

SLWG Spotlight: *We're Pleased to Present...*

David N. Motherwell



Memoirist, Columnist, Historical Writer

SLWG Member Since 1998

SLWG Vice President 1999

SLWG President 2000-2005

David Motherwell was born in Chicago. When he was three months old, his parents and his grandmother moved to a sixty-acre farm in northwest Arkansas. The farm was bought by his grandmother, because she was always fascinated by stories about rural life. The family soon came to the realization that farming in the Ozark Mountains was much tougher than they had ever anticipated. Within four years, the money saved in Chicago was depleted, and it was imperative that David's father had to return to the city to earn a living for his growing family. There were now two more children named Beth and Jonathan.

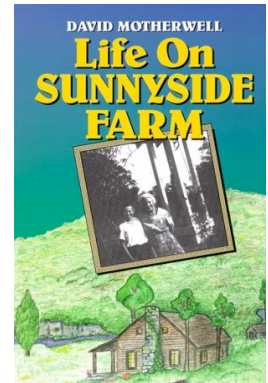
David's dad secured a position as a postal clerk 300 miles away in Memphis, and the family moved to West Memphis, leaving Grandma on the farm. When David was ten-years-old, his father sent him to care for his grandmother and to run the farm. In the evenings he settled in the quiet living room with books stacked to the ceiling. It was here that he developed a lifelong passion for reading. After living on his grandmother's farm for eight years, he graduated from high school with no money to go to college. Undeterred, he worked nine months as a concrete inspector on the construction of the Hernando de Soto Bridge in Memphis and nine months as a rod man for the Army Corps of Engineers in St. Louis. In 1973 he graduated with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Missouri - Rolla.



David's career as a planning and scheduling engineer has involved him in some of the nation's largest and most notorious engineering and construction projects. It has also taken him around the world. Over the past 32 years he has worked on seven nuclear power plants, a NASA rocket project designed to rectify problems of the Challenger disaster, and the first skyscraper in America built on the metric system. He also worked two years in Saudi Arabia during the late 1970s on the construction of the transmission and distribution electrical grid in the eastern province. His work abroad allowed him to visit forty-two countries and to fulfill a boyhood dream –climbing to the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro!

His love of reading evolved into a special interest and ability with the word game, *Scrabble*. During the 1980s and 1990s, David was an avid player and won tournaments in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

In 1996 he took a break from playing Scrabble to pen his memoir about growing up in the Ozarks. He realized that the rural way of life that he had known as a young boy was rapidly disappearing and also that no one had recorded the often unique memories that the locals mentioned when he encountered them around town. In mid-October of 1999 his book, *Life on Sunnyside Farm*, was published to favorable review by *The Ozark Mountaineer* magazine. Since then David has received numerous letters from readers stating that the book brought back their own memories of a bygone era. It even inspired members of the two-room school, which David attended in the first grade, to have their first reunion since the school closed in 1957.



David is currently a senior project controls engineer on the construction of the St. Louis MetroLink light rail extension project. He writes travel and historical articles and has served as president of the St. Louis Writer's Guild for six years.

To order a copy of *Life on Sunnyside Farm*, contact David Motherwell at dmothe5626@aol.com Cost is \$10.

Read some of David's articles:

["Ike Doss was the Village Blacksmith"](#)

["Haying was our busiest chore in the Summer"](#)

["Checks was a Legendary Restaurant"](#)

["The Carroll County Fair was an Exciting Time"](#)

Here's a review of Life on Sunnyside Farm:

["Review of Life on Sunnyside Farm" by Russell Hively The Ozark Mountaineer](#)