

# GRAHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



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



**479.7971 | 479.9411**  
**WWW.HISTORYGC.COM**

Volume 2, No. 3  
August 2018

### NEWSLETTER

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**GCHA meets the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of each month at 5:00 p.m.**

United Community Bank  
132 Rodney Orr Bypass  
Robbinsville, NC 28771

### History of Graham County, NC

#### The Cherokee Indian

*From a document contributed by  
Leota Wilcox*

The Cherokee are "the largest American Indian tribe of the southeastern culture area. In colonial times they inhabited the southern Appalachian region and spoke a language belonging to the Iroquoian linguistic stock. The Cherokee Indian lived in permanent villages and were farmers growing maize, beans, squash and gourds. Cherokee families built conical earth-covered winter homes and larger rectangular summer homes. Their large ceremonial houses were typical of the Southeast. Cont'd Pg. 2

## GCHA HIGHLIGHTS

The campaign to transform the old Snider's Department Store into a museum received a \$25,000 boost from the state legislature on Monday. State Rep. Kevin Corbin presented the check to Graham County Historical Association President Edd Satterfield.

"Thanks for helping us get started. That pays for our plan," Satterfield remarked. "It will help revitalize this particular property and also help us get a cultural designation for downtown."



At the GREAT meeting at the high school on July 19, 2018, Leota Wilcox represented GCHA on a panel of volunteer organizations with the goal of educating participants as to the accomplishments, challenges, and vision. Great Job, Leota!

Fantastic response from the public at the Heritage Festival in Downtown Robbinsville. Thank you to our volunteers who generously give their time for Outreach efforts during fairs and festivals.



## History of Graham County, NC

### The Cherokee Indian (Cont'd)

In the winter of 1838-39, the U.S. Army forced them to move to Oklahoma under the command of Andrew Jackson. The journey accompanied by considerable hardship and the loss of one-fourth of the number of the Cherokee people. For those that stayed behind hid in caves along the Tennessee River and Great Smokey Mountains."

I am glad that my great ancestor who stayed here in the mountains of western North Carolina; I am proud to be a Cherokee Indian. Today the Cherokee Indians live just as any other human being doing their daily living.

"The hardships that Cherokee Indians and four other tribes faced was called the *Trail of Tears*. Part of this trail is the Tatham Gap Road." *(to be continued)*

By Mark Wachacha  
Junaluska Descendent

*See our next newsletter for the continuing  
Historical Time Line of Graham County*

### 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.

### 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, N.C., and promote cultural tourism and economic development in our area.

### GCHA BOARD

Edd Satterfield- Pres. ~ Carolyn Stewart- V.P.  
Lavina West- Sec. ~ Terri Phillips- Treas.

**GRAHAM COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, RESPONSIBILITY  
Status as of August 2018**



**GOAL #1**

*Organize and establish Graham County Historical Association as a non-profit organization.*

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE COMPLETED
Organizational meeting	Solicit volunteers and information pertaining to Graham County history	Carolyn Stewart Edd Satterfield Lavina West	2016
Become a 501-C3 non-profit organization	Apply for 501-C3 status	Terri Phillips	Aug. 2016
Seek Funding	-Fund Raising events -Donations -Membership Solicitations -Apply for grants	GCHA Committees	Ongoing
Obtain information related to the establishment of a museum	Special meetings with individuals involved in history related organizations	GCHA members	Oct.-Dec. 2017

**GOAL # 2**

*Develop a marketing plan to inform the public, solicit members, participate in fundraisers, use social media and other forms of advertising to promote Graham County Historical Association.*

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE COMPLETED
Inform public of GCHA purpose	Place signs and banners with GCHA information in various locations	Terri Phillips	Aug. 2017
Advertising	Develop and distribute brochures, membership forms, -Participate in fundraisers	Terri Phillips MD/PR Committee	June-Aug. 2017 July, Sept, Oct. 2017 (ongoing)
Participate in Social Media	Facebook Maintenance	Carol Borrelli	Initiated May, 2018
Up-to-date information	Design and distribute newsletter once/quarter	Tere Moore	First newsletter published Dec. 2017
Promote GCHA	-Design and publish website -Develop marketing plan and budget	-Terri Phillips -Membership Development and Public Relations Comm.	June, 2017

**GOAL #3**

*To purchase, renovate, and maintain a building to display and educate the public about Graham County, regional, and Appalachian history. Select a name to encompass all potential elements considered for this structure.*

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE COMPLETED
Locate and purchase a building to be used as a museum	Negotiate a purchase price with Snider family	Board Members	Aug. – Oct. 2017
Purchase Snider building	Purchase and obtain deed for building	Board Members	Nov. - 2017
Develop plan and layout for renovation and remodeling of Sniders Building including a Welcome Center	Estimate from Architect and Contractors (Phase 1)	Building and Grounds Committee	03-05-18

**GOAL #6**

*Gather and preserve Oral History to be used for historical and educational purposes.*

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE COMPLETED
Gather and preserve oral history	-Attend oral history workshop -Identify individuals to gather oral history and conduct interviews -Develop a plan for proper preservation	Oral History Committee	03-05-18

## Charlie Denton was a living History Lesson

*Reprinted from a Graham Star article  
by Marshall McClung*

### PART I

A study of Charlie Denton is a study of the history of the area. He was born in Benton, Tennessee in Polk County in 1868, but moved with his parents to what is now Graham County at the age of eleven in 1879. They moved to a section of Little Santeetlah Creek in what is now a portion of the Joyce Kilmer Forest. His father was John Denton, who whipped most of Robbinsville over a disagreement about a poll tax as covered in the store "The Great Graham County Tax Fight" published last year in the Graham Star.

At the time the Dentons moved to Graham County, there were only about forth white families living here. The Dentons moved to Little Snowbird in 1895, and lived near a Cherokee Indian settlement.

Charlie's playmates when he was a young boy were Indians. He spent much of his young live in the woods hunting and fishing. A lot of their hunting companions were Civil War veterans. He recalls meeting John Jackson "Bushwhacker" Kirkland, who lived in Graham County.

Beginning in 1903, and for the next twenty years or so following, Charlie Denton was employed by U.S. Indian Land Office of the Department of the Interior, and was associated with the Cherokee Indian Reservation lands. As a result, he learned much of the early history of the Cherokee in Graham County.

Charlie said that the earliest white settlers to come to Graham County took the best farm land, first in private settlements with t he Cherokee prior to 1837. Following that time, the state of North Carolina surveyed the lands, operating from an office in Murphy.

Charlie learned much early history of the Indians coming into Graham County. He said that some of the very intelligent Cherokee told him that the Iroquois and Cherokees came from the Great Lakes, and after much fighting between them, settled near the mouth of the Tellico River and called their settlement Echota. They later moved on through Tennessee into Georgia and South Carolina and set up a new headquarters and called it New Echota.

In 1835, the North Carolina Militia moved in to begin the round-up of the Cherokee in preparation for their removal. Many Cherokee hid out in the

mountains, staying there until the final removal was over. Charlie said one family that lived near them, Conseen, also spelled Conesene at the time, was one of the families that hid out and escaped the removal. They were living on Santeetlah Creek at the time, but hid in Slickrock near the Big Flats, which is below Big Fat Gap and near Slickrock Creek. They stayed hid in Slickrock for three years. Charlie recalled that most of the Cherokee lived in log houses, but didn't hew the logs like the white man did, but left them round.

(to be cont'd)

*See our next newsletter for the continuing  
story of Charlie Denton*

## Whisky was downfall of Eagle Rose, Brothers

*Reprinted from an article by John Parris'  
"Roaming the Mountains" Column  
in the Asheville Citizen*

### HANGOVER MOUNTAIN –

Eagle Rose grew up in a stillhouse and died at the hands of another blockader in an ambush on a lonely mountain trail.

"Whiskey was his downfall," said his 72-year-old son Floyd T. Rose, a retired Baptist preacher who lives in Brevard. "and it was whiskey that brought on the murders of his two brothers before him."

Eagle Rose, born in 1876, was the son of Jacob Rose and a nephew of the widely known blockader Aquilla Eagleton Rose for whom he was named.

"My granddaddy Jake made a lot of whiskey too," Floyd Rose recalled. "But he was converted to Christ when he was 70 years old. And he tried to get my daddy to straighten up.

"One day he said to my daddy, 'Why don't you quit that drinking, Eagle, and straighten up and try to live right?'

"My daddy looked at him as straight as a gun-barrel and said, 'Why, Pap, you ought to have thought about that when you was raising me. You raised me in a stillhouse.'"

Floyd Rose slowly shook his head.

"I never will forget that," he said. "I was only about 10 or 11 years old. I was standing right there by my daddy w hen he said it.

"We were living in the Dave Orr mountains, high under Hangover that adjoins the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness Area in Graham County. He had been pretty sick, spitting up blood. He took me out there on a log by that cold spring and said he wanted to talk to me.

Cont'd Pg. 5

## Whisky was downfall of Eagle Rose, Brothers (cont'd)

"Then he said, 'Whatever you are in life, even if you're a dirtroad tramp, be good at it. But don't make no pretense. Just be what you are.'

"That never did register until I became a Christian. And then I began to see how shallow the average church member was living. I said, I don't know where my daddy went, but I said the Lord will remember him for that.

When Floyd was only a few years old, his mother and father separated and for the next few years he was shunted about from one relative to another. When he was about nine years old he went to live with his father.

"We couldn't hardly get into the Dave Orr mountains where me and my daddy batched after I came to live with him," he recalled. "We lived in an old log cabin right under the Hangover. It was three miles out on the mountain.

"We had to sled everything we took in there. No road except a rough, steep sled path. We did our trading at Topoca, three miles away. We had a mule that pulled the sled. I walked that three-mile twice a day to get what little schooling I had there at Tapoco.

"My daddy followed his dad's habit and his Uncle Quill's habit. He made a lot of whiskey. I helped him make it back there in the Dave Orr mountains. A two-gallon keg was all I could muck up over the ridge with.

"Like his Uncle Quill, my daddy made good whiskey, pure whiskey. He would run off what you call the 'singlings', which is a weak and impure liquid that has to be redistilled at a lower temperature to rid it of water and rank oils.

(to be continued)

See our next newsletter for the continuing story of Whisky was the downfall of Eagle Rose, Brothers.



### THE GOAL IS TO

create a museum of Graham County.

- A destination for families, friends and tourist.
- An education center for our schools.
- A place to learn how our community began, how industry changed the mountains, how families survived and made a living.
- A wealth knowledge with stories of our founding families and artifacts from earlier generations.

### WE VALUE YOUR INPUT AND HELP

- GCHA meets every Monday at the Register of Deeds office at 4:30 p.m.
- This is a community effort to save Snider's building and our history.

### GRAHAM COUNTY HISTORY ASSOCIATION

www.historygc.com | info@historygc.com  
828.479.7971 | 828.479.9411  
P.O. Box 406 | Robbinsville, NC 28771

### DONATION FORM

The work of Graham County History Association is greatly assisted by your generous support.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your donation!**

Please mail to: P.O. Box 406 | Robbinsville, NC 28771

Phone: 828.479.7971 | 828.479.9411

Email: info@historygc.com

Graham County History Association is a non-profit, tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions are tax deductible.

### GRAHAM COUNTY HISTORY ASSOCIATION

#### METHOD OF PAYMENT

- **Check | Money Order** (Payable to GCHA)
- **PayPal** (Send to: info@historygc.com)
- **Credit Card:** (All major credit cards)

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

Cardholders Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**One time Donation \$**

**Monthly Pledge \$**

I authorize GCHA permission to auto-draft my donation from my bank account.