for Dayco Corporation in Waynesville, but also in his work at the Jackson County Genealogical Society (JCGS).

At the Society

Bill’s impressive knowledge of western North Carolina and its people has been utilized time and again through his work with the JCGS. He is a founding member of the Society, serving as President from 1997 to 1998 and Vice President from 2012 to 2014. He has been instrumental in researching many JCGS publications, including *The Cemeteries of Jackson County North Carolina* and both volumes of *The Heritage of Jackson County*. He was also a major consultant for Alan and Karen Jabbour’s *Decoration Day in the Mountains*, published by UNC Press in 2010. The William Loranzo Crawford Scholarship Fund was created in Bill’s honor for use by local high school seniors getting ready to go to college.

In the Courthouse and the Community

If you’re looking for Bill, he can frequently be found in the Genealogical Society’s library. As many friends say, Bill has “never met a stranger” and this attitude, along with a passion for local history, has led to people throughout the U.S. and Canada discovering connections to the area or to local families. His naturally humble and friendly personality have helped to bridge the gap between the academic world and the world of personal interest for many people, a gift that is invaluable for the preservation and expansion of mountain culture and heritage.

Crawford continues to be a paragon of local genealogical and history work in the Jackson County community as well as in surrounding counties. His unselfconscious dignity and genuine friendliness epitomize the ideals of Appalachian life and bring joy to all those who are lucky enough to meet Bill Crawford.