



THE TOWNS HISTORIAN

The NEWSLETTER of the TOWNS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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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.

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From the President by Sandra Green



Our monthly meetings for the second quarter of 2019 were held at the Civic Center due to the repair being done to the building where our meetings are normally held. Although we've enjoyed meeting at the Civic Center, we look forward to returning to our regular meeting room once the repairs are complete.

Since being at the Civic Center, we've actually had some of the largest audiences the Historical Society has ever had at our monthly meetings! The guest speakers presented programs ranging from Lake Chatuge fishing camps during the 50s & 60s to Native Americans living in the Brasstown Valley. The June program was about New Echota & the Re-birth of The Cherokee Nation. We look forward to continuing our momentum during the third quarter with the program hosted by Betty Phillips honoring our veterans and the August program about the past, present, and future, of the city of Hiawassee. The September program is sure to be a crowd-pleaser. It features Sam Ensley telling about growing up in Jacksonville, an unincorporated community outside Young Harris! The monthly programs for the fourth quarter of 2019 are still in the planning stages. We have already started planning for the Haunted Jail on Halloween. It was a big hit last year but we hope to do even better this year! Also, we have Pickin' on the Porch at the Old Rock Jail in the fall.

We hope you will continue to support the Historical Society as we strive to preserve and share our heritage through our monthly programs and displays at the Old Rock Jail Museum!

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Native American Soapstone Bowl Quarries

by Bruce Roberts

After several recent TCHS presentations on the subject of Native American history in our area, I thought it might be interesting to discuss one of the larger but lesser known artifacts that can be found locally. Many folks are familiar with the arrowheads, points and stone tools that have been found in the ground over the decades, as well as rock art (petroglyphs and other carvings) that can be seen at locations such as Track Rock Gap. But another reminder of the Native American history in our area is the frequent occurrence of stone bowl quarries and workshops that can be found in Towns and adjoining counties.

Background

In much of what is now the Southeastern USA, the introduction of pottery didn't occur until sometime around 1000 B.C. Prior to the invention of pottery, containers for cooking and storage consisted of baskets, wooden bowls, things such as gourds and turtle shells, and carved stone bowls. Despite their weight, the stone bowls had many advantages over the other vessel types.

The use of carved stone bowls seems to have been most common during the Late Archaic period, between about 4,000 and 1,000 B.C., although it probably continued sometime later, into the Woodland period. Archaeological studies have shown that stone bowls manufactured in the Southeast were traded or transported throughout the eastern U.S. Stone bowls and fragments have been recovered at archaeological sites from the Midwest to the southern tip of Florida.

Once pottery was introduced, the manufacture of stone bowls decreased. It was once thought that production stopped altogether after pottery became available, but recent studies show that both types coexisted for centuries in many areas. In spite of their weight, the stone bowls were used long after pottery bowls were common, perhaps due to the excellent heat retention qualities of the stone. In many households, a finely produced stone bowl was a valuable commodity that would remain with the family for many generations.

Geology

Soapstone, an impure talcy rock which occurs in many parts of the Piedmont and Southern Appalachian mountains, was a common raw material for carved

stone bowls. The stone is easily carved into bowl form, and was also used for making smoking pipes and other small ornaments. The stone was quarried from natural outcrops using stone chisels and axes. Smaller stones, antler, and bone tools were then used to scrape out the finished bowl.

Stone bowl quarries have been located in both the Piedmont and the Blue Ridge Mountain areas of north Georgia. The Chatuge-Brasstown Ultramafic Sill is a well-studied geologic zone, and includes several areas with soapstone outcrops.

Some Native Americans in the Archaic Period were apparently very astute "geologists". Almost anywhere that appropriate rock outcrops are found, there was bowl production. Sometimes the outcrop might be only a single small boulder. Originally, many Native Americans probably produced their own bowls, but it is likely that over time, bowl production became more of a "craftsman" vocation for the more skilled artisans.

There are several common names for the rock that was utilized: soapstone, steatite, altered ultramafic, etc. Generally, rocks that contain a percentage of talc are referred to as soapstone, and we will stick with that term here. The rock at many of our local sites is a chlorite-talc schist. It is soft but has good integrity so it can be carved into bowl preforms and later into finished bowls. Soapstone has two advantages over many other rock types. Being softer, it is relatively easy to carve it with harder rocks. Secondly, it has heat retention properties that are advantageous for cooking.

Terms

Before continuing, definition of a few commonly used terms should be understood:

Bowl Quarry - any soapstone deposit where stone bowls were processed and removed from the rock. This can be anything from a single boulder to a series of large soapstone outcrops.

Bowl Scar - the (sometimes shallow) protuberance on a parent rock that remains where a bowl preform was removed.

Parent Rock - the larger rock/boulder from which a bowl is carved/chipped.

Preform - a roughed-out bowl shape which has not yet had the interior chipped out. Preforms may be found still attached to the parent rock, or removed.

Stone Bowl Manufacturing Process

Figure 1 illustrates (in rather crude form) the soapstone bowl production process. Evidence from around the Southeast shows that all bowl manufacturing was done using basically the same process. (Note that in these illustrations, scars from earlier bowl quarrying are shown on the boulder.) The various stages of bowl production are as follows:

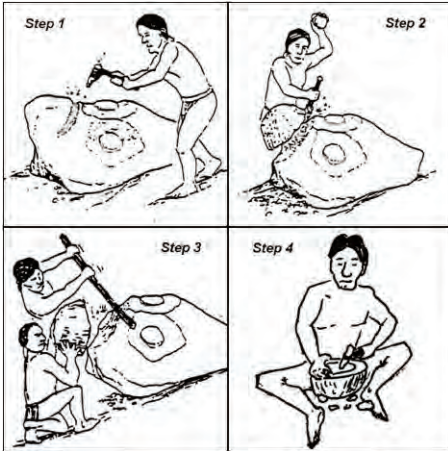


Figure 1 - Soapstone Bowl Production

Step 1: Once a suitable soapstone boulder is located, the worker found a rounded protuberance and/or chipped away at the rock (using stone tools) until a roughly rounded bottom of the bowl took shape.

Step 2: Once the preform exterior is roughed out, the worker chipped around the circumference to undercut the preform, readying it for detachment from the parent rock.

Step 3: The preform is detached, using some combination of additional chipping, wedges, or a wooden pry bar.

Step 4: The inside of the bowl is now chipped/carved out. Wall thickness, presence of handles and the amount of finishing on the bowl depended on planned use and other factors.

Examples

As mentioned earlier, a number of bowl quarries and workshops are found in our area, both on private property and on USFS land. The locations aren't usually publicized, due to the vandalism and theft which these sites sadly seem to attract. If you, the reader, knows of any, and maybe has visited them, please be respectful of the historic significance of these interesting locations.

A few examples from several local Soapstone quarries follow; these illustrate some of the features described earlier in the article:



Figure 2 - Bowl Preform



Figure 3 - Bowl Preform

Figure 2 shows an excellent bowl preform attached to the parent rock. Figure 3 shows the same preform, viewed from above. Note the skillful workmanship in achieving a nicely rounded shape for the bowl bottom. I often wonder why these bowls were abandoned before being removed and finished, with so much work already accomplished.



Figure 4 - Bowl Scar



Figure 5 - Quarry boulder

Figure 4 illustrates a classic example of a bowl removal scar on the parent rock. The flat rounded segment is where part of the inside of the bowl detached and remained when the bowl preform was pried off.

Figure 5 shows a boulder of almost 6 foot length, with indications of at least three bowls being made. On the left is a bowl removal scar, while the middle and right side show two preforms in their early-mid stages of manufacture.



Figure 6 - Large Quarry Ledge



Figure 7 - Boulder with Preforms

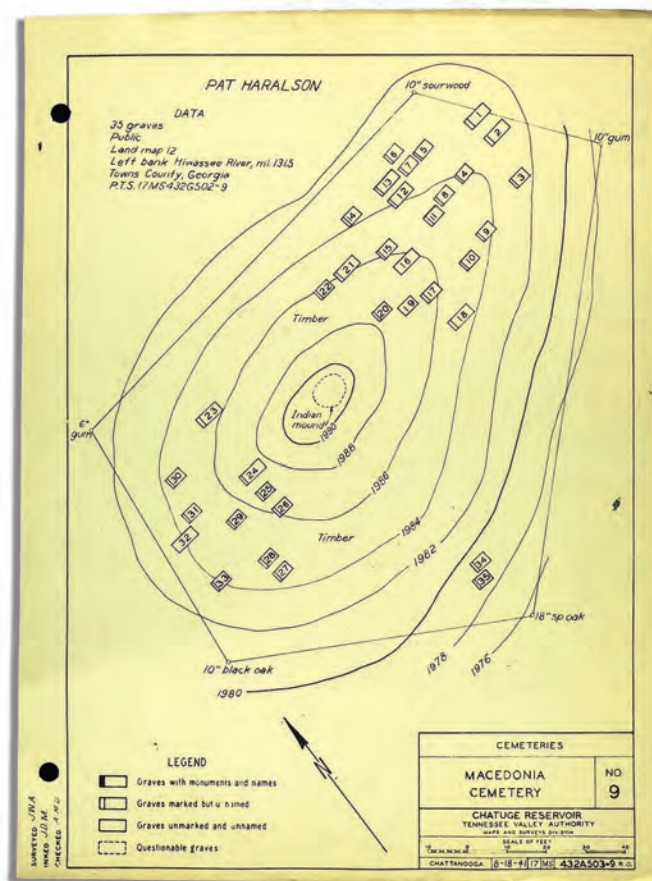
Figure 6 is a photo of an outstanding large quarry boulder, approximately 12 feet wide by 8 feet high. It was obviously used as a bowl quarry for a long period of time. We counted 19 bowl preforms and/or removal scars on the face of this rock. Doubtless there were many more bowls produced from this boulder, but their evidence was subsequently removed as new bowls were carved from the underlying rock.

Figure 7 illustrates a boulder with several unusual bowl preforms in work.

These are just a very few examples from the Native American soapstone bowl quarries to be found in our area. I find it fascinating to come across these remnants of ancient American civilization, and gaze upon articles that were worked by the hand of man some thousands of years ago. And I wonder what caused these individuals to lay down their tools and abandon these workshops with so many works still in progress.

OLD FAMILY BURYING GROUNDS

By Jerry A. Taylor & Jason L. Edwards



1941 TVA plat showing old Macedonia Cemetery, including the Indian Mound, behind the present church

When the first settlers began arriving in this area in the 1830s, there were no established churches with grave yards; therefore, early burial sites were generally family cemeteries located on a hill on the home place, and, of course, facing east. Some of the family cemeteries became quite large over time as the extended family increased and by accepting neighboring families. Such was the case with the Osborn Cemetery, Ivy Mount Cemetery, Woods Grove Cemetery, and Burch Cemetery.

Here are some of the Towns County family cemeteries randomly located throughout the county:

The Edmonds Cemetery on Upper Hightower consists of a few graves including John Jackson Edmonds (1848-1901) and family members.

The Nicholson Cemetery near the Marlor Maney place on Fodder Creek consists of the graves of pioneer settler Walter Nicholson (1795-1859) and his wife Dorcas Hogsed Nicholson (1793-1880) along with other family members.

The Carter Cemetery located on Bugsuffle near the Towns County School site consists of pioneer settlers Josiah Carter (1807-1880) and Nancy Beck Carter (1812-1880) as well as Peter Stroud (1807-1872) and Lucinda Carter Stroud (1816-1904) and other family members. Through the years, members of the Tanner, Jones, Barnes, Gillespie, Barnes, and Foster families have been added to the mix. Upon close examination, sunken spots and field stones reveal that there is a much larger number of graves than first meets the eye. Old-timers often referred to this as the old Macedonia Cemetery, and it was used as a burial place for members of Macedonia Baptist Church in the late 1800s.

The Burch Cemetery, originally located on the island across from the Hiawassee Beach, was the family cemetery of pioneer settlers Jarrett Burch (1782-1856) and Millie Pinson Burch (1787-1881). From the 1850s, the cemetery increased in size as members of the extended family and neighbors were buried there. In 1941, with the coming of Lake Chatuge, the cemetery was relocated to its present location on Sunnyside Road (Hwy 288). The relocation was necessary because the cemetery would become inaccessible once the lake was filled. Some two dozen graves remained on the island by family request.



The Logan Cemetery in Pine Crest Subdivision

The Logan Cemetery located in Pine Crest subdivision near Young Harris consists of the grave of pioneer settler Lewis B. Logan (1808-1886) and family members including some Swansons. The cemetery is preserved and cared for by the homeowner's association.

The Osborn Cemetery located within the city limits of Hiawassee began as the family cemetery of Jesse Osborn (1799-1894) and Cynthia Murray Osborn (1805-

OLD FAMILY BURYING GROUNDS CONTINUED



Ivy Mount Cemetery located off Sunnyside Road

The Jacks Cemetery up Soap Stone on Jacks Gap was the family cemetery of pioneer settler Solomon Jacks (1785-1868).

The cemetery on Tate City, sometimes known as Tallulah River Baptist Church Cemetery and the Nichols Cemetery, was begun as the family cemetery of John A. Nichols (1839-1892) and Sarah Curtis Nichols (1841-1906).

The Hunt Cemetery on Gum Log was the family cemetery of William A. Hunt (1844-1917) and Mary E. Dean Hunt (1852-1913). It is also known as the Stanton's Chapel Methodist Church Cemetery.

The old Smyrna Cemetery located on land near Charlies Creek surrounded by the national forest was the site of the long-gone Smyrna Church. Hardy W. Eller (1843-1908), Jacob L. Eller (1859-1881), and other family members are buried there as well as James B. Goddard who was murdered by Tilmon C. Justice on 17 January 1887. Mr. Steve Eller is in the process of organizing a work day to clean up the long-abandoned cemetery.

The Lyon Cemetery is across Hwy. 76 from the home place now known as the Mont and Reide Wilson home. Henry A. Lyon had his wife Margaret Brown Lyon and baby buried there together when they died 1 September 1863. Later, he moved to what is known as the Joe Berrong place on Swallows Creek. Here he buried a child.

The Alston Cemetery located off Hwy. 17 on Hiawassee River near Mill Creek Road consists of the graves of Mrs. Henry Alston (1786- c.1845) and two adult children, Euphan Alston (1807-1851) and Charles B. Alston (1820-1899). The family had moved to Hiawassee River from Halifax County, NC, in the 1830s.

The Crow Cemetery was off Brasstown Creek Road. It was destroyed when a house was built over it. The Crow family moved to extreme northwest Georgia by 1850.

The Hooper Cemetery on Fodder Creek began with the burials of pioneer settlers Andrew (1792-1849) and Dicey Hooper (1798-1847) and Absalom Jr. (1799-1862) and Martha Hooper (1800-1862). The cemetery expanded with extended family and neighbors, and with the establishment of Enotah Church, has generally become known as Enotah Cemetery.

Boyd's Chapel Cemetery on Upper Hightower actually began as the Visage Cemetery. The pioneer settlers were William (1794-1853) and Elizabeth (1777-1854+) Visage. Extended family members were the Smiths, Ellers, and Hoopers. After the land was donated to Boyd's Chapel Methodist Church in the late 1800s, it became known as Boyd's Chapel Cemetery and was sometimes referred to as Unity Cemetery.

On Sunnyside near the fire station, are two little graves being the infant twin daughters (1885/6) of Elisha and Addie McConnell.

The Kimsey Cemetery is located on Lower Bell Creek near Lower Bell Church. There are four unidentified graves there.

When Lake Chatuge was constructed in 1941, there was an old abandoned cemetery consisting of about a dozen graves close to Cedar Cliff on the Penland property. One grave marked as A. Henson was relocated to the Burch Cemetery. All the rest of the graves, including the Leg of Melinda Penland were left undisturbed and inundated by the lake.

Behind Macedonia Church is the original church graveyard. According to a survey made by the TVA in 1941, there is an Indian mound at the center of the cemetery and a couple dozen graves surrounding it. The only known burials in the cemetery are David Brown (c.1763-c.1843) and Ruth Carter Brown (c.1768-c.1843), ancestors of many of the early Brown settlers in the area.

1885). Through the years it has increased in size as extended family and neighboring families were added to the mix. Today the cemetery is maintained by McConnell Memorial Church.

The Burrell Cemetery located off Hwy 76 East, close to Scataway Road, consists of the graves of pioneer settlers Walter M. Burrell (1818-1909) and Elizabeth Denton Burrell (1824-1900).

The Jameson Cemetery began with the death of my fourth-great grandmother Rebecca Reece Jameson on 3 April 1850. Her birth date of 2 December 1769 is the oldest birth date on any tombstone in Towns County. Other family members were subsequently buried there. Through the years, family members moved away, and neighboring families were buried there. Sometime in the early 1900s, the title to the property was transferred to Macedonia Church which currently maintains the cemetery as Macedonia Cemetery; however, there are a few old-timers who still refer to it as Jameson Cemetery.

The Russell Cemetery, located on Cedar Cliff, began with the death of Arminta Matilda Russell, the twelve year old daughter of pioneer settlers John Russell (1803-1883) and Nancy Dickey Russell (1804-1859), on January 14, 1851. As the case of other family cemeteries, neighboring families have been added to the mix.

The Gibson Cemetery on Lower Bell Creek contains the graves of the Jacob Newton Gibson (1833-1906) and Alletha Caroline Ledford Gibson (1840-1911) family. The cemetery is sometimes called Sims Cemetery since several members of Julia Gibson Sims' family are buried there.

Lower Hightower Cemetery actually began as the James Osborn (1801-1852) and Ann Johnson Osborn (1804-1870+) family cemetery. The cemetery was enlarged with extended family and neighbors. With the establishment of Lower Hightower Church in the late 1800s, it became known as Lower Hightower Church Cemetery.

The Corn Cemetery on Hightower consists of family graves of pioneer family John Corn (1813-1875) and Mary Wade Carter Corn (1810-1878).

The Garrett Cemetery on Upper Bell Creek is the family cemetery of William K. Garrett (1848-1940) and Mary Ann Eller Garrett (1848-1923). However, Jehiel Sellers, who died 23 July 1881, is the first documented burial there. Others buried there prior to the

Garretts are Daniel Phillips (1904) and Louisa Dawson Phillips (1923).

Ivy Mount Cemetery off Laurel Lane on Sunnyside was begun with the death of Henry Brown on 14 November 1845. Henry Brown (c.1798-1845), his wife Mary Hooper Brown (c.1800-1889), and other members of the extended family moved to Fodder Creek in the late 1830s. When he was on his deathbed, Henry Brown requested to be buried behind his house next to the pasture fence. Eventually, he was joined by other members of the extended Brown family.



The old Wilson Cemetery on the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds campground area

The Wilson Cemetery located in the Georgia Mountain Fair Campground area was the family cemetery of the William Wellborn Wilson (1810-1880+) family who moved to Kansas in the 1870s. In 1941, when it was inventoried by the TVA, in preparation of the coming of Lake Chatuge, it was identified as the Rogers Cemetery since James Alastus Rogers owned the land.

The Solomon Smith Corn (1828-1895) family cemetery is located off Hwy 76 on Upper Hightower. It consists of a few family members who died before the family moved to Oklahoma.



The Margaret Brown Lyon and infant child grave across from the Mont and Reide Wilson place



Plum Jelly

by Tyler Osborn

Ingredients

- 5 pounds fully ripe plums
- 1-1/2 cups water
- 1 box fruit pectin
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 6-1/2 cups granulated sugar



Instructions

- Slice the plums in half and remove and discard the pits. Don't bother peeling them.
- Place the plums in a large stockpot. Add the water. Bring the pot to a boil, then cover and simmer over medium heat for 10 minutes.
- Strain the juice by pouring through a fine mesh strainer or line a colander with several layers of cheesecloth. Allow the fruit to drain for about 30 minutes. Discard the fruit.
- You should have about 5 1/2 cups of plum juice. Pour the juice back into the pot. Add one box of pectin & 1 tbs. butter. Bring the juice to a hard rolling boil.
- Add the sugar. Continue to boil the jelly for one minute. Remove the pot from the heat. Skim any foam from the top with a metal spoon.
- Ladle the jelly into clean jars. Jelly can be stored for one year in the fridge.
- Jelly can also be canned using the water bath canning method. Leave 1/4 - inch of headspace in each jar. Top with lids and bands. Process for 10 minutes.



Georgia Mountain Fair Parade Float by Tyler Osborn

This year our float in the annual Georgia Mountain Fair Parade was in honor of the late Fiddlin' Howard Cunningham. I would like to give a special thanks to Mary Ann who helped me design & build the float. A special thanks also goes to those who donated items to use and for their participation listed below:

The Cunningham Family for riding on the float
Reggie Kimsey for the use of a trailer
Jacky Jones Ford for the use of a truck to pull the trailer
Bert Rogers for hay bales
Russell Hedden for the use of a generator
Daren & Missy Osborn for allowing us to use their shed to build the float, as well as helping with finishing touches & pulling it in the parade.



I am proud to say that most of the items used on the float we purchased locally & helped support our local economy. This was a fun project to work on & a learning experience for all.

❧ DONATIONS ❧

APRIL - JUNE 2019

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

Deborah Reynolds

In memory of Zola Reynolds

Susan Sorrell

In memory of the Burch Family

Deborah Reynolds

In memory of Joyce and Steve Holmes

Frances Shook

In memory of Ronnie Clampitt

Class of 1956-Towns County Schools

In honor of Ina Allison Kozesky

Dr. and Mrs. Lanier Nicholson

In memory of Ina Kozesky

Steve and Donna Howell

In loving memory of Ina Kozesky

Jerry Taylor


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*In honor of John and Janice on their
50th anniversary*

In memory of Ina Kozesky


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