



THE TOWNS HISTORIAN



The NEWSLETTER of the TOWNS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOL. 3 ISSUE 1

www.townscountyhistory.org

MARCH 2019

The Towns County Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and sharing the rich history of our area. We meet the second Monday of each month at 900 N. Main St., Hiawassee, GA.

P.O. Box 1182
900 North Main St.
Hiawassee, Georgia
(706) 781-8611

An Exciting New Year by Sandra Green, President



The Historical Society started the 2019 year with two great programs by Jerry Taylor on the origins of some of the local road and community names. Who hasn't wondered how Bear Meat, Shake Rag, and Scataway got their names? Thanks to Jerry, we now know! The March program featured Grace Howard telling us about the history of, and future plans for, Hamilton Gardens. The Gardens feature an extensive collection of Rhododendrons as well as native azaleas and wild flowers.

Two new officers were elected in January. Jerry Taylor, our official county historian, was elected vice president and Tyler Osborn was elected secretary. Jerry is well known for the programs he has done for the historical society and the many other hats he has worn over the years! Tyler Osborn is a young man from a family that has been in Towns County for many generations. Tyler brings computer skills, fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the group. Congratulations to Jerry and Tyler.

We have several committees appointed to work on different issues.

Betty Phillips, Terry Lynn Marshall, Joan Crothers, Gazette Morgan, David & Myrtle Sokol, Kris Phillips, and Chris Henson are in the process of compiling interviews from the Wisdom of Our Elders project.

Jounida Bradley, Donna Howell, and Ron Gibson are on a committee responsible for revising our bylaws.

Last but not least, our refreshment committee includes Janice Cochran, Frances Dyer, and Carol Gibson!

Thanks to all for their hard work.

The Old Rock Jail Museum opens in April through the last weekend in October. The hours are Friday and Saturday noon until 4:00. Come see us and bring your friends. We're still looking for volunteers to act as hosts. If you aren't very familiar with the ORJ history, then we'll train you!

I look forward to a year filled with interesting programs and fellowship. Our goal is preserving and sharing the unique history of our beautiful area. Hope you can join us!

2019 OFFICERS

Sandra Green
President

Jerry Taylpr
Vice President

Tyler Osborn
Secretary

Frances Shook
Treasurer

Mary Ann McCall Miller
Membership Secretary

HISTORIANS

Jerry A. Taylor
County Historian

Jason Lee Edwards
Deputy Historian

Mary Ann McCall Miller
Webmaster/Graphic Designer

Decoration Day: The Forgotten Holiday

By Tyler Osborn



With the spring and summer months upon us we have several holidays to look forward to, such as; Easter, Fourth of July, Labor Day and the one that seems to be overlooked the most, Decoration Day. For most people Decoration Day is a thing of the past. This is partly because it has undergone a name change and is now known as Memorial Day.

So what is Decoration Day? It is exactly as it sounds, a day to decorate. But not your homes or yard, but rather cemeteries. It started around the mid 1800s and gained popularity after the Civil War, when the people of the small southern towns, most notably those of Appalachia, would gather in the cemetery to clean the graves and plant fresh flowers. It was a weekend event that usually started on Saturday with cleaning and decorating, and finishing on Sunday with a lunch spread on the grounds.

Back before cell phones and the Internet, Decoration Day was the perfect opportunity for families to gather together to respect their loved ones, as well as share in the fellowship with one other.

Because of this yearly tradition that was celebrated in the

South, it is thought that it inspired the national holiday of Memorial Day, a remembrance of those who sacrificed their lives for us. Whether this is true or not, I honestly do not know. I do know that I am proud to say that my family and I still celebrate Decoration Day. Following in the same path as our ancestors. While it has become an almost forgotten tradition, there are some small rural churches in our area that still celebrate Decoration Day. It is held the

same weekend as homecoming and is honestly one of the most beautiful times of the year. Many Forks Baptist Church on Gumlog, for example, is transformed into a field of brightly colored flowers on every grave. This is where I learned about the holiday. I would spend Sat-

urdays with my mom, grandmother, and aunts, cleaning the graves and decorating them with flowers. The church members make sure every stone is decorated by placing a single flower on those who no longer have family in the area. It is truly an uplifting experience to be part of honoring those who have gone before us.



Hiawassee Had a Dairy

by Mary Ann McCall Miller and Anne Mitchell

Yes, there once was a dairy in Hiawassee! Lloyd's Dairy opened in the 1930s when the CCC Camp was active in the Soapstone area and it supplied all of the camp's milk needs. The dairy was built on the property of Rev. Frank Lloyd. Milk was delivered in ten-gallon cans to the camp. The cans were lowered into the creek at the camp to keep them cool. Later on, the milk was delivered in bottles. Anne Mitchell's granddaddy, Ross Lloyd, would scrub the bottles prior to filling and then her mom would deliver them to Soapstone by herself. The milk house was built out of concrete and



Ross Lloyd's Barn & Dairy Barn



Jewell Franks Lloyd

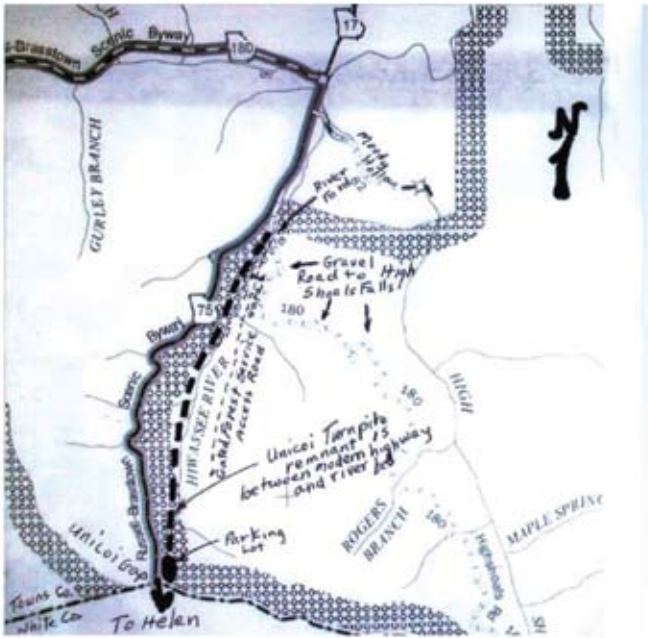
The dairy also sold milk also to Mount Valley Creamery in North Carolina. This was in 1934. In 1942, the CCC camps closed and most of the cows were sold off. Ross and Julia Lloyd continued to sell milk and butter to the public and at the Georgia Mountain Fair until the death of Julia in 1958.

the back room was for sterilization of the bottles. The building was washed out before and after bottling the milk. The water was piped from the spring on the side of the mountain to the milk house. This system was also used to supply water to Rev. Lloyd's home, and it was one of the first indoor water systems in Hiawassee. In Rev. Lloyd's spring house, the water ran through a series of concrete troughs that cooled the milk and butter behind the family's kitchen. This water was also used to clean the cows' udders before milking.

Anne Mitchell recalls a story her mother told about milking a cow. "My mom, at age 13 tried to milk a cow named Blossom into a paper cup. The cow kicked her though the fence." The dairy had thirty cows. All the cows had names including Granny, Cherry, Cricket and Happy. Electric milking machines were used at the dairy. There were eight stalls in the barn.

The Unicoy Turnpike

(a recent presentation given to Brasstown Community Club by
Towns County historian Jerry Taylor)



If tonight, we were transported back in time 200 years (6/16/1818) to this same setting, we would be at Thompson's Stand on the old Unicoy Turnpike coming down the Joe Brown Hwy from Eastern Tennessee to Murphy, then to Brasstown, then down Settawig Road to Fort Hembree (now known as Hayesville), then on to Hiawassee, going up the River, crossing over Unicoy Gap, ultimately ending near at the headwaters of the Savannah River, now under Lake Hartwell.

Traffic on this thoroughfare might not have been as stressful as rush hour at Spaghetti Junction, but was still quite brisk. Coming down/up the turnpike would be tourists, businessmen, turkeys, geese, sheep, horses, cattle, and great herds of swine. Also, there would be wagons loaded with hams, side meat, honey, leather, dried apples and peaches, ginseng, tobacco, plants, furs, root crops, home-made items, and, of course, I'm sure there was a great quantity of liquid corn included in the merchandise...all kinds of goods for sale or trade!

In 1813, Cherokee and American investors built a north-south road through Cherokee territory linking parts of East Tennessee with the coastal area of Savannah, GA, and Charlestown, SC. This road, the Unicoy Turnpike, became heavily traveled by foot, by horse, and by wagons. Goods and livestock produced in Tennessee found markets down south. The turnpike came through Cherokee County, generally following the present Joe Brown Hwy, crossing the Hiawassee River at Murphy. Then the path led up the south side of the river to Brasstown. There, the course generally followed the present Settawig Road, then up US 64 to Hayesville, and up the Hiawassee River to Hiawassee, GA.

Along the turnpike, about a day's travel apart, were "stands" or places for travelers with livestock and trade goods to spend

the night and seek refreshment. There were two stands in Clay County – one at Brasstown, owned by David Thompson and another was Hyatt's Mill Creek, owned by Nathan Hyatt.

The Brasstown stand probably covered the hillsides and ridges near where the present community building is located.

There was a wagon road that came from the Martin's Creek – Little Brasstown area that joined the turnpike at Brasstown. There was also an Indian road coming down the north side of Brasstown Creek from the Young Harris area to near the stand. This stand, store, and crossroads give Brasstown a beginning of about 1813, making it the oldest continuous settlement in this county.

Stand owner David Thompson was Brasstown's first white citizen. By all accounts, he was a capable and generous man, giving support and finances to the Cherokee Mission. He bought 3,000 acres on Notla River where some of his descendants still live. His direct descendant, Jack Thompson, was a respected and well-liked sheriff of Cherokee County.

Unicoy Turnpike was built in 1813 (basically following Indian trails) by the Unicoy Turnpike Company, a joint venture of American and Cherokee investors. The road was the first to link East Tennessee, Western North Carolina and North Georgia to points on the Eastern Seaboard, thereby facilitating trade and commerce.

In its 1816 charter from the State of Georgia, tolls were set at:
'For every man and horse, 12 and 1/2 cents; (about \$2)
for every led horse not in a drove, 6 and 1/4 cents;
for every loose horse in a drove, 4 cents;
for every foot man, 6 and 1/4 cents; (about \$1.10)
for every wagon and team, one dollar;
for every coach, chariot, other four-wheel carriage, chaise, or other carriage of pleasure, one dollar and twenty-five cents;
for every two-wheel carriage (etc.) for pleasure, seventy-five cents; (abt \$13.50)
for every cart and team, fifty cents;
for each head of cattle, two cents;
for each head of sheep, goats, or lambs, one cent;
and for each head of hogs, one cent."

One of the main stockholders in the company was Gen. James R. Wyly, whose home "Traveler's Rest" near Toccoa, was a stage-coach inn along the historic route. It is now a state historic site and I would encourage you to pay a visit for history's sake. Gen. Wyly was such a well-to-do businessman and investor in the Turnpike that an 1830s map of the area labeled the Georgia portion of the turnpike as Wiley's Road. He had a number of inns located about a day's journey (about 20 miles) for the convenience of travelers and of course for his banking pleasure. Traveler's Rest near Toccoa, then Toccoa Falls, then Antioch Church, Clarkesville, Nacoochee Valley, then over Unicoy Gap to head of Hiawassee River where a two-story brick house near Mt. Zion Church stood until the mid-1980s. Moving on into NC, there was Hyatt's Stand in vicinity of Myers Chapel, then Thompson's

continued on page 5



Stagecoach Inn on Hiwassee River

Stand here at Brasstown, then Hunter's Stand at Murphy, then onward toward Tennessee were Rhea's Stand, Wacheese Stand, and Burnt Stand.

Where feasible, the roadbed was dug out following the ancient trail.

It was required to be twenty feet wide, twelve feet wide where bridges or stream crossings occurred.

Only hand tools were used to grade the route.

It was tedious, back-breaking work, and required much longer than anticipated.

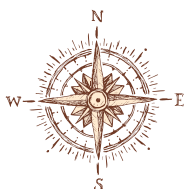
The work started on the road in March, 1814. The Georgia Legislature had asked for completion in 1817, but had to renegotiate for the road to open in November 1818. The Tennessee crews were having the same delays.

The road finally opened for full operation in 1819, and was advertised as "a safe route and with as much convenience as any other road through Cherokee Country."

Lest you think that the turnpike was much like a modern 4-lane interstate, it was NOT. My own ancestor, Walter Nicholson, in moving to Fodder Creek in the 1830s, came the southern route. In crossing over Unicoy Gap, the route became so steep and treacherous that they had to dismantle the wagon and carry it across the gap.

So, "What happened to the turnpike?" you may ask.

The days of the turnpike came to an end with the states little by little incorporating their sections into their new state highway systems. By the late 1800s, all that was left of Unicoy Turnpike was the portion in White and Towns County, GA, and that came to an end in the 1930s when the State of GA Highway Dept., with dynamite and bulldozers, made for public access across Unicoy Gap.



In The Carcass Of Big Mule Drunken Men Sew Comrade and He Remains Six Hours



Young Harris, Ga., Dec. 18, 1910...(Special.) – Bart Brown, a young man who resides at Gum Log in this county, has had an experience similar to that undergone by the prophet Jonah, who remained for many hours in a whale's belly, Bart Brown was in the great fish. Instead of being in a whale's belly, Bart Brown was in the belly of a mule, and still lives to tell the tale. Bart Brown's novel experience was the result of a practical joke played on him by half dozen companions. All of them were drinking, and it is said that Bart Brown practically overcome by the "Mountain Dew" he had been imbibing. As the party passed down the road near Gum Log one of them noticed the carcass of a large mule which had just died by the road side. The mule was called "Old Hump Back," and had carried the mail from Brasstown to Young Harris for seven years. Bart Brown collapsed as he and his friends passed "Old Hump Back's" carcass. As Brown fell one of the party suggested that he be put in the carcass of the mule and sewed up. The suggestion appealed to the humor of the drinkers, and they went to work with knives and soon had "Old Hump Back" prepared for the reception of Brown. The unconscious man was then placed in the carcass and the skin sewed up. Brown came to after being in the mule about four hours and began to utter screams which had a gruesome sound coming from a dead mule. Several persons who passed were nearly frightened out of their wits by the screams which Brown, encased in "Old Hump Back's" carcass, uttered, and they ran for dear life. At least two men passed who were not easily frightened and they decided to investigate. They soon found that there was a man in the mule's body, and after they cut the stitches Brown crawled out, bloody from head to foot, but cold sober and badly frightened. Brown swears he has gone on the water wagon for keeps, but vows to get even with his chums who sewed him in "Old Hump Back." He says that he had just the same experience as Jonah, only it was not as fast sailing. (from Atlanta Constitution)

Growing up, I remember my grandmother, Joan Mulkey Brooks, had several binders full of recipes. Everything you could imagine was in there, from her 'secret' Thanksgiving Dressing, to her mothers Chow-Chow recipe. One recipe in particular always stood out to me, and that was the Walnut Pound Cake. It was written down by my great-grandmother Minnie Shook Mulkey, then again by my grandmother, each with "this recipe is over 100 years old" across the top. Is it really that old? Truth be told, I have no idea. One thing I know for sure, it is delicious & simple!

- Tyler Osborn

Great Grandma Minnie's Walnut Cake

1/2 C Lard (Crisco works just fine!)
 2 Sticks butter
 2 C Sugar
 3 C Plain Flours
 5 Eggs
 1 C Milk
 1 Tsp. Baking Powder
 1 Tsp. Vanilla
 1 Tsp. Rum Flavoring
 1 C Chopped Walnuts (tossed in 2 Tbsp. flour)



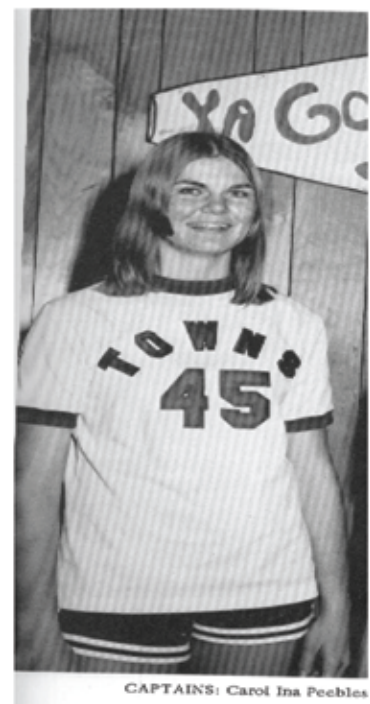
In a large bowl, cream together lard & butter. Add all ingredients except walnuts. Mix together well. Toss walnuts in 2 Tbsp. of flour and add into batter. Fold into batter, carefully, do not mix. Pour into a greased tube pan & bake for 1 hour 20 minutes at 350°

SPORTS HISTORY

By Jerry Kendall

Carol Ina Peebles (Ramsak) (TCHS-1975)

The daughter of 1950s Lady Indians star Ina Allison, Carol Ina Peebles (Ramsak) reached the 1,000 point career scoring total in basketball nearly by the time she was sixteen years old. After leaving high school a year early to pursue her college education at Young Harris, she returned to the sport a year later as a starter for the North Georgia College Lady Saints.



CAPTAINS: Carol Ina Peebles

DONATIONS

JANUARY - MARCH

Thank you to the following people for their generous donations to the historical society.

Mary Ann Koos

*In Honor of
Jerry Taylor and Jason Edwards*

Winston & Diris Farmer

*In Honor of
The Towns County Historical Society Officers*

Norma Jean Stewart

*In Honor of Jerry Taylor
In Memory of Bob Stewart*

Vickie Kimball

The Old Rock Jail

Bud & Rosemary Branson

The Old Rock Jail

Darlene Bradshaw

The Old Rock Jail

Sid Turner

*In honor of
Nell Berrong*

Ina Kozesky

Towns County Historical Society

Susan Taylor & Joe Gull

The Old Rock Jail

Kathy & James McAteer

*In Memory of
Warren Paul Berrong*

Michael Gerchefski

*In Memory of
Mac & Betty Jo McCall*

Anna Dancu

The Old Rock Jail

Henry & Cornelia Harnage

*In Honor of
Barbara Hyatt*



MYSTERY PHOTO??

Many of our landmarks in the county are no longer around.
Do you remember this building?

If you have a photo that you would like to share of a place that no longer exists or an old home, barn, church, or even relatives... please share. We will put your photo in the newsletter and Facebook. You can email, or give us the photo at a meeting. Please send your photos to: maryannmiller1002@gmail.com



Towns County Historical Society
P.O. Box 1182
900 North Main St.
Hiawassee, Georgia 30546

