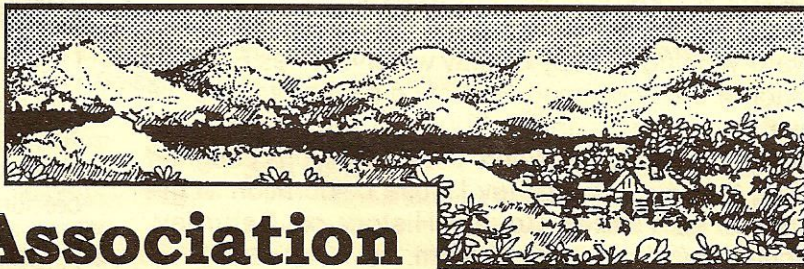


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Quarterly Newsletter

Yancey History Association



Volume XV, No. 3

Preserving Our Appalachian Heritage

Fall 2003

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

The Yancey History Association invites you to join us for an authentic Nineteenth Century Christmas at the McElroy House, home of the Museum of Yancey County History. Join us for the sights, sounds, aromas, flavors and sensations of an authentic 1800's Christmas.

Sights: Yancey County students and professional interior decorators are teaming up to decorate the McElroy House for a Victorian Christmas Holiday. The ornaments for the ten foot Christmas tree have been made by the students of Mountain Heritage High School. The tree will be decorated by the Yancey County 4-H Home Schoolers. The holiday adornment of the house is being provided by the decorating teams of Craft Pride, Inc., D.K. Puttyroot and Grapevine Limited.

Sounds: Friday evening, December 5th, the McElroy House guests will enjoy a performance by Rev. Raymond Hollifield playing the viola with accompaniment of Dr. Dorothy Bobbe playing the violin.

Aromas and Flavors: The mixtures of the aromas of simmering potpourri, fresh cut pine boughs and the yule log on the fire will fill the air. Hot mint tea and spiced cider will warm the body while ginger snaps and a wide array of home baked goodies will tantalize each visitor's taste buds.

Sensations: The warmth of the fire in Aunt Lucy's kitchen will chase the chill from your bones while the hospitality of the Living Historian hosts and hostesses will warm your hearts. Dressed in period clothing these fine and friendly folks will share with you the true experience of life in the McElroy House in the 1800's.

The home will be open Friday and Saturday evenings, November 28th-29th & December 5th, from 4:00 to 8:00 pm and again on Saturday, December 6th from 2:00 to 6:00 pm. Admission is a \$2.00 donation per person which includes refreshments. The McElroy House is located above the Visitor Center on West Main Street in Burnsville with additional parking at 11 Academy Street. Handicap parking is on Walnut Street next to the Museum. For details call (828) 682-3671.

Combine your visit to the History Museum with a visit to the Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center to get all the details of the events taking place in Burnsville on this Winterfest weekend. Enjoy the fine shopping at the many merchants on Main Street who are participating in creating this traditional Christmas event. You won't want to miss the Christmas Parade, lighting of the Town Square, buggy rides, live Nativity Scene, the Toe River Arts Council Studio Tour, traditionally decorated businesses on Main Street and of course the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus.

A Message from the President

Effective December 1st, Jim Priesmeyer will be leaving the History Association to take on a full time position as Project Manager/Director of the newly formed Yancey County Cultural Resources Commission. Jim will continue to be associated with the Museum on a limited basis. We all are sorry to see Jim go, but we understand that he cannot exist on the part time salary that we were able to pay him. Jim has brought the Museum from an idea, to a building, to a museum, a museum that is one of the best small museums in the State. He accomplished this feat with a lot of hard work and devotion on his part. He has been able to draw in others that have given of their time and money to help us reach this period in our history.

The Museum Director and Curator is no longer a part time position, but a full time one and we must work to obtain sufficient monies to support this office. There are ways that each of us can help. First, we need to get additional funding from the City and County. They each need to agree to accept a certain percentage of the Museum Budget. Second, we all need to consider the Museum when drawing up our Wills. By bequeathing to the Museum, property, either real or monetary, the Museum could establish an endowment which could provide an income for years to come. Third, renew your membership, and if possible, renew at a higher level or send a donation with your renewal. Give memberships to your friends and relatives. Increasing our membership rolls not only helps us financially, but it helps us in securing Grants for the Museum. If you are able, agree to cover the costs of such museum expenditures as the Newsletter, utilities, telephone, security, insurance, etc.

We wish Jim well and offer him our thanks for all the years that he devoted himself to the museum and for the monumental accomplishments he achieved. We are glad that he will still be available to us and will continue to provide us support.

- Keith Johnson

Book Signing at Museum _____

Award-winning Yancey County writer Charles F. Price, author of the acclaimed *Hiwassee* series of historical novels about 19th-century Southern Appalachian life, will sign his new book *Where the Water-Dogs Laughed* during the McElroy Holiday House celebration at the Museum of Yancey County History on Saturday, December 6 from 2 pm to 4 pm.

Price has been called by critic Martin Northway "a significant new voice on the American literary scene". *Independent Publisher Magazine* says he is "leading a new wave of great Southern writing" and hails him as "a truly original voice that resonates like the hill country he writes about".

His works include *Hiwassee: A Novel of the Civil War* (Academy Chicago, 1996), now acknowledged as a mainstay of American Civil War fiction; *Freedom's Altar* (John F. Blair, 1999), winner of the Sir Walter Raleigh Award as the best fiction of the year written by a North Carolina author; and *The Cock's Spur* (Blair, 2000), which *Independent Publisher* chose as one of the Ten Outstanding Books of the Year published in the United States. The same magazine also named Price Story Teller of the Year. *The Cock's Spur* went on to garner the Clark Cox Historical Fiction Award of the North Carolina Society of Historians.

Where the Water-Dogs Laughed (High Country Publishers, 2003), recently released, has already been hailed by Appalachian writer and storyteller Gary Carden as "a drama of epic proportions" marked by "faultless research", "sparkling with wit, anecdotes and folklore" and "bristling with buffoons, villains, pining lovers and obsessed folks – obsessed with greed, vengeance and dreams".

"I write historical fiction about ordinary people confronted by extraordinary events in the past," Price explains. "My interest is in history not simply for its own sake, but as it sheds light on the problems and issues of today." His ancestors, the Price and Curtis families of Clay County in southwestern North Carolina, figure prominently in his stories. All four novels are set in Clay County and convey a strong sense of place - the remote valley of the Hiwassee River, surrounded by the grandeur of the Nantahala, Tusquittee and Valley River mountain ranges.

Price lives, writes and teaches on Cattail Creek above Pensacola.

Books For Sale _____

Sharyn McCrumb's latest masterpiece, "Ghost Riders" will be available during the Holiday House. Each book has been signed by the author.

Farewell - Fare Thee Well _____

I can not begin to express the full range of thoughts and emotions that I feel as I depart from my position as YHA Executive Director, nor can I put into words the gratitude I have for those who have worked so hard in creating our county history museum.

During the past seven years we have:

- Saved the Historic McElroy House.
- Restored this majestic home.
- Developed a first rate museum.
- Provided historic programs for our schools.
- Saved the Historic YCI Brown Dormitory.
- Assisted in creating the YCI Historic District.
- Developed the annual "Battle of Burnsville".
- Provided a wide range of traditional music.
- Hosted storytellers and book authors.
- Created the Jim Ray Heritage Garden.
- Created the Transportation Enclosure.
- Developed the Dodge Roadster Exhibit.
- Supported the Historic Preservation Committee.
- Assisted the HPC in protecting cemeteries.
- Set and maintained museum operating hours.
- Developed strong relationships with local not for profit groups and regional Museums.

At this point in time I have completed the goal that I committed myself to. Namely to take the Museum Project to the point of its dedication. As YHA has continued to grow we have laid the ground work for many new projects that are very important and need to be completed. They are:

- Secure and move the Petroglyph.
- Build the West porch on the McElroy House.
- Restore the McElroy House Parlor.
- Continue to build the Museum's collections.
- Continue to build a strong financial future.
- Create a historic log structure Pioneer settlement on the Museum grounds.

A little more than a year ago I put forth the following challenge to the YHA Board of Directors. If they wanted me to continue as the Executive Director my position would have to become full time. Since this has not been accomplished I have made interim recommendations that I believe will keep the Museum healthy and allow the Museum to grow into the entity that it has become.

Finally there are two MUST DO goals:

- Enlarge the Board of Directors. NOW
- Hire a local historian to run the Museum at the end of this interim period.

Many Thanks and God Bless.

- Jim

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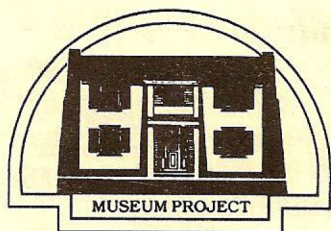
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Yancey History Association

Post Office Box 1088
Burnsville, NC 28714



no beefspoke

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(See the complete membership list inside)

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*Published Quarterly by the
Yancey History Association*

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Burnsville, NC 28714
(828) 682-3671

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.**

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