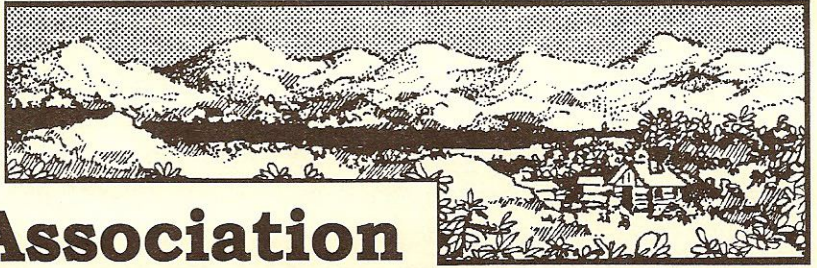


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Quarterly Newsletter

Yancey History Association



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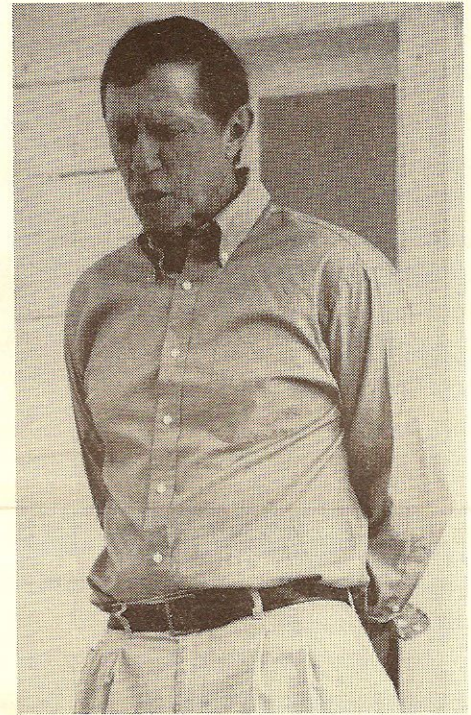
Preserving Our Appalachian Heritage

Spring 2003

The Rush T. Wray Museum of Yancey County History Dedication



Burnsville Town Board member Doyce McClure cuts the ribbon as Museum Curator Jim Priesmeyer and Yancey History Association President Dr. Keith Johnson look on.



Yancey County
Commissioner
Blaine Whitson offers
the invocation.

Saturday May 17th was a cool and drizzly morning. The kind of morning that most folks want to stay in bed. None the less a nice crowd of ardent Museum supporters gathered on the front lawn as the rain stopped and the sun broke through offering a warm glow and a new page in Yancey County's Heritage.

Understanding the Cherokee Culture

Long before the first settlers of present-day western North Carolina began arriving in the mid 1700s, the area was inhabited by the Cherokees. Though most of the Cherokee people themselves passed out of the mountains and into history in the nineteenth century, they left behind them a powerful legacy that is woven throughout the culture of the region, echoing in the names of places, and in the stories passed down through their descendants.

Charlotte T. Ross, a folklorist specializing in the regional culture of Southern Appalachian, presented a special program on the Cherokee at the June 1 meeting of the Yancey History Association. The program was a delight to the audience from grandchildren to grandparents. Like all of Charlotte Ross's programs, this event was educational, entertaining, and most of all, unforgettable.

Ms. Ross is a master storyteller and has collected some 3500 stories. Among the festivals, conferences and universities at which Ross has performed, are the American Folklore Society, the Smithsonian Institution Folklife Festival, Opryland, the Ulster (Ireland) Folklife Festival, the Kellogg Institute, Harvard University, National Institute of Health, and the New University at Ulster (Ireland).

Ross has also been featured on numerous television and radio interviews, such as NPR's "All Things Considered," and the BBC in Glasgow. PBS airs broadcasts of an historical play she wrote based on her family's five generations of stories titled "From My Grandmother's Grandmother Unto Me." Ms. Ross appears courtesy of a grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council.



"When a community loses its memory, it's members no longer know one another. How can they know one another, if they have forgotten or never learned one another's stories? If they do not know one another's stories, how can they know whether or not to trust one another? People who do not trust one another do not help one another, and moreover they fear one another..."

— Wendell Berry

Special Guest Speakers

August 3, 2003

Michael C. Hardy 2:00 p.m.

The Cousins of Yancey County arrived in the area in the midst of the Civil War. Clark Cousins married a local girl in 1863. Two of Clark Cousins' brothers were Franklin Cousins and William Henry Cousins. They both served in the 37th North Carolina Troops during the War. Franklin was killed on August 29, 1862, at Second Manassas, but Henry returned to western North Carolina. He, like his brother Clark, married a Yancey County girl, and in 1902, applied for a pension. Clark is buried in Yancey County and, most likely, so is Henry. The regiment in which Henry served, the 37th North Carolina Troops, is the subject of a new book by Yancey History Association Vice President Michael C. Hardy. Michael will be presenting a discourse on the 37th and their service, along with a book signing. (PS: Michael is still looking for the burial site of William Henry Cousins.)

September 7, 2003

Dr. Timothy Silver 2:00 p.m.

It was a debate between Thomas L. Clingman and Dr. Elisha Mitchell that brought Yancey County into the history books. That debate, over who had measured the highest peak in the eastern United States, and many other events, are the focus of a new book by Dr. Timothy Silver, professor of history at Appalachian State University. *Mount Mitchell and the Black Mountains: An Environmental History of the Highest Peaks in Eastern America* covers the history of the mountain chain and the history of the surrounding areas, from the native inhabitants all the way through today's spruce-fir decline. Dr. Silver, a descendant of the Silvers of Kona, grew up in the area and has added a wonderful book to the scholarly study of the region.

A Salute To Yancey County Veterans

Yancey County native Charles W. Ray was like many young men: when his country called, he answered. Ray joined the army and became a sergeant in Company I, 22nd United States Infantry. Sergeant Ray was stationed overseas, and one day, while leading a detachment of scouts in advance of the main body of the army, came across a group of the enemy trying to destroy a bridge. Ray sent one man for reinforcements, and placed his remaining eleven men along his side of the river. Ray then "calmly walked across the bridge." Soon, all of Ray's small band of men were across the river and battling with the enemy. The date was October 19, 1899, and the place was the Philippine Islands, near San Isidro, Luzon. Sergeant Ray was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions on April 18, 1902.

The story of Sgt. Charles W. Ray, and many others, will be presented in a special exhibit from July 2 to July 6, 2003 at the Museum of Yancey County History.

The exhibit, "A Salute to Yancey County Veterans" will feature displays, such as the uniform of a World War I Infantry soldier and the



uniform of a Vietnam-era petty officer. There will be hundreds of other items on display besides the museum's normal exhibits about the history of Yancey County.

The Yancey History Association

is also launching a campaign to preserve the stories of the men and women from Yancey County who have made a contribution to the freedom we all enjoy. The YHA has developed a survey for veterans, or their descendants, to fill out. These surveys will preserve both the basic information, like the name of the veteran, his parents, spouse, and children, along with information regarding the veteran's service, his rank or grade, unit, and the action that he participated in. The surveys can be picked up at the museum. The Yancey History Association is also asking that visitors bring photographs, letters, or other documents to the museum so they may be copied and preserved.

On Sunday, July 6, at 2 p.m., the museum will host an informal gathering of veterans interested in telling their remarkable stories. If you are a veteran, or know of veterans who would be interested in coming by the museum and sharing their stories, then please give the museum a call. You can contact the museum at (828) 682-3671.

A Special Veterans Exhibit at the **The Museum of Yancey County History** **July 2 - 6, 2003**

Wednesday, July 2 - Saturday, July 5
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sunday, July 6
2 - 4 p.m.

Informal Veterans Discussion Forum at 2 p.m.

This issue of the Estatoee is sponsored by Iris Ray Meyer

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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 Towe or Toe River is derived.

Board Members:

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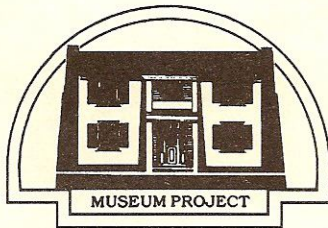
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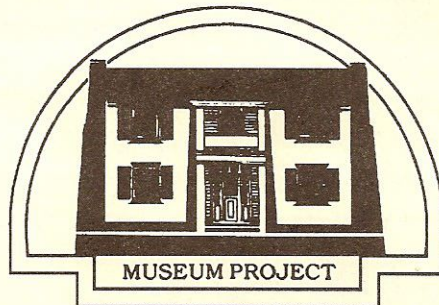
*Directors: Jacque Redleaf Gameau
& Mike Ledford*

*Executive Director/Museum Curator:
Jim Priesmeyer*



Yancey History Association

Post Office Box 1088
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UPCOMING EVENTS

July 27 - Sheila Kay Adams

August 3 - Michael C. Hardy

August 30 - Train Days

September 7 - Dr. Timothy Silver

September 13 - Storytelling Festival

October 4 - Family Heritage Day

November 28 & 29, December 5 & 6 - McElroy Holiday House