



**Get your place in the country and follow your own rules. Whether it's dogs, cats, or even a few horses, there's plenty of room in the country.**

With our competitive interest rates and attractive loan packages, there's never been a better time to invest in a place in the country. Whether you want small or large acreage, building now or later, we know where to begin.

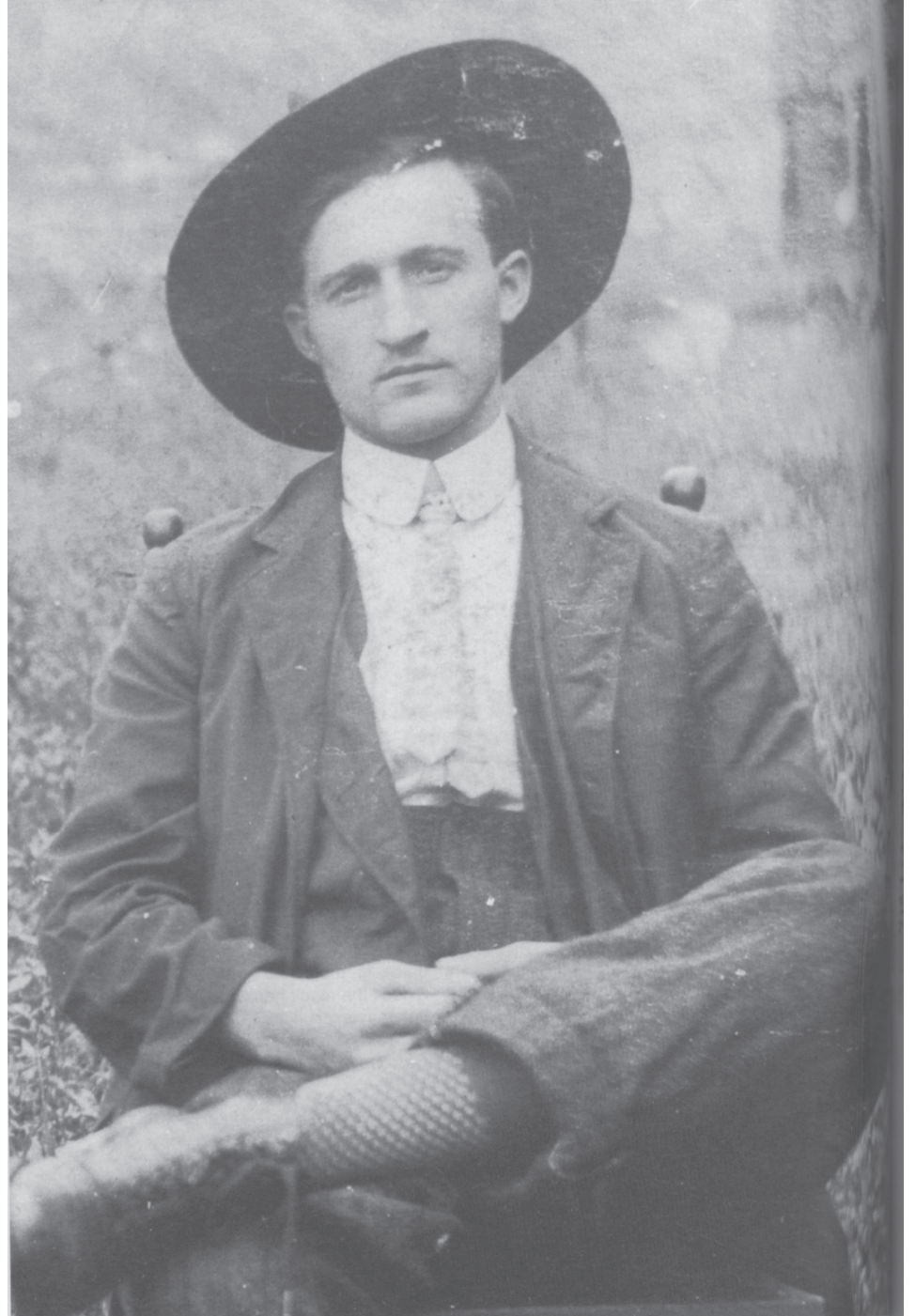


**Carolina  
Farm Credit**  
Country Mortgages  
1-800-828-8943

Call us, we are the home lending experts!  
www.carolinafarmcredit.com

181 Meadowview Drive  
Boone, NC 28607

(828) 264-5272 Fax (828) 264-7156



**Clarence Potter: His violent habits did not keep him from living a long life, nonetheless. Clarence Potter died in 1965, 62 years after being condemned to hang. Photo reprinted from "Until He Is Dead" by Tom Rusher. (Parkway Publishers, 2003. www.parkwaypublishers.com)**

## NOTORIOUS CRIMES The Clarence Potter Story

It wasn't so very long ago, less than a hundred years, that Watauga County could quite credibly lay claim as North Carolina's very own wild west. A pistol in the waist band then was as common as a cell phone in hand today. Law and order were ideals more easily debated with words than defended with action.

It was a reality made possible – maybe even inevitable – by the county's mountainous terrain, a scarcity of roads, an absence of railroad lines, and an abundance of men and women determined to live their lives unburdened by the bonds of law or societal expectation.

The landscape was beautiful but unforgiving. Moonshine whiskey was a source both of intoxicating escape and of much-needed cash and trade. Liquor-fueled fisticuffs were a common pastime.

It was not easy to be a lawman in such times. Drawing up arrest warrants was a routine enough matter, but serving them on gun-toting mountaineers who viewed the law as little more than a nuisance, was dangerous at best, and deadly at its worst.

Or so it was for a young man named Amos Wellington Howell. It was November of 1902, and Howell had been deputized by the local justice of the peace to serve warrants on 22-year-old Daniel Boone Potter and his 18-year-old cousin, Clarence Potter. By the end of the month, Howell would gain dubious distinction as the county's first ever law man to die in the line of duty.

When all was said and done, Clarence Potter would gain two distinctions of his own, as the only man in Watauga County history to be sentenced to hang; and as perhaps its only man ever to outlive his death sentence by more than 62 years.

Howell, who was only 21 himself, had been chosen for the job, as best as can be determined, because no one else wanted it. The Potter boys were well known in the region as well armed and more than willing to draw their weapons when threatened.

D.B. Potter, or Boonie as he was known among the locals, had already gained notoriety for a number of deadly incidents including a gun-battle with his father, Enoch Potter, in which the

elder was gunned down, but only after shooting Boonie first.

Even before that fateful day, Boonie had been implicated in the shooting death of a local man, James M. Broome, who'd made the fatal mistake of standing outside the Potter home and challenging the boy to come outside and settle a dispute, whose origin has long ago been forgotten.

After several hours of shouting his challenge up at the Potter residence with no response from within, darkness had fallen, a single shot rang out, and Boonie's challenger said no more. Neighbors discovered Broome's body in the morning near the Potters' front gate, a single bullet wound to his breast.

An inquest followed, and Boonie, 16 at the time, was questioned but never charged. Broome's killer was never brought to justice.

Not unlike many in a region that had seen its share of hardship in the long lean years of reconstruction, the Potter men were inclined to scratch out a living by whatever means possible – legal and otherwise. Among their specialties was running a still. They were known to carry their potent distillations by wagon over rough-hewn trails down the mountain to Wilkes County.

Making and selling liquor was not outlawed in Watauga County until 1903, but selling it without offering the government its due was strictly forbidden. Oddly, it was not this avocation that earned Clarence and Boonie Potter their warrants.

Early that year Clarence had been charged with carrying a concealed weapon. By fall, the original warrant remained unserved and Boonie had earned a charge of his own. A man named Isaac Hodge alleged that Boonie had broken into his home. He was charged with forcible trespass and the deadly showdown with the Watauga posse was at hand.

This presented local law enforcement with a serious problem: no one wanted to serve the warrants. Boone justice of the peace Burnett Smith would later tell the court how he'd chosen Howell only after a number of more qualified men – from Sheriff W. B. Baird to several deputies

It's not just product...



It's **PEOPLE**  
and product!

**BOONE**

FORD • LINCOLN • MERCURY

300 New Market Blvd • Boone, NC  
www.boonefordlincolnmercury.com

**828-264-6111**  
Toll Free 1-866-230-0169