

# GRAHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



## HONORING THOSE WHO PIONEERED THE RUGGED MOUNTAINS OF GRAHAM COUNTY



[www.HISTORYGC.org](http://www.HISTORYGC.org)

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Tere Moore, Editor



Native Azaleas  
(see pg. 9)

### NEWSLETTER

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Spring Fest April 20 – Stecoah  
Valley Cultural Arts Center

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

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 – PRES  
CAROLYN STEWART – V. PRES  
LAVINA WEST – SEC'Y  
TERRI PHILLIPS – TREAS'R  
DOYLE BROCK  
MAX BUCHANAN  
JAMES CALHOUN  
TERESA GARLAND  
JACK B. WIGGINS

## New Acquisitions

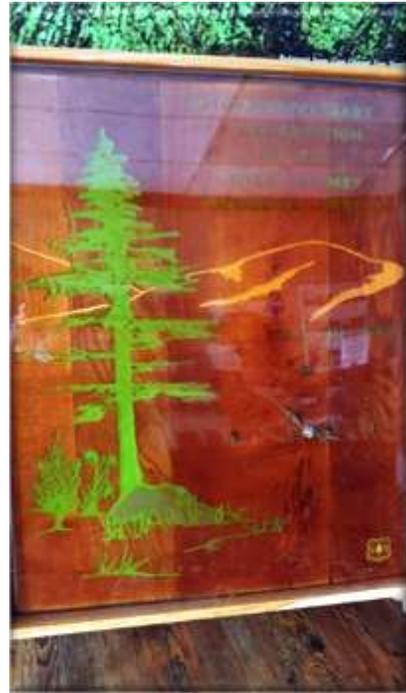


Cherokee County Historical Museum gifted to GCHA 50+ G.B. and W.P Walker (later Cooper & King) Store journals from the late 1800s through early 1900s.



The detailed transaction information reveals names and purchases of early residents of the area and provide a peak into our early ancestors' everyday lives.

## Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest Anniversary Clock



Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Clock

**James "Jim" Burchfield**, the last back-country Ranger in the US, started with the US Forest Service in 1964 and retired in 1992/93. He manned three fire towers during his career. Jim hand-crafted this walnut clock in 1986 to commemorate the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest 50th anniversary. The clock hung on his wall at the Cheoah Ranger Station. The clock was accidentally damaged in 2014. Donnie Burchfield, Jim's son, restored the clock in January of 2024 and donated it to the Graham County Historical Association.

The inscription in the upper right corner reads:  
**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest**

The inscription above the clockface reads:  
**July 30, 1986**

Ed Satterfield, GCHA President, remembers attending the celebration as a boy scout and receiving this memorial coin.



The clock is **Now on Display** at the Graham County Historical Museum Preview at the Graham County Travel & Tourism Office, 474 Rodney Orr Bypass.

## Genealogy Corner



**Manoes Alexander & Mary (Polly) Lovin Crisp**

Prints of this photo seen in older publications bore a caption “Manes A. Crisp and Polly Lovin Crisp.” However, according to Shirley Crisp, the Stecoah Crisp Family historian, his first name is actually spelled “Manoes”.

”Manoes Alexander Crisp, son of William A. (Burt) and Elizabeth Morgan Crisp, was born on March 15, 1846 and died January 12, 1924. He married Mary (Polly) Lovin, born August 18, 1847 and died January 25, 1936.

Over his lifetime, Manoes Crisp owned approximately 500+ acres in the Stecoah Valley. To save land that Polly’s family was in jeopardy of losing through a delinquent property tax sale, he purchased the land. Polly later donated that land to build the Stecoah Baptist Church that still stands today.

### **Registered Lands to M.A. Crisp:**

- Feb 16, 1886, 400 acres on Stecoah River
- Feb 17, 1886, 101 acres on Stecoah Creek – (M.A. and John M. Crisp)
- June 5, 1890, 16 acres lying on the waters of Stecoah Creek
- Dec 31, 1898, 9 acres on the waters of Stecoah Creek



**Stecoah Baptist Church**

The home of Manoes and Mary (Polly) Lovin Crisp sat across the creek from where Rick McCracken's mill is today.

### **Siblings of Manoes Alexander Crisp:**

**Nancy E. Crisp** (1847-1877) married Daniel Johnson (born 1839)

**William Deaver Crisp** (1849-1924) married Mary Edwards (1851-1923)

**Mary Crisp** (born 1851) married Jason W. Bradshaw

**Hasey Crisp** (born 1853 or 1854) is in the Crisp household in the 1860 and 1870 censuses.

**Edith (Edie) Crisp** (born 1855) married Phillip Clingman Sawyer

**Miley M. Crisp** (1857-1942) married James Carver (1845-1919)

**Samantha Clementine Crisp** (born 1860) married Joel Decatur Jenkins

**Martha J. Crisp** (born 1861-62) married Jacob A. Ammons

**Parasada Crisp** (1863-1919) married Charles Randolph (1842-1892)

**Andrew W. Crisp** (1867-1939) married Clarrisa Carver (1854-1935)

### **Children of Manoes Alexander and Mary (Polly) Lovin Crisp:**

**Christopher Caswell Crisp**, (1870-1959) married Roena Carolina Taylor (1876-1917)

**Phillip S. Crisp** (1872-1938) married Florence Zora Belle Shehan (1878-1924).

**Cora J. Crisp**, (1873-1955) married Theodore Shehan (1880-1947).

**William Francis Crisp** (1875-1913) married Martha (Allie Mae) Crisp (1883-1962).

**Charles C. Crisp** (1878-1966) married Maggie Taylor (1883-1970)

**Andrew Crisp** (1880-1973) married Lenora Carpenter (1884-1932)

**Seymour A. Crisp**, (1886-1923) married Clara Gunter (1890-1926)

**\*Editor’s Note:** US genealogical records rely strongly on censuses. Census takers wrote down names according to what they heard from the person(s) reciting their own name(s). Consequently, misspellings often occurred.



# History makes Great News!

## STECOAH SIGN GETS A NEW LOCATION

Photos by Rick Davis

The iconic native rock Stecoah Arts & Crafts Gallery sign built in the 1970s, located at the corner of Stecoah Road and NC Route 28, was moved on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024 to make way for the Corridor-K roadwork. The NCDOT allowed the sign to stay at the edge of the expanded right-of-way on NC Route 28.



Painstaking measures to ensure the integrity of the sign's historic construction were taken by Crisp and Crisp, Adams Contracting, Kyle & Christy Norcross, Billy Carr, Preston Crisp, Mitch Hyde & Rick Davis as they oversaw and completed the relocation.



Plans for refurbishment of the sign will be determined at a future date.



## SAVING THE HUT

A cabin known as the "Hut", constructed in 1938, has made the news recently.



Photo by Kevin Hensley, *The Graham Star*

Located on property owned by the Robbinsville First Baptist Church at 101 Church Street, it has long served as a community building, initially operated by the Lions Club and Graham County Women's Club, and later used by the Boy Scouts. The First Baptist Church hopes to utilize the area occupied by the cabin for future expansion of its facilities.

The Hut's Rustic Revival style and side-gable, rubble chinking and grapevine mortar joints is listed as an individual property meriting inclusion on the National Register Study List in the Robbinsville Comprehensive Survey by Lisa D. Buckley, MHP, North Carolina Historic Preservation Office in December 2018.

Graham County Historical Association applauds the efforts of the organization known as REVVED UP, along with the ARUBA Alliance, Scott Hatch and others for their diligent efforts to move and preserve the iconic Graham County landmark. GCHA considers the Hut's preservation and restoration of particular importance.

While the relocation and preservation efforts will be arduous and require meticulous reconstruction, hopes are that this unique piece of Graham County's history will become a go-to place for visitors and also serve to inspire future generations of Graham Countians to take pride in the cultural heritage of their community.

*Show your Support!*

Contact your County Commissioners, Travel & Tourism Authority, and/or the REVVED-UP organization.

### INDUSTRY & EMPLOYMENT

Looking at the limited employment opportunities available in Graham County today, it makes one wonder what makes a remote mountain community like ours attractive to employers large enough to sustain the local economy.

The 1880 Census for the Cheoah Township (Robbinsville) noted that occupations included carpenter, laborer, blacksmith, miller, cook, trader, miner, and most extensively, farmer or farm laborer. There were four physicians in town, two lawyers, one clerk and a clerk of the Superior Court. <sup>1</sup>

Historically, our largest employers came to the area to harvest our abundance of natural resources – land, timber, water and minerals – and provided the influx of capital needed to build and stabilize the county’s economic viability.

#### LOGGING:

Beginning in the 1880s, the Southern Appalachian mountains became the scene of a major logging boom which continued until the 1920s. It was begun and sponsored almost wholly with capital from outside the region. <sup>2</sup>

During that time, a myriad of timber/lumber interests bought, leased and cleared thousands of acres of old growth forests in Graham County, providing income higher than could be earned from farming. Belding, Heiser, Gennett, C.M. English, Whiting, and Bemis, to name but a few, offered employment in Graham County during the boom (1880’s-1920’s) of the industry. Boatmen, land clearers and road builders were at the forefront, bringing in supplies and workers and transporting the lumber out of the county. Sawmills were built to ease the laborious effort required for hand-sawing and created central hubs from which the lumber could be loaded onto awaiting transportation.

A logging camp’s crew in the 1880s consisted of a foremen, teamsters, swamper, skidders, fallers, sawyers or buckers, barkers, shoo-tenders, skid greasers, landing guards, barn-men, cooks, and extra hands.

Moving lumber by barge, sledge and wagon proved problematic and railroads had to be built to increase productivity and save time. These activities created even more jobs and required additional land to be cleared and rails to be laid.

“In the early 1910s, the Whiting Company began construction of a double band mill, a planing mill, and dry kilns at Judson, and had plans to employ at least 400 men. Whiting extended narrow gauge rail lines up many of the drainages along the Nantahala and Little Tennessee rivers, including Panther Creek, Fox Branch and Welch Cove. Whiting typically skidded logs to the railroad using horses or ox teams where they were transferred onto cars and taken to the band mill at Judson.

“The company also built a depot just below Judson, aptly named ‘Whiting.’ In a 1912 description of their passenger rail stops, Southern Railway referred to the Whiting depot and Judson area as containing ‘important and rapidly developing lumber plants’ and mentioned that the nearby forests ‘have scarcely been touched’ and would develop the area as a populous and important part of Swain County. The firm eventually logged much of eastern Graham County, but by 1928 had ceased operations in the area.” <sup>3</sup>

Other railways built and operated during that time included Snowbird Valley Railroad Co. (Kanawha), Kanawha Hardwood narrow-gauge, Carolina Railway and Lumber Co., Southern Railway Co. (ALCOA), Buffalo-Snowbird Railroad Co., Graham County Railroad Co. (Bemis).

Within four decades, the logging boom dramatically altered the land ownership pattern and influenced the economic and social structure of the Southern mountains. In addition, large-scale logging caused extensive damage to the mountain environment which drew the attention of conservationists in the region and in Washington, D.C. A movement to secure the protection of the Southern Appalachian forests in National Parks or National Forests helped lead to the passage of the Weeks Act in 1911, and with that, the Federal Government came to the region as a major holder and manager of land. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Historic Architecture Survey Report, Corridor K, Appalachian Highway Development System

<sup>2</sup> & <sup>4</sup> Mountaineers and Rangers: A History of Federal Forest Management in the Southern Appalachians, 1900-81, Chapter I, Conservation Movement Comes to the Southern Mountains

<sup>3</sup> Cultural Resources Existing Conditions Report, North Shore Road Environmental Impact Statement, Swain And Graham Counties, North Carolina

**HYDROPOWER:**



In 1898, the first hydropower plant began construction in Forsyth County, NC. In 1909, Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) completed plans to construct four hydroelectric dam projects utilizing the water resources of Graham County. Cheoah began construction in 1916 and was completed in 1919; Santeetlah began construction in 1925 and was completed in 1928;

Calderwood began construction in 1927 and was completed in 1930; and Chilhowee began construction in 1955 and was completed in 1957. In 1935, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) assumed control from ALCOA of the Fontana project (1942-1945).

The construction of these marvels of engineering required thousands of workers from not only Graham, but neighboring counties and states as well. Additional jobs included land clearing, road building, construction of entire communities – Rhymer’s Ferry, Tapoco and Fontana Villages – with associated stores, supply lines and transportation systems.

**MINING**

According to information posted on The Diggings™ which is based on publicly available data through the Bureau of Land Management, Graham County had six Iron mining claims, four Copper mining claims, two Gold mining claims and two Silver mining claims recorded.

**Note:** More than one claim may be held by a single owner.

**Graham County, North Carolina Mines – The Diggings™**

**Iron Claims**

- Welch Copper-iron Prospect Near Almond
- Kitchen Copper-iron Prospect Near Fontana Village
- Whiting Iron Prospect Near Fontana Village

**Copper Claims**

- Welch Copper-iron Prospect Near Almond
- Kitchen Copper-iron Prospect Near Fontana Village

**Gold Claims**

- Welch Copper-iron Prospect Near Almond

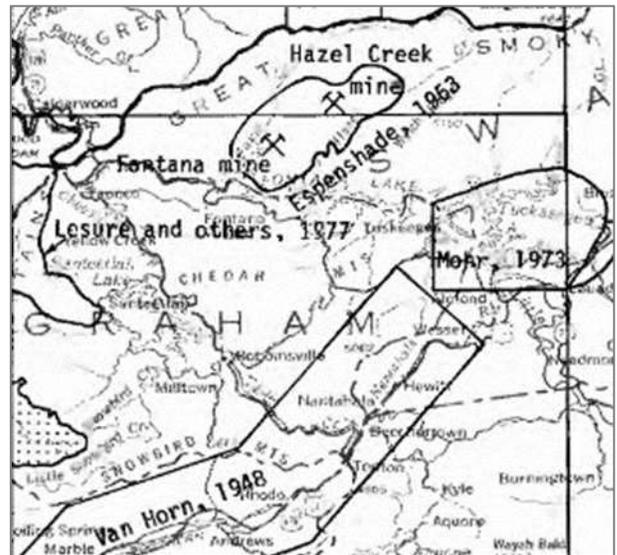
**Silver Claims**

- Welch Copper-iron Prospect Near Almond<sup>5</sup>



Map of Kitchen and Whiting mines, Graham County, NC from Mindat.org

Of course there were private mines where claims may or may not have been filed. There is also a stream known as Gold Mine Branch and Route 1129 is known as Gold Mine Road off of Tapoco Road (129).



Map showing location of the geological surveys of Snowbird Roadless Area, Fontana, and Hazel Creek mines

The abundance of employment opportunities in Graham County took a sharp downturn as the lumber boom receded and the construction of hydroelectric dams was completed, although some mining jobs remained.

Other industries came and went throughout the decades following – American Components, American Uniform, Carolina Wood Turning Co., Dale Electronics, Insilco (American Components, Inc.), James Lees Carpet Company, Stanley Furniture Company, and a parachute plant, to mention a few.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://thediggings.com/usa/north-carolina/graham-nc075>  
GCHA NEWSLETTER

Last Large Manufacturer Leaves Graham County



Stanley Furniture of Robbinsville

Photo by Katie Bailey, Asheville Citizen Times

When Stanley Furniture announced in 2014 that it was closing Robbinsville's last manufacturing plant, laying off 400 workers in a county where only 3,800 people have a job, it was a devastating blow impacting the entire community and its economy.

Stanley Furniture had been the economic mainstay of Robbinsville for three decades. While other employers slowly slipped away, such as Bemis Lumber Company and American Uniform, Stanley kept pushing out furniture and paychecks. Even while the world outside Robbinsville was shrinking with trade agreements seeking larger profits using cheaper labor in foreign countries, it pushed to bring back “Made in America” furnishings. When consumers worried about toxic chemicals and finishes found in many shoddy Chinese products, Stanley pitched its “Young America” line to parents who wanted safer, quality bedrooms for their children and infused \$9 million into capital improvements at the Robbinsville plant.

As businesses everywhere seemed to not be doing well, everyone thought Stanley would just scale back... not close everything. Hopes were temporarily raised as officials from Ashley Furniture toured the plant, but the deal fell through. It was hoped that Stanley would get yet another chance when Time and Tides USA, a Chinese lumber exporter with a Charlotte headquarters, talked to local officials and to Stanley about buying space for a mill and kiln that could ship hardwood to overseas markets. Alas, the failure of those negotiations was the determining factor for Stanley’s decision to close its doors in Graham County forever.

What happened? Potential buyers decided it was too far from any of the interstates, that there were only about 400 people eligible to work, including those in surrounding counties. The national manufacturing decline and the local workforce limitations made this an insurmountable problem, in that Graham is a sparsely populated county and has one of the state's smallest labor pools.

Aside from the recent increase in job opportunities created by the Corridor-K Project that began in August of 2022 and has a projected date of completion in 2029, not much has changed since this 2012 report.

LARGEST GRAHAM COUNTY EMPLOYERS (4TH QUARTER 2012)

Rank	Company	Employment Range
1	Graham County Schools	250-499
3	Graham County	100-249
4	Principle Long Term Care Inc.	50-99
5	Graham County Land Company LLC	50-99
6	Ingles Markets Inc.	50-99
7	Sawyers Home Care	50-99
8	Crisp And Crisp Inc.	50-99

Source: NC Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division

According to a Southwestern Commission report, the top employers in Graham County today (excluding Corridor-K contractors) are **Graham County Schools, Graham County, Fontana Village, and Principle Long Term Care, Inc.** The remaining employment opportunities (less than 50 employees) are mainly in land clearing, construction, tourism, retail and service-related businesses.

What then for the future economic viability of Graham County? Will the planned ease of accessibility created by the Corridor-K improvements bring new businesses and tourists in? Will the county’s internet infrastructure ever be solved so that outside industries can provide sustainable remote networking job opportunities?

It most certainly will take a concerted effort on the part of government and every citizen of this county to attract new businesses and revitalize Graham County’s future economy.

What can we do now? Consider supporting and/or becoming active with one of these organizations:

- G.R.E.A.T. (Graham Revitalization Economic Action Team) – [greatgc.org@gmail.com](mailto:greatgc.org@gmail.com)
- REVVED-UP (Robbinsville Envisioning Vital Vibrant Economic Development & Urban Prosperity) and ARUBA (Alliance of Revved Up Business Affiliates) – [RevvedUpOrg@gmail.com](mailto:RevvedUpOrg@gmail.com)



# NEDDY DeLOZIER'S SILVER MINE

TreasureNet.com - Sep 17, 2007

One of the most famous legends of Graham County is the DeLozier silver mine.

Edward "Neddy" DeLozier is said to have known the actual location of the mine, and that he died taking the secret with him. Born in 1803, Neddy was the son of Jessie DeLozier and Alosey Fields DeLozier. Neddy was the great grandfather of Homer Constance and a distant relative of the late Martin DeLozier who owned DeLozier Drug Center in Robbinsville. In 1983, Martin DeLozier presented a DeLozier family history book to Homer which contained a reference on Neddy and listed Homer as a great grandson.

"Neddy's" mother was one quarter Cherokee. Some attribute his ability to move through the woods unseen and unheard to being part Cherokee. Whatever the reason, no one was ever able to follow him to the mine as he was always able to lose them.

Arkie Orr, who lived in the Orr Mountains near the Slickrock Creek area, told of a man who would spend the night at their cabin on occasion. He was part Cherokee and very secretive about his journey. He would be carrying sacks of something that resembled rocks on his return trip. No one questioned him. As was the custom in those days he was accepted and welcomed. It is thought that this man was Neddy DeLozier.

The story goes that Oliver Orr and his father Hart Orr once cut a tree that had a turtle and snake carved on it. This was supposed to have been a directional tree marking the way to the silver mine.

Old land records were said to show that Neddy owned substantial landholdings in Graham County supposedly bought with silver from the mine. He was said to have owned 50 acres on lower Yellow Creek, 640 acres on Sawyer's Creek, and 1,155 acres on Tuskegee Creek.

Neddy's parents died before he was two years old and the story has it that he was raised by the Cherokee. When the Cherokee signed a treaty in

1835 giving up all rights to their lands east of the Mississippi River. Neddy joined the U.S. Army and

helped in the removal of the Cherokee to Oklahoma. He was a member of the Marcus Dickerson Unit of Macon County.

Neddy was said to have a silver dollar mold and would mint silver coins to pay property taxes and for necessities, but would only go to the mine as needed for silver, and would not keep much of it on hand for fear of being robbed.

Dennis Sawyer said that while Twenty Mile Creek was being logged around 1917 or 1918, that his grandfather Golman Sawyer and Jim Moore were looking at the timber and where to place logging roads in that area. They were accompanied by Guy Sawyer who was a young boy about 12 or 13 years old. While in the area, they found a horse that had fallen in a hole. When they rescued the horse, they found some old mining tools in the hole. Guy took one of the small hatchets or hand axes with him, but lost it in the woods. Deciding that this might be the lost silver mine, the Sawyers tried to return to the hole, but were never able to locate it again.

Homer Constance and his daughter Dorthea Beasley also looked for the mine for many years without locating it. One legend says that from the mine entrance the Little Tennessee River was visible in four places. Another story said seven places.

Neddy DeLozier married Elizabeth Poindexter on May 24, 1834. She is said to be buried in Swain County. Neddy was apparently as elusive and secretive in death as he was in life since no one seems to know for sure where he is buried. Some say he is buried beside his wife in an unmarked grave. Others say he is buried on Tuskegee. Wherever he is buried, the secret of the DeLozier silver mine is buried with him.

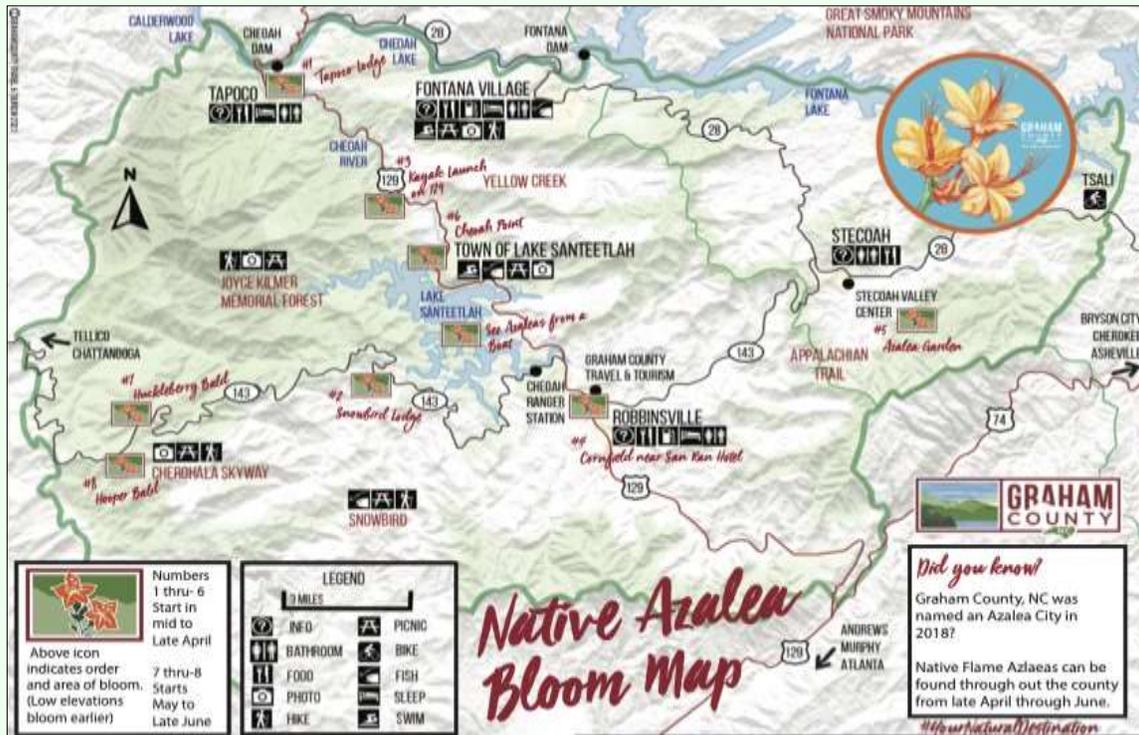
## Notes:

It was about 1840 that a land grant was taken by Edward DeLozier on what is now called Sawyer's Creek.

There is a DeLozier Cemetery located in Graham County.



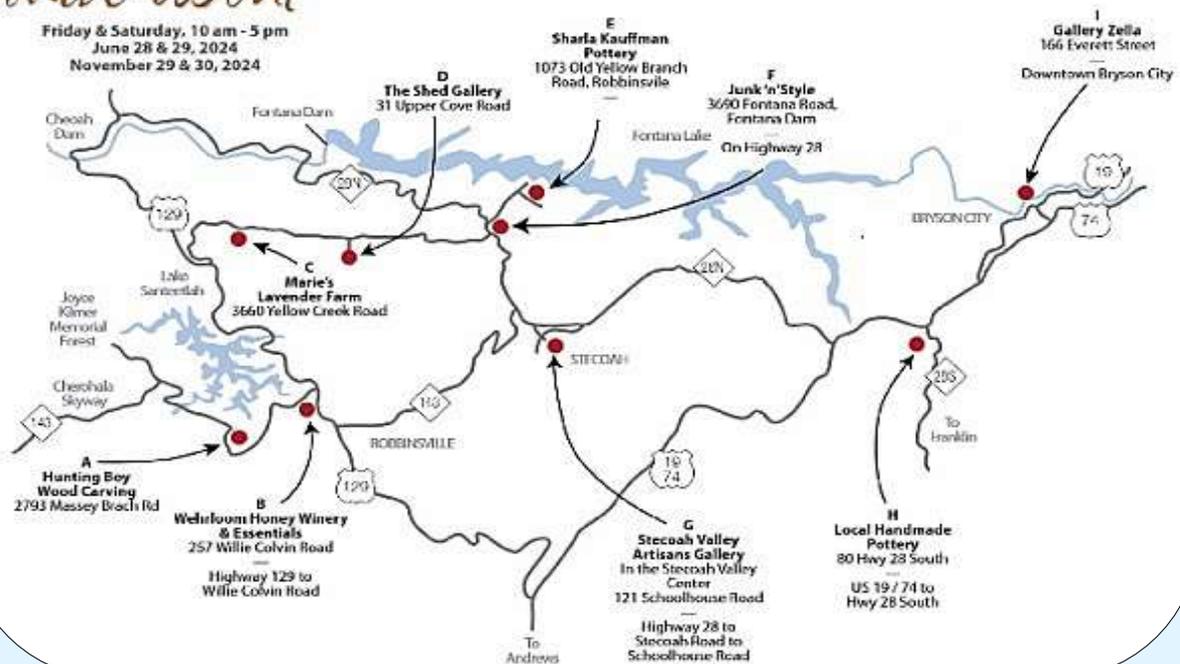
# Annual Native Azalea Celebration June 1<sup>st</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, Festival June 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>



Guided hikes on Hooper Bald at 10am, 12 and 2pm Fri. June 14<sup>th</sup> and 10am on Sat. June 15<sup>th</sup>. From 12-5pm, enjoy food, arts & crafts, local musicians at town square, music and dancing begins at 6pm.

## STECOAH arts & crafts drive-about

Friday & Saturday, 10 am - 5 pm  
June 28 & 29, 2024  
November 29 & 30, 2024



Graham County history is reflected in the Arts & Crafts made by the hands of its people. Support your local Artisans and enjoy the Natural Beauty on the way.

# Join Us Today

## HELP PRESERVE GRAHAM COUNTY'S HISTORY

Become A Member

### JOIN US TODAY



MEMBERSHIP LEVELS		Membership Benefits
1-year	\$25.00	Quarterly Newsletter Meetings and Committees GCHA Decal 10% discount on GCHA merchandise
5-year	\$100.00 (1 year free)	
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

**Become a Member Today**  
and proudly display your new  
GCHA Window Decal!



**Send your payment:**

- Through **PayPal** to [grahamcountymuseum@gmail.com](mailto:grahamcountymuseum@gmail.com)
- Drop off at **Hometown Tax**, 62 Tapoco Road, Robbinsville
- Mail to **GCHA**, PO Box 1221 Robbinsville, NC 28771

If you know someone who  
loves history like you do...



### GRAHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP / DONATION FORM

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

**Membership Includes:** GCHA Decal /Meetings & Committees / Quarterly Newsletter

Please Check Membership/Donation Option Below

- 1 year \$25.00       5 years \$100.00  
 10 years \$200.00       Lifetime \$1000 or more  
 One-time Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Monthly Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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\* First \$25 of donation goes to 1-year Membership

#### METHOD OF PAYMENT

Check | Money Order (Payable to GCHA)

[grahamcountymuseum@gmail.com](mailto:grahamcountymuseum@gmail.com)

Credit Card: (All major credit cards)

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize GCHA to auto-draft my donation from my account

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[www.historygc.org/](http://www.historygc.org/) GCHANC

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