

ESTATOE

Quarterly Newsletter

Yancey History Association



HERITAGE DAY

At the McElroy House

MUSEUM of YANCEY COUNTY
HISTORY BENEFIT

Sat. September 22nd - 12:00 - 5:00

Enjoy the Music and Storytelling of

Maggie Lauterer & Zack Allen
Lee Rexroat

Bruce Greene & Loy McWhirter

Jacqueline Red Leaf

Charlotte Barnett

Elizabeth Hardy

Museum Tours by Living Historians
in Civil War period clothing

Cake Walks - Hot Dogs - Hamburgers - Cold Drinks

Donation \$5.00 * preschool children free

Executive Director's Museum Report

I am pleased to report that the History Museum has experienced growth on many levels during this summer season.

* We were fortunate to have our County Gov. continue and increase the financial support that is so vital to our mission of preserving Appalachian Heritage. We were also able to convince the Town of Burnsville of the benefits that the Museum offers to our community and we regained their financial support.

* We mounted the on loan Civilian Conservation Corp. (CCC) Exhibit provided by the Appalachian Consortium and set up by our friends from the Old Fort Museum.

* We opened the Living Room and the Civil War Room Displays through a grant from the John Wesley and Anna Hodgin Hanes Foundation.

* We opened the new Civil War Exhibit with the on loan displays furnished by the Living Historians of the 58th NC Troop reenactors.

* We have achieved our funding goal for the 1922 Dodge Roadster that will be the centerpiece of the Transportation Enclosure that will open in October.

I look forward to seeing our members and friends at Heritage Day.

Jim Priesmeyer

THE BLACK MOUNTAIN RAILROAD

About 1911, construction began on the Black Mountain Railroad (BMRR) to serve the timber industry in the Bowditch, Bowlens Creek, Pensacola, and Eskota, NC, areas of Yancey County. The BMRR originated at Kona on the Carolina, Clinchfield & Ohio railroad's main line from Tennessee to Spartanburg, SC. Kona is located at the confluence of the North and South Toe Rivers. The BMRR ran 24 miles along the South Toe River and Little Crabtree Creek to Burnsville, NC. Thence it followed Cane River and forked where it met Cattail Creek. The BMRR ended at the Pensacola Station on the left branch and at Eskota on the right branch. At these points, track laid by the Brown Brothers Lumber Company (Eskota) and the Carolina Spruce Lumber Company (Pensacola) began. Their tracks ran for long distances and had many switchback curves up the mountains to points at which the timber cutting was taking place. Also, there was a spur that ran about two and one-half miles from Micaville to the Clinchfield Products Corporation at Bowditch, and there was another spur for 2.3 miles long to Bowlens Creek. [Editor: An article on this railway may be found in Vol. I, Article No. 9. Many photographs of this activity may be found in *Images Of Yancey* (Burnsville: Yancey History Association, 1993), Chapter IX.]

Shay type engines, sometimes called "The Titans of the Timber," were the primary locomotives that they used because their geared, vertical cylinder design made them much more powerful and better suited for logging the mountains than conventionally designed engines. The sawmills, better known as bandmills, were at Pensacola, Eskota, and probably at other sites such as Bowditch and Bowlens Creek. [Unless the Editor is mistaken, a photo survives of the operation on Bolens Creek.]

The timber industry ran its course and ended the need for the railroad circa 1928, and the track was removed. Highway NC 197-S, the Pensacola Road, now uses part of the old railroad bed from near Burnsville to Pensacola and Eskota. A short section of spur track can still be seen at Bowditch.

While the BMRR was in operation, two of the post offices along the route were operated by my grandparents. The post office at Low Gap, called Vixen, was operated by my maternal grandfather, S. Bart Penland. It was in the building now identified as the C.C. and Grover Ray Store, currently used as an antiques business. My mother, Ruby E. Penland, grew up in the house that still stands behind the store. When a train wrecked beside the store, there was near panic because a train car landed where Mama had been seen playing a few minutes earlier. Fortunately, she had moved unseen to another area before the wreck.

My paternal grandfather, Thomas G. ("Tom") Dellinger, owned and operated a store, mill, RR station and post office about midway between Burnsville and Pensacola. It was known as Dellinger Station. The post office was named Anatone. I have letters bearing the Vixen and Anatone post marks. My dad, J. Henry Dellinger, was only about nine or ten years old when the track was laid through his dad's farm, but he carried drinking water to the men cutting cross-ties on the Dellinger farm. Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate any pictures of the Dellinger Station, store or mill.

In order to build the BMRR, a route had to be selected, rights-of-way had to be obtained, surveys made, and a detailed design had to be made and documented. Several years ago, I was able to obtain a copy of the drawings used to build the railroad. The drawings not only contain an excellent engineering detail of the project, but the names of the people from whom the RR had to obtain a rights-of-way. Some people apparently deeded the necessary land, some land was condemned, and some others never transferred the land to the railroad. It is my intention to donate a copy of the drawings to the Yancey History Association for display in the Rush Wray Museum of History in Burnsville.

RIGHTS-OF-WAY

The drawings contain far more information than I can put into this article. The following is a summary of land owners, sometimes owning more than one affected parcel of land, involved in the right-of-way issue:

Kona to Micaville

D. Newton Woody; Geo. T. Woody; Tom E. Woody; Jake Robinson; T.B. Felts; Augustus P. Young; E.C. Guy; Augustus P. Young; Sam K. Ray; James E. Burleson; Heirs of Ned Wilson (L. Berry Wyatt; Jim Wilson; Mattie Wilson; John Wilson); Ella Wyatt; Bud Wilson; W.E. Clontz; and James Anglin.

Micaville to Burnsville

W.E. Clontz; T.M. Young; A.B. Silver; Geo. W. Silver; Baptist Church (at Cane Branch); Mrs. M.M. Edge; T.T. Edge; Mrs. A.D. Gellespie; Wm. Thomas (formerly H.J. Fox); W.B. Robinson; W.O. Griffith; L.H. Griffith; Peter A. Casida; Mrs. Desdemonia Young; Methodist Church (South); J.W. Young; D.J. Young; T.J. Young; Mrs. Dullie Young; S. Hugh Banks; Leon P. Banks; Plato M. Banks; H.C. Smith; Wm. S. Wright; Yancey County Poor Farm; and Miss Bessie E. Smith.

Burnsville to Low Gap/Vixen

J. Wesley Higgins; John Autrey; W.K. Boone; G.D. Ray (heirs, including James Wilson); J. Bis Ray; O.R. Lewis; J. Bis Ray; John Styles; E.F. Watson; Belle Roberts; (S.) Dave Dellinger; Robert Ray; Jam(es) Banks; T.G. Dellinger (Dellinger Station and Anatone Post Office); James M. Banks; C.W. Parker; W.E. Billings; James W. Ray; Chas. Ray;

Wm. Buckner; W.M. Ray; J.R. (Jesse Ray) Penland; R.L. Penland; J. N. Wilson; W.H. Rathbone; and J.R. (Jesse Ray) Penland (Vixen Post Office).

Low Gap to Pensacola

J.N. Burleson; John McCord; W.B. Ray; Joe N. Wilson; Mrs. Elsie Ray; Weldon Haney, B.B. Riddle; H.C. Rathbone; B.B. Ray; J.S. Riddle; (Rev.) Garret L. Ray; B.B. Ray; and the Baptist Church (Laurel Branch).

Pensacola to Pensacola Station/ Carolina Spruce Rail

Methodist Church; Hayse McMahan; and Judson McMahan.

Pensacola to Murcheson/Eskota/ Brown Brothers Lumber Rail

Agusta H. Oberlin; Methodist Church; Sallie L. Ray; Z.L. Ray; W.M. Riddle; J.S. Riddle; Welzie Riddle; J.C. McPeters; W.M. Riddle; Welzie Riddle; Mrs. R.C. Robertson; Joe N. Wilson; Mrs. R.C. Robertson; E.R. Wilson; A.G. Wilson; S.M. Wilson; John Allen; Adolphus G. Wilson; and Joe N. Wilson.

Submitted by: Thomas (Tom) Penland Dellinger, 315 Mockingbird Road, Huntsville, Alabama 35803-1552 (256-881-5858).

Data source: Twelve "K" size drawings titled "Right-of-Way and Track Map, Black Mountain Railway Co., Office of Chief Engineer, Johnson City, Tenn. The maps start at mile post zero (Kona) and end at mile post 24 (Eskota).

Editors Note:

The Yancey History Association is most Grateful to Mr. Dellinger for his diligent research and his contributions to the History Museum. The Association has received the Railroad drawings that are mentioned in this article. The section from Micaville to Burnsville will be an important part of the Transportation Exhibit that will open this October.

ESTATOEE

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Estatoee (es-to-toe-e)

Estootowie in early records. A Cherokee place name, shortened to Estatoe/Estatoah, from which the name Tow or Toe River is derived.

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