



# ESTATOOEE

PRESERVING OUR APPALACHIAN HERITAGE

Photographs by John Elsegood

## SAM BENNETT RIFLE DONATED TO THE MUSEUM BY HIS GREAT GRANDSON ON OPENING DAY



President Elaine Boone welcomed Yancey History Association members and guests who came up to the daffodil filled front lawn of the McElroy House/Rush Wray Museum on Saturday, April 5th, to celebrate the opening day of the 2014 season.

Glen Raven Mills donated a new locally made US flag which Roger Ray, a descendent of Civil War veteran Mont Ray, raised before the small assembly.

Next, Mayor Theresa Coletta, a founding member of YHA, addressed the audience recounting the 1988

museum ribbon cutting and her dreams of seeing the McElroy House and Yancey Collegiate Institute restored. She urged members to continue the mission of historic preservation in Yancey County.

The audience was encouraged by her touching stories and her commitment to YHA through the years.

Through the efforts of Lloyd Bailey a surprise presentation was made by Palma L. Bennett who donated a rifle and artifacts belonging to his great grandfather, Sam Bennett the last surviving Civil War veteran of the Carolinas.

Following the ceremony guests toured the house featuring exhibits on The Importance of Music 1860 to 1865 and Women's Roles During the Civil War.

The rifle and picture of Samuel Bennett celebrating his 100th Birthday are now on display at the Museum on select occasions.

### BOOK SIGNING AND SLIDE PRESENTATION

We would like to thank Mr Douglas J. Butler, member of the NC Humanities Council speakers bureau, the Road Scholars, presented an excellent slide show and talk in the McElroy house and signed his latest book North Carolina Civil War Monuments. We are looking forward to having Mr. Butler back again for another presentation.



## ELAINE DELLINGER

Elaine McAlister Dellinger, the Yancey History Association leader from 2002 to the present, retired in April, 2014. She will be missed by everyone. Her extensive training and knowledge cannot be replaced. She almost lost her life for the association by falling 40 feet inside the well on the property while doing an archaeology dig. She has served as a Board Member, Secretary, Vice-President, President and Director at Large. She is Regent of the Ruth Davidson Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. She is a member of the Yancey Historical Preservation Commission, and chairs the Cemetery Committee. We the members of the Board of the Yancey History Association thank her very much for her many years of service and for her part in the preservation of the history in Yancey County.



### ESTATOOEE (es-to-toe-e)

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

#### Board Members

Elaine Boone - *President*  
Chris Carter - *Secretary*  
Vivianne Bradley - *Treasurer*  
John Elsegood  
Linda Elsegood  
Judy Fuqua  
Dixie Styles

Bob Wilson - *Past President*  
Jake Blood - *Past President*

Lloyd Bailey - *Founding Member and Historian*

#### Staff Members:

Marilyn Oakley

#### Hours:

Wednesday to Saturday  
10am - 4pm

## FINAL EXCAVATIONS AT THE CANE RIVER SITE

By Ashley Schubert

Archaeological work continued this spring behind the Cane River Middle School with six more areas excavated. Within these units, three hearths were identified. These hearths were centrally located within houses as areas for cooking and contain large quantities of ash and fire-cracked rock, along with animal bone fragments and burned plant material. Additionally, two pairs of entrance trenches were identified and excavated, marking an entranceway to a structure. These entrance trenches held up wooden posts that formed a vestibule. At some point in time, the entrance trenches were re-dug and the structure rebuilt in approximately the same location. This structural elements will help me reconstruct the village



layout and household organization at the Cane River site, thus providing a better understanding of what prehistoric Cherokee life entailed.

Thank you to all the volunteers and site visitors who came out! We had a great field season!

## MAJOR UPGRADES AND IMPROVEMENTS



We have had a couple of good months work at the history association and on the grounds.

Hannah and Milo have returned to work on the cabin and Tom Smith has joined them to move the project on further.

A work detail from the Yancey Corrections Center helped us take down the old shed on the grounds and scrape and paint the fence around the parking and garden area. We thank Sherriff Gary Banks, Bradley Boone and their staff for making these inmates available to help us. They did an amazing job in a short time span.

After the water damage from an upstairs toilet flooding the Genealogy Room and part of the walls and carpeting of the Doctors exhibit. Luckily the damage was

not to the exhibits or books. The leak was fixed but we did lose the computer in the Genealogy room which we will replace and moved to the new location of the Genealogy Room at the front to give it more light, air and space. We will be hooking up the internet via ethernet and already have wifi access for easy file access.

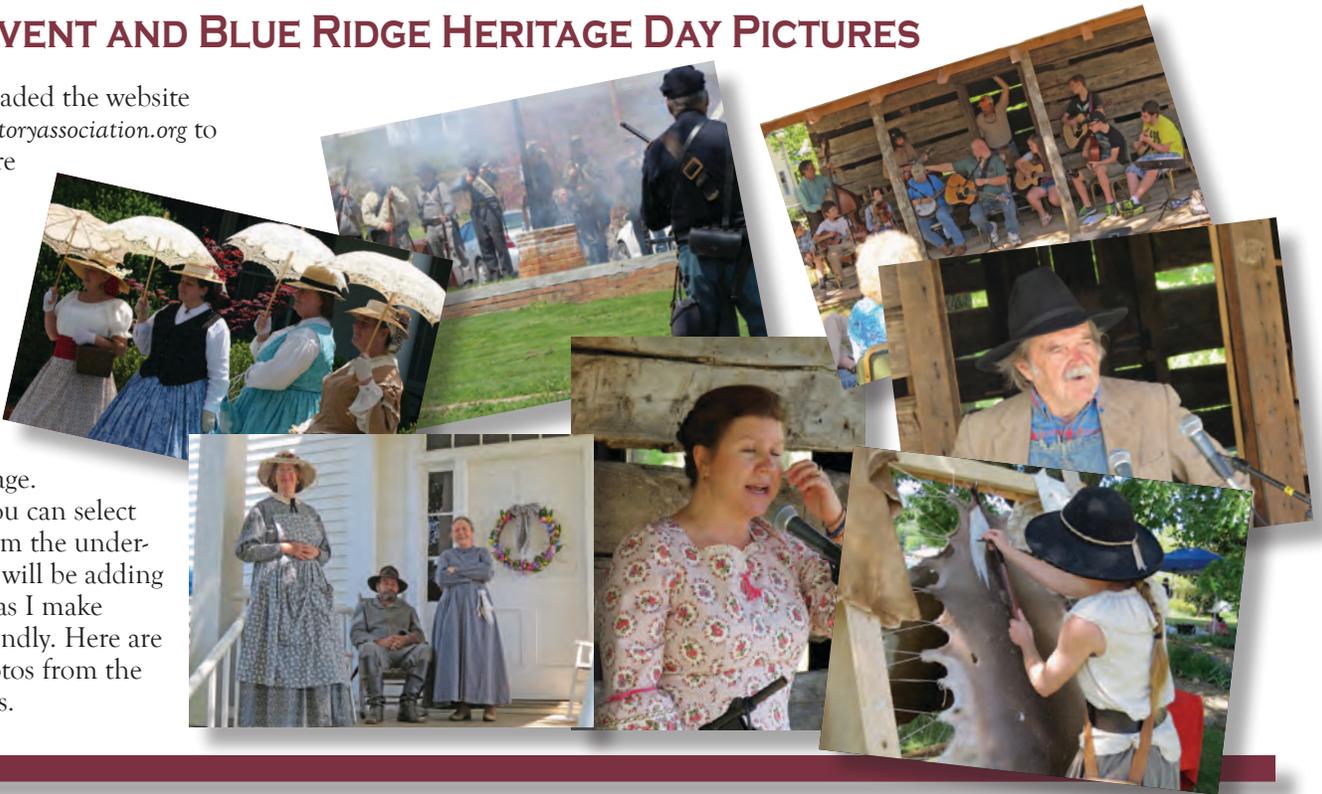
We are very pleased with the response for old wood for our Smithy and storage shed. Our Blacksmith, Bill Bache, will be drawing out the plans and we hope to start the project soon.

### A SPECIAL THANKS

to SOMETHING SPECIAL, DAVID BOONE WOODCARVING and HAL & DIANE COLEMAN for joining as SILVER MEMBERS.

## 3 DAY EVENT AND BLUE RIDGE HERITAGE DAY PICTURES

We have upgraded the website [www.yanceyhistoryassociation.org](http://www.yanceyhistoryassociation.org) to include picture galleries of events and exhibitions. Just click on the arrow on About Us and you will be taken to the Gallery page. From there you can select the album from the underlined list. We will be adding more photos as I make them web friendly. Here are just a few photos from the last two events.



## THE SHELTON LAUREL MASSACRE

During the Civil War, Shelton Laurel was a remote Appalachian town in North Carolina. Despite its location in the Confederacy, there remained a strong tie to the Union and because of this it became a target for both Confederate and Union armies.

When the Civil War started, the Confederates tried to maintain control of the area and recruit soldiers for their side, but at the same time, the Unionists tried to persuade mountain Unionists to attack the Confederacy.

The tensions were made worse when on April 16, 1863, the Confederate Congress passed a conscription that forced all men, 18 to 35 to join the army. This was a huge problem for mountain farmers. Men were needed to plant and harvest crops or their families would go hungry or starve. The mutual killing, burning of barns, houses and fields, the slaughter of all livestock crippled productivity of the region's farms.

If this wasn't bad enough, there was a shortage of salt and without salt, meat could not be properly stored.

These problems soon became too much to bear and in January of 1863, a group of fifty men raided the salt storages in the nearby town of Marshall, in Madison County.

These fifty men, mostly deserters from the Confederate armies, and some from Shelton Laurel, raided the town stealing salt, blankets and anything else of value.

The Confederate army soon heard of the raid and General Henry Heth sent James Keith and Lawrence Allen to punish the rebels.

Thirteen prisoners, ranging from the age of thirteen to fifty-nine, were taken from their homes in the Shelton Laurel area and were shot to death without proving for certain that they were the guerillas.

The problem with this is that international law said, while guerillas could be killed if engaged in battle and could be denied the right to become prisoners, once they had been captured, they could not be executed without legal proceedings, to determine their status as guerillas and their guilt for killing or destroying.

S. A. Merrimon sent a letter to Governor Zebulon Vance in February 24, 1863 informing him of the horrific murders and demanding justice.

You can find the full story on the Shelton Laurel Massacre at the North Carolina State Archives. "Victims: A True Story Of The Civil War." Written by Phillip Shaw Paludan, gives a vivid description of what went on at the time of the Shelton Laurel Massacre.

Research: Linda Vickers Elsegood

**NOTICE.**

**\$300 REWARD**

Broke jail in Buncombe County on the night of the twenty first instance the following named and described prisoners, viz; James A. Keith, D.L. Presley, and W.H. Walker. Keith is about six feet high, dark complexion, gray or blue eyes, slim face, high forehead, prominent cheek bones, black hair and beard, was unshaven at the time of escaping from prison, and is the rise of forty years old. Presley is about five foot ten inches high, swarthy complexion, light hair, blue eyes, downcast look, and about twenty-two years of age, weighs about 150 pounds.

W.H. Walker is about five foot eight or ten inches high, dark complexion, dark-brown hair and rather inclined to be curly, blue eyes, is about thirty years of age, stoutly built, and weighs about 150 pounds.

I will give the above named reward of one hundred and fifty dollars for the delivery to me at Asheville, in the County of Buncombe, N.C., or confined in any jail within the State, of the above described persons, or fifty dollars for the delivery of either of them.

J.SUMNER, Sheriff Buncombe Co,  
Asheville, N.C, February 22, 1869

In addition to the above reward I will give one hundred and fifty dollars for the delivery to me, or to the Sheriff, all of the above escaped prisoners, or fifty dollars for eith or them.

T.K. DAVIS, Jailor

