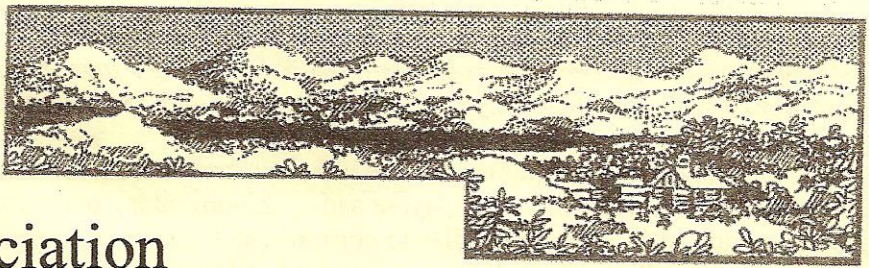


ESTATOEE

Quarterly Newsletter

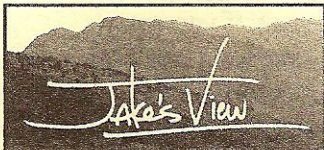


Yancey History Association

Volume XX, No. 1

Preserving Our Appalachian Heritage

Late Winter & Spring 2011



First, I'd like to thank those volunteers who have agreed to serve as board members this year. Bob Wilson, our past president, is still carrying on with all his activities and gusto while Elaine Dellinger continues as the mastermind behind all our endeavors. Vivianne Bradley as our treasurer has brought our finances into the realm of understandability! Sandy Whitehouse, our vice president, and Jeannie Miller, our historian, are new to our board and bring an exuberance that is contagious. Our board is rounded out with the addition of Elaine Boone and Ruth Banks, both of whom represent countless generations of Yancey County history.

Second, I want to thank our staff – Marylyn Oakley, Vickie Fortune and Larry Parker. We are truly fortunate to have such dedicated and talented folks to keep our office humming and our buildings fit! As a non-profit with very limited funds, to actually have staff is quite remarkable and we thank the State of Franklin for providing their salaries. Please drop by our offices and say hello and let them know how much we appreciate their work.

Third, I can't overstate how exciting 2011 is going to be here at the Yancey History Association. As history buffs, we know this is the 150th year since the start of the Civil War. We are going to remember the War and its impact on our community with a Living History Event on April 16 to depict life in 1861 Burnsville. This will be in conjunction with the Spring re-opening of the McElroy House/Rush-Wray Museum and will include period music and singing, crafts demonstrations, and the replication of a military camp replete with camp fires, cooking, military drills and parade and hopefully, the firing of a canon! All this is through the exceptional efforts of one of our VOLUNTEERS, Chris Carter. If you would like to VOLUNTEER with this event or offer your services in any other way, please give us a call at 678-9587.— *Jake Blood, President*

Meet the Board –

Jeannie Miller was elected to the Board of Directors as Historian. Jeannie's job is to keep files of all published information regarding Yancey County's history and especially the Yancey History Association's activities; this position was last kept by Nancy Shaw.



Jeannie is the second daughter of Boyd & Billie Jo Deyton of Green Mountain. She is a graduate of Mars Hill College with a degree in Education and has taught in both Yancey and Madison counties for the past 27 years. She has been a Jr. Historical Advisor for 20 of those years and her students have won many awards. She was named Advisor of the Year five of those years! She was recently nominated for the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American National History Teachers. She was Board Certified in 2008 and is currently working to finish her Master's Degree in Science.

She and her husband Randall live in the Pensacola Community and spend a great deal of their time with their three grandchildren. As if teaching all week were not enough, she also prepares and helps teach the Children's Sermon at Bolen's Creek Baptist Church.



Elaine Boone was elected as Member at Large on the Board and brings a wealth of experience to us, as she has spent 38 year working life, as a Yancey County teacher. She has also given years of dedication to other organizations within our community: Yancey Chamber of Commerce, TRAC, Yancey County DSS, the Yancey Literary Council, and Yancey Citizen Review Panel. She served four years on the Yancey Board of Education and is member of the Yancey Retired School Personnel.

She and she husband David also live in the Pensacola community and attend the Concord Baptist Church. Now that she is retired she spends a good portion of her time taking care of her grandchildren. She and David are very proud of the fact that their forefathers and mothers were among the first families into Yancey County.

News from the Association Office

Much work is underway here at the YHA, we have begun a very detailed and complex inventory of all the museum collections from postcards, personal papers from Lusky Edwards to Indian artifacts, clothing, linens, furniture and household items. Everything is becoming a traceable items within our new system. Thanks to a couple of great volunteers Phyllis Duenas, Howard Smith (Smitty) and myself.

Marilyn Oakley and Larry Parker, who are staffers from the State of Franklin program have been super busy making improvements to the layout and operations taking place all over the complex. Vickie Fortune has been working with Vivianne Bradley to inventory all the property owned by the association aside from the museum collection. Plans are underway as we speak to have a brand new web site up and running very soon.

The genealogy library is growing every month. Please help spread the word that it remains open all year long. Please phone the office for the days and hours we are open. It is nice to be able to offer this service during the slower winter months. We have just been the recipient of a new HP computer as part of a grant allowing the regional public library to connect more smoothly with our museum genealogy library. If you are interested in attending monthly or quarterly genealogy round tables please call the office and put your name on the contact list.

Civil War Sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) is occurring across the nation from now through 2015. As part of the North Carolina Civil War Trails, we too plan to have events, as they relate to the war years here in Yancey County. This will include reenactments, displays, living history camps on the museum grounds, graveside services for both slaves and soldiers of that period. Some of these activities will be in erecting markers to the individuals memory of both slave and free. Programs involving the social customs and music of the time; the role of the women, the home guard, the clergy or chaplains. Stories and letters written by the soldiers to loved ones at home will be read during events by their present day descendants. By spreading these out over a four year period, we will be able to truly tell the story of the war, and how it affected our land, people and our history.

We are in need of desk/s if anyone has old ones in storage, please consider donating them to us. We can arrange for pick up. Bookcases and chairs are also needed for the office areas. Dishes, glassware, old kitchen tools, period framed prints for the walls, fabric for drapery making are needed for the McElroy House and museum. In case you have any of these items stashed away we could really use them!

As a board member I attend the regional Museums In Partnership monthly meetings in an effort to help create more visibility and knowledge of what we offer here in Yancey.

Elaine McAlister Dellinger, Senior Director

Coming later this year:

"Yancey County" part of the Arcadia Publishing Images of America Series, by Elaine McAlister Dellinger and Kiesa Kay, this paperback pictorial history will contain approximately 200 pictures taken from every township in the county. You are sure to find someone you have known in this upcoming book. The cost will be approximately \$21.99 and should be available by the time of the literary festival in September.

"*Images of Yancey Volume II*", the association has begun to meet with the publisher to set up a cost, etc. for this future book. The first *Images* has now been reprinted three additional times, so it is time for a second volume, don't you think? Watch your newspaper and radio for dates and times when photographs will be accepted from the public for publication in this new version.

MUSEUM HOURS

Year Round

Wed., Thurs., Friday & Saturday

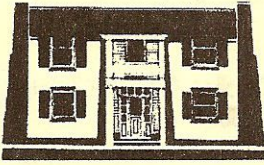
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

(Holiday & Special Events to be announced)

828-678-9587

Email: yhmuseum@frontier.com

Our new website will be coming soon!



McELROY HOUSE C. 1840
BURNSVILLE, NC

Yancey History Association

3 Academy Street
Burnsville, NC 28714

Phone
828-678-9587

Email:
yhmuseum@frontier.com

Lloyd Bailey Annex
Hall of Honor
Yancey Genealogy
Library
Ce-Nan Gift Shop
Organization Offices

Rush Wray Museum
McElroy House &
Garden

Board of Directors - 2011

Jake Blood
Sandra Whitehouse
Elaine Dellinger
Vivianne Bradley
Robert Wilson
Elaine Boone
Jeannie Miller
Ruth Banks
Christine Carter

March 2011

Dear Resident and Visitor of Yancey County,

It is with pleasure that the Yancey History Association sends our spring newsletter to your household. As a valued member of the Yancey County community the association would like to invite you become a member of our organization. The group has been together for well over thirty years and through the efforts of those who have gone before us, there is much to be proud of. It doesn't matter if your family is of pioneer stock; the fact that you are now living or visiting in our beautiful area and are a living part of our history is all that is important.

The Yancey History association's mission is to preserve and interpret Yancey County history. This is accomplished in a variety of ways:

- Maintaining our two historic structures and making them available to you and the public with free admission to the McElroy House and use of the Genealogy Library with its wide array of reference materials housed in the Lloyd Bailey Annex –
3 & 11 Academy Street, Burnsville
- The association is a repository of historic items dating back to the prehistory of this area. It is possible to make permanent donations or to loan items to be valued by the entire community
- Interpretive changing exhibits. New plans are currently underway.
- A wide selection of quality books, Victorian and gift items are available in our gift shop at a discount for members
- Presenting a selection of historic activities for the general public and the school children of our community
- Annual meeting and program
- Publishing historical reference documents and books
- A quarterly newsletter featuring articles of historic and local interest

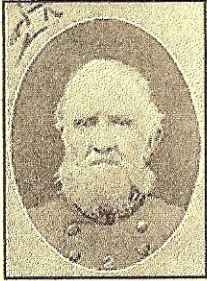
The common element in making all of this work is YOU and your membership. You can make a huge difference in the future plans for our community functioning with the town of Burnsville, Yancey County and the school system as we move forward into the future. Please find an application for membership enclosed in this newsletter and come join us for an exciting year of 2011. Remember all donations and membership fees are tax deductible as the Yancey History Association is a 501 3C non-profit organization.

With sincere good wishes,

Vivianne Bradley, Membership
For the YHA Board of Directors

A long-lost general is found in Robbinsville

...Marshall McClung, a writer for the "Graham Star," (Graham County, NC) has found the location of a long-lost Confederate General, John Wesley McElroy.



McElroy had been in charge of the 1st Brigade of the Home Guard in the mountains of North Carolina. Governor Zebulon Vance had appointed him to serve as Brigadier General of the scattered reserves on Sept. 18, 1863.

Gettysburg had taken its toll. The tide of the war was turning. The Confederate Army was bleeding men—casualties and deserters.

McElroy established his headquarters at his home in Burnsville, which now houses the Rush Wray Museum of Yancey County. After his death in 1886, William Moore, a Union leader, bought the place, and the location of McElroy's remains was forgotten.

McElroy had not gone to his final rest in Burnsville. He "was buried in Old Mother Cemetery (above Old Mother Baptist Church in Robbinsville)," McClung writes. "Just how he came to be in Graham County or when, is unknown."

McElroy, age 55 in 1863, was no new recruit to the fight. In 1860, after John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry had confirmed fears of slave rebellion, McElroy was one of the region's community leaders—merchant, lawyer, slaveholder—who put their names on local militia units.

Not many years after the founding of Burnsville in 1833, McElroy had built a plantation home there for his wife, Catherine Poteat, a local girl his age. Their daughter, Harriet, would marry Zeb Vance's brother, Robert—later General Robert Vance—in 1851. Catherine would die in 1855, and McElroy would be left with a family that included grandchildren.

As commander of the Home Guard, McElroy faced an impossible task. In addition to attacks by Federal forces, McElroy had to contend with raids by sanctioned and unsanctioned bushwhackers and families unhappy with the Confederate Conscription Act of 1862.

People were starving. Mountain men and boys had stormed Marshall for salt in January 1863, resulting in the Shelton Laurel Massacre, after which Gov. Vance condemned two of his military leaders.

A few months later, mountain women stormed a Confederate depot in Burnsville and took wheat, as William Trotter has described it in his book, "Bushwhackers."

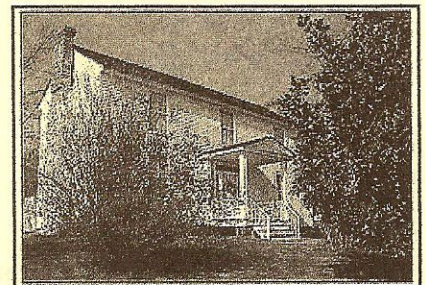
The next day, on April 10, 1863, Montrevail Ray, leading a band of seventy-five men enlisted to wreak havoc as part of Colonel George W. Kirk's license to raid, fell upon Burnsville, taking arms and food. The Home Guard had been easily overwhelmed.

McElroy gathered his troops at Mars Hill College and wrote Gov. Vance a letter.

"There is a determination of the people in the country generally to do no more service to the cause," McElroy wrote. At the same time, he reported, "Men (are) conscripted and cleaned out as (though) raked with a fine-toothed comb...if something is not done immediately for this country, we will all be ruined, for the home guards now will not do to depend on."

Leading up to Gillem's advance on Asheville at the end of April 1865, home guards in various other places did put up strong resistance—including those at Asheville and at Swannanoa Gap. But those repulses only changed the direction of the Union sweep, not the mission. McElroy lived to see two decades of post-war enmity, Emancipation, Reconstruction, and the railroad.

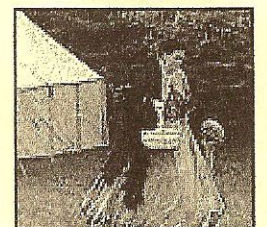
As reported in the Asheville Citizen Times, November 2010, Rob Neufeld's Column.



AN UNCIVIL UNION: THE BATTLE OF BURNSVILLE by Britt Kaufmann

To be performed at the Parkway Playhouse - June 3-11

During the Civil War some forty women stormed the Confederate Army stores in Burnsville, North Carolina and took food supplies to keep their families fed. The next day a group of men raided the same Confederate encampment and stole guns and ammunition.... and a half a ton of bacon. This is world premiere play is a fictitious account that imagines events leading up to the aforementioned raiding. Written by Burnsville area poet and author Britt Kaufmann, this surprising and clever new play reminds us that heroes come can come from the unlikeliest of places.



150th Year Observation of the Civil War

Over the next four years the United States will be observing the 150th observation of the Civil War, which very nearly dissolved these United States. David Madden, guest columnist for the Asheville Citizen Times remarked:

Our Civil War Sesquicentennial has the vibrant potential to be

... inclusive, exciting and rewarding over the next four years and to leave a legacy of new ideas and new attitudes about our union...

...Profoundly changed attitudes and conditions in the South and in the North enable Americans to proceed with fewer conflicts.

...Northern perspectives on the South and Southern perspectives on the North are more clear-eyed and tolerant partly because many southerners have long lived in the North and far more northerners now live in the South.

...Through meditation, more than historical scrutiny or celebration, we may achieve a sense of the legacy of the war and reconstruction as part of each individual's identity.

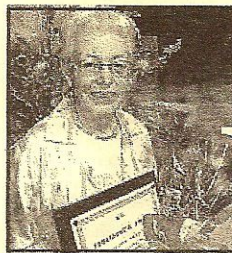
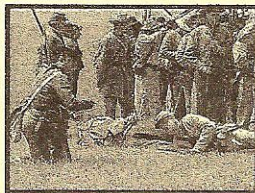
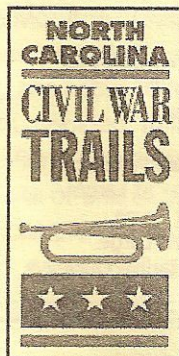
In recent years anthropologists, archeologists, biologists, zoologists, geographers, psychologists and chemists, to name a few, have brought new perspectives into the Civil War dialogue. We are able to examine the everyday lives of those who heard, saw and lived during those tumultuous times.

The Yancey History Association will be presenting a wide spectrum of activities highlighting Northern & Southern ideas and outlooks.

The first presentation will be held on April 16th, with a living history encampment to take place on the grounds of historic McElroy House, 11 Academy Street. This will be a view of camp life as it would have

appeared during the early years of the war – featuring men, women and children, their food, clothing and daily activities. There will be exhibits within the house of pictures, letters and personal items from the war years. During the day activities

included will give a picture of camp life and its routines, crafts demonstrations, 1860s music and including participation of members of the Yancey County school system – portrayed in period attire. This event is open from early morning until nightfall and all members of the community are encouraged to attend this free event.



In Memoriam

Nancy Sexton Shaw, 91, passed away Friday, Feb. 11, 2011. She was born to the late George and Lucy Sexton and spent her early years in Grayson Co., Virginia. Nancy was the wife of the late Cecil Shaw who died in 1992.

Nancy's nursing career began at the Virginia Baptist Hospital of Nursing and she worked as a nurse in Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina.

Nancy and Cecil moved to Burnsville in 1968. She spent her first two years working at the Burnsville Hospital. Then Nancy became the first school health nurse and was instrumental in establishing the first Health Occupations Program in the Yancey County school system in 1973. She held this position until 2005, when she retired having completed thirty-two years within the school system.

After her retirement, she became very active in the Yancey History Association and at the time of her death she was a 'lifetime' member and Director at Large of the organization.

She was dearly loved by her family and many friends and will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Frances Wilson Higgins, 90, of Pensacola, NC died Tuesday, January 25th, 2011.

She was a native of Yancey County, and the daughter of Charles and Joan Rathbone Wilson and the wife of the late Wyman Higgins who died in 2010. She leaves five daughters and a son, a sister and



two brothers.

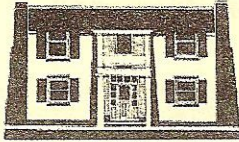
Frances was interested in all forms of learning – history and literature were among her favorites. An avid local historian and genealogist, she spent many years volunteering with the Yancey History Association and spent a number of years as our President. She was an author and poet and she wrote the following:

Winter Woods

Come walk with me through winter woods, and as we walk, we'll share the beauty of this time and place, the cold and crispy air. The stately hemlocks proudly wear their coats of ermine snow. Does this somehow remind you of winters long ago?

Come walk with me through winter woods. The sky is sparkling blue. The night brought softly falling snow and everything looks new. A quite loneliness prevails upon the peaceful scene. It's hard to think that come the spring, this white world will be green.

Frances Higgins



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 28714

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 3 Academy Street
 Burnsville, North Carolina 28714

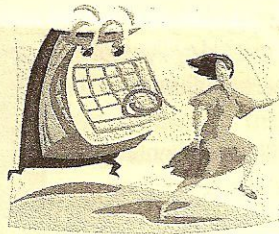
Estatoe Quarterly Newsletter

YHA 2011 Spring & Early Summer Calendar at a glance:

March - *A Walk in the Garden* as the McElroy House garden comes alive. There was also a huge yard sale held on the 18th & 19th which netted well over \$500.00.

The annual membership drive will be launched toward the end of the month with a mailing to all Friends of the Association. We hope to be able to encourage everyone to be involved in *their* organization.

March 24th will be a half day session for volunteers (new & old) led by Elaine Dellinger as plans for the coming season are laid out and updated.



April - The first week in April will be the opening of the McElroy House and the resumption of tours.

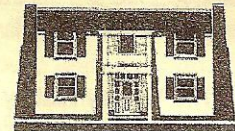
On Saturday, the 16th, a living history event will be taking place on the grounds of the Association where members and visitors will be able to partake in this exciting experience of a Civil War encampment. (See page 5.)

May - Tours continue at the Rush Wray Museum/McElroy House.

June - This is the month for brides and YHA is no exception. Young ladies from Mountain Heritage and Cane River Middle Schools will don wedding finery from throughout the history of McElroy House giving a fashion show and high tea for visitors to enjoy on Saturday, June 18th. Please watch for further information via the local newspaper and radio.

The Parkway Playhouse will also be presenting the play, *An Uncivil Union—The Battle of Burnsville*. (See page 5.)

July - A Salute to Veterans Celebration - to be announced.



ESTATOE

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 Yancey History Association
 3 Academy Street
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Estatoe (Es-toe-ee), Estotowie in early records. A Cherokee place name, shortened to Estatoe/Estatoah, from which the name Towe or Toe River is derived.

Officers and Staff Directory

Editor & Treasurer: Vivianne Bradley

Contributing Editors: Lloyd Bailey & Elaine Dellinger

President: Jake Blood

Vice-President: Sandy Whitehouse

Secretary : Elaine Dellinger

Historian: Jeannie Miller

Board of Directors:

Bob Wilson - Past President

Christine Carter - At Large

Ruth Banks - At Large

Elaine Boone - At Large

Staff: Vickie Fortune, Marilyn Oakley & Larry Parker