

GRAHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



HONORING THOSE WHO PIONEERED THE RUGGED MOUNTAINS OF GRAHAM COUNTY



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Tere Moore, Editor



Corridor K Construction - Stecoah
(see article Pg. 3)

NEWSLETTER

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GCHA meets the 1st & 3rd Mondays of each month (except holidays) at 5 pm at United Community Bank, 132 Rodney Orr Bypass, Robbinsville.

We also have a teleconference option.



Contact us for call-in information

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

To preserve, interpret, and convey Graham County, regional, and Appalachian history through exhibitions and educational programs to showcase our history, making Graham County a desired historical destination.

GCHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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HENRY SILVER BOY .22 WMR, Model H0045M

PURCHASE TICKETS AT:
GCHA Booth at GC Farmers Market & Special Events
Hometown Tax Lovin Equipment & Sales

Chances \$ 5.00 Each or 5 for \$ 20.00

Drawing to be held at the 2023 Stecoah Harvest Festival
Winner is required to legally own/obtain a buyer's permit and pass all background checks. If not be eligible to own and/or acquire a firearm permit, the winner will be disqualified and another ticket will be drawn.

All Proceeds benefit the GRAHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Graham County 150th Anniversary Blanket Sale



Order yours Today! Call Carolyn Stewart @ 828-735-6979
Proceeds benefit Graham County Historical Association

\$50

MEET EDD SATTERFIELD, GCHA PRESIDENT

Edd Satterfield, native of Graham County, NC, son of David Satterfield and the late Dot McKeldrey Satterfield, married Jocelyn Stewart and is father to one son, Colton. He attended Graham County Schools and graduated from Robbinsville High School in 1994.

Edd has enjoyed a progressive career with the Phillips Family companies. He began his tenure with a related company, Phillips and Jordan, Inc, from 1995 until 2017, starting as a heavy equipment operator and then becoming a vice president, before moving over to Phillips Family Investments in 2017 as Property Manager.

Edd is one of the founding members of GCHA and has served as its President since its creation. His passions are family, work, community, local history, and genealogy.

We at GCHA acknowledge Edd Satterfield as a dedicated and focused leader and tireless proponent for Graham County history and heritage. His awareness of personal relations and the sensitive nature of family histories makes him perfect for the job. GCHA has great confidence that with his help our goals and mission will be achieved.



CORRIDOR K IS UNDERWAY

The project to link Stecoah and Andrews via Robbinsville is finally underway after long delays due to the difficult terrain, the same sort of acidic rock that was a major factor in stopping the road along the north shore of Fontana Lake.

Project Overview - NCDOT

Construction is underway for improvements to a 12-mile portion of Corridor K between Robbinsville and Stecoah.

Corridor K is that portion of the Appalachian Development Highway System extending from Dillsboro in Jackson County to Interstate 75 at Cleveland, Tennessee. In North Carolina, completed portions lead from Dillsboro to the Stecoah community in Graham County and from Andrews west to the Tennessee line in Cherokee County.

The NC Department of Transportation, local and state officials broke ground on Corridor K at a ceremony in Robbinsville on Oct. 3, 2022. Although construction is underway, no completion date has been determined.

The 12-mile corridor between Robbinsville and Stecoah will include the following:

- Improve road alignments of U.S. 129, N.C. 143 and N.C. 28 between U.S. 129 south of Robbinsville and the existing four-lane section of N.C. 28 in Stecoah.
- Increase shoulder widths and add passing and climbing lanes for the length of the project. N.C. 143 and N.C. 28 will include two 12-foot lanes with 10-foot shoulders.
- Construct a bridge across N.C. 143 at Stecoah Gap. The Appalachian Trail will realign across the bridge. This bridge will offset any impacts associated with widening N.C. 143 and provide safe passage for wildlife and hikers using the trail.
- Add a 10-foot multiuse path for pedestrians and cyclists on the south side of N.C. 28 from Stecoah Road to Hyde Town Road.
- Construct sidewalks next to N.C. 143 from Robbinsville High School to the U.S. 129 / Five Point Road intersection.

Corridor K is part of the Appalachian Development Highway System, a network of road corridors established by Congress in 1965 to provide a safe and efficient transportation system for the Appalachian region.

This project is among the last of the Appalachian Development Highway System's corridors to be completed due to the challenges associated with the region's mountainous terrain and sensitive natural habitat.

NCDOT worked closely with numerous agencies and local governments on Corridor K, including:

- Graham County
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Environmental Protection Agency
- N.C. Division of Water Resources
- N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

For real-time traffic information, please visit drivenc.gov or follow [NCDOT on Twitter](#).

In Memoriam



Robert (Tom) Ward, 74, of the Long Creek Community of Robbinsville, NC, passed away on Thursday, March 30, 2023, at his residence. He was a native of Graham County and the son of the late, Robert Thomas Ward Sr. and Carol Snider Ward.

Tom spent 4 years in the Air Force where he was trained to be a machinist teacher in Rantoul, Illinois. In Rantoul, he met his wife-to-be at the USO, and they were married in Illinois in 1971. After finishing his time of service, he and Denise returned to Robbinsville where they resided until his death. Tom and Denise bought and ran a Ben Franklin Store for 13 years. They met many friends during that time. He also ran the DMV Tag Office for many years. After his mother's death in 2008, he took over managing the rental houses that his family owned. Tom and Denise were married one month shy of 52 years.

Tom worked closely with GCHA and was instrumental in helping us achieve our goal of purchasing the old Snider's Store building for the purposes of transitioning it into the new Graham County Museum & Heritage Center. He made sure that a part of history dear to his heart – the Sniders' story – would live on into the future.

THE COMING OF THE DAMS (CONT'D)

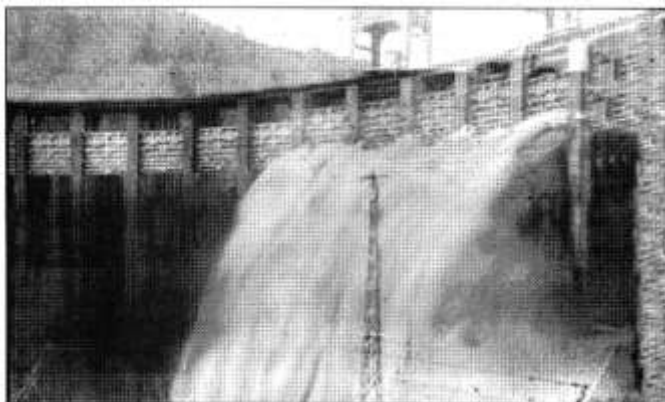
GRAHAM RICH WITH DAMS

The Graham Star Centennial Edition, 1972

The Little Tennessee River Basin in eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina is a region of mountainous country with steep slopes and fast streams. These characteristics make this area perfect for economical hydroelectric development. Years ago, the Aluminum company of America, searching for low cost power, recognized the hydroelectrical potential of this basin and began purchasing the land and riparian rights along the Little Tennessee River and its tributaries.

Fontana, the largest development on the river, was built by the Tennessee Valley Authority as a result of an agreement between TVA and ALCOA. Power generation by subsidiaries of ALCOA is made available to TVA. In return, TVA makes power available at times and in amounts useful to ALCOA's plant in Alcoa, Tenn.

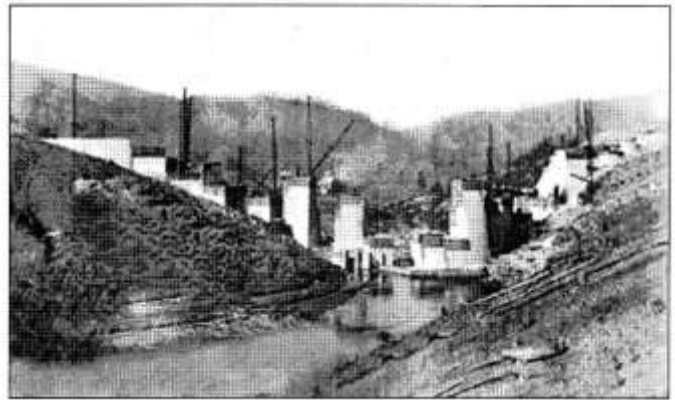
The first dam built was Cheoah, in a narrow gorge on the Little Tennessee River just above the mouth of the Cheoah River. In March 1917, the first concrete was poured and on December 8, 1918 the closure to the dam was made. April 6, 1919 the power house began operating. This dam is a gravity-type concrete dam, arched in plan, and 225 feet high. The length along the crest is 750 feet. Average annual generation is 515,600,000 KWh.



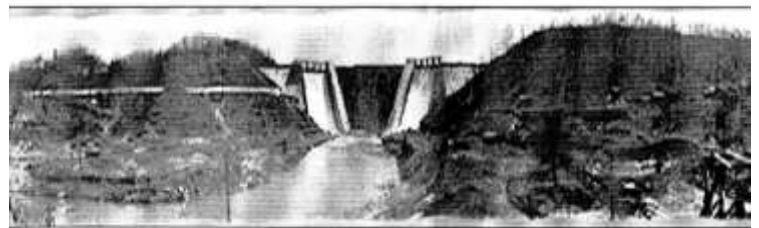
Water spills over the newly constructed Cheoah Dam in 1919

The second hydroelectric development was Santeetlah. Completed on June 7, 1928, this dam diverted additional water to Cheoah to improve operating characteristics. It is 212 feet high and

1,054 feet long. Average annual generation is 188,500,000 KWh.



Santeetlah was the second dam constructed in Graham County



Santeetlah Dam as it looked shortly after completion in 1928



Extensive excavation was required before dam construction could begin. Hundreds of workers from outside the county came in during periods of construction



Large generators were set in place to produce energy to Alcoa's Tennessee Aluminum Facility

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Just before Santeetlah was completed, a third project – Calderwood – was started. Completed April 19, 1930, this development is located 9 miles downstream from the Cheoah Plant. The dam is a concrete arch 232 feet high and 916 feet long. Average annual generation is 589,000,000 KWh.

Chilhowee is located on the Little Tennessee River 9 miles below the Calderwood Powerhouse. Construction began in 1955 and in August of 1957 the first of three units began operation. The dam is a concrete gravity intake and spillway. Maximum height is 91 feet and the total length is 1,483 feet. Average annual generation is 186,000,000 KWh.



Calderwood Penstock Tunnel drilled during construction of the Calderwood Dam in 1929. (Greg McClain/Knoxville News Sentinel)

On December 7, 1941, the federal government ordered that mining interests on Eagle Creek in western North Carolina be terminated immediately. With that order came a notice that the Tennessee Valley Authority was on its way to Graham County. A legislative act had ordered the construction of a gigantic hydroelectric power dam, "Fontana." The primary material in Fontana Dam is concrete. More than 2,813,000 cubic yards were needed to complete the 480 foot high, 2,662 foot long structure, making it the largest dam east of the Mississippi."

Editor's Note: Graham County Historical Association is honored to have been gifted an extensive photo collection of the construction of Fontana Dam, including the work camp, village, schools, hospital, etc., that will be utilized in future displays and publications.

Triumph and Tragedy BUILDING OF FONTANA DAM

Article by Jim Casada

Hydropower provided one of the best ways for rapidly expanding the country's energy output and was virtually important to the manufacturing industry during World War II. Fontana Dam was constructed in 1942 to supply power for the war effort.

Born in Georgia's Blue Ridge mountains, the Little Tennessee River made its way north into North Carolina, where it traced a circuitous but unfettered path through the rugged Smokies' landscape before entering Tennessee. Countless tributaries helped it gather strength and size before leaving the Tar Heel State for its eventual juncture with the larger Tennessee River and the ultimate mingling of its clear waters with those of the mighty, muddy Mississippi.



The Little Tennessee river below Calhoun Island

It was a stream flowing in a world mankind had only partly tamed. It coursed through what Alberta and Carson Brewer aptly styled a "Valley So Wild" in the title of their folk history of the river and those who lived in its rough embrace. Wild though it unquestionably was, the Little Tennessee and its bountiful environs had always attracted humans. Archaeologists tell us portions of the drainage are among the richest, in terms of remains left by Native Americans, to be found anywhere in North America. Yet much of the Little Tennessee, and that was particularly true of its middle reaches, was such steep, raw landscape it was ill suited for large-scale settlement.

It was mostly a river marked by crossroads settlements, small villages, remote homesteads, and what many residents considered splendid isolation.

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Genealogy Corner



Joseph Judson (Jutt, J.J.) and Nancy Mariah Wiggins Colvard

Joseph Judson (Jutt) and Nancy Mariah Wiggins Colvard were an early county family that helped build a mountain wilderness into a self-supporting community. J.J. Colvard served as Chairman of the Graham County Board of Commissioners in 1872 and 1877. He served as County Treasurer and was elected Sheriff of the County on December 4, 1882. He built the first jail in Graham County.

When the Town of Robbinsville was laid off in lots and sold on January 3, 1876, J.J. Colvard, T.S. Colvard, N.F. Cooper, N.G. Phillips and W.B. Wiggins purchased most of the lots for sale. John Colvard, Robert Colvard, Frank Colvard and Mrs. Belle Colvard Martin are grandchildren of the late J.J. Colvard.¹

Joseph Judson Colvard was born June 25, 1833 in Macon County, North Carolina to James C. Colvard (1810-1887) and Catherine Mahala Sherrill (1814-1880).

In the 1850 U.S. Federal Census he is listed as living in Cherokee County with his parents and siblings: Elizabeth, Peyton D., John M., Sarah O., Jasper N., Nancy A., and Mary A.

According to the U.S. and International Marriage Records, 1560-1900, he married Nancy Mariah Wiggins in 1859. Nancy Mariah Wiggins was born on May 30, 1830, in Macon County, North Carolina to Abraham L. Wiggins Jr. and Margaret Deaver. She married Joseph Judson "Jutt" Colvard on October 30, 1859, in Cherokee County, North Carolina.

In the 1880 U.S. Federal Census, J.J. is listed as living with wife Nancy and children Mary Josephine, Joseph Payton Newton, Mahala M, John Wiggins, Robert Judson, Alfred Harvey and Abraham H, and his occupation is listed as "Sheriff."

Nancy Mariah Wiggins Colvard died on January 1, 1911 and J.J. Colvard died on October 6, 1916, and both buried in the Old Mother Church Cemetery in Robbinsville, Graham County, North Carolina.

Children:

- Mary Josephine - (1860-1949)
- Joseph Payton Newton (1862-1886)
- Mahala Magnolia "Maggie" (1864-1950)
- John Wiggins (1866-1899)
- Robert Judson "Bob Jutt" (1869-1940)
- Alfred Harvey (1870-1951)
- Abraham Hardie (1873-1954)
- Nancy Elizabeth (1875-1943)
- Maggie Idadelle Colvard (1886-1975)

Editor's Note: Please feel free to add/subtract or correct any information published in our *Genealogy Corner*. Research information varies across websites and word of mouth and we apologize for any misprints.

If you would like to feature your own ancestry information, please mail facts, photos and stories to GCHA, P.O. Box 1221, Robbinsville, NC 28771 or email them to gchanewsletter@gmail.com.

¹ Article by L. Lloyd, The Graham Star, 1972, photo furnished by John Colvard

ERA OF TRANSITION

Yet remoteness could not protect the region and its hardy residents from what, over the course of a short four decades, would prove to be unimaginable change. That era of transition, almost exactly matching the first 40 years of the twentieth century, culminated with the Tennessee Valley Authority building the massive Fontana Dam, construction of which began... in 1942. For a host of considerations, including flood control, hydroelectric power, and America's effort in World War II, the closing of its gates created a watershed which stopped the flow of the brawling river. Its massive electric generation powered Oak Ridge, the first and largest of the Manhattan Project sites built to produce the world's first atomic weapons, as well as production of aluminum and other war materials.

Construction of Fontana inundated or isolated hundreds of homes and displaced entire communities. Its rising waters flooded fields and farms, railroads and residences, while backing up at full flood all the way to the outskirts of Bryson City, North Carolina.

Flooding 10,230 acres, it created a 30-mile long lake with 238 miles of shoreline. Tens of thousands of acres along its north shore feeder streams were incorporated into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Altogether 68,291 acres were taken. For many locals, the impact was not positive, as 1,311 families were displaced, 2,043 grave sites left isolated or removed and reinterred, and Graham and Swain counties lost a chunk of their tax base.

Decades later, people of the area still recoil at what they say was TVA's treatment of those who stood in the way of progress. Again, Oliver described the situation in graphic terms. "TVA appraised the land, setting the price at the lowest level possible and allowing no bargaining." In the end, some 1,064 tracts were acquired at an average sum of only \$37.76 an acre.

The settlement received by Cole Hyatt – one of a handful of landowners who fought TVA condemnation – for his 225-acre holding with two homes, was only enough to buy only 125 acres elsewhere. The human impact still evokes great passion among locals with deep roots in the area,

and has to be troubling to objective students of Fontana's creation.

HELPING THE WAR EFFORT

The urgent demands of a country suddenly at war brought TVA to the forefront. Alcoa had neither the fiscal nor human resources to proceed at the needed pace, so the Department of Defense and TVA entered the picture. Intensely patriotic, most folks living in the region to be flooded were initially either supportive of or at least compliant with government takeover. There was at least some awareness of the general process, thanks to Alcoa's previous acquisition of lands. Almost ninety percent of the affected landowners would sell voluntarily, although many said they felt they had no real alternative.

Even those who were sufficiently affluent or determined, such as M.I.T. graduate Philip Rust, who owned 4,300 acres on Noland Creek and generated his own electricity, could not prevail against the governmental might. Rust and a handful of fellow landowners sued TVA, saying lands were being condemned even though it lay above the planned level of the lake. They won in Federal District Court and the Fourth Circuit Court, only to lose in the Supreme Court.

Locals of all stripes found some temporary relief in the much-needed economic boom that came with the dam, as almost 4,000 workers were hired for the multi-faceted construction of Fontana. Many welcomed the opportunity to work for "cash



Fontana Dam under construction (www.grahamcounty.net)

money," as the local vernacular put it. Still, many realized that construction of Fontana meant that nothing would ever be the same.

(to be continued)

Look for "History of Graham County - Part XII" in the next GCHA Newsletter

GCHA Displays Now Showing!

Window Displays at the GCHA Museum Building 12 N. Main Street Robbinsville, NC

CHEOAH DAM REPLICA

This Cheoah Dam Replica was constructed by Cutler Edwards as a Senior project. It was donated by Linda Edwards.

Cheoah was Graham County's first dam; constructed in 1919 and the highest overflow dam (225 feet) in the world at that time.



The dam and associated structures were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.

The dam was used as a filming location for the 1993 movie *The Fugitive* starring Harrison Ford. If you look closely at the replica, you can see Harrison Ford jumping from the dam.

LOGGING ARTIFACTS



Photo of men working oxen; an oxen yoke; and heavy chains used in the logging process to prevent logs from hitting the oxen or horses.

On Display at Graham County Travel & Tourism, 474 Rodney Orr Bypass Robbinsville, NC

FLAG QUILT



Clark and Donice Hooper donated a flag quilt made by Clark's Grandmother when she was 14 years old in the early 1920's. The quilt is in good condition and was made when there was only 48 states. Clark Hooper is a descendent of the Lovins who owned property on Big Snowbird.

Graham County 150th Anniversary Magazine



Need Extra Copies?

Graham County Historical Association is proud to offer copies of the Graham County 150th Anniversary Magazine!

A collaborative effort between the Graham County Historical Association, The Graham Star, and the Graham County Travel and Tourism Authority, this magazine is packed full of an array of historic photos provided by the Graham County Historical Association and fascinating articles about Graham County history written by Kevin Hensley and Randy Foster of The Graham Star.

Order Today!

Email GCHA at: grahamcountymuseum@gmail.com

\$4.00

NORTH SHORE CEMETERY VISITATION SCHEDULE 2023

Date	Cemetery	Departure Location	Time
4th Sunday in April April 23, 2023	Branton & Lower Noland	From Lakeshore Drive, Noland Creek Parking Area, access road, drive upstream to Campsite #64	10am
1st Sunday in May May 7, 2023	Woody and Hoyle	Cable Cove at 7:30am or Wilderness Marina (from Bryson City, take US 19 south to Old US 19 on right, then right onto Buckner Creek, which will become Laurel Branch. Turn right onto Round Hill and then another right onto Greasy Branch to end at boating access area.	From Cable Cove 7:30am or Wilderness Marina at 9:30am
Reunion date set by Family Coordinators	Orr and Payne Family Reunion	From NC 28, 4 miles below Fontana Dam, turn right onto Old 288, 1 mile to cemetery	2nd Weekend in May
3rd Sunday in May May 21, 2023	Cable	Cable Cove (Directions to Cable Cove) NC 28 north from US 74 at Almond for about 15 miles to Cable Cove Road on right and go to boat ramp	First boat 8:30am Last boat 9:30am
After Cable May 21, 2023	Payne & Orr	Cross Fontana Dam toward Lakeshore Trailhead, turning left onto Old 288 1/2 mile to cemetery, to Orr, directions above	Payne by car 2:30pm Orr by car 4pm
4th Weekend in May, May 27-29, 2023	Lauada	West on Hill at eastern intersection of NC 28 & US 74	Drop-in Decoration. Friday - Sunday
1st Sunday in June June 4, 2023	Pilkey & Posey	Cable Cove	First boat 8:30am Last boat 9:30am
2nd Sunday in June June 11, 2023 Limited to 20 because of time & distance	Wike, Walker, & Calhoun	This trip is limited to 20 Participants. Please contact Henry Chambers hwc@windstream.net or call 706 896 2183 to sign up.	Cable Cove 8:30am Arrival back at Cable Cove will be after 5pm
4th Sunday in June June 25, 2023	Bone Valley & Hall	Cable Cove	First boat 8:30am Last boat 10am
1st Sunday in July July 2, 2023	Proctor & Bradshaw	Cable Cove	First boat 9am Last boat 10am
3rd Sunday in July July 16, 2023	Fairview, Nelms, & Cook	Cable Cove	First boat 9am Last boat 10am
1st Sunday in August August 6, 2023	Cable Branch	Cable Cove	First boat 9am Last boat 10am
3rd Sunday in August August 20, 2023	Higdon & McCampbell Gap	Cable Cove	First boat 8:30am Last boat 9:30am
1st Sunday in Sept. September 3, 2023	McClure & Welch	Cable Cove	First boat 8:30am Last boat 9:30am
3rd Sunday in Sept. September 17, 2023	North Shore Reuion	Deep Creek Picnic Pavilion	From 10am - 2pm
4th Saturday in Sept. September 23, 2023	Mitchell	Cable Cove	10am
2nd Sunday in October October 8, 2023	Upper Noland (Wiggins)	Backcounty Campsite #64 Follow directions as Lower Noland at top of list	10am
2nd Sunday in October October 8, 2023	Stiles & Conner	Off Lakeview Drive, Access Trail about 3/4 mile before Noland Creek Parking Area on left, downhill side of road	2:30pm

For more information call: 828-488-7857

Certificates of Appreciation Ceremony – March 9, 2023

Edd Satterfield, President of GCHA, presented Certificates of Appreciation to Kevin Hensley (Editor, Graham Star) and Randy Foster (Editor, Cherokee Scout) in the presence of their regional publisher, David Brown, for their significant contributions in creating and publishing the 2022 Commemorative Magazine entitled *Graham County Past, Present and Future* for Graham County’s Sesquicentennial (150th) Anniversary.



Tere Moore, Randy Foster, Kevin Hensley, Edd Satterfield, David Brown, Max Buchanan

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5-year	\$100.00 (1 year free)	All 1-year benefits plus GCHA Short-sleeve Tee Shirt
10-year	\$200.00 (2 years free)	All 1-year benefits plus GC Centennial Book
Lifetime	\$1000 or more	All 1-year benefits plus memorial at Museum

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- Drop off at **Hometown Tax**, 62 Tapoco Road, Robbinsville
- Mail to **GCHA**, PO Box 1221 Robbinsville, NC 28771

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GRAHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP / DONATION FORM

The work of Graham County Historical Association is greatly assisted by your generous support!

Membership Includes: Membership Card & Decal / Meetings & Committees / Quarterly Newsletter

1 year \$25.00	5 years \$100.00 (1 year free)
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I authorize GCHA to auto-draft my donation from my account

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