

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE

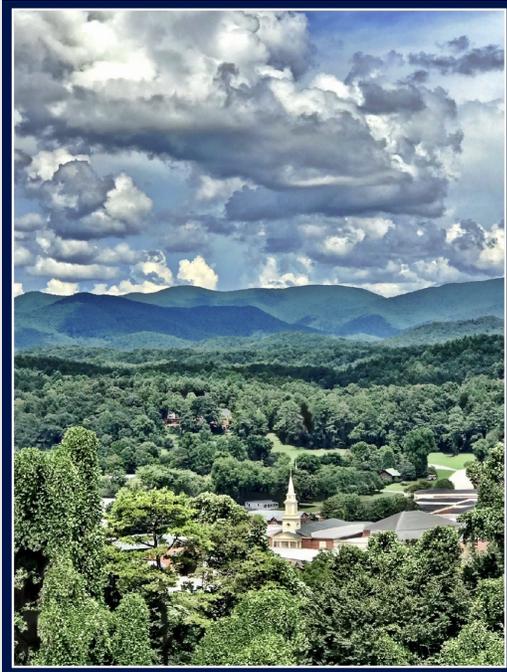
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This Appalachian Life

Barbara J. Dover, GCGSI Publication Chairperson



*Ellijay, Georgia - located in the Appalachian foothills
Image captured by Barbara J. Dover
from the Ellijay City Cemetery on July 25, 2020.*

Growing up in the foothills of the Appalachians, a lot of us just took things for granted. The scenery; the way we talked; the gardens behind peoples' houses, even some of the city folks'; the history; and the ways our parents and their parents lived their daily lives were all just normal things that became a part of our being. It's not that it wasn't interesting. It was. And is. It's not that it wasn't unique to other parts of the country and the world. It was. And is. It's not that with the myriad differences, there were not commonalities with other regions. There were. And are. But for most of us, it was all we knew.

We knew the joys of biting into a warm tomato right off the vine and having the juice run down our chin. We had helped weed that garden and carry rain water that we had previously collected in buckets from the roof the times that Mother Nature didn't see fit to provide.

We realized that we pronounced our words differently and didn't always use the same grammar that our English teacher said was proper. But almost everyone else did too, so that had to count for a lot.

We knew how to string beans, shuck corn, bait a hook, and cast a line. We knew that the fruits of our labor might even be our Sunday dinner. And after Sunday morning church and dinner, we would go for car rides on dusty back roads, looking up at the mountains surrounding us, wondering what it would be like to stand at the very top.

We knew some things about our area's geographic and cultural history as well as our personal family history; but we didn't understand until later, that although we might be proud of our ancestry, there were also things to be ashamed of. But we saw our parents and grandparents work hard at everything they did, providing for their families in the best way that they knew how, and wishing for the best lives for their kids and grandkids.

This was a big part of my own Appalachian life. In this edition of *Mountain Heritage*, we will explore some of the lifestyle and history of folks who called Appalachia their home.

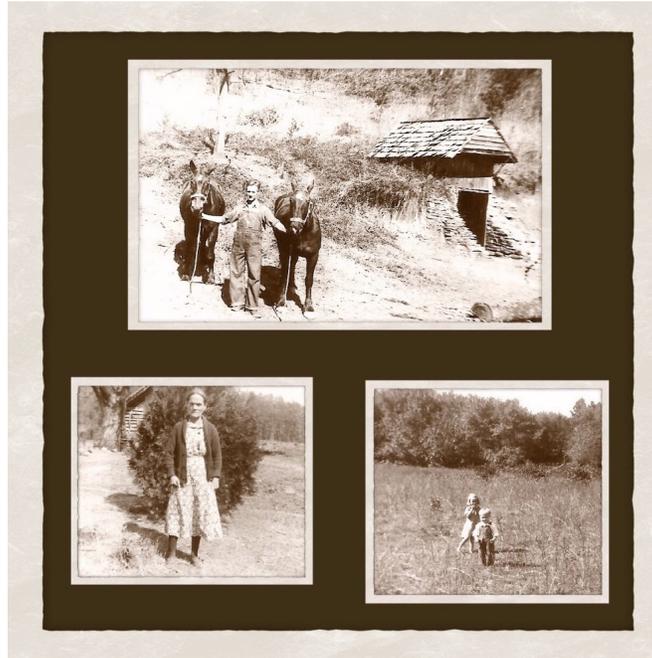


A Day in the Life of a Woman in Early Rural Appalachia



Gladys Dotson Spivey

Author's Note: This story is taken from my early childhood memories of my grandparents Ray and Emily Sanford Miller. Ray was born in 1895 and died in 1975. Emily was born in 1890 and died in 1976.



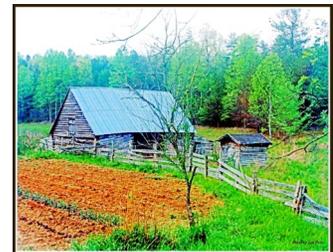
(Photos from the author's family collection.)

Clockwise from bottom left: Emily Sanford Miller; Ray Miller and the mules "Gee" and "Haw;" Gladys Dotson Spivey and brother Grady Dotson on the Miller farm.

A woman's day in early rural Appalachia starts before daylight. She restarts the fire in the fireplace to warm the house and to prepare the family breakfast. She does this by the light from a coal oil lamp and the light from the fireplace.

She places the bread in the cast iron Dutch oven, and places the pot in the hot coals along with a few potatoes to roast. Bacon goes into a large cast iron skillet. Water was heated in a cast iron kettle to make coffee and have ready to wash the dishes after breakfast.

When the sun is barely peeking over the mountains, with breakfast over and the dishes done, she is off to the barn to milk the cow and feed the animals. Then she heads back to the house to strain and



*Miller Garden, Barn, and Feed Room
(Photo: Jim Price)*



A Day in the Life of a Woman in Early Rural Appalachia
-continued-



An Appalachian Woman's Work Tools

prepare the milk so it could be placed in the spring house to keep cool for later use.

During the rest of the day she had other chores to do. Her day was full taking care of the children at home; cleaning the house; washing and ironing the clothing; sewing and repairing clothes for the family; cobbling or repairing shoes on the shoe last; piecing scraps of cloth and sewing them together for quilt tops; quilting the quilts for warmth in the winter. And that's not all. In addition to doing all the chores and taking care of the children, she made time to prepare three meals for the family: breakfast, dinner, and supper. The family always ate breakfast and supper together, and often had dinner together unless children were in school and the man of the house was at a workplace.



Granny Miller's Spinning Wheel

From the author: "Growing up in rural Gilmer County as a young child I remember my grandpa sheering the sheep and grandma cleaning the wool and spinning the wool into thread. I would stand by grandma, fascinated as she worked the spinning wheel. Grandma would let me help pick out the scraps of cloth she would use in her quilt tops."

If some of the children were school age, she would make sure they had done their homework each night, helping when she could. The next morning, she would pack up lunches and help them get all their things together before they made their walk to the schoolhouse. She did all this while often carrying a baby on her hip.

If the family had sheep, after the sheep were shorn in the spring, she spent time carding and cleaning the wool. Then she would dye the wool using walnut hulls, onion skins and other materials. Next was the job of spinning the wool on her spinning wheel into



A Day in the Life of a Woman in Early Rural Appalachia
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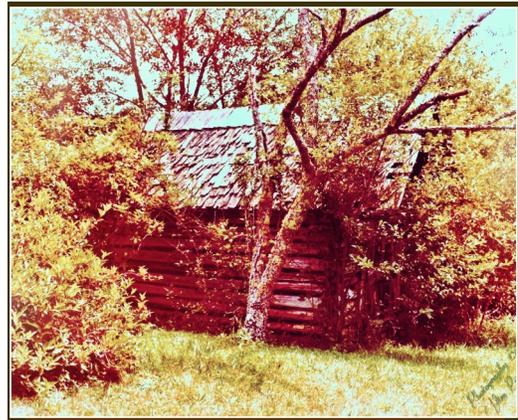
thread or yarn. When she had enough thread or yarn, she would use it for knitting socks and sweaters for the family.

In the summertime you would find her and the children in the garden planting potatoes and vegetables to be harvested for meals and preserved in the fall for use during the long cold winter months.

Sometimes, along with the vegetables, meals would include a piece of meat or pork from one of the farm's animals that had been butchered and then cured or smoked in the smokehouse. Usually the man of the house would take care of that chore, although the woman would often wring the neck and pluck the feathers from a chicken to fry up for Sunday dinner.

Faith was important in the life of an Appalachian woman. After a long hard week's work, on Sundays she would get the children ready and they would walk a mile or two to church. When a revival was held, they might make that walk every night of the week.

An Appalachian rural woman in the early years had a hard row to hoe, literally and figuratively. When people would say, "A woman's work is never done," they might very well have been referring to women in early rural Appalachia.



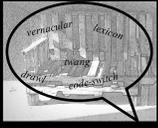
Grandpa Miller's Old Smokehouse

From the author: "Another memory I have is when grandpa killed the hog, I was going in the smoke house with him and watching him place the different parts of the hog on a long table and pouring salt all over the different parts of the hog. My question was why was he doing this? He would explain this was to preserve the meat and keep it from spoiling."

(Photo: Jim Price)



Old Miller Farmhouse built in 1849 by Peyton Ivey
(Photo: Jim Price)



Twang Talkin'



Barbara J. Dover

Call it “twang” or “drawl,” or git all fancy and call it “dialect” or “lexicon” or “colloquialisms” or “vernacular,” but y’uns from Appalachia know for certain what it is. It’s the unique, often discriminated against and/or treated as a lovely novelty, way of speaking by mountain folk. Some want to lose it, known as code-switching; some want to defiantly embrace it as part of their heritage; some want to use the “dumb hillbilly” stereotype to their advantage to outsmart the “smart,;” and some don’t care one way or t’other since they have never heard nor spoke different.



wikipedia.com

Legend has it that the Appalachian dialect is so odd and ancient that it is centuries behind the modern English-speaking world, so much so that people might could ask what country you were from. As a matter of fact, some say that the speech of the southern mountaineers is “pure Elizabethan English” just as Shakespeare would have spoken it. Some perpetuate the legend that the isolation of the mountain people helped to preserve speech that is the oldest living English dialect, older than Shakespeare’s and closer to the 14th century speech of Chaucer.

The legend further explains that the way of speaking results from the predominately Scots-Irish immigrants who settled in the Appalachians prior to the Revolutionary War. The U.S. Geological Survey lists 13 Appalachian provinces across the states, however, culturally speaking, the region ranges from northern Georgia as far north as Pennsylvania, encompassing West Virginia and everything between: portions of Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina and Kentucky. Residents who can trace their ancestry back to this area will have traces of this dialect in their speech, regardless of their economic, educational, or social background. Of these, residents found in more rural areas will have speech patterns and vocabulary even closer to the older dialect. Elements that are also found in music, such as pitch, intonation, melodic patterns, inflection, and rhythms, have traditional commonalities infused throughout the speech.

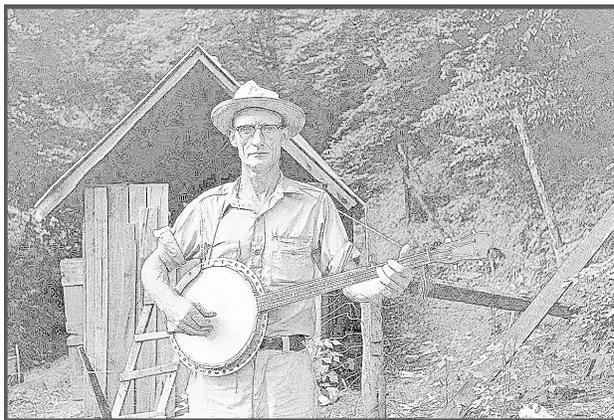


Twang Talkin'
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Although the legend is that Scots-Irish immigrants exclusively influenced Appalachian speech, the truth is that other immigrants' vernacular, especially that of African-Americans contributed as well. Nearly 10% of the population of Appalachia was African-American in 1860, so this cannot and should not be left out when describing the region's history, culture, and language. In such a widespread region, across so many different states, there isn't any one place or group that can represent the entirety of Appalachian culture or language. Appalachian speech itself varies from holler to holler. The myth of the self-sufficient white banjo-playin' moonshinin' mountaineer is deeply embedded in the American psyche, but it is just that, a myth.

Many have noticed strong similarities between white southern speech and African American Vernacular English or AAVE, although AAVE isn't necessarily tied to the south. But how did they come to be so similar? Although white southern speech has a Scots-Irish origin and shares some of unusual grammatical structures, it is also missing some of distinctive features. And although most linguists agree that AAVE originated from the same British dialects as white southern speech, some argue that there was some linguistic influence from an English-based creole formed when millions of Africans speaking many different languages were forced, through slavery, to communicate with each other.

It has been suggested that that the grammatical usage of zero copula, or the joining of subject to predicate without an auxiliary verb such as "is or are" is a characteristic sign of creole influence from AAVE. (Example: "He working now" instead of "He is working now.") But how did this feature get into white southern speech, especially if the grammar was inherited mostly intact from its Scots-Irish immigrants? It seems likely that while both dialects came from similar sources, AAVE had a significant impact on how the white southern speech evolved. (As a side note, it wasn't just Appalachian language that African Americans influenced, but other culture



Appalachian Musician Roscoe Holcomb
newyorker.com

as well. Just look at the introduction of the banjo into Appalachian music.) White southern speech could have adopted and assimilated certain features of AAVE through white children spending formative time with slave caregivers and their children. In a social context where white southerners and black southerners were closely interacting, many elements of African American Vernacular English, from grammar to accent, were likely to have been influences in development of this dialect.



Twang Talkin'
-continued-

Appalachian language is not just the grammatical usage, but also the way the words are formed when speaking. The physical production of words through fixed chins and half-closed mouths and the pulling of vowels, with the exception of “o,” to the middle of the mouth results in the unique pronunciation with the fracturing of vowels or the lengthening of words. For example, “bat” becomes “ba-it;” “cup” becomes “cu-up;” “what” becomes “wh-ut;” and “nice” becomes “nahce.” The “long u” sound is used in words like roof, school, and root; but the words “put” and “soot” often rhyme with “nut.” The Scottish influence on the letter “r” and its sound, although not rolled, is so dominant in mountain talk that it is often attached to the end of words like “tomato-mater,” “hollow”-“holler,” “potato-tater,” and “narrow-narrer.” The “r” is also often found inserted into words: “woman-womern” and “ruin-rurn.” Mountain folk do not sound the “g” in “-ing” endings. It’s not that they leave it off; they never added it. This is fortunate because the addition of the “g” sound has had a negative effect on the movement of speech and its melody. Instead of adding the “g” at the end of the word, the “a” is often added at the beginning: “a-fly’n” and “a-writ’n.” There are many more unique pronunciations, with several for the same word, and we have all heard them when Appalachians come together to chat.



Appalachian Storyteller Ray Hicks
wncmagazine.com

Along with the grammatical usage and pronunciation of words, there are the words themselves. Words used to describe items, words with different meanings from what might ordinarily be used, words that developed through different pronunciations and different grammatical usage, and words that were invented. These all combine to form the lexicon; their own regional vocabulary; words that you will hear when Appalachians come together. Here are a few of those words/expressions and their definitions/usages:

- poke - bag or sack - “I reckon I forgot my poke, so you’ll have to put my peas in your’n.”
- britches - trousers- “I reckon she needed a shoehorn to get into them britches.”
- sigogglin - lopsided or crooked - “That back wall sure is sigogglin.”
- jasper - a stranger - “That jasper takin’ the census just left.”
- peckerwood - stranger or someone up to no good - “I hid in the back room when that peckerwood from the guvmint come a-callin’.”
- boomer - red fox squirrel - “Did you see that boomer back there in the road?”
- sallet - salad, as in poke sallet, from the pokeweed not a bag - “Time to bile me up some poke sallet.”
- afeared - afraid - “I’m afeared I ate too much poke sallet.”
- fixin’ - getting ready - “Watch yore mouth! I’m fixin’ to go get me a switch!”



Twang Talkin'
-continued-

allow - suppose - "I'll allow I'll head over yonder now."
covered up - very busy - "I can't get to that job 'til Friday week. I'm plumb covered up!"
airish - breezy and chilly - "My dawg loves to go outside when it's airish."
yonder or yander- over there - "The swimmin' hole is over yonder."
dopes or Cokes- carbonated nonalcoholic beverages - "I'm puttin' peanuts in my dope."
plumb - absolutely - "Don is actin' plumb crazy!"
pert near - pretty much - "I'm pert near fed up with them lies!"
blinked - sour or spoiled - "That milk is so blinked, it's pert near buttermilk."
a coon's age - a long time - "I ain't seen you in a coon's age."
gom or gaum - mess- "Ever' time he cooks, he leaves goms ever'where."
reckon - suppose - "I reckon I'll mosey on home."
ate up - completely - "He is ate up with the dumb!"
y'uns, his'n, her'n - you ones, his own or his ones, her own or her ones - "Y'uns know this hyur book is his'n, an' that thair'n her'n."
might could/should - "We might should tell them that their horse jumped the fence."
like to/liketa - "I like to never got that old truck cranked."
done - "He done lost his mind."

Language has an important place in Appalachian mountain heritage and has continued to evolve from its original sources. Unfortunately, linguistic discrimination is the most socially acceptable form of discrimination in the United States, and the stereotypes of Appalachians as slow or stupid based on the way they speak needs to evolve as well. One way of changing these misperceptions based on dialect is showing that this unique linguistic quilt, created with many and varied stitches, is just one part of our Appalachian culture and heritage, and is something to be proud of and shared.

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*Appalachian Mountain Old Shed - Tom Reichsteiner
pixels.com*



“Still” Waters Run Deep



Janice Dover Watson



*Gilmer County, Georgia Moonshiners and Still
dig.galileo.usg.edu*

A feature on Appalachian life would be remiss without a brief history on the infamous industry of spirits from our region. Almost all civilizations in history have experimented and developed spirits unique to their region. Basically, anything that can be fermented can be made into alcoholic spirits by a process of fermentation, condensing, and capturing the condensed liquid alcohol, a process known as distilling. The apparatus used in this process is known as a still.

Scots-Irish immigrants from the province of Ulster in Ireland came to the New World and favored the highlands most like their homeland, (as fans of the books/series “Outlander* know). Many families settled in this area of the Blue Ridge and Appalachian Mountains and resumed their cultural craft of distilling. These spirits were almost universally poured at family gatherings and celebrations by the settlers of the region, and distilling was a craft perfected and passed down through the generations.

Corn whiskey soon emerged as the favorite spirit of the region when it became a more profitable product of the corn harvest than selling corn meal. In our area of Gilmer County, apple brandy became the stuff of white liquor lore. We're “Apple Country,” after all. These early distillers were largely accepted as valuable members of society until around the time of the Civil War, 1861-1865, when the U.S. Congress levied a “luxury tax” on alcohol and tobacco to attempt to balance the budget.



"Still" Waters Run Deep
-continued-

Many returning soldiers from the Civil War, often small farmers, then began distilling their spirits covertly, not because it was illegal; but to avoid paying the taxes, which was. This was usually done at night, by the light of the moon, and these distillers came to be known as "moonshiners" and the alcohol as "moonshine." These hidden stills were often near a clear mountain stream as a water source, with elaborate pipe systems to transport the water.

In the 1870's the "moonshine wars" between the moonshiners and tax collectors, also known as revenuers, began in North Georgia and elsewhere in Appalachia. Even the Ku Klux Klan joined the moonshiners to fight the tax.



The resulting family chaos and alcoholism due to the mass consumption of 100-proof alcohol spawned the temperance movement of the 1880's, led primarily by evangelists, women, and journalists. Many during this period came to support this movement hoping to discourage alcohol consumption and encourage family peace and a moral society. A Prohibitionist Period was enacted from 1920 to 1933 where the production, transportation, and consumption of alcohol was illegal. Of course, this didn't stop these practices, it just became illegal.

During this time of Prohibition, distillers moved from being respected members of society to often violent criminals. From the mountains of Dawson County, millions of gallons of moonshine were transported to Atlanta, with other mountain counties such as Lumpkin, Pickens, and Gilmer following suit.

These outlaws engaged in a game of cat and mouse with the revenuers, ingeniously adapting their cars, often 1940 Fords, into high performance vehicles, the precursor to the modern sport of stock car racing, NASCAR.

In other efforts to evade detection, some lowlanders who had stills in outbuildings or barns, modified their shoes to mimic cows' hooves so footprints wouldn't be detected in the fields.





"Still" Waters Run Deep
-continued-

Not all of those who produced moonshine were distilling and selling their spirits while running from the revenuers. Some just created enough for their families to keep in quart or half gallon Ball Mason jars to use "for medicinal purposes." In a case of art imitating life, a popular television series of my youth portrayed a couple of sweet little old ladies making their Daddy's "recipe." I suspect these family-operated stills were quite common throughout our history, and are still found today.

Currently some descendants of these early moonshiners have private legal distilleries, making quality liquors, and paying taxes. They have become part of our area's Agritourism Industry, and in doing so, continue to preserve the craft and folklore of distilling for future Appalachian generations.



A Revenuer's Diary



A
REVENUER'S
DIARY
Gilmer
County,
Georgia
Cagle

For another side of the moonshine industry in the Southern Appalachians, GCGSI has reproduced digital copies of the out-of-print book **A Revenuer's Diary** by Warren G. Cagle, a former investigator for ATF. This book is a compilation of witness and daily reports from Cherokee, Pickens, Murray, and Gilmer Counties from 1954-1959. Digital copies are available in either c.d. or flash drive format, and you can find a mail order form for this and other books at gcgis.org.

Jasper, Georgia
March 25, 1955
Warren G. Cagle, Investigator

8:00 AM 9:30 AM Attending office duties.

9:30 AM 10:00 AM Departed Jasper, Georgia in Government auto #2785 in company with Investigator D.L. Floyd and State Revenue Agents William Hughes, Roy Stauch and Hubert Wehant. Proceeded to Gilmer County where we were joined by State Revenue Agent Ben Wilbanks. We then served a demand letter to Garland Cochran, President of Ellijay Feed and Supply Company.

10:00 AM 9:00 PM On distillery investigation at a location six miles south of Ellijay in Gilmer County. At 1:20 PM we seized one illicit distillery and arrested Horace Monroe Teems. We destroyed the following: 1 65 gallon cu. still, 1 cu. cap, 1 heater, 1 radiator condenser, 1 furnace, 1 heater box, 1 flake stand, 10 220 gallon HH fermenters, 2450 gallon mash, 22 cases 1/2 gallon Ball jars, 1 50 gallon whiskey 5 gallon non-tax-paid whiskey, buckets and tools

Thence to the Tate Mountain section of Pickens County, where we located and destroyed a reported distillery, ten miles north east of Jasper, Georgia at 5 PM. We arrested J.B. Bearden and Max Lanier Swofford and destroyed the following:
1 10 HP upright boiler 1 120 gallon bl. still, 1 100 gallon steel still, 1 220 gallon heater box, 1 cu. heater, 1 radiator condenser, 18 220 gallon HH fermenters, 2420 gallon mash, 1 50 gallon whiskey bl. 46 cases 1/2 gallon Ball jars, 197 gallon non-tax-paid whiskey, 25 bags coke, 1 1941 1/2 ton Ford truck, motor number defaced, 1955 Georgia license # A/P 10656, containing 31 cases non-tax paid whiskey. Horace Monroe Teems, J.B. Bearden and Max Lanier Swofford were arraigned before U.S. Commissioner R.M. Edge in Jasper, Georgia and were released on \$300.00 bond each, pending action of U.S. District Court in Atlanta, Georgia.

United States of America
vs.
Wesley J. Grizzle
and
Ed Colley
March 24, 1955
Witness Statement of Warren G. Cagle

On Monday, March 21, 1955, about 4:00 PM, Investigator Duff L. Floyd, State Revenue Agents Roy Stauch and Ben Wilbanks and I seized and destroyed an illicit distillery, and arrested Ed Colley at a location about ten miles south west of Ellijay in Gilmer County, Georgia.

At approximately 3:30 PM, the above named officers and I arrived in the vicinity of this distillery. I was assigned a local investigation, and while engaged in it, the other officers located and raided the distillery. They arrested Ed Colley at that time. Wesley J. Grizzle was recognized in the distillery, however, he made good his escape.

Investigator Floyd drove to my position, about four hundred yards from the distillery, and told me to proceed to a position where I might possibly apprehend Wesley J. Grizzle. I was unable to locate him. I then proceeded to the distillery and assisted in its destruction, consisting of the following: 1 65 gallon sheet metal still, 1 furnace, 1 heater box, 1 flake stand, 1320 gallons mash, 1 bushel corn, 1/2 bushel corn meal, buckets and tools.

On the date of his arrest, Ed Colley was arraigned before U.S. Commissioner R.M. Edge at Jasper, Georgia, and was retained in jail pending the posting of \$300.00 bond.

On March 24, 1955, Wesley J. Grizzle was arrested and arraigned before U.S. Commissioner R.M. Edge at Jasper, Georgia, who he was released on \$500.00 bond pending action of the United States District Court, Atlanta, Georgia.

Warren G. Cagle, Investigator
Alcohol and Tobacco Tax

A
REVENUER'S
DIARY
Gilmer
County,
Georgia
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Mountain Menu



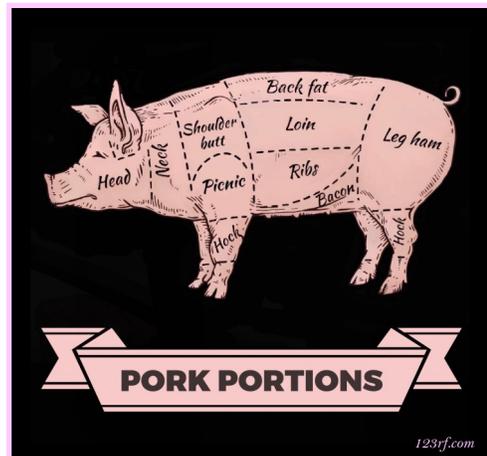
Barbara J. Dover

Traditional mountain food tends to be simple and hearty. Most of what was eaten in the early days was grown by the same ones preparing it for daily meals. Long rows in gardens provided vegetables; farm animals provided meat, poultry, and milk; fruit trees gave sweetness during or at the end of a meal; and even breads were often made from ground dried corn from the garden. Vegetables and fruits were either “put up,” dried, pickled, and stored in root cellars or under the dirt to be eaten after the garden was done for the season. Curing or smoking the butchered meat allowed it to be preserved for multiple meals. In the winter, tables were spread with these foods along with winter greens that were planted to grow in the cold.



When snow was on the ground, you might walk into the house and find the oak table groaning with a steaming pot of dried beans or “leatherbritches/shuck beans” and another pot of collard greens, both seasoned with pork from the smoke house; some boiled potatoes; a pone of golden cornbread; a pitcher of milk; a pot of coffee; and some fried apple pies. And if you weren’t careful, you might also end up groaning from overeating.

In these early days, not only was transportation to supermarkets over rocky and treacherous mountain roads difficult, but there were no supermarkets. Nearby farmers might barter for or even sell meat and produce to their neighbors; but when there was plentiful bounty from the garden, they would share without hesitation, knowing that the neighbor would do the same if the situation was reversed. And occasionally if there was a way to make it up into the holler, the rolling store in the form of a horse-drawn wagon would come along bringing food staples and other necessities. Meals tended to be repetitious, but mountain folk took pride in filling a table with foods for their regular evening meals and for special occasions. They believed that food should never be wasted and that every part of a fruit or vegetable should be used. Apple peelings were boiled down for apple butter. Pumpkin seeds were dried, salted and baked to use in cakes or as snacks. Every part of the pig was utilized. Chitterlings or “chitlins” (pig intestines) and fatback would be fried up in cast-iron pans. Pickled pigs’ feet were sold in the





Mountain Menu
-continued-

general stores. At breakfast time, hominy grits would be warmed up daily in pots on the woodstove. Dried apple slices would simmer in butter churned from cream separated from their own cow's milk. Kernels of field corn would be parched and given as snacks for children. Ground dried corn would be mixed up for a pone of cornbread, the batter poured in heavy skillets and baked in the tiny oven of the woodstove or over the fire in the fireplace.

When special times rolled around, simple foods were dressed up for the occasion. A salted ham that had been saved in the smokehouse was brought out with pride, and several bowls of steaming vegetables were presented. At Christmas time, oranges and nuts were special treats found in stockings hung above the fireplace; and many times these same oranges became a tasty dessert, eaten slowly at the end of the meal. Even the orange peelings were munched or used to spice up a pot of cooked fruit—an old mountain name for applesauce. A bowl of cooked fruit, boiled or fried, was found on the table for most meals, especially if pork was served.

Although things have changed since those early times, today's mountain menu still includes the same entrees and desserts. The preparation and some of the ingredients might have changed a bit for better health benefits. Olive oil might replace bacon grease in the green beans; kale and chard might be added to collard greens; green tea instead of whole milk might be the drink used to wash it all down. If meat is eaten, most is bought already butchered; and the refrigerator and freezer have all but replaced the smokehouse. But the garden is still a large part of the home place's acreage; and its harvest, either fresh or preserved, still finds its place in the center of the old oak table that Grandma used. Sustainable and renewable are words that are used today to describe the "waste not, want not" of years past. And good hearty simple food continues to be found on the tables and in the stomachs of all mountain folk.





Mountain Menu
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Shuck Beans or Leatherbritches
Gladys Dotson Spivey

Pick green bean pods that have beans inside the green pod. Take the stem and tail off the pod. Then string the beans on a thread and hang the strings of beans in a dry place until they are dry and they rattle when touched.

When they were ready to cook, this is the way my Granny Miller and mom would cook their leatherbritches. They would wash the beans and place in a pot with a piece of fatback and cover with water and cook for two or three hours adding water to beans as needed. Sometimes they would add onion or a pod of hot pepper. The beans were eaten along with corn pone and mashed taters.



Pickled Okra
Barbara J. Dover

Ingredients:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 3 pounds 2.5- to 3-inch okra pods | 3 cups white vinegar (5% acidity) |
| 1/3 cup canning and pickling salt | 2 teaspoons dill seeds |
| 5 garlic cloves, peeled | 3 small halved hot peppers (optional) |

Directions:

1. Sterilize jars and prepare lids. While jars are boiling, wash okra and trim stems, leaving caps intact. Combine vinegar, salt, dill seeds, and 3 cups water in large stainless steel pot. Bring to a boil.
2. Place 1 garlic clove and 1 pepper half, if desired, in each hot jar. Pack okra pods tightly in jars, placing some stem end down and some stem end up. Leave 1/2 inch headspace.
3. Seal with lids and bands and process jars for 10 minutes. Remove jars from water and let stand undisturbed at room temperature for 24 hours. Listen for the pop. When cool to touch, check seals by pressing in the center of the lid. If it pops up, the jar isn't sealed so you can try processing again or refrigerate and eat within a week. Store properly sealed jars in a cool dark place for up to 1 year. Refrigerate after opening.





Mountain Menu
-continued-

Buttermilk Biscuits

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting the work surface
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon baking powder, aluminum-free
- 1 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 6 tablespoons leaf lard, very cold
- 1 cup buttermilk, very cold

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F.
2. Whisk together dry ingredients (flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt) in a large bowl until well combined. Add the cold lard into the dry ingredients and cut it into the flour using a pastry cutter or a fork until it resembles coarse meal.
3. Make a well in the mixture and add the cold buttermilk, stirring with a spoon or rubber spatula a few turns, JUST until combined. Dough will be wet and sticky.
4. Turn dough out on a lightly floured surface. With floured hands gently pat out the dough until it's about a 1/2 inch thick. Do NOT roll with a rolling pin! Fold the dough in half and turn 90 degrees. Pat and fold again. Do this process about 6 times to create layers in the dough and flakiness in the baked biscuit.
5. Gently pat the dough out to a 1-inch thickness. Use a round cutter to cut into rounds. (The size of the cutter will determine how many biscuits you end up with.) Gently pat the scraps together to cut out the rest of your biscuits.
6. Place the biscuits close together in an ungreased cast iron skillet. Bake at 450 degrees F for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Keep an eye on them but do NOT open the oven door for at least the first half of baking time. You want to keep the steam in the oven to help with the rise. Remove from oven. Serve with sawmill gravy, creamy butter, or muscadine jelly.



Sawmill Gravy
Gladys Dotson Spivey

In skillet where bacon or sausage was fried, add some corn meal. Stir and cook on low heat until meal starts to brown. Add milk. Cook and stir until the desired thickness. Eat with bacon or sausage and hot buttermilk biscuit.

Blackberry Cobbler

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons melted butter, divided
- 1 cup self-rising flour
- 1 1/2 cups sugar, divided
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 cups fresh blackberries or frozen unsweetened blackberries

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Pour 1/2 cup melted butter into an 8-inch square baking dish.
3. In a small bowl, combine flour, 1 cup sugar, milk, and vanilla until blended. Pour into prepared dish.
4. In another bowl, combine blackberries, remaining 1/2 cup sugar, and remaining 2 tablespoons melted butter. Toss until combined. Spoon over batter.
5. Bake 45-50 minutes until topping is golden brown and fruit is tender.
6. Serve warm, with or without a scoop of vanilla ice cream.





First Families of Gilmer County Georgia

Gladys Dotson Spivey, First Families Chairperson

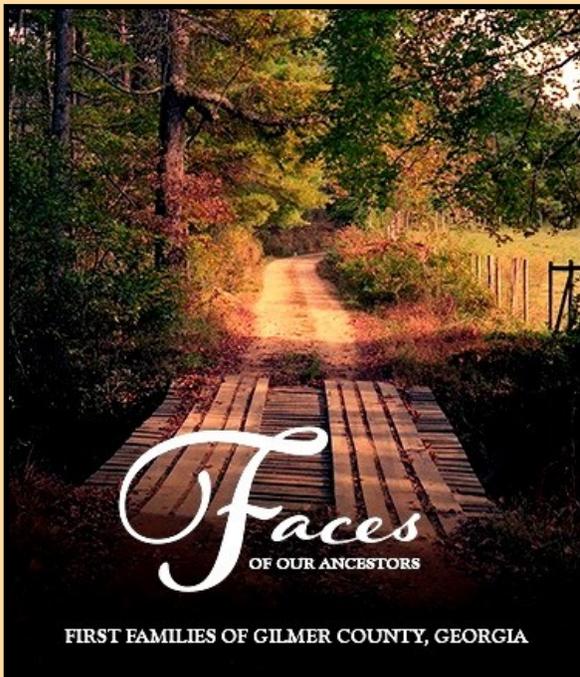
The First Families program is designed to honor those pioneers who settled in Gilmer County in 1840 or before, and to recognize their descendants upon becoming members of this program. We encourage anyone who is directly descended from early settlers whose names appear on the 1840 or any prior Gilmer County Census to apply. Discovering your Gilmer County roots can be challenging and exciting; and your research can serve as a source of information for generations to come. An approved applicant receives a certificate and pin acknowledging this Gilmer County ancestor. Come and join our 228 descendants who are currently members of First Families of Gilmer County! Applicants are not required to currently reside in Gilmer County. For more information, please visit our website at: <http://www.gcgisi.org/firstfamilies.html>.



First Family Members Added During The First Quarter Of 2021

New Members	Ancestors
Pat Foster	Benjamin Chastain
Karen Spivey Crider	Abraham Darly Pence
Caylee Spivey	Samuel J. Thompson
Philip Spivey	Samuel J. Thompson
Thomas Spivey	Samuel J. Thompson
Charlie Harper Watson-Trefry	Nicholas Robert Osborn

Faces of Our Ancestors: First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia



The latest publication from The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc., ***Faces of Our Ancestors: First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia***, was released in December of 2019 with an exciting Book Reveal Party at the Gilmer County Library. A whopping 800+ pages, it is a lasting heirloom of contributed stories, photographs, and family trees from descendants of the original pioneers of Gilmer County. The creation of these families' legacies is a testament not only to those ancestors and their descendants, but to all of North Georgia and beyond. This beautiful hardbound book is available at Walls of Books in East Ellijay, Georgia, and via mail order.

See www.gcgisi.org for the mail order form for this and other GCGSI publications.



BULLETIN BOARD

**All GCGSI activities are cancelled until notified otherwise.
Please take care and stay healthy!**

March 2021

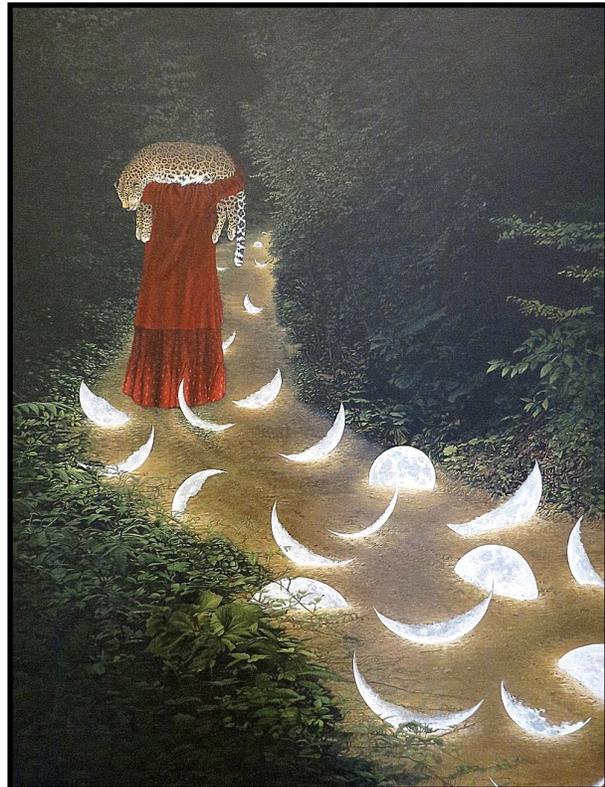
- Sunday, March 14 - Daylight Saving Time Begins
- Wednesday, March 17 - St. Patrick's Day
- Saturday, March 27 - Passover
- Sunday, March 28 - Palm Sunday
- Research Fridays
Gilmer Family Research Center Volunteers
Gilmer County Library
Cancelled due to COVID-19

April 2021

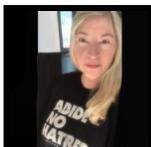
- Thursday, April 1 - April Fool's Day
- Friday, April 2 - Good Friday
- Sunday, April 4 - Easter
- Thursday, April 22 - Earth Day
- Research Fridays
Gilmer Family Research Center Volunteers
Gilmer County Library
Cancelled due to COVID-19

May 2021

- Sunday, May 9 - Mother's Day
- Monday, May 31 - Memorial Day
- Research Fridays
Gilmer Family Research Center Volunteers
Gilmer County Library
Cancelled due to COVID-19



The Moon Falls a Thousand Times, 2019
Naehmeh Naeemaei (1984-)



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

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

GCGSI and First Families Founder
Betty Sue Abernathy Riddle (1930-2021)

First Family Members
Ruth Hyatt Caudell (1937-2021)
Mildred Spivey Corbin ((1942-2021)

and the son of First Family Member
Charlotte Tanner Davis
Mark D. Watkins (1963-2021)



Betty Sue Abernathy Riddle (1930-2021)



Philip and Betty Riddle
(Photo provided by Gladys Spivey.)

Betty Sue Abernathy Riddle, a founding member of the Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc., passed away at her home on Friday, February 19. Although Ms. Riddle lived in Jasper and her parents married and lived in Cherokee County, she had roots in Gilmer County. Her maternal grandparents George and Nancy (Winters) Frady lived in the Buckhorn Church Community; and her paternal grandparents Jim and Rachel (Scott) Abernathy lived in the New Hope Church Community. However, at the turn of the century, both sets of grandparents joined the exodus from Gilmer to Cherokee County to work in the cotton mills built by R. T. Jones. Dellie (Del) Frady met and married James Arthur Abernathy in Cherokee County, and they had three daughters. Betty Sue Abernathy was the middle daughter, and she met and married Philip George Riddle in Cobb County. She and Philip had 4 children: twins Dana and David, Scott, and Nanette, and made their home in Pickens County.

Betty Riddle was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and a founding member of the Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc. She loved to talk genealogy and was proud of her contribution to the society's origin. Betty wrote her own genealogy and the story of the society's beginnings in a two-part feature of the GCGSI Member Spotlight. It may be found in the March 2019 and June 2019 editions of the society's quarterly newsletter *Mountain Heritage*. (<http://www.gcgsi.org/newsletters.html>). A condensed version of Part 2 of the feature is shared in this memorial.



(Photo of Betty Riddle provided by Gladys Spivey.)



Betty Sue Abernathy Riddle (1930-2021)

-continued-

In February of 1995, Dora Parks, five people from Chatsworth, a court official, Kathryn and Mike Watkins, and Betty and Phil Riddle braved a recent snowstorm and met in a small room of the Gilmer County Courthouse to discuss the publication of the book **The Heritage of Gilmer County, 1832-1996**, a book about the history, heritage, and genealogy of the families of Gilmer County. Interest for the project grew and more members joined the group as they began to meet monthly at The Gilmer County Library, located on Dalton Street at that time. Officers were appointed and committees were formed, a workshop was held in August, and by October a countdown to the final deadline began. In December, the meeting location moved to the main courtroom of the courthouse, and by this time, hundreds of family histories and photos had been submitted.

The final meeting before publication of **The Heritage of Gilmer County, 1832-1996** was January 8, 1996, and the color purple was selected for the book cover in honor of Gilmer High School's school color. The deadline for all submissions was January 17, and boxes full of the individual folders containing proofread stories with photos were sent to the publisher. An informational meeting was held at the courthouse on February 9, 1996, and all that was left to do since the project began was to wait for the finished book to be delivered to the library for pickup of pre-paid orders.



*Founders of GCGSI and First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia Betty Riddle and Shirley Sluder
(Photo provided by Gladys Spivey.)*

The frontispiece of **The Heritage of Gilmer County, 1832-1996** recognized those that had worked diligently on the project. Shirley Sluder, Merle Weaver, George and Evelyne Canup, Morris Parks, Lamar Partridge, Betty Riddle, Kathryn Watkins, Edgar and Jerrie Marie Crump, Dr. Jim and Sonya Burleson, Gail Freundt, Estelle Wall, and Earl Cagle were pictured.



Betty Sue Abernathy Riddle (1930-2021)

-continued-

While working on the book, discussions were held about organizing a genealogical society, so in the Spring of 1995, the Gilmer County Genealogical Society was formed and regular monthly meetings were scheduled for the second Thursday at 2:00 p.m. in the library. A charter from the state was received, officers elected, and by-laws approved. The first officers were Lamar Partridge, President; Morris Parks, Vice-President; and Shirley Sluder, Treasurer. Betty Riddle served on the GCGSI Board in various capacities and worked to make the organization more visible in the community by participating in events such as the Gilmer County Fair and local parades. Under her leadership, a float was entered in three local parades, winning prizes and trophies.



(Photo from June 2014 edition of Mountain Heritage)

In 2012, Betty Riddle, Eurilla Hyatt, and Shirley Sluder created the First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia, a stand-alone organization under the umbrella of the Gilmer County Genealogical Society. This organization recognizes descendants of the early ancestors of Gilmer County as found on the 1840 census or earlier. Applicants are required to provide documented proof of their ancestry and upon approval are awarded membership into the organization with a certificate and a commemorative pin. Within the first year, 78 descendants qualified as charter members.

Ms. Riddle said of the Gilmer County Genealogical Society, “We were like family. We grieved when members were taken from us; we rejoiced at births and weddings; and we celebrated each other’s successes.” She will be missed.

Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc. members remember Betty:

Former GCGSI President Sylvia Johnson writes, “*A few years back, we wanted to publish more copies of **The Revenuer’s Diary** as we were often asked about it. It was realized that we did not have a master copy of the book, so Betty retyped the entire book very efficiently. We took advance orders for \$50 and printed additional copies.*”

Glenda Garland shares, “*I have such happy and warm memories of Betty. I worked at the library from 1989-2011 and met her through the GCGSI founding members group. They had just gotten together and were making plans for the **Heritage** book. This was back in the early 1990’s when the library was on Dalton Street and they used the library board room to edit and work on getting the book ready for publication. The genealogy collection was part of my job, and I got to know all of the members well; they worked so hard to preserve county records and many other projects. There’s no way to estimate the hours Betty spent indexing old records and putting them into a format that could be used. Bear in mind, a lot of what she did was done by hand; this was prior to our access of online records and databases. Such a fine lady, always*



Betty Sue Abernathy Riddle (1930-2021)
-continued-

warm and friendly, provided ‘appreciation lunches’ to the library staff and the annual picnic! At one time, Betty collected pig figurines, and I would find them in the thrift store for her. I enjoyed knowing her. My condolences to her family.”

Barbara J. Dover remembers, “Although I never did get to meet Betty face-to-face, we spoke on the phone several times when she was preparing her autobiographical information for the March and June 2019 editions of the GCGSI newsletter. She was a fountain of knowledge about Gilmer County in general and the society in particular. In addition to the information in her printed autobiography, she told me about how she and others tried to save



Luan-Themed Gilmer County Library Appreciation Luncheon at Dalton Street Location
(L to R:) Ben and Joyce Whitaker; Sheila Clayton; Hilda Parks; Shirley Sluder; Rebecca Burrell; Betty Riddle
(Photo provided by Rebecca Burrell.)

as many records as they could from the basement of the old courthouse before it was demolished it in 2008. I remember her saying that she had heard when they tore it down that there were thousands of papers from there just flying in the breeze. In our telephone conversations, we discussed our Gilmer County ancestry and when she mailed me her stories for the newsletter, she surprised me with a copy of a record, along with a typed transcript, from when her grandfather James Abernathy was ordained as a minister at New Hope Church in 1920. This record was in the handwriting of my Great Great Grandfather, Rev. Jason Gordon (J. G.) Dover, as the moderator and member of the ordination counsel. It was simply marked with a sticky note, ‘For you.’ This was a perfect example of her generosity and her ability to make genealogical connections with folks whose roots are in Gilmer County.”

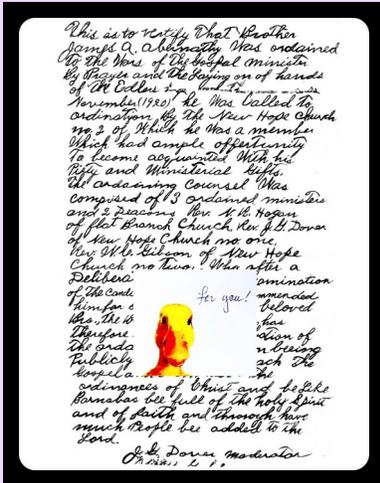


Photo provided by Barbara J. Dover.

Gladys Dotson Spivey recalls, “I met Betty in 2010 when I joined GCGSI. She was one of those persons you liked immediately. When she came to the GCGSI meeting, she came down the hall with a big smile on her face. She always brought a list of books she had ordered for the research room. Over the years we would call each other and talk about our Gilmer County roots. Betty was proud of her heritage. Sometimes we talked about our grannies. She said she remembered her granny’s tea cakes that she would put in a cloth bag and hang on a nail by the wash stand so the grandkids could get the teacakes. My own memory I told her was of my granny’s peanut butter biscuits. One of the last times I spoke to Betty, we were still talking about our Gilmer Heritage.”



GCGSI Annual Picnic
(L to R:) Parks Hill; Betty and Phil Riddle
(Photo provided by Rebecca Burrell.)



Betty Sue Abernathy Riddle (1930-2021)
-continued-

Brenda Cochran said, “Betty Riddle and I have been friends for many years and I will miss her very much. Betty always wore a smile, had a positive air about her, and was ever helpful. I met her through the Gilmer County Genealogical Society. Betty started the First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia program which led to the publication of our 2019 book **Faces of Our Ancestors**. The preface of the book reads, ‘In 1986, the State of Georgia was the sixth state to start the First Families Program. In 2012, under the leadership of Betty Riddle, Chair, a committee was founded to begin the First Families program of Gilmer County, Georgia. The program’s purpose is to honor the pioneers who were settled in Gilmer County in 1840 or before and to recognize descendants who become members of this program.’ Gilmer County now has hundreds of members in the First Families Program.



2016 Presentation of Certificates of Appreciation for Founding of First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia Program (L to R.) Former GCGSI President Karen Titus; Betty Riddle; Shirley Sluder (Photo provided by Gladys Spivey.)



Award-winning GCGSI Parade Float (Photo provided by Rebecca Burrell.)

From Rebecca Burrell, “When I first joined GCGSI, Betty was the Event Chairperson. She organized some great events such as the library appreciation luncheon, planning a theme with appropriate decor and foods. She also planned the installation of officers at the Christmas party. When we participated in local parades, Betty was in charge of our floats. We won many trophies in these parades. She was so knowledgeable of the genealogy of this area’s families and was instrumental in the publication of the books that we published. She was a very big part of the organization from the beginning and will be greatly missed.”



2016 GCGSI 20th Anniversary Picnic Honoring Founding Members (L to R) Kathryn Watkins; Betty Riddle; Anita Summers; Glenda Garland; Jerri Marie Crump (Photo provided by Rebecca Burrell.)

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

