MOUNTAIN HERITAGE

The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc. December 1, 2021 Volume 9, Issue 4

# The Evolution of Ellijay, Part 2
# 1900's to Present

*Barbara J. Dover, GCGSI Publication Chairperson*

In our September 2021 edition of *Mountain Heritage,* the quarterly newsletter of the Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc., we created an archival document providing historical information and a timeline of the physical evolution of Ellijay, Georgia from the early 1900's to present day. The background of changes was gleaned from various sources and an annotated and indexed map of businesses and buildings from before to now was given as a starting reference. Native residents of Gilmer County were interviewed, relying on their memories as well as photos of how their town looked in early years in comparison with how it looks today. We also gathered information and photos from various publications' articles and writings, as well as online groups. This edition of the newsletter may be found at this link on our website:

*https://www.gcgsi.org/docs/MountainHeritageSeptember2021.pdf*

Some of the interviews, along with a slideshow of photos showing the evolution, were also combined in a presentation that may be found using this YouTube link:

*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lASzx5OZwZM&t=293s*

For this December issue of *Mountain Heritage,* requests were made for stories from GCGSI members of the evolution they have personally seen and experienced during their lives in Ellijay and Gilmer County. ***The Evolution of Ellijay, Part 2*** features this personal perspective of the changes with a variety of reminiscences and thoughts of then and now. Special thanks to Edith Harper Pinson, Gladys Dotson Spivey, Laurel Brenda Cochran, Annita Bramlett Megregian, and Glenda Garland for sharing your stories with us. (You will also find a story from me, your Publication Chairperson.)

Our hope is that both parts of ***The Evolution of Ellijay 1900's to Present*** feature will be combined into one publication and become available for all of those who want to learn more about the changes that have occurred in our mountain town in Gilmer County, Georgia, over the passage of a more than a century in time. We appreciate any and all support in this endeavor.

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**The Evolution of Ellijay, Part 2**
*-continued-*

# "FaceTime" in 1950's Ellijay

Edith Harper Pinson

I graduated from Ellijay High School in 1957, got married, and then moved to the Atlanta area immediately. During the 1950's, our way of communication in Ellijay was very different than it is today. Not everyone had land line telephones, much less mobile phones where people can make a quick call or text to communicate. And in today's time of the internet and online communication, I often enjoy reminiscing about our ways of socializing with our own version of "FaceTime" on Ellijay's town square when I was growing up.

During the 1950's, before I was old enough to drive, I was fortunate to have my older sister Wanda who I could hitch a ride with until I could get my driver's license. On the weekends, we would ride around and around the square until we found a parking place. Other teenaged boys and girls would do the same. We would perform this early form of social media decades before the internet was even invented. The ideal parking place on the square was beside the one occupied by the person that we were trying to pursue a relationship with or ask for a date.

If the boys did not find a parking place next to us, they usually parked somewhere else and walked up to our car. We would chat in person, getting to know each other, and perhaps plan a date for the next weekend. It was customary back then for boys to ask girls for a date; nice Southern girls would never ask boys out.

There were many advantages to socializing with our in-person "FaceTiming" on the square. Many couples found their life's mate back then, plus it was much more fun than using the internet. You could interpret the other person's body language and see their facial expressions without waiting while the online image was buffering. It was also a lot safer than using today's social media like Facebook. After all, the person you think you're messaging with online may be completely different from what is represented by their photo. And back then you didn't have to "Google" someone for a background check. If you wanted to know something about someone's past, all you had to do was ask anyone. If they didn't know, they would find out and let you know.

Unfortunately, but in some ways, fortunately, downtown Ellijay's "FaceTime" of the 1950's is long gone. The internet and mobile devices have created a whole different way of communication. Parking on the square and hanging out with friends has been replaced by a fast-moving roundabout. There is even talk of eliminating most of the parking in front of the businesses around the square so that the sidewalks can be extended and restaurants can expand outdoor dining. Yes, change is inevitable and modes of communication have evolved through the years, but I can't help feeling that it just doesn't compare to sitting on the square in Ellijay in the 1950's, with the stars twinkling up in the sky above us, and socializing face to face with the boy or girl you are trying to get to know better.

*Photo: A Day in Ellijay, 1953*

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**The Evolution of Ellijay, Part 2**
*-continued-*

# From Punkin Center to Town School

Gladys Dotson Spivey

I was born to parents Charles Thomas "Tommy" and Mattie Jewell Mary Lavada Miller Dotson at the tail end of The Great Depression. We lived in the western section of Gilmer County in the little community of "Punkin Center," a small part of the Tails Creek community. In our little part of the community, there was a little country store, a grist mill, blacksmith shop, and Cross Roads Baptist Church, and Crossroads School.

Just as the country was coming out of The Great Depression, along comes WWII. My mom's brother, my Uncle John, was drafted into the army. I remember my mom and grandparents worrying about him while he was in the army, but Uncle John made it back home safe. After he returned home from the army, he bought a green car.

*Uncle John's Car*

The first time I really remember going into the city of Ellijay, Uncle John took mom and us kids to town in his car, probably the first time I had ever been in a car. We went to Penland's Dry Goods and Grocery Store down on River Street. The store, with all the different things to see, was a wonderland for us kids after being used to going to Aunt Millie Jane Sanford's little country store that only had the basic necessities such as flour, sugar and coffee. And during WWII, mom had to have ration stamps to buy the flour, coffee and sugar there.

I started to school when I was eight years old. I had to wait until my brother Grady got old enough to start to school because my parents didn't want me walking there by myself. We walked about three miles to Crossroads School. On our way to school we had to pass Pa and Ma's house on our way to school. (Pa and Ma were what we called mom's dad and mom.) We would stop in for a short visit and to pick up our milk for our school lunch. In the winter time we stayed a little while longer to get warm. I went to Crossroads School in first and second grades., and my Great Aunt Mary Sanford was my teacher.

In the late 1940's we moved from "Punkin Center" over to my Uncle Jim Dotson's house located where the Red Apple Barn is located today. At that time, Dad and Uncle Jim had jobs at the Kiker Lumber Company. They walked about five or six miles to work every day until dad saved up enough money to buy a Model- A car.

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**From Punkin Center to Town School**

**The Evolution of Ellijay, Part 2**
*-continued-*

**From Punkin Center to Town School**

Gladys and Grady

When we were at Uncle Jim's, my brother Grady and I went to Pleasant Grove School, another one room school, until we moved out Boardtown Road. Then we had to start riding the bus to "Town School." Town School is what we called Ellijay Elementary and High School. Town School was so different to the little one room schoolhouse that we had been used to attending. The one room school had a few students, and at Town School, there were hundreds of kids running around from first grade through high school.

In the early 1950's, we moved again to about a half a mile from town, and Dad went to work for Charlie Logan at his dairy. We had to walk to school because we lived too close to school for the bus to pick us up. While we lived at the Logan house, Charlie built the skating rink and the Dairy Paradise restaurant. We spent a lot of time at the skating rink trying to learn how to skate.

In the late 1950's, Davenport Hosiery Mill came to Ellijay, so I quit school and went to work when I was seventeen years old to help out the family. By the early 1960's, there were several places for the residents to work. There was the McCutchen Bedspread Company that was established in the late 1940's, a spinning mill, carpet mills, Hampton rug mill, and the apple packing house. In the late 1960's, yet another manufacturing plant moved to Gilmer County. I worked there while I raised my family. Also during that time I studied and got my GED.

In the city of Ellijay, we had Thrifttown Supermarket, C & K Supermarket, Lay's Dime Store, Penland's Dry Goods and Grocery Store, Reece Brothers' Dry Goods and Grocery Store, two drug stores, Wright's Department Store, Wright's Grocery Store, Bowen's Dry Goods Store, Rackley's Department Store, Andy's Jewelry Store, Jerri's Dress Shop, a bank, and other locations for the people to shop and work.

By the late 1980's and early 1990's, everything started to change. Businesses moved from the downtown area to other locations or the business just closed. All the places for people to work moved out of the county, so many people in Gilmer County had to go out of town to work.

Now our little sleepy town is one of the most popular tourist spots in North Georgia. There are no grocery stores, drug stores, or clothing stores in town. Everything in the downtown area is geared to the tourist who comes to town. Seems like the native Gilmer County folks don't matter anymore. As Ellijay has changed and grown busier through the years, I miss the slower pace of our small town. But I guess nothing ever stays the same.

*2021 Former Penland's Dry Goods and Grocery Store*
*Whimz Boutique, Heart and Vine,*
*Yesterday's Décor, Hometown Florist*
*Photo: Barbara J Dover*

*1948 Penland's Dry Goods and Grocery Store and*
*Reece Brothers' Dry Goods and Grocery Store*
*Photo: Times Courier*

*2021 Former Reece Brothers' Dry Goods and Grocery Store*
*MooBears Ice Cream & Hot Dogs*
*River Street Tavern*
*Photo: Barbara J. Dover*

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**The Evolution of Ellijay, Part 2**
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# The Places We Were Born, Part 1

Laurel Brenda Cochran

In the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, our small town thrives contentedly as we reminiscence about our safe and innocent childhood because of good neighbors and our way of life. It is interesting to watch the development of Ellijay and the surrounding countryside. But things change and a way of life vanishes as our world progresses.

*My mother Rosalie and me, Laurel Brenda*

We moved back and forth from Ellijay to Okeechobee, Florida, until I enrolled in the first grade. My teacher was Ms. Hipp. Then we moved back to Okeechobee for good. I have always loved Ellijay, and as we traveled home each summer, I could not wait until we reached the Gilmer County line. The summers were incredible as I spent time with my mountain families. We played in the creeks. Ellijay just felt better. Ellijay smelled great. Ellijay was welcoming. Ellijay was home! Finally, in my late 20's, my family and I moved back to Gilmer County, and we are home! I believe that God places us in specific locations for a reason. ***The Places We Were Born*** is to be significant in our lives.

Our hometown plays a vital role in helping us become the people we are today.

Though it is long since gone, I would like to share the place where I was born. Many local folks remember it well. It was called Lonie Frisbee's Restaurant and Boarding House. A **pink** dot on the map found on page 7 shows where it used to be located in downtown Ellijay. Many family members were present for my arrival: sister Gwen, brother Grady, Aunt Lena, cousins Cecil, Roy, Francis, JB, and many others. I believe that the restaurant was in the front of the building, rooms for boarders were upstairs, and we lived in the apartment in the back. As fate would have it, the county fair was in town that Saturday night, and the doctor could not be located in time, so I was delivered by a wonderful midwife, Delia Stanley.

My family enjoyed living in the apartment and thought a lot of Lonie Frisbee. We were home and surrounded by good people.

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**The Places We Were Born, Part 1**

## *Lonnie Frisbee's Restaurant and Boarding House*

*This building is no longer standing. The location is now part of an Ellijay City Parking Lot, west of the present Dalton State College and across Sand Street.*

*Photos of Laurel Brenda with siblings.*

*Photo Left: Laurel Brenda and sister Gwen Crane*

*Photo Right: Laurel Brenda and brother Grady Norton*

*Gwen was 18 years old and Grady was 6 years old when I was born.*

*A short time later Gwen married John Cantrell; both were born in Gilmer County, Georgia.*

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**The Places We Were Born, Part 2**

**The Evolution of Ellijay, Part 2**
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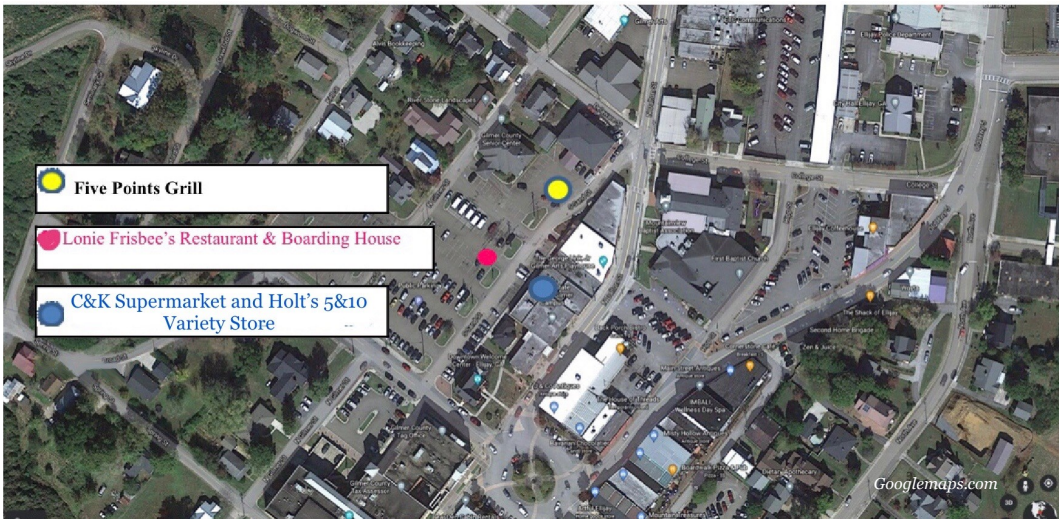
# The Places We Were Born, Part 2

Annita Bramlett Megregian

Lonie Frisbee was my paternal Grandmother and a Grand Lady she was.

Also, as I recollect, these dots on the map below indicate the locations of my grandmother Lonie Frisbee's Restaurant & Boarding House, C & K Supermarket, Holt's Five and Dime Variety Store, and the Five Points Grill.




The restaurant was called Five Points Grill because five streets came together or were in same vicinity. Chatsworth Highway and Sand Street were two of the streets. Mama Frisbee's boarding house was in about the middle of the block, the Five Points grill was near the end of street, to the north. I remember Dink Waters' Furniture store, advertising the newfangled automatic washing machine on the street by the front door. (No wringer!) The tub was clear with red white and blue poker chips in the water so you could see how they were being whirled around in the machine. You could watch them spinning around and think, oh my, what innovation! Now I live two miles from the Kennedy Space Center Gate. I guess I really can see innovation now. It's funny the things you remember. Directly across the street from the boardinghouse were the back doors into a grocery store, the C & K Supermarket, I think. I think a variety store was fronted on the same street as the First Baptist church, but the church was across the street and some distance north - maybe a football field or less.

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# The Places We Were Born, Part 2

Mama Frisbee was constantly fixing and adding on and painting and repairing. She was truly an entrepreneur.

My grandmother Lonie Frisbee was married twice. Her first marriage, which ended in divorce, was to Lewis Bramlett. They had five children, and my father was her fifth child with Lewis Bramlett. L. M. Bramlett, a longtime Ordinary in Ellijay, was her 2nd child with Lewis Bramlett.

After Lonie and Lewis divorced, she married Ted Frisbee. She and Ted, Sr. had one child, Theodore Dwight Frisbee. He was an Ellijay High School football star.

My dad was Willard Bramlett and my mom was Doris Parks Bramlett. I always called Lonie "Mama Frisbee," and my other grandmother, "Mama Parks," or "Big Mama" sometimes. Until I was five we lived with Big Mama and, for a while, on the road that goes up to the cemetery. Mama Frisbee's little sister Maude lived with her a lot of the time, and later her sister Florence lived in the apartment next door.

*A photo gallery on a wall in my home shows the boarding house, with Lonie's pic under the boarding house picture. The other pictures go clock wise, Uncle John Bramlett, Uncle L.M. (The Ordinary). Uncle Wade, Aunt Oleeta, my Dad Willard, then Uncle Ted Frisbee.*

I remember another older woman that lived with Mama. Her name was Ader Mulkey (I think.) There were two huge weeping willow trees to the back of the property. I also remember a smokehouse out back. Mama would stir up biscuits in one bowl on top of the flour, or what she called sweet bread, in the blink of an eye. I love my Ellijay memories. My cousin Jimmy Bramlett was the apple of my eye. He took care of us girl cousins like we were precious jewels.

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# The Places We Were Born, Part 2

At the end of Lonie's streets, Sand & Broad Streets, on the corner as you turned toward the square, was a brick house. It was the home and the office of Doc Watkins. He **delivered me** in his house. On the other side of the street from Mama's house, you could walk right into a grocery store. If you turned left on Sand Street from my Grandmother's boarding house and walked, you would pass the courtyard of the boarding house, with cars parked there too, two huge weeping willow trees. You would continue past the Five Points Grill, and come to another street with a furniture store across that street.

## Lonie's Lineage

**Lonie Stanley Bramlett Frisbee**: 4 Sep 1893 - 17 Feb 1978 (aged 84), her parents were Rickles Calvin Stanley: 1859-1943 and Cordealy "Delia" Davis: 1871-1956. Lonie is buried in the Ellijay City Cemetery, Gilmer Co. GA.

+ Lewis Milton Bramlett Sr.: 27 Mar 1875 - 29 Sep 1962 (aged 87), His parents were Cicero Taylor Bramlett: 1845 - 1904 and Margaret Bramlett: 1842 - 1927 Lewis is buried: Pleasant Grove Baptist Church Cemetery, Gilmer Co. GA.

- John Calvin Bramlett: 1912 - 1954
- Lewis M Bramlett: 1919 - 1984
- Wade Edward Bramlett: 1922 - 1978
- Margaret Oleeta Bramlett Raiford: 1925 - 2008
- Willard Earl Bramlett: 1928 - 2016
  + Helen Doris Parks Bramlett Johnson: 1929 - 2016
    - Annita Bramlett Megregian
    - Doris Earlene Bramlett Hart: 1950 - 1982
    - Vicki Bramlett Yates
    - Tami Layne Bramlett Robinson

+ Theodore "Ted" Frisbee Sr
  Theodore "Ted" Frisbee Jr

*The U.S. Navy Destroyer, USS Meredith*
*U.S. Navy photo NH 89423*

My dad Willard Bramlett served in the United States Navy during WWII aboard the USS Meredith. He had a successful career at Kennedy Space Center as a quality control inspector and later established and operated the Tenderfoot Ranch, and Tenderfoot Feed and Supply Store, located on Cox Road in Cocoa. Willard traveled to over five continents during his lifetime. Animals, especially horses were his greatest interest. One of his fondest memories was of the Bahia Temple, Shriners, and Horse Patrol.

My mother Helen Doris Parks' parents were Mack Arvin Parks 1906 - 1979 and Leona Hyde Parks 1912 - 1990. Her first husband was Willard Earl Bramlett (m. 1946) and her second husband: William E. Johnson.

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# Library Memories

Glenda Garland

The library has been a huge part of my life. I tell people nowadays when they question my coming back to work part time after officially retiring from working at the library that I don't know how to do anything else. I remember going to check out books as a young adult when the library was in the cannery building beside the Ellijay Elementary School Gym. Lois Dover was the librarian at that time. Later on, the year the Dalton Street location was built, my youngest child was born. Being a busy mom with 3 children to raise, I used the library as therapy and books as entertainment.

Around the Christmas holidays in 1988, the library manager at the time, Ruth Hamrick, asked me if I would like to work in the library while Judy Griggs was on maternity leave. That led to a full time job, and I was there until 2011. In July of 1989, Mrs. Hamrick retired and Anita Summers was hired to be the branch manager. We had a staff of 3: Wayne Oliver, Anita, and myself. From then on, the Gilmer County Library grew at a fast pace. Here are a few of the changes made in the following years:
1) In 1989, all of the genealogy books we had were kept on about 3 shelves in the workroom behind the circulation desk, and I always suspected they were from Ruth Hamrick's own personal books.
2) Nothing was computerized. We had the old card catalog with dozens of little drawers and everything was done by hand.
3) In 1991, we had a major renovation of the building, and operated for 3 months out of the lobby of the building. As we worked to serve the public, we were surrounded by construction workers and all that entailed. We called it our "condensed library."
4) We got our first computer in 1991, and having no experience at all with it, I was terrified. But at last, we had a real genealogy/special collections room and a reference desk!
5) We got more staff members, more books, more patrons, and added more services.
6) The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc. was established, and up until I retired in 2011, I had the opportunity to spend a lot of time with the members

*Boxing books for the move.*
*Photo: Ellijay Times-Courier*

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**Library Memories**

**The Evolution of Ellijay, Part 2**
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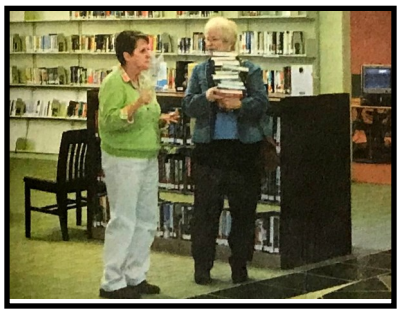
**Library Memories**

and, on behalf of the library, I became involved in the organization as needed. I have such great memories of all their projects and I still count the ones who are still here as friends to this day.
7) The Friends of the Library was formed also, and all of the volunteers in both groups worked so much to raise funds for materials and make us better.

*New library construction*
*Photo: Gilmer County Library*

By this time, the library was outgrowing the space on Dalton Street and we worked for several years, along with the Board of Trustees and other interested parties, to get funding for the grand new building on Calvin Jackson Drive. Once approved, it took about a year to build it. I would come out to the site with Anita and we'd stand in amazement that it was finally happening.

Then the building was completed and it was time to move! Moving a library is quite an undertaking. A company that specializes in moving libraries was brought in to move the book collections and heavy items. Some of us staff members actually loaded up office items and small things in our cars and hauled them to the new location. It was a lot of work but fun at the same time, and we had about 8 or 9 people on staff to set things up once everything was moved.



*Helping a patron in the new library*
*Photo: Michael Andrews, Ellijay Times Courier*

Shortly after moving to the new building, Anita was offered the position of assistant to the Director of the Sequoyah Library System. She went to Canton to work there, and ultimately became the Director. By then, I was what was called the Reference Coordinator and Assistant Manager.

I have seen a lot of changes in the library through the years especially with the advance of technology through computer systems, the internet, virtual this and that. I hope people realize what an asset the library is to the county and the community. There were times that it was very challenging, but I liked my work far more than most people do. Librarians do not work for the money. They do it for the love of the library, books, reading, and information. I have been so lucky to have found my place and get to do what I enjoyed so much. I don't think Ruth Hamrick ever realized what a gift she gave me when she hired me. Not only did she give me employment in doing what I loved, but some of the best friends I have had are people that I met at the library.

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# This Used to Be My Playground

Barbara J. Dover

Many things have changed in and around downtown Ellijay in the decades since I was born in Watkins Memorial Hospital, but probably the most profound to me, aside from the deaths of my grandparents and parents, was the demolition of Ellijay Elementary School. Although I still have my memories of the time that I attended the school, the loss of a place I had spent seven formative years of my life was met with sadness and anger. This was a building, although parts had been ravaged by fire and rebuilt, that had been used by generations of Gilmer Countians since 1936. My Mama and Daddy had attended and graduated high school from Ellijay Elementary and High School. All of my siblings had attended this school. Many good, bad, and scary times of my life were from the years I was there. But, poof! In 1987 it was reduced to a pile of bricks and rubble.

*Mrs. Hipp's First Grade Class 1963-1964*

People of my generation are often asked if they remember where they were when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. I was in the first grade of Ellijay Elementary School, in Mrs. Hipp's classroom, and my older sister Janice was brought to the door when we were told. They probably thought it best if we had a sibling in the school for support when presented with such horrific news. School was released early that Friday, and I don't believe I have ever been on a school bus as quiet as it was that day. I remember sitting in front of our black and white television watching the casket being carried down the street on a horse-drawn caisson on the Sunday after his death. I don't think school was in session the next day due to the funeral, and we sat speechless and crying in front of the tv as he was laid to rest. I was so upset for Caroline losing her father, because I had felt such a kinship with her. We were almost the same age, I was about 2 weeks older, and I just knew that I was going to be invited to play with her at the White House. But not now.

I was in the third grade at the start of The Beatles Invasion, and I could remember all the talk on the playground about getting anything to wear that was Beatles-related. The coveted item was a Beatles wig styled just like those mop tops of John, Paul, George, and Ringo. There was talk that if you sent in a number of box tops of a certain cereal, you could receive a wig of your own through the mail. Needless to say, that cereal was bought and consumed in our house, and

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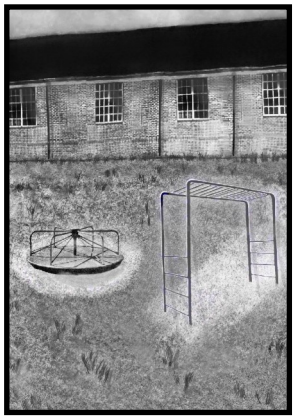
**This Used to Be My Playground**

the playground was abuzz daily with a comparison of the number of box tops we still needed to collect in order to qualify. One of my classmates already had hers and was wearing it daily! Unfortunately, we didn't see the "while supplies last" until my sisters and I had already sent in the box tops for a shared wig and kept waiting for something that never came. I guess we learned the hard way to "Let it Be."



*Collage of Ellijay Elementary School Playground created by Barbara J. Dover*

Throughout the next few years, we studied and worked hard, but we also played hard. In our early grades, we had the playground near the gym with just a slide and hopscotch. But later on we were able to play on another playground with the monkey bars, slide, and merry-go-round. Many skinned knees and blistered hands resulted from that merry-go-round, and if was cold, you had better make sure you were wearing gloves or your hands would end up sticking to both the merry-go-round and monkey bars. Of course, with gloves our grips were weakened, thus the skinned knees.

Then there were the races on the football field. My cousin Sheila Dotson always came in first, but occasionally, I would be a close second. We also had some rollicking rounds of "Red Rover," and I always had a hard time because of my name; "Red Rover; Red Rover; Send Dover right over." In our P.E. class, we chose teams for softball and got very competitive, with names and even "uniforms." (I made sure I was on the team with my cousin Sheila since she ran so fast!). Our team was "The Red Barons," and we wore long scarves around our necks. I don't remember how we came up with that name. It might have been related to the Peanuts comic strip with Snoopy. Or maybe we were studying them in history. I remember those scarves though.

When it was cold or rainy, P.E. class would take place in the gym with basketball games, climbing the big ropes, and playing dodge ball. I had a hard time with the ropes, and I ended up with many bruises from dodge ball. But who didn't? I was a decent basketball player, not as good as my sister Joyce who was a starter for the Bobcats in high school, but okay. I had a pretty good set shot and my layups were successful if I somebody tall wasn't guarding me. But one of my most memorable times in the gym had to be as a spectator at a unique basketball game for a school fundraiser. It was called Donkey Basketball, because people riding donkeys came and actually played a short game on our nice wooden floors. Of course now I see how PETA would disapprove, but I can still smell the popcorn machine from that game, and, fortunately, nothing else.

*Collage of 1960's Ellijay Elementary School Gym created by Barbara J. Dover.*

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**This Used to Be My Playground**

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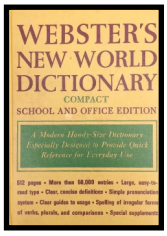
**This Used to Be My Playground**

*Mrs. Brown's Fourth Grade Class 1966-1967*

The gym was also the site for the school's annual Halloween Carnival with all sorts of games, a cake walk, and a haunted house in the locker room. The locker room was decorated with fake spiderwebs, black streamers, and skeletons; and there were the ubiquitous bowls of spaghetti and grapes to represent worms and eyeballs. One year I had the honor of being the witch that led folks through the house. I channeled my inner Margaret Hamilton and cackled all night long, my pretties!

Later on, around the sixth grade, I had a hard time fitting in with some of my classmates and remember some angst when I got "hate Valentines." But I also got into writing and created a few editions of a short newspaper that I was allowed to duplicate on the purple mimeograph machine. (Sniff!) The newspaper included features like movie and record reviews, jokes, and school news. It sold for 10¢ and nobody got rich. I also wrote skits and plays in the sixth and seventh grades, and of course I gave myself the starring role. (*See the September 2017 edition of* Mountain Heritage *on our website for my story about those plays and other personal memories of Ellijay Elementary School's auditorium. Here is the link: https://gcgsi.org/docs/GCGSISeptemberNewsletter2017.pdf )*




*Yes, I still have the dictionary!*

The sixth grade was definitely a pivotal year for me at Ellijay Elementary School, good times, bad times, and scary times. I got a chance to show off my spelling skills in our Sixth Grade Spelling Bee and ended up winning it. The prize? A dictionary, of course! I was thrilled!

Throughout that trying sixth grade year, I tried to ignore the mocking and laughing from other classmates by looking out the windows and working on my writing projects, but I was often hurting inside. And then there was that one teacher who must have been very affected by The Cold War and Communist threat because we could often postpone our class assignments if we could get her talking about Communism. (Come on, you all had a teacher that you could side-rail and often did! I used to joke with my students that I was one of those teachers. But then I'd jump back on track!). Anyhow, this was in 1967-68, and this teacher would usually freak us out talking about how if we weren't careful, we would have that "knock, knock, knock" on the door and never be heard from again. Her actual knocking on her desk was the red icing on the cake. She would also hold her own nuclear air raid drills where we would duck and cover under our desks.

*Mrs. Reynolds' Sixth Grade Class 1968-1969*

*See* **The Evolution of Ellijay, Part 2,** *page 15.*
**This Used to Be My Playground**

**The Evolution of Ellijay, Part 2**
*-continued-*

**This Used to Be My Playground**

*Inverness Middle School Jazz Band - Barbara J. Dover, Music Director*
*Mahaffey Theater/Duke Energy Center for the Arts*
*St. Petersburg, FL—05/16/2015*
*Screen Capture from video by Steven Baumer:*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsAIcNeMMPM

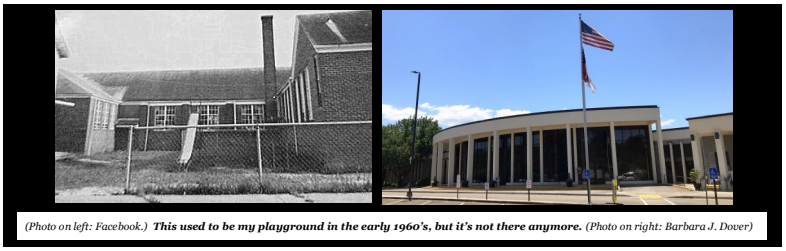
In seventh grade, I had the opportunity to begin learning a band instrument. Although I had taken piano lessons from Miss Henslee in the first grade, up until then my only other musical experience was singing in our church's choir. I chose to learn the flute and practiced a lot for those weekly classes in the little room on the side of the gym. It was the highlight of my year and little did I know that my first year of Beginning Band in seventh grade would lead to a rewarding 36-year career of teaching music.

In spite of the Communists coming to get us in our small town of Ellijay, we had a fairly safe time at the school. We had unsupervised recess, but sometimes a teacher whose classroom was located nearby came outside and threatened to whip us if she caught us hanging upside down on the monkey bars. Often if we were caught up in our work, we were able to leave the classroom and work on projects at other locations on campus. We had unsupervised lunches in the cafeteria, but I don't recall one food fight ever, just those wonderful yeast rolls.

After the dismissal bell while waiting for the buses to arrive, we were allowed to go to the window of the cafeteria to buy ice creams and popsicles if we had 25¢. Speaking of snacks and sweet treats, some kids would actually sneak off during lunch and walk to Bennie's corner store to buy candy, usually Pixie Sticks and Charms cherry lollipops. Not me, of course. And at the end of the school day, even if we were bus riders, we could also walk up to Starnes Rexall Drugstore on the square and sit at the fountain for a Cherry Coke and barbeque-flavored potato chips. Or you could do like my sisters and I did; walk to our church for Jr. Choir practice on Wednesday afternoons, stopping at Lay's 5 & 10 to buy an after-school snack.

*EES Ice Cream Window*
*The window itself has been updated,*
*but it's still there!*
*Photo: Barbara J. Dover*

There are a lot more memories of those seven years at Ellijay Elementary School that have helped to shape me into the person I am today. And even though I was teaching in Florida at the time, I was heartbroken when I had heard that it was demolished. I was also angry that this building that had held good, bad, and scary times, and that had helped form thousands of children into adults, the same adults whose own children had later experienced their formative years there, would no longer exist. No more shared experiences under the same roof. Yes, I know that it's just a building and that it was the people there that made it special. Maybe so. But maybe not. And maybe we should be more judicious in removing things just because they're old. After all, people get old too.



*(Photo on left: Facebook.)* ***This used to be my playground in the early 1960's, but it's not there anymore.*** *(Photo on right: Barbara J. Dover)*

# The President's Corner

Happy December!

I hope this newsletter finds you well and full from a festive Thanksgiving. As we approach the end of the year, I wanted to say how much I have enjoyed being your President. The times in which we currently live have not given us much to spend together, but we have weathered the storm and I hope will be much stronger next year.

On December 9th I will hand the "gavel" over to our own Jan Cooler. She will be your President for the 2022 year. I look forward to serving as an advisor to her.

Please continue to enjoy the programs Jan has set for the rest of the year and show her the love you have so willingly given me.

May the joy of the holidays be with you and your families.

All the best,
Keely Chalk

*Photos of GCGSI President Keely Chalk from November 20, 2021 meeting by Jan Cooler.*

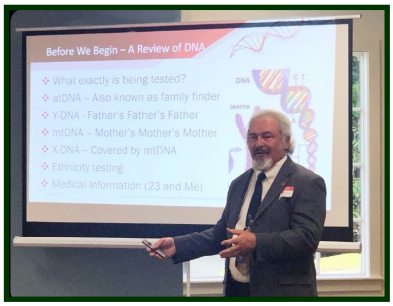
# Fourth Quarter Highlights, 2021

*Photos provided by Barbara J. Dover, Jan Cooler, and Becky Burrell.*

*Speaker Jerry Taylor*

September Monthly Meeting
Saturday, September 18, 2021
Gilmer County Library

Jerry Taylor, the official historian of Towns County presented an informative and entertaining program at the GCGSI September meeting. His presentation *On the Census Trail: The United States Census from 1790 to 2020* provided useful information in climbing our family trees.



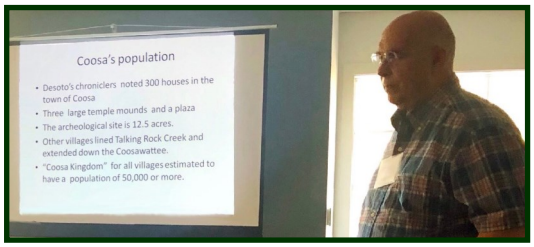

*Genealogist Larry T Thomas*

October Monthly Meeting
Saturday, October 16, 2021
Gilmer County Library

Genealogist Larry T. Thomas was our speaker for GCGSI's October meeting. His presentation *Using DNA as a Tool in your Genealogy Research* shared how the use of DNA results in researching family trees provides one of many sources to confirm or deny the information found.

*See* **Fourth Quarter Highlights, 2021,** *page 18.*

**Fourth Quarter Highlights, 2021**
*-continued-*




*Speaker Wayne Hooper*

## November Monthly Meeting
## Saturday, November 20, 2021
## Gilmer County Library

At this combined meeting of GCGSI and GCHS, Wayne Hooper presented *Hernando De Soto Contacts the "Coosa" in 1540*. His talk and slide presentation detailed the encounter of Hernando De Soto's army with the "Coosa Kingdom" while exploring the Southeastern United States for slaves and gold. The Coosa, whose town was located at what is now the base of Carter's Lake Dam," were part of the "Southeastern Ceremonial Culture" also known as "The Mound Builders' whose power reached from the Tennessee River to Alabama.

## Gilmer County Library Festival of Trees
## December 1-22, 2021

For what has become a tradition, the GCGSI is once again participating in the Gilmer County Library's *Festival of Trees*. Members decorated a tree that was placed in the Family Research Center/Georgia Room of the library using ornaments to reflect the theme *Cooking Up Our Families' History*.

The library will kick off the holiday season with an Open House on Wednesday, December 1, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. Come and view the trees and wreaths on the upper floor, then proceed to refreshments, games, a cakewalk and other festivities in the lower level.

The trees and wreaths will be on display for most of the month of December.

*GCGSI Member Decorators with our "Cooking Up Our Families' History" Tree*
*(Left to Right: Eileen Bailey, Jan Cooler, Becky Burrell, Jane Tischler)*

# Christmas in Ellijay as interpreted by artist Gayla Pankey.

*(In 2015, the Gilmer Chamber commissioned a painting by Ellijay artist Gayla Pankey to benefit the annual Light Up Ellijay Christmas event. For the painting, Ms. Pankey chose as her subject the snow-covered downtown Ellijay square with the Gilmer County Courthouse and the north side's shops in the background. A fully decorated Christmas tree on the square with Gilmer County residents, one with his pet dog and all dressed in early 1900's attire, are gathering there to celebrate the holiday season together. The painting was appropriately titled* **Christmas in Ellijay**, but *Ms. Pankey used her imagination and not a photograph to create the scene, knowing that the background was more contemporary than what would have actually been seen at the turn of the century. But this vision of Ellijay and its spirit, a town that she knows and loves, is reflected in her art. Only 250 limited edition prints were produced and they are no longer available. If you are invited into a Gilmer County resident's home at this time of year, you might possibly find this work of art along with other pieces of Ms. Pankey's hanging with pride upon its walls.)*

*See* **Christmas in Ellijay as interpreted by artist Gayla Pankey,** *page 20.*

***Christmas in Ellijay as interpreted by artist Gayla Pankey.***
-continued-

Biography compiled by Barbara J. Dover from information provided by Ms. Pankey.

About the artist:

Ellijay artist Gayla Gardner Pankey was born October 17 in North Carolina. Her family moved to Ellijay, Georgia when she was young, and she has been here ever since. Also, when she was young, Ms. Pankey discovered that she could draw, and soon she was drawing all the time. From those early years, she dreamed of becoming an artist. She would share her dreams with others, but they were quick to discourage her by saying "you can't make a living in art." But she describes that it was her high school counselor Mr. Homer Hefner who gave her a glimmer of hope that she could become anything she wanted in life.

She could not wait to begin art school. She hoped to study every aspect of drawing and to learn all the technical skills needed to become a successful artist. Her dream finally came true when she attended the North Carolina School of Fine Arts and received her Fine Arts degree. Upon completion of school, Ms. Pankey returned to Ellijay, set up a studio, and began teaching art to Gilmer County's children. Soon, adults began taking classes, both individually and in groups. Her greatest reward as an artist and teacher has been to give the people of Gilmer County the opportunity to experience art. She said, "As a young person in Gilmer County, I did not have the opportunity to experience art."

Ms. Pankey and several other like-minded Gilmer Countians had the vision to start a nonprofit organization to promote the arts in Ellijay. Originally known as Gilmer Arts and Heritage Association, Gilmer Arts is now a thriving organization with a performing arts playhouse and gallery, and is looking to expand its location even more within downtown Ellijay. With the help of her students and a $50.00 donation from friends, she and then Gilmer County Chamber Director Brenda Johnson created the Light Up Ellijay event which continues today.

Ms. Pankey's paintings have appeared in many exhibitions and numerous private collections. She has illustrated books and album covers, and her largest works have been theatre backdrops, murals, and even furniture.

Several years ago, she discovered that she and one of her students, Bonnie Smith, had similar ideas about art and decorating. They collaborated on several successful projects and decided to pursue other decorating ventures. They developed a partnership called "Uniquely Yours" and their business mission is to integrate art into decorating ideas. Ms. Pankey shares the idea behind the business, "You and I have all heard of or seen the great works of art that hang in the museums around the world. I know I can't afford to purchase the great works of art, but I can make my things look like works of art. Bonnie and I take great pride in finding very inexpensive pieces and turning them into quality pieces."

Everything Ms. Pankey has learned about studying and creating art is shared with her students. As a result, she is now teaching the children and grandchildren of some of her first students. She does not distinguish between her students, no matter how they intend to use their artistic skills. She expects the same effort from each student. She says, "My greatest joy as a teacher is the look on the student's face when they have just completed their first painting. Even though teaching can sometimes be a challenge, my students make it all worthwhile."

**2018 Christmas in Ellijay**
**as photographed by Barbara J. Dover.**

## GILMER COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY BOOKS

## WE HAVE YOUR GIFT-GIVING ALL WRAPPED UP!

**GCGSI has published several books that feature the legends of our Gilmer County families and our unique Appalachian heritage. Books may be purchased at Walls of Books in East Ellijay or via mail order. Here is a link to our mail order form:**

*https://gcgsi.org/docs/2021GCGSIBookOrderForm.pdf*

**Available books are:**
***A Revenuer's Diary—Family Legends of Gilmer County (both: digital format only)—Reflections on Mountain Heritage***
***Poetry from the Mountains—Days Gone By—Faces of Our Ancestors: First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia***

***(Free gift wrapping with mail orders for the rest of 2021. Specify type of paper: Christmas, birthday, all-occasion. Books may also be shipped to a different address if requested on the order form. Don't delay, order today!***

# BULLETIN BOARD

Due to the lack of availability of GCGSI volunteers to assist patrons with genealogical research at the Gilmer County Library on Fridays, we are suspending the **Research Fridays** program at this time. If you need assistance in researching your family tree, we ask that you email us at gilmergenealogy@gmail.com with the details needed in your research. If you prefer to receive help in person in the Family Research Center at the library, you may make an appointment by either emailing us, sending us a message via Facebook, or calling us at 706-514-8600. Please provide details of your research needs, your contact information, and a couple of preferred date(s) and time(s.) We will be in touch to set up an appointment. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

**December 2021**

- Wednesday, December 1
  Holiday Open House & Festival of Trees
  Gilmer County Library - 6:00-7:30 p.m.
- Thursday, December 9
  *GCGSI Holiday Gathering and Installation of Officers*
  Double L Restaurant, Ellijay-12:00 noon
  Dutch Treat Lunch
- Tuesday, December 21 - Winter Solstice
- Saturday, December 25 - Merry Christmas!
- Sunday, December 26 - Happy Kwanzaa!
- Please see message above regarding Research Fridays.

**January 2022**

- Saturday, January 1 - Happy New Year!
- Saturday, January 15 - GCGSI Monthly Meeting
  Speaker: Wayne Hooper
  *Letters from a Confederate Soldier*
  Gilmer County Library - 2:00 p.m.
- Monday, January 17 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Please see message above regarding Research Fridays.

Merry Christmas N.Y.C. 1985( (Subway Art)
Keith Haring (1958-1990)

**February 2022**

- Wednesday, February 2 - Groundhog Day
- Monday, February 14 - Happy Valentine's Day!
- Saturday, February 19 - GCGSI Monthly Meeting
  Speaker: Karen A. Titus
  *How to Research Your Family Tree*
  Gilmer County Library - 2:00 p.m.
- Monday, February 21 - President's Day
- Please see message above regarding Research Fridays.

**This edition of *Mountain Heritage* is dedicated to the memory of**

**The father of members Rebecca Holt Amerson and Richard Holt:**
**Vernon Jasper Holt, Jr.**
**Mar. 27, 1927 - Sept. 25, 2021**

**The son of member Shirley Wells:**
**Greg Brant Wells**
**Dec. 26, 1972 - Nov. 14, 2021**

**The son of member Laurel Brenda Cochran and GCGSI member:**
**Michael Carlton Hardy**
**Oct. 16, 1963 - Nov. 18, 2021**

*Mountain Heritage Newsletter*
*Published by Barbara J. Dover*
*Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.*
*Publication Chair*

All members of the
Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.
are invited to our Holiday Gathering
and Installation of 2022 Officers
on Thursday, December 9, 2021.
This gathering will be held at the
Double L Restaurant at 12:00 noon, and
the meal will be Dutch Treat.
(The Double L Restaurant is a cafeteria-
style restaurant located in the Spring
Plaza at 448 Industrial Boulevard,
Suite 155; Ellijay, Georgia.)
Members are encouraged to wear masks
and observe social distancing where
possible.
Please RSVP to 706-514-8600 as soon as
possible if you plan to attend.

The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.
P. O. Box 919
Ellijay, GA 30540



The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.
P. O. Box 919
Ellijay, GA 30540
706-514-8600

**We're online!**
www.gcgsi.org
Contact email: gilmergenealogy@gmail.com

## What Is Available Online?

- GCGSI Membership
- First Families Application
- Genealogical Links
- Officers and Chairpersons
- Book Order Forms
- 1834 and 1840 Census
- Contact Information
- GCGSI Newsletters