

GRAHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



HONORING THOSE WHO PIONEERED THE RUGGED MOUNTAINS OF GRAHAM COUNTY



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Tere Moore, Editor



Lake Santeetlah Vista

NEWSLETTER

CONTENTS

In Memoriam	2
Vision & Mission Statements	2
Board of Directors	2
Fundraiser Raffle	3
Cherokee Basket Making	4-6
GCHA Festival Presence	7
Membership & Order Forms	8



Tsali Recreational Bike Trail

GCHA meets the 1st
Monday of each month
(except holidays)
at 5 pm at
United Community
Bank
132 Rodney Orr
Bypass, Robbinsville

Contact us for
telephone call-in
information.



In Memoriam

DOYLE RUBEN BROCK



September 8, 1925 – April 29, 2026

“Doyle was a founding member of the Graham County Historical Association. He was a walking history book and helped me innumerable times get past something historical that I was hung up on. He never failed to provide the information I needed. A three-hour conversation with Doyle seemed like minutes. Graham County lost an invaluable and beloved citizen and I lost a great Friend.”

Edd Satterfield, President GCHA

Doyle Ruben Brock, born September 8, 1925 in Proctor, NC – referenced often by himself as "born on Hazel Creek" – son of Ruben and Maggie Brock of the Milltown Community in Robbinsville, NC, passed away at the age of 100 on April 29, 2026. He attended Robbinsville High School and studied at Blanton's Business College.

Doyle enlisted in the United States Navy during World War II, from 1943 until his discharge on April 18, 1946.

In reference to Doyle's WWII experiences, an article in *The Graham Star* newspaper in 2022 read:

Way out in the Pacific Ocean, the forces of history drew at least eight Graham County servicemen to the island of Iwo Jima.” Robbinsville resident **Doyle Brock** remembered Iwo Jima like it was yesterday. “They were fanatics,” Brock said of the Japanese. “They would rather die than surrender to Americans.” In the end, 22,000 Japanese were killed, as well as more than 6,800 Americans. Brock said that perhaps 10 servicemen from Graham County participated in the epic battle. “To think there were that many people from Graham County on that Island,” Brock said. The known servicemen on the island were *Doyle Brock, Leonard Lloyd, Ray Wiggins, Charles Phillips, Hobart Stewart, Eston Hooper, Arnold Jenkins and William Green.*

After returning to Robbinsville from World War II, he met "the prettiest redhead he'd seen in ages," he commented about Helen Cole, whom he married on October 1, 1947. They were married for 69 years. Doyle and Helen had one son, Tim Brock, and two daughters, Kim Brock Williams and Karen Brock Ingram.

He worked with Bemis Lumber Company for 43 years until retirement and then worked 17 years with Havco Wood Products.

Doyle was also a member of Robbinsville First Baptist Church for 90 years, active as a deacon, teacher and a member of various church committees, the Lions Club for 67 years, the District Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees for 27 years, as well as other community functions.

GCHA VISION STATEMENT

To maintain a heritage center located on Main Street, by focusing on education, history, and community activities, to assure that Graham County's place in history will be secured for future generations. Participate in the revitalization of downtown Robbinsville, NC, and promote cultural tourism and economic development in our area.

GCHA MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to preserve, interpret, communicate, and celebrate the unique culture and rich history of the Southern Appalachian Region and Graham County, North Carolina through exhibition, demonstration, and education. Vital to this mission is our establishing and maintaining a Cultural Heritage Center located on Main Street in Robbinsville, North Carolina, that would further economic development by contributing to the revitalization of the historic downtown area, promoting cultural tourism, and showcasing area artisans and their work.

GCHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EDD SATTERFIELD – PRESIDENT

CAROLYN STEWART – V. PRESIDENT

LAVINA WEST – SECRETARY

TERRI PHILLIPS – TREASURER

MAX BUCHANAN

JAMES CALHOUN

EMERITUS:

LAVINA WEST, TERESA GARLAND, JACK B. WIGGINS

GUN RAFFLE



HENRY

Made In America,
Or Not Made At All



Henry Classic .22 Caliber Lever Action Rifle

TICKETS: \$5.00 EACH OR 5/\$20.00



NOTE: Winner is required to qualify to legally own a firearm and obtain a buyer's permit and pass all background checks. If not eligible to own and/or acquire a firearm permit, the winner will be disqualified and another ticket will be drawn.

Purchase Tickets at:



**Any upcoming Graham County Festival,
Hometown Tax & Accounting, Lovin
Equipment, or any member of GCHA**

Drawing in December 2026

**All Proceeds benefit the
GRAHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**



CHEROKEE BASKET MAKING



Emma Garrett Baskets sold at the old Snider's Store now part of the GCHA Museum Collection

Before colonization efforts, almost all Cherokee women would have learned to weave by observing older generations. For some artists, weaving continues to be enmeshed in social and domestic life, something that a prospective weaver might pick up from a relative or friend. Influential basket maker **Emma Taylor** described learning as a child by saying that “*my mother, she didn't really teach me how to make the basket; I learned how to make a basket just by seeing.*” The artist **Pat Welch** told me that she grew up watching her own mother make baskets, but only became interested in learning after she married. Welch's mother-in-law, **Agnes Welch** made materials available with which she could practice, encouraging Pat to learn through observation and experimentation. Agnes Welch learned from **Lottie Queen Stamper**, a celebrated artist who taught basket-making in Cherokee boarding schools for decades. Stamper learned from her own mother, **Mary Queen**, at the age of 15; in a 1976 interview, Stamper also credited her mother-in-law, **Sally Anne Crowe Stamper**, as one of her teachers. This interwoven lineage of makers illustrates how observation and the act of gathering together uphold weaving traditions, as Taylor said, “*just by seeing.*”¹

Rivercane baskets have been made in the southeast for thousands of years. They are a hallmark craft of the Cherokee people. Rivercane is woven using two methods: the single weave and the double weave, the latter being a two-layered basket, one inside the other. Historically, rivercane basket patterns did not have names. Several Cherokee basket makers have remarked that their mothers did not use names for the

many patterns they wove into their baskets. **Rowena Bradley** recalled, “*My mother never had no names or no meaning to her designs. She just made them.*” Instead, basket makers communicated in terms of the weave itself, for example “*over-two-under-two*” or “*over-five-under-five.*” Some say pattern names were given in the early 20th century by culture workers and teachers who encouraged basketmaking in the many Indian boarding schools set up to assimilate native peoples to Anglo ways. Whether or not there is truth to this statement, by the late 1930s, Native American teacher **Lottie Stamper** collected patterns and posted them to the walls of her classroom. No matter their origin, today's rivercane basket patterns carry names that describe their weaves in representative terms, such as the *Casket* or *Cross-on-a-Hill*.²



Lottie Queen Stamper teaching a basketry class at the Cherokee Training School, 1950; pictured, from left to right: Lois Rattler (Calonehuskie), Frances Bradley, Annie Queen, Lottie Queen Stamper, and Mary Jo Washington (image courtesy Cherokee Museum Photo Collection, Museum of the Cherokee Indian).

Cont'd Pg. 5

¹ <https://hyperallergic.com/chokeee-craftspeople-are-stronger-together/>

² <https://www.wcu.edu/library/digitalcollections/chokeee-traditions/ArtsAndCrafts/pattern-index/>

Cherokee Basket Making (cont'd)



Single weave rivercane basket by Cherokee basket maker Lottie Queen Stamper

MASTER BASKET MAKERS OF THE SNOWBIRD COMMUNITY

LIZZIE AND EDDIE YOUNGBIRD

Like her mother before her, Lizzie Stamper Youngbird was a basket weaver. Her son, Edmund Youngbird, learned to make baskets from his grandmother and became known for his work in rivercane baskets and mats. When he first entered his baskets into competition, he entered them under his mother's name. As a male basket weaver, Edmund Youngbird had a unique place among the Eastern Band Cherokee. His grandmother, **Sally Ann Stamper**, and his mother, **Lizzie "Nannie" Youngbird** were both weavers of baskets. He recalled his childhood in a basket-making family, growing up in the 1930s.

*"My parents just barely made a living by making crafts. I can remember vaguely, it was back in the Depression days, and I was ten or twelve years old. There are a lot of boys to feed, and we didn't eat fancy. Back in those days there was no money."*³

EUNICE LOIS RATTLER CALONEHUSKIE

Eunice Lois Rattler Calonehuskie lived her entire life in the Snowbird community. Lois attended the boarding school in Cherokee where she was a student of Lottie Stamper, the celebrated basket maker.

BESSIE SMOKER JUMPER

A little Snowbird woman, Bessie Jumper, was a white oak basket maker, hard stitch quilt maker. She would walk with her mother back and forth across the mountain to Andrews where they would sell and exchange their baskets for food and household items. She provided for her family selling crafts and carrying on all the knowledge her mother had shared with her.

EDNA MARIE WACHACHA CHEKELELEE

Edna Chekelelee promoted Cherokee traditions in her community through dance, storytelling, and crafts. She taught Cherokee arts and crafts like basket making, beadwork, doll making and quilt making at Robbinsville High School.

EMMA JACKSON GARRETT

Emma Garrett was an outstanding basket maker; her works are displayed in museums from Washington to Atlanta. Emma traveled the nation to share her art of basket weaving with people from all walks of life. She often taught classes and demonstrated her skills in rivercane basketry at various Native American festivals. Many say that rivercane is one of the most challenging materials to weave with.

MARTHA WELCH WACHACHA

Martha Welch Wachacha was an excellent white oak basket maker, did bead work, and cooked all the traditional Cherokee foods.⁴

TRADITIONAL BASKET TYPES

Single Weave: A single-walled basket woven upward from a square base, resulting in a flexible, natural storage container historically used for gathering.

Double Weave (Double-Wall): A mathematical marvel where the artisan weaves an interior basket, bends the cane outward at the rim, and weaves a second exterior wall. The resulting wall is so dense and tight that the baskets are often waterproof. Baskets are typically woven from rivercane but can also incorporate materials like white oak, buckbrush, and honeysuckle.

MATERIALS

River Cane: The most historically significant material. It creates rigid, durable baskets. It is split into splints and often woven using the highly complex double-wall technique.

White Oak: Known for its strength, white oak logs are split into thin splints and are especially favored for constructing sturdy rib baskets.

Honeysuckle and Buckbrush: Vines (specifically honeysuckle roots or buckbrush) are highly flexible and are frequently used in modern Cherokee weaving to create elaborate, delicate patterns.

NATURAL DYES

To achieve contrasting reds, yellows, and blacks weavers boil the materials with natural elements such as:

Black Walnut yields a dark, deep brown.

Bloodroot creates a vibrant orange or red-brown.

Yellowroot provides a bright yellow.

Butternut creates black or rich brown.

Cont'd Pg. 6

³ https://www.wcu.edu/library/digitalcollections/cherokeetraditions/people/Baskets_Youngbirds.html

⁴ <https://cherokeespeaks.com/snowbird-matriarch-mural/>

Cherokee Basket Making (cont'd)

PROMINENT BASKET PATTERNS

The complex geometric motifs woven into the cane are historically rooted in Cherokee folklore, regional adaptations, and nature. The most recognizable designs include:

- **Eye of the Sacred Bird:** A striking diagonal motif often used in double-weave lidded baskets.
- **Chief's Heart:** A complex geometric pattern that gives the basket striking angled sections.
- **Chain & Diamond:** Linked chains alternating with diamond centers, often seen on storage or planter baskets.
- **Serpent / Snake:** Designs featuring diagonal lines resembling the scales and movements of a snake.
- **Other Traditional Motifs:** Patterns like *Arrow Point*, *Evening Star*, *Flowing Water*, and *Man in a Coffin*.

PATTERN INDEX ⁵



Arrow Point or Fishbone



Chief's Coffin



Coffin



Double Chief's Daughters



Arrowhead or Man in a Coffin



Chief's Daughter with Double Peace Pipe



Cross on the Hill (1) or Stairway to Heaven



Evening Star or Noonday Sun



Chain (1)



Chief's Daughters (2)



Cross on the Hill (2) or Stairway to Heaven



Eye of the Sacred Bird



Chain (2)



Chief's Daughter (1) or Star on the Mountain



Diagonal Design



Flowing Water (1)



Serpent (1)



Chief's Heart



Diamond



Flowing Water (2)

⁵ <https://www.wcu.edu/library/digitalcollections/cherokeetraditions/ArtsAndCrafts/pattern-index/>

GRAHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION BOOTHS

Drop by and chat
with us at the
Stecoah Harvest Festival
October 16-17, 2026



June 20th, 2026

Learn about Graham
County History and
view our pictorial
history posters.



Graham County 2026 Heritage Festival

July 3rd & 4th, 2026





Gift a
MEMBERSHIP!