

COMMUNITY

Artifact theft by state park administrators from Blue Licks State Park reaches new level of criminal activity

By Charles Mattox
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The state-sponsored theft, of 274 Native American artifacts from the Pioneer Museum inside the Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park has been nearly completed, with state Parks Commissioner, Russ Meyer, signing his name to public records in which he falsely claims the standards of the federal NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation law have been met (That is not true) and he has thus officially transferred ownership of the 274 artifacts to "The Shawnee Tribe."

The fact that a state administrator has again been part of fabricated non-truth in order to "steal" museum artifacts that have traditionally benefited the cultural identity and helped educate Kentucky tax Payers on the fascinating Native American history of northeast Kentucky is criminal within itself, added to that the fact that Meyer signed and sent the document to Tony Tipton a tribal historian with the Shawnee Tribe on June 24, 2024 is yet, another insult to those patriotic souls of the region who continue to try to halt the illegal action.

Meyer has totally ignored all attempts of communication from taxpaying citizens and media personnel to explain the motives and design for the three -year-long project that takes local treasures away from all Kentuckians and all of the Kentuckians of the future and provides nothing in return, except for more incompetence from the pusillanimous political parasites who have secretly undertaken the illegal project.

"Dear Ms Tipton," Meyer wrote to the Shawnee Tribal Historian located at 29 S. Hwy 69A Miami OKLAHOMA, on June 24, 2024. "In accordance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act 9NAGPRA; U.S.C. 3001 et seq) and its implementing regulation (43 CFR part 10), this statement certifies the following:

"The Pioneer Museum, Blue Licks Battlefield State Resort Park, Kentucky Department of Parks, relinquishes possession or control of the human remains and unassociated funerary objects listed in the attached Federal Register notices to the Shawnee Tribe."

Although Meyer quotes the federal regulation (43 CFR part 10) used as the standard to implement NAGPRA, he fails to mention that his actions as well as the actions of parks museum curator, Jennifer Spence, in illegally taking the artifacts is a clear violation of federal law.

The standards include the specific language that to confiscate Native American artifacts labeled as Unassociated Funerary Objects under NAGPRA, "The 274 cultural items described above are reasonably believed to have been placed with or near individual human remains at the time of death or later as part of a death ceremony and are believed, by a PREPONDERANCE OF THE EVIDENCE, to have been removed from a specific burial site of a Native American individual."

But that condition was not met, according to public documents including emails to Tipton from Spence.

In a public record, in the form of a February 1, 2023, email from Spence to Shawnee Tribal Historic Preservationist, Tonya Tipton, Spence says that, "There are 60 pottery shards and pots on our list. Many are noted as coming from nearby Mason County (Fox field) but NONE ARE IDENTIFIED-HAVING BEEN REMOVED FROM A GRAVE SITE."

She then asks Tipton,

"Would you like me to include these in the notice as unassociated funerary objects?"

Tipton quickly replies, "Yes, you should include them all."

And Spence does include them all, and others, which certainly appear to fail to meet the basic requirements for repatriation.

It is the opinion of this reporter and many of the approximate 4,000 Kentucky tax payers who have signed petitions demanding the thefts of the artifacts stop; that Meyer, Spence and others should be indicted and criminally charged, for knowingly and purposefully violating NAGPRA laws.

Meyer ignores the facts and in his correspondence to Tipton dated June 24, 2024, he continues:

"The Kentucky Department of Parks has no information about the human remains or cultural items being treated with pesticides, preservatives, or other substances that represent a potential hazard to the object(s) or to person(s) handling the object(s). Any information about these treatments was previously shared with the recipients. After sending this repatriation statement, the Kentucky Department of Parks will: 1. Consult with the parties above on custody and physical transfer, 2. Document any physical transfer, and 3. Protect sensitive information from disclosure to the general public to the extent consistent with applicable law. Nothing in the Act or this part limits the authority of the Kentucky Department of Parks to enter into any agreement with the requestor concerning the human remains or unassociated funerary objects. The Kentucky Department of Parks will send a copy of this repatriation statement to all parties identified above. Sincerely, Russ A. Meyer Commissioner Kentucky Department of Parks."

missioner Kentucky Department of Parks."

That document is signed by Meyer with carbon copies going to Melanie o'Brien, manager of National NAGPRA Program, Washington D.C.

On the federal form, Meyer and Spence provide the following:

"Pursuant to NAGPRA and its implementation regulations, and after consultation with the appropriate Indian Tribes, The Kentucky Department of Parks has determined that:

- The 274 cultural items described above are reasonably believed to have been placed with or near individual human remains at the time of death or later as part of a death ceremony and are believed, by a PREPONDERANCE OF THE EVIDENCE, to have been removed from a specific burial site of a Native American individual.
- There is a relationship of shared group identity that can BE REASONABLY TRACED BETWEEN THE CULTURAL ITEMSD AND THE ABSENTEE-SHAWNEE TIBE OF OKLAHOMA."

In the Notice of intent document, Spence that the 274 artifacts as having been found decades ago, on private property in Mason County, by the 'Father of Blue Licks Park', William J. Curtis.

Of those 274 artifacts, Spence lists 61 pottery shards, 19 pottery vessels and 10 pipes as among the nearly 300 listed, which she says a, 'preponderance of evidence exists that proves beyond a reasonable doubt, that every single one was removed from a specific Native American, Fox Field burial.'

Spence is the public servant, who initiated, the selection and removal process, as a portion of her duties

as curator for the Kentucky Department of Parks, under the supervision, and general guidance, of Kentucky Department of Parks Commissioner, Russ Meyer and Heritage Council Executive Director, Craig Potts. The removal process has been done as a result of blatant misinterpretation of recent revisions and more stringent implementation of the federal law, referred to as NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act).

The selection for removal of the designated 274 Native Americans artifacts and proposed repatriation of those items to members of the Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, has been carried out thus far with a level of secrecy the likes of which have not been practiced from government officials since the height of World War Two.

The lack of governmental transparency exhibited as the process continues, has been disturbing for the local population, and media members, who continue to seek basic information from the public servants directly involved in the process and who are the sole possessors of the specific information used to determine the scope, reasoning and desired results, regarding the process.

Further, Meyer and his team of accomplices have met with elected officials such as Kentucky Senator, Steve West, representatives from US Senator, Mitch McConnell and local state representatives William Lawrence and Matthew Koch.

It was suggested during those meetings that future meetings be held in secrecy to discuss the controversy, which the secret meetings by design are un-American and violate open meetings Laws.

When this reporter was told about the possibility of such meetings he asked if a

north Korean flag would be flying inside the room, since any such secret meetings were in violation of the U.S. Constitution.

This reporter received no intelligent response from any elected official. Those officials have said that Meyer and other preservation officials promised them that a public meeting would be held to answer all questions of the public and clarify the actions of state parks administrators.

That was evidently another lie perpetrated by Meyer and the rest of the state's history erasers and political parasites as no such meeting has materialized or been announced.

Meyer has refused to return phone calls and emails to dozens of citizens who have inquired to him about the state-sponsored theft of the artifacts, but did make a brief comment to journalist, Pat Conley, who writes for the Bourbon County Citizen newspaper.

In an article by Conley dated October 17, 2024, Meyer told Conley the artifacts in question were not donated but purchased from Curtis in 1949 for \$15,000.

But Meyer fails to note that it was the tax-paying citizens of Kentucky, not any administrator in the park system, who fitted the bill for the artifacts!

Meyer also comments about skeletons being dug by Curtis at Fox Field with artifacts, yet he fails to provide any evidence that most of the pilfered and pirated, 274 treasures were found in graves with Spence admitting in emails they have No Proof of most of the artifacts coming from any Native Graves, which is clear violation of federal NAGPRA laws.

The sad saga continues.

OBITUARIES

WALTER MCGLOTHIN



Crouch, and Patricia Moody.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Joyce Moore McGlothlin, one son, Walter "Wayne" McGlothlin of Olympia, Kentucky; two daughters, Deborah Kaye Osborne (Robert) of Lake Butler, Florida, and Kathy Congleton (John) of Richmond, Kentucky; and a stepdaughter, Joan Norris of Lexington, Kentucky, nine grandchildren: Andy Fritz (Ashley), Leslie Hensley (Joey), Kristen McGlothlin (Charlie), Shane Goldie (Katie), Dana and Angie Osborne, and Jordan, Madison, and Jayden Congleton. He also leaves behind four great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren, and special friends Pauline Kesler (Chuck).

Funeral services were conducted at 1:00 PM Tuesday, October 22, 2024, in the chapel of the Michael R. Gray Funeral Home in Owingsville with Rev. Lowell Rice officiating.

Burial along with military rites were performed by American Legion Post 22 at the Oldfield Cemetery in Olympia.

Visitation at the Michael R. Gray Funeral Home in Owingsville was from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM Tuesday.

Pallbearers were Charlie Webb, Jayden and John Congleton, Kelly Moody, Timmy and Billy Coye.

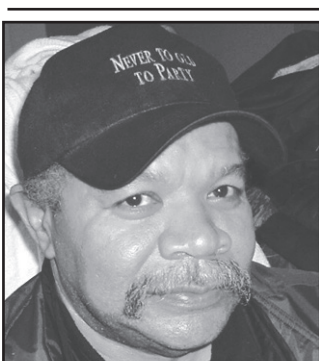
Honorary pallbearers were Chuck Kesler, Joe Karick, Charles Whittington and Jimmy Thompson.

Contributions are suggested to the Owingsville First Church of God, UK St. Claire Hospice and an animal shelter of your choice.

The Michael R. Gray Funeral Home, 89 Slate Avenue in Owingsville cared for all the arrangements for Walter McGlothlin.

To view the online memorial and sign the guest book, please visit www.mrgfh.com.

GREGORY LEWIS JOHNSON



Gregory Lewis Johnson, known affectionately to many as "Papa Smurf," passed away on Friday, October 18, 2024, at St. Joseph Hospital in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky. He was born on December 31, 1953, in Bath County to the late Walter and Lena Razor Johnson. Gregory lived a full life, marked by his dedication to family, work, and the joys that brought him happiness.

Gregory worked diligently in the field of Vehicle Maintenance for Ryder, where his commitment and skills left a lasting impact.

Outside of work and family life, Gregory embraced his passions wholeheartedly. He found joy in playing bingo, a thrill in watching NFL football, and peace in catfishing. A devoted fan of the Louisville Cardinals, he watched every game with enthusiasm. He also enjoyed the excitement of playing the lottery, always dreaming of what might be.

In addition to his parents, he is predeceased by his brother, Ernie Razor, along with his paternal grandparents, Charles and Ida Johnson, and maternal grandmother, Laura Reed.

Gregory was a devoted husband to his beloved wife, Mae Nell. Together, they raised three wonderful sons: Matthew Johnson (Leona) of Owingsville, Gregory Johnson (Candi), and Clarence Harris, both of Louisville, Kentucky. He also cherished his two daughters, Doneeda

Chapman of Lexington, Kentucky, and Karpreece Harris of Louisville, who brought joy and light into his life.

Gregory's family extended beyond his children, as he was blessed with twelve grandchildren: Julian and Ondray Johnson, Anita Dixon (Eugene), Tierionna Pinkston (Joseph), Julana, Tia and Raheen Chapman, Jaime and Jesse Harris, Kayla Johnson and Josh Breeding. He took immense pride in being a grandfather, and his legacy is further carried on by his sixteen great-grandchildren.

He was the cherished brother to Roy Hodge, James "Pookie" Johnson (Sharon), Clarence "Tinie" Johnson (Anita), Charles Johnson (Trea), all from Lexington, Micheal Tooson (Alicia) of Detroit, Michigan and David Razor of Dayton, Ohio. His sisters, Barbara Jones of Mt. Sterling and Wanda Guy (Raymond) of Dayton, Ohio, shared a special bond with him, filled with laughter and support throughout the years. Gregory also held dear his aunt, Charlene Razor of Trotwood, Ohio.

Funeral services will be conducted 2:00 PM Thursday, October 24, 2024, in the chapel of the Michael R. Gray Funeral Home in Owingsville.

Burial will follow at the Greencrest Cemetery in Owingsville.

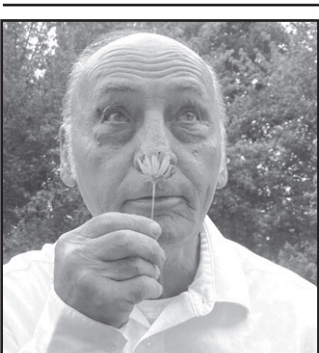
Visitation at the Michael R. Gray Funeral Home will be 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM Thursday.

Pallbearers include, Matthew Johnson, Gregory Johnson, Clarence Harris and Karpreece Harris.

The Michael R. Gray Funeral Home, 89 Slate Avenue in Owingsville is caring for all the arrangements for Gregory "Papa Smurf" Johnson.

To view the online memorial and sign the guest book, please visit www.mrgfh.com.

ELMER ROWE



of Frenchburg, KY, Arlie Rowe (Danita) of Means, KY.

He was preceded in death by his parents Cletus Rowe and Gladys Viney Powell Rowe. Son Elmer Lee Ritchie, three sisters Norma Thomas, Minnie Miller & (spouse James), Effie Rowe. Two brothers, Herman Rowe & (spouse Della Marie) and James Rowe.

Funeral services will be 1:00pm, Tuesday, October 22, 2024 at the Means Community Miracle Church, 6584 US Route 460, Frenchburg, KY, with Bro. Tommy Evans officiating. Interment in the Rowe & Moore Cemetery, Means, KY. Visitation will be 6:00pm, Monday, October 21, 2024 at the Means Community Miracle Church, 6584 US Route 460, Frenchburg, KY.

Pallbearers: Jason Rowe, Jimmy Glass, Tyler Glass, Jonathan Glass, Dustin Williams, Andrew Doering, Bo Fugate, Douglas Moore "Doodle", Mike Hall. Honorary pallbearers; Kiser Larrison, Ricky Byrd, Austin Rust, Michael Englemen,

Menifee Home For Funerals, Frenchburg, KY, Randy Halsey, Funeral Director.

To send flowers to the family or plant a tree in memory of Elmer Rowe, please visit our floral store.

Public Notice Ad

Reyna Jacome, 787 Main Street, Sharpsburg KY 40374. Hereby declares intentions to apply for a NQ2, NQ Malt Beverage Package, Special Sunday Retail Drink license no later than 11th of November of 2024. The business to be licensed will be located at 595 Main St Sharpsburg KY 40374, doing business as Los Lirios, LLC. The owner, Reyna Jacome of 787 Main St, Sharpsburg KY 40374. Any person, association, corporation, or body politic may protest the granting of the license(s) by writing the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, ABC 500 Mero Street Frankfort KY 40301.