

A Local History of the Land at and Surrounding Earthaven

Because of County Line changes throughout the past 150 years, particularly where McDowell, Buncombe and Rutherford meet, this area has been mostly forgotten in local history books. We were left out of Rutherford History, because we are now Buncombe, and for about 100 years, we were McDowell.

Thrisa Murphy
7/26/2011

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Land History

Formation of counties in North Carolina

The counties were formed as folks moved westward...Rutherford Co., was created in 1779 from the larger Burke & the old Tryon County. It consisted of all the area west of the old Mecklenburg Co. and "west" to the present state boundary.

In 1778, Lincoln was created from the old Tryon Co.

In 1779, part of Rutherford was created from Rowan & Tryon was discontinued.

In 1791, part of Buncombe was created from, Burke & Rutherford

In 1841, Cleveland was created from part of Lincoln & Rutherford

In 1842, McDowell was created from part of Burke & Rutherford.

In 1855, Polk was created from part of Henderson & Rutherford

The Rutherford County Courthouse burned in 1857 so many records were lost.

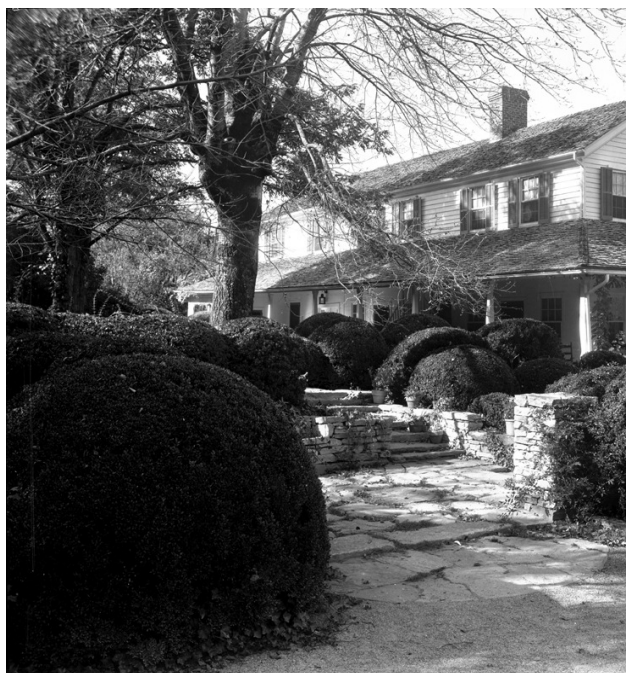
Note: From the late 1700's into the early 1900's "Another Way Road" was a well traveled route. It continued past Earthaven in a SE direction and connected with Buffalo Road and then to Cedar Creek Road on to Rutherfordton, the county seat. There was no road to Old Fort, as McDowell County was not formed until 1843. This explains why the Elliott family ran a saw mill on Taylor Creek, and less than 500 feet downstream, the Gilbert family ran a blacksmith shop. There was also a grain mill on Three Creeks. The Gilberts lived at the Taylor Creek ~ Sonkey Branch confluence from around 1870 to 1919 or so, and have written about numerous visitors. Aunt Mamie Elliott (wife of Uncle Johnson (Jonse) Elliott) told me that the state stopped maintenance of the road after WWII.

- The early settlers of Rutherford County were of Scots-Irish origin. Most traveled down the Great Wagon Road that ran from Pennsylvania into North Carolina.
- The area was rich: fertile land, plenty of virgin forest pine, plenty of hardwood, and plenty of wild game for food.
- The first census of the county in 1790 listed 1,136 heads of household. In 1800 the census showed Rutherford County had a 2,945 gain in population.
- Until the mid 1800's the best way of travel was by water on the First Broad, Second Broad and Green Rivers. These waterways were used to transport farm products to market at Columbia, South Carolina. The men who lived along these streams, were required to see that they were kept open for the passage of small boats.

- In 1829 the General Assembly appropriated \$12,500 to complete a road through Hickory Nut Gap (Bat Cave) to Asheville, because by this time the stage line began operating. It was called the Drovers Road and somewhat followed the current Highway 74 through that area. The Sherrill's Inn is on that route and is the site of the oldest remaining building in Buncombe County.
- Rutherford County was the center of the gold production within the United States. The Bechtler Mint was the only private gold mint ever operated in the southeastern United States and was the first mint to coin a gold dollar. You can view one at the Minerals Museum in Spruce Pine, NC.
- The first newspaper, published in Rutherford County, was on January 19, 1830. This paper was called "The North Carolina Spectator and Western Advertiser."
- The Overmountain soldiers marched through Rutherford County on October 3-5, 1780 on their way to meet Major Ferguson at the Battle of Kings Mountain. This battle took place October 7, 1780, and was the turning point of the war.
- Gilbert Town, named for William Gilbert, served as the first county seat from 1779 to 1787.
- In September 1787, fifty (50) acres of land was purchased for the new county seat, with the name of Rutherford Town.
- Rutherford County was named for Brigadier General Griffith Rutherford of Rowan County, NC, a famous Revolutionary War soldier. He also lead the 'Expedition against the Cherokee' in 1776. They burned villages, and crops of every Cherokee village from Cathey's Fort in McDowell County to Tennessee, as they traveled down the Catawba River

Most activity took place on the farm: planting of grain, raising cattle, chickens, pigs and sheep, as well as growing food for the table. Each home had its own loom, spinning flax and cotton into cloth for clothes and linens. Each community had its own potters, shoemakers, carpenters, etc. Skins from animals were tanned; furs from wild animals were secured to provide additional clothing. The pioneer homes, the furniture and furnishings were built from the surrounding forest. The plantations and farms were generally small. Land could be bought for a nominal fee paid to the state for a grant. Each land owner worked the land, sometimes assisted by a slave or two. In the mid 1800's, the farmer drove stock and took surplus agricultural products to Charleston, South Carolina, where they could then buy staple products to take back home.

Notes: Sherrill's Inn and the Drovers Road:



The Sherrill's Inn located in Fairview, Buncombe County, NC

Sherrill's Inn was established in 1834 to serve travelers crossing Hickory Nut Gap over the Drovers Road. It was in continuous service until 1909.

Before 1800, a log fort was built there, as a precaution against Indian attack, before any settlement was made in the valley. This "block house" still stands in the court yard behind the main house, having been used as a smoke house for many years. In 1806 a house was built..

Bedford Sherrill purchased land and the existing house in 1834. He then enlarged the house and added other outbuildings to support a store. Sherrill was able to secure the local stagecoach stop. Visitors to Sherrill's inn ranged from tourists to farmers driving herds of livestock southward. To accommodate the "drovers" and their herds, Sherrill sold feed and supplies to the farmers.

Some of the early guests at the Inn arrived by stagecoach. These were the old-fashioned Albany coaches, and the horses were changed about every 8 miles. They carried nine passengers inside and had room for the driver and others on top. The driver used to blow his horn some distance before reaching Sherrill's Inn to indicate how many passengers he was carrying, so the family would know how many guests to prepare for. When the coach arrived, Mr. Sherrill would go out and offer apple brandy to the weary passengers. His black boy would take the horses to the barn and the guests would be shown to their rooms.

In late fall, farmers gathered their hogs, cattle, horses, mules, turkeys, or ducks for the trip to markets in Charleston, South Carolina and Augusta, Georgia. From the early 1800s until about 1885 great herds of stock were headed down the Drovers Road. It is estimated that 150,000 to 175,000 hogs passed through each October, November and December on their way to market, forming an almost continuous string of hogs from Tennessee to Asheville. Tavern keepers had to keep plenty of corn on hand to feed the animals. Chestnuts were then so plentiful that he offered a choice of chestnuts or corn for hogs. One guest was driving 1098 hogs at one time!

Depending on the type of livestock, drovers could travel six to twenty miles each day. Hogs, the most numerous animal on the turnpike, could only travel six to eight miles a day. Every eight or ten miles along the road, there would be a "stand" where animals could be fed and penned outdoors and the men could find hospitality indoors. Although this route was used by all sorts of traffic, it gradually received the name of the Drovers' Road.

The Civil War slowed the flow of travelers. General Stoneman's raiders visited the Inn and descendants of the family tell how one of the daughters shook her stockings over eggs frying for the soldiers, saying, "They can eat the dust off my feet and they'll think it's pepper!"

After the railroad came to Asheville in 1880, the drover trade dropped off rapidly.

The original spring house still exists, it is a large room with a large trough in it. The original log fort is still there, as well as numerous out buildings.

Fortunately the registers of the tavern have survived, all of them, from 1850-1909. They can be viewed here:

http://toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/mss/sherrills_inn/ledger_01_sherrills/volume1.htm

SHERRILL'S INN – VOLUME 1 – Page 35



James W. Patton (Patton Avenue in Asheville was named after him)

At the time when he stopped at Sherrill's Inn, James W. Patton owned the Warm Springs Hotel at Warm Springs (now Hot Springs). He was a very successful business man with varied interests. He operated the Eagle Hotel in Asheville. He also owned a large tanyard. For many years he was Chairman of the County Court of Buncombe County. He was the great grandfather of Frank M. Parker.

Note: My GGGG Grandfather W.A.B. Murphy drove a stage to Asheville prior to the 1840's and I always had wanted to see those registers. In 2010 I was there for a wedding and just started talking to a lady who obviously either worked or lived there and told her of my interest in the history of the Inn. She most graciously took me into her library, turned on the light, got out the registers and handed them to me.

Eagle Hotel in Asheville, NC



Davy Crockett Bridle Trail:

DAVY CROCKETT b 1786 on the Nolichucky River, what was then TN... The Creek Indian Wars in Alabama were from 1813 to 1815 Davey Crockett was there under General Andrew Jackson. On November 3, under Andrew Jackson, Crockett participated in the retributive massacre of the Indian town of Tallussahatchee. He found it to be nasty business, and he returned home when his ninety-day enlistment for the Creek Indian War expired. He re-enlisted on September 28, 1814, as a third sergeant in Capt. John Cowan's company. He arrived on November 7, the day after Jackson took Pensacola, and spent his time trying to ferret out the British-trained Indians from the Florida swamps. After his discharge in 1815 as a fourth sergeant Crockett arrived home and found himself again a father. Polly died the summer after Margaret's birth, although she had been in good health when David returned. ...he did not like it During the Creek Indian wars, James Patton of the Bee tree Settlement in Swannanoa was mortally wounded. And as he lay dying he asked his friend and fellow Indian fighter, David Crockett, to take his personal effects back to his wife. David honored his friend's dying request and in the process of returning the personal belongings, met Elizabeth Patton, the widow of James Patton.

After his wife died, he remembered the pretty widow Patton, who moved back to her father's home in Swannanoa in Buncombe County, NC. Although Elizabeth Patton was pleased by David Crockett's attention, she was not "bowled over," and it took Crockett a considerable length of time to persuade Elizabeth to marry him.

In the course of this activity David Crockett was a frequent visitor to Buncombe County. David and his companions frequently travelled the road from Asheville to Old Fort by way of Black Mountain. As a result of some local "political shenanigans" (as Crockett called it) the road up Old Fort Mountain was paved with logs and a toll was levied. Crockett decided to find another way to get from Old Fort to Asheville. Crockett went up the old Asheville-Charlotte Road (now U.S. 74) to Fairview. There, about a mile and a half past Mine Hole Gap, they started clearing a bridle trail east to Old Fort. This is the present "Old Fort Road" in Fairview, and for a time after Crockett cleared it, the road was known as "David Crockett's Bridle Trail." This was in 1816. It later became known as the "Drovers Road".

The Bridle Trail from Old Fort, went up either Moffat Hill or around Pine Cove Road, then headed right at present day Crooked Creek Store and up what we call 'Big Hill' and came out on present day Crooked Creek Road on NC No. 9 at Ray Kirsten property. Continued down Chestnut Hill Road on the left, over Mine Hole Gap into Swannanoa. You can see the original road bed just past Ray Kistein's barn.

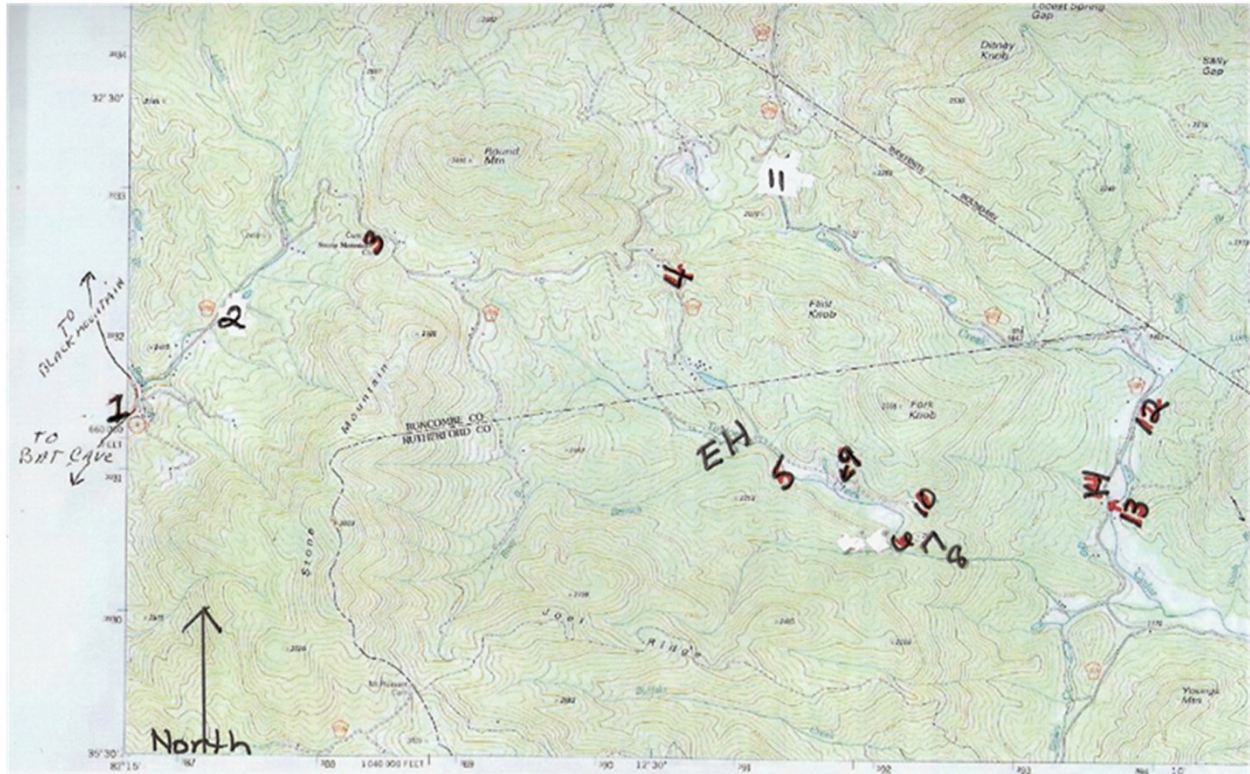
Notes: Bechtler's Mint:

From about 1803 until California's gold strikes of 1848, North Carolina led the nation in gold production. Gold was a key industry in the state, with about fifty mines operating by the 1830s. Getting better prices from brokers and commercial operations, North Carolinians sent little gold to the United States Mint. An 1834 congressional investigation of the industry concluded that only about one third of North Carolina's gold went to the mint, while, "the other two-thirds has been exported, or consumed in the arts, and a part is circulating under private stamps in at least two of the States in which gold is found."

Indeed gold in North Carolina was being sent to a private mint within its borders. Christopher Bechtler, and some family members, moved to Rutherford County, North Carolina, in 1830. The elder Bechtler saw that the lack of currency in western North Carolina was stifling the regional economy. Experienced metalworkers, the Bechtlers developed dies, built a press, and by July 1831 were striking \$2.50 (quarter-eagle) and \$5.00 (half-eagle). The following year the Bechtler mint began to strike the first gold \$1.00 United States coins. Although not a government office, the mint produced coins from gold procured, analyzed, and purified by the Bechtlers.

As late as the Civil War, some Confederate contracts specified payment with only Bechtler coins.

The Bechtler Mint ceased operations around 1849, after having struck about \$2.25 million in coins.



1. NC Highway #9
2. Old Fort - Bat Cave Road (Old Fort Rd. if you are in Buncombe County and Bat Cave Road if you are in McDowell County).
3. Stone Mountain Missionary Baptist Church
4. Camp Elliott Road
5. Taylor Creek
6. Elliott Picnic Rock (site of saw mill before 1916)
7. Saw Mill and Blacksmith Shop, the Gristmill was just further downstream
8. Gilbert Home Place (double sided chimney and some of the foundation is left.
9. Mollie and Miles Burgin Log House, (Owned by Johnson "Jonse" Elliott and now owned by Ronnie and Johnsie Mae Elliott Coates)
10. Woodson Burgin home (owned by Reed and Lois Elliott Murphy)
11. Cedar Creek Road
12. Cedar Creek
13. Grants Store on Cedar Creek
14. Grant Home Place

THE ELLIOTTS

William Elliott ^{1st} Generation in America - was born 1699 in Scotland or Ireland, immigrated about 1730 and died 1795 in Virginia. Married **Margaret Graham**. Settled in the Cumberland Valley of Pennsylvania, then moved to the Calf Pasture (what is present day Rockbridge County, Virginia). He was a prosperous and prominent man, being a cattle farmer by trade - there are many listings of him selling cattle with his sons in newspapers.

Archibald² Elliott (of William²) was born 1726. He married **Sarah Clark** in 1748 Augusta County, Virginia. She was born 1729 in Augusta County, Virginia, and both died in Anson County, North Carolina.

- Deed No. 799 P. 231 Book C
1789 Joel Shelton to Archibald Elliott for 10 pounds 70 acres on branch of Buffalo Creek between Job Self and Marvel Elliott's plantation been granted by patent August 9, 1787. Marvel Elliott, Elias Morgan and Samuel King.

***Archibald had 6 children, but only two concern us.
Marvel Elliott and his brother William Elliott, Sr.
This is where they started buying land close to Earthaven***

Marvel² Elliott (of Archibald², of William¹) born 1745 - 1755; died ?

- 50 shillings for every 100 acres. Land containing 300 acres lying in Rutherford Co. on Buffalo Creek. Granted by - Welnep Richam Caswell Esq. our Governor Capt. General and Commander in chief at Newbern the 16th day of December in that tenth year of our Independence and in the year of our Lord 1785 - R. Caswell
- Deed No. 798 p. 230 Deeds E-I Rutherford Co.
Marvel Elliott - On 24 Feb. 1789. From William Gates on Buffalo Creek to Jonas Bedfords line 200 acres.
- Deed No. 798 p. 230 Book C
1789 - Marvel Elliott to William Yates land 200 acres on Buffalo Creek. Perminter Morgan, Robert Hill and Elias Morgan.
- 1785 - 50 shillings, Marvel Elliott, 300 acres Buffalo Creek. Paid state Gov. Richard Caswell

William³ Elliott, Sr. (of Archibald², of William¹) was born 1763 in Rockbridge County, Virginia, and died 1832. He married **Linda Middleton** in 1780

- Deed No. 684 P. 85 Book E
Land Grant - North Carolina grant 191
Governor Caswell to William Elliott 10 pounds. Tract of 10 acres on South Fork of Bill's Creek near Underwood Mountain. Beginning at Pine in Fort Shillars line, by Richard Caswell (Gov. Capt. Gen. and Comm. in Chief at Kingston August 9, 1787)

Samuel⁴ Elliott, Sr. (of William³, of Archibald², of William¹) was born 1783, and died 1855 in NC; he is buried on his own land on the top of a mountain, per his request. It is marked with a native stone and it is situated between Buffalo Creek and Cedar Creek currently on Grey Rock property. He married **Nancy Smathers** 1810. Born Abt. 1790, died Abt. 1867 in NC; buried in Bill's Creek Baptist Cemetery, Rutherford County.

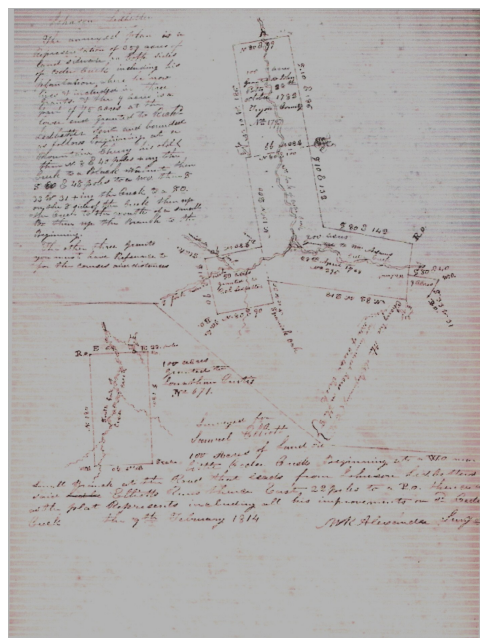
By 1810, Rutherford County had been formed and Samuel was listed on the 1810 US Census with one free white male less than 10 yrs. 2 free white males 10-15 years, 2 females under 10, one female 10-15 yrs and one free white female 45+.

- In 1814 land was purchased by Samuel Elliott, Sr. This was for 100 acres of land 'in the lower tract'. Later, 148 acres in the 'upper tract' from the state of North Carolina at \$5.00 per 100 acres. There was 75 acres of speculation land between these two tracts, and he purchased it for 12 1/2 cents per acre. This made the amount of 323 acres. After his death, four of his children inherited the land and it was put up for sale at public auction. Roscoe Gilbert, a great grandson of Samuel Elliott, Sr. purchased the land. The Gilbert house double sided chimney still stands below close to the confluence of Taylor Creek and the Sonkey Branch.

Land purchased by Samuel Elliott, Sr., in 1814

I am only listing below what I can actually read

- Johnson Ledbetter,
- Col. Ledbetter (Possibly: Colonel Ledbetter of Colonel Drury Ledbetter's NC Regiment)
- Mr. Adams, or Ashby.
- 100 Acres in Tryon County, October 28, 1782. No. 1792. North Fork of Cedar Creek.
- 50 Acres granted to Col. Ledbetter.
- 200 acres granted to Mr. Adams (I think it says Adams). April 28, 1768 No, 276
- 100 acres granted to Jonathan Curtis or Custis.



Survey for Samuel Elliott, 1814

100 Acres of land on **Little Cedar Creek** Beginning at the waters of _____ Branch at the road that leads from Johnson Ledbetter's said Elliott's road hence East 22 poles to a P.O. hence is with plat represents including all his improvements on Cedar Creek the 7th February 1814. MK Alexander, Surveyor

To keep this simple, I am only mentioning the children of Samuel that pertain to this story. These were the folks that actually stayed in this area

- **Rhoda⁵ Elliott** (of Samuel⁴, of Williams, of Archibald³, of William¹), born 1807, married **Joseph Taylor**, Dec. 25, 1838
- **Noah⁵ Elliott** (of Samuel⁴, of Williams, of Archibald³, of William¹), born 1811, married **Elizabeth Taylor**, Dec. 28, 1844
- **Johnson⁵ Elliott** (of Samuel⁴, of Williams, of Archibald³, of William¹), born 8-23-1818, died 11-18-1914, married 6-26-1856 Martha Whiteside who was born in 1827, died 3-18-1882. Both are buried at Stone Mountain Baptist Church. **They lived where the Earthaven Council Hall is located.** Johnson and Martha had several children, one of which was:
- **John Dickson⁶ Elliott** (of Johnson⁵, of Samuel⁴, of Williams, of Archibald³, of William¹), who married **Rose Coxey**....They lived where the chimneys are on Rosie Branch and **Rosie Branch was named after her.**
The 1860 Census lists value of Real Estate at 800 and Personal Property at 450.00 for John Dickson and Rosie Elliott.

NOTES ON ABOVE...

Rhoda Elliott married **Joseph Taylor**.

Joseph was the brother to Noah's wife **Elizabeth Taylor**.

Noah and Elizabeth also named one of their daughters Rhoda, who married Robert Davis. See page 12

Noah⁵ Elliott (of Samuel³, of William³, of Archibald², of William¹) married Nancy Elizabeth Taylor, daughter of William Taylor and Hannah Steele.... now I am not sure if Noah purchased the land or if he inherited it. I cannot find a record of it. It could have been lost when Rutherford County courthouse burned in 1857. Or it could have been lost during the Civil war, when the Union soldiers set the land records on fire and threw them out of the windows at the Burke County Courthouse. Also, if it was purchased in Tryon County (now discontinued) most of those records were lost. I am unsure of how much land he owned. Noah lived where Camp Elliott is, and is buried in that cemetery. The branch running into the lake at Camp Elliott is called the 'Noah Branch'. In 1860 Buffalo district of Rutherford County Census lists Noah as a farmer and the value of his real estate was 300.00 and personal property was 250.00

The Elliott Cemetery is located on the property of Camp Elliott (now Stone Mountain School), just above the lake. Lum Elliott lost his leg in the saw mill on the Elliott property and his leg is buried there with Siler Elliott. The Elliott Cemetery was used until Stone Mountain Church was built.

I am just mentioning 2 of Noah's 5 children because they are the only ones that are on the land:

- **Rhoda Elizabeth⁶ Elliott**, born October 15, 1845; died November 29, 1913 in NC, buried in Stone Mountain Missionary Baptist Cemetery, Buncombe County.
- **Marcus Columbus Elliott**, born January 12, 1849 in Broad River; died May 28, 1902.

The Robert Davis Family

Wife - Rhoda⁶ Elliott (Noah⁵, Samuel³, William³, Archibald², William¹)



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The Robert Davis Family

Front, L to R: Robert Davis, Rhoda Elliott Davis and
Mary M. Davis (Brown)

Back, L to R: Mattie Davis (Collins), Tommy Davis and Sarah
Davis

1. Mary M. Davis married Rev. T.K. Brown – see picture page 13
2. Sarah Davis, born 4-1870, never married, see note below
3. Martha C. 'Mattie' Davis, born 4-1875, died 1947 married John T. Collins.
4. William Thomas 'Tommy' Davis, born 1877, never married.



Reverend T.K. Brown and wife *Mary Davis⁷ Brown* (of Rhoda⁶, Noah⁵, Samuel³, William³, Archibald², William¹) **and Family**

Reverend T.K. Brown was the first minister of the First Baptist Church in Black Mountain.



Mary Davis (Brown) and her brother *Tommy Davis*



Tommy and *Sarah Davis*
They were unmarried;

see next page for info on them

The Tommy and Sarah Davis House **This was located where Medicine Wheel is built now**



Tommy and Sarah were never married. When they died, all the land went to Mary Davis Brown and her children (the Browns) inherited it from her.

The Browns purchased the Johnston Elliott tract (who lived where the Council Hall is), from the heirs for \$1500.00. And they already had the Tommy and Sarah Davis Land which is where Medicine Wheel is now.

Rev T.K. Brown and Mary Davis Brown had several children. One of their sons was Lawrence Brown, High Sheriff of Buncombe County. He served from 1926-1928. And from 1930 until 1962. He was had a public reputation as a sheriff who was tough on illegal liquor. But the family and locals have told me that if you needed to make liquor to feed your family, he would not destroy the still, just dismantle it and tell you to move it elsewhere. Julius Elliott and Sherriff Lawrence Brown were first cousins.

Sheriff Brown built the house known as "The Light Center" on NC 9.

Every Sunday the Buncombe County Sheriff Lawrence Brown had to bring his mother, Mary Davis Brown (above) to see her siblings, Tommy and Sarah Davis. He always drove the patrol car.

Shirley Nanney Moffitt at age 93 in 2002 told me that Sarah Davis had taken blue glass bottles (like Vick's salve came in) and had buried them in the ground, upside down to make a walk way to the house. Shirley said it was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen.

Marcus Columbus⁶ Elliott (Noah⁵, Samuel⁴, William³, Archibald², William¹) was born January 12, 1849 in Broad River, and died May 28, 1902. He married **Minta J. Davis**. She was born January 24, 1849, and died June 03, 1947.

I am listing their children because they, along with their mother 'Mint', donated the Noah Elliott land to the YMCA so a children's summer camp could be established. The YMCA, of course named the camp, Camp Elliott.

Their children were:

- Julia Evelyn⁷ Elliott, born March 14, 1864; died September 17, 1901.
- ?? Elliott, born 1879; died 1879 in North Carolina, buried in cemetery located at Camp Elliott.
- **Julius Young Elliott**, born March 14, 1880; died August 27, 1959 in NC, buried in Stone Mountain Missionary Baptist Cemetery, Buncombe County.
- Marion Walker Elliott, born November 30, 1883; died August 01, 1960
- Evie Elliott, born 1885; died April 01, 1952.
- Lewis M. Elliott, born July 04, 1888; died November 22, 1969 in NC
- Maude Elliott, born 1890. She married William Fortune
- Holly Wallace Elliott, born December 24, 1890; died May 02, 1964
- Boyd Elliott, born April 24, 1896 in McDowell County, North Carolina; died May 02, 1965
- Maggie Elliott, born December 29, 1900; died April 10, 1981

NOTE: In the following parts, you will see this area listed as McDowell County, because for a time it was Rutherfordton, then it McDowell for a bit, then back to Rutherfordton, then Stone Mountain and Broad River area was 'given' to Buncombe County.

Julius Young⁷ Elliott (Marcus⁶, Noah⁵, Samuel⁴, William³, Archibald², William¹) was born March 14, 1880, and died August 27, 1959 in NC. He married **Easter** Marcella **Nanney** on 2-11-1904 in McDowell Co., by F.C. Davis. Easter was the daughter of Columbus and Eva Painter Nanney. Eva Painter is of the Painters of Painters Greenhouse, so that is how we are related to them. She was born April 25, 1886, and died March 18, 1942. Both Julius and Easter and their daughter Beulah are buried in Stone Mountain Missionary Baptist Cemetery. Reed, Lois and Thrisa Murphy live on the land on Stone Mountain that was inherited from Columbus Nanney (purchased in 1850) through Easter Elliott and to Lois Murphy.

Julius owned all the land past the Elliott Gate.

When Julius Elliott died, the land passed to his sons

Noah Elliott's (Julius's father) land extended to behind Smith's Store. Julius built and lived in a house behind Smiths Store, and he left to go to Beckley, West Virginia, by train, to work in the coal mines. When Julius came home from West Virginia in 1923 or 1924 they found that Lewis Elliott (his brother) had moved into his house and would not move out.

Nancy Burgin with sons Woodson and Miles Burgin, former slaves of the Burgin family, appeared on the census in 1870, and lived below EH. Woodson and Miles apparently built the dam that powered the sawmill at the 'Picnic Rock' which was destroyed in the 1916 flood.

Julius bought the home place (the one that Lois Elliott Murphy owns, and EH did the roofing) from Woodson Burgin. Miles Burgin owned Uncle Johnson Elliott's house (the one owned by Ronnie and Johnsie Mae Elliott Coats). Julius and Miles tore down the existing house and built a new one, the one that still stands today. They took the old chimney and used those rocks in the foundation of the new house. They are still black on the inside of the foundation. They left the old kitchen standing and used it for a smokehouse. The date on the concrete on the foundation of the house is December 28, 1928.

Julius was a farmer and a moonshiner. Miles Burgin used to help Julius hide his liquor. Grandma Daisy Elliott (wife of Taft⁸, of Julius⁷) and Lawrence Elliott⁹ told me that during the depression they would have starved if they hadn't had the revenue from the liquor. During WWII they had to use syrup and molasses to make liquor, because sugar was rationed. There was just no way to make money in this area in those days. My Grandfather, Taft Elliott⁸, who lived in the house that I live in, kept liquor in the attic. Like my dad, he was a welder, and he had a stainless steel tank that ran down to a spout which was hidden behind a dresser drawer. The patch in the sheetrock is still visible today. During WWII he was not deployed because he was a Master Welder at Fontana Dam.

Once when Julius had come home he saw the Federal Revenuer car sitting at the bottom of Rosy Branch (close to the Village Green). He went towards the Sonkey

Branch and then cut across the ridge and down into the hollow to warn the rest of the 'moonshiners' that the revenuers were sniffing about. The others had gotten away, but they caught and charged Julius with aiding and abetting. They took him to Buncombe County Courthouse and his wife's brothers came and bailed him out. He received 6 months probation

Julius and Easter had 3 children:

1. Beulah Elliott – never married
2. Commodore Taft Elliott
3. Johnson 'Johnse' Columbus Elliott

2. Taft Commodore⁸ Elliott (Julius Young⁷, Marcus⁶, Noah⁵, Samuel⁴, William³, Archibald², William¹) was born March 26, 1908 in McDowell County, North Carolina, and died Abt. 1973 in NC, buried in Stone Mountain Missionary Cemetery, Burke County. He married **(1) Eva Garrison** Unknown. She was born Abt. 1916, and died Abt. 1937 in NC, buried in Stone Mountain Missionary Baptist Cemetery, Buncombe County. He married **(2) Daisy Jane Davis** Unknown, daughter of Carl Davis and Cynthia Conner. She was born September 16, 1919, and died Abt. 1988 in NC, buried in Stone Mountain Missionary Baptist Cemetery, Buncombe County.

Children of Taft Elliott and Eva Garrison Elliott:

- **Lawrence Elliott⁹**

Eva got sick when she was pregnant with Lawrence. She had bone cancer, and died when Lawrence was 9 months old. Grandpa always said they burned her up with Radiation.

Taft then married Daisy and had the following children and they are the current owners of Taft's inheritance from his dad Julius:

- Barbara⁹ Elliott. She married Robert Harris.
- **Lois⁹ Elliott, married Reed Murphy**
- Wayne⁹ Elliott married Gail Clark

3. Johnson 'Johnse' Columbus⁸ Elliott (Julius Young⁷, Marcus⁶, Noah⁵, Samuel⁴, William³, Archibald², William¹). 1912 – 1997. Johnson married Mamie Davis, who was the sister to Daisy Davis, the wife of Johnson's brother Taft Elliott. Ronnie and Johnsie Mae Elliott Coates are the owners of the log cabin. Ronnie is the one who drives the Jeep.

THE JULIUS YOUNG ELLIOTT FAMILY



Julius Young ⁷ Elliott (Marcus ⁶, Noah⁵, Samuel⁴, William³, Archibald², William¹) and Family

Left to Right: Julius Elliott⁷, his oldest son Taft Elliott⁸, his wife Easter Nanney Elliott, his son, Johnson Columbus "Jonse" Elliott⁸ and his daughter Beulah Elliott⁸.

The little girl is Thelma or Rainie Hall of the Hall House which is where Becky and Larry live.



Taft Commodore Elliott₈, Johnson Columbus Elliott₈ and Julius Elliott₉



Julius Elliott and his pet crow.
This was probably in the early 50's.

NATURAL DISASTERS

FLOOD OF 1916

On the Elliott property, the field was a lake as there was a dam at the Picnic Rock that powered a saw mill. The dam was located at the Picnic Rock This is where Lum Elliott lost his leg. His leg is buried in the Elliott Graveyard at Camp Elliott. .

If you go on down the creek and look where the creek takes a sharp left you can find evidence of the blacksmith shop that was run by the Gilbert Family. They lived where the Sonkey Branch and Taylor Creek converge. (See local area map)

The flood of 1916 destroyed the dam, the blacksmith shop and the saw mill. And just about everything else.

On July 5th and 6th, 1916, a tropical cyclone swept over the Gulf Coast of Alabama, and caused torrential rains in the Carolinas as well as Tennessee.

On July 14, a second tropical cyclone came up from Charleston, S.C. moving northwestward, its advancement to the northeast was completely halted by a large stationary high pressure mass of cold air in Tennessee. The first storm had already saturated the soil and filled the streams bank-full. The run-off from the saturated soil was very rapid, streams rose high above all previous flood records; it is estimated that 90 per cent of the water resulted from the second hurricane ran off. At Altapass, the rainfall was measured at 22.22 inches in 24 hours, the highest ever recorded in the US (at that time). The death toll was about 80. Property damage estimated at about 22 million dollars. At Bat Cave eight persons were drowned, four were drowned near Brevard and three near Hickory Nut Gap.

Every bridge on the Catawba River, both rail and highway, washed away except for one Railroad Bridge near Marion. The approaches to the bridge, however, for one mile in each direction were destroyed. All telephone and telegraph lines crossing the Catawba River in both North and South Carolina were swept away. All rail, highway, telephone and telegraph connections were severed. Catawba River crested west of Charlotte at 47 feet above flood level.

Early Sunday morning the rushing waters of the French Broad and the Swannanoa flooded the entire lower part of the city of Asheville and all of the neighboring model village of Biltmore."

Now if you know and have seen where Reed Murphy was raised, this will make sense, if not maybe not so much. But, it is exactly one mile from the Julius Elliott house (that Lois Murphy owns) to the Murphy place on Cedar Creek. During the 1916 flood, my Grandmother, Edna Searcy Murphy, said the water came up almost to the house at the base of Roanhorse Mountain. Pigs, houses and all manner of debris washed down the creek. Cedar Creek Road used to be on the other side of the Creek and the flood washed all that away, so the new road was built back at its current location.

Southern Railway had placed 18 fully loaded boxcars on its mammoth double track bridge across the Catawba River on the main line between Charlotte and Gastonia. When it was seen they could not possibly hold the bridge down, they were run back. Then the giant bridge plunged downward, rebounded, turned upside down and disappeared with a mighty splash. Both the bridge and the boxcars were swept downstream, while the river was still some 20 feet below its ultimate crest. Thirteen persons were killed when the bridge gave way.

My Great Aunt Lennie Noblett Gilliam (aunt to Edna Searcy Murphy, my paternal grandmother) who was born and raised on Crooked Creek in McDowell County was on a train home from Colorado immediately after the floods. Her husband was a Master Mechanic for Southern Railway and told her not to worry, the railroad would have it all fixed. They got into NC and the train had to back all the way back into Georgia...and finally after 3 or 4 days they got to Old Fort, but the lines were still down and she had to walk from Old Fort to Swannanoa up Old Fort Mountain to get to her cousins house. She always complained that she did not have her boots on and ruined her shoes.

"The destruction wrought by the storm came so suddenly that on July 15th many trains were caught on the line between terminals, and the fact that many more were not thus marooned is due to the timely warnings of section foremen and telegraph operators on the various lines....A heavy movement of passenger business to resort sections of western North Carolina was in progress, and it is as remarkable as it is fortunate that no passenger train was overwhelmed by flood or land-slide and thus swept to destruction with inevitable loss of life by the carrying away of the structures or road-beds. Not a passenger was killed or injured as a result of the flood. (1917, *Southern Railway Company. The Floods of July 1916, p.26*)

At that time most of the food stuff and supplies used in the county arrived by Southern Railroad, which was cut by the flood. Two passenger trains were stranded in Marion. One of these trains carried 225 passengers.



This is the only known picture of the dam at the Picnic rock that was destroyed in the 1916 flood.



SOUTHERN RAILWAY AT RIVER ROAD, BILTMORE, ASHEVILLE, NC
THE BUILDING SHOWN ON THE BACK RIGHT STILL STANDS.
You can see that building on the left just past Habitat for Humanity in Biltmore.



DEBRIS NEAR ASHEVILLE CONCRETE BRIDGE AT HEIGHT OF FLOOD.



DEBRIS NEAR ASHEVILLE CONCRETE BRIDGE

RAIL ROAD TRACKS NEAR OLD FORT WHERE THE FILL MATERIAL HAD WASHED
AWAY....

Those guys are brave or crazy!



1982 FLOOD

There was a flood in 1982 that washed out the road from the fist gate to the Elliott gate.
See pics below:





Our Gate





Lois Elliott Murphy



I think this is the road between Shawn and Holly's house and the first bridge.

EARTHQUAKES OF 1874

There was a series of earthquakes in 1874.

I attached a copy of the New York Times on 3-21-1874.

I attached copies of the letter that the Professor Warren DuPre of Woffard College wrote. He traveled here to investigate these occurrences.

Chuck Marsh had a professor who was teaching on this subject and he contacted Chuck who in turn contacted me and that is how I obtained this information. There is also an entire book written about this. I can email a copy if anyone is interested.

Now note:

On page 24 of the New York Times article, they mention the following folks:

Johnston Elliott - who lived where the Council Hall is

Noah Elliott – who lived at Camp Elliott

Widow Nanney – lived on Stone Mountain Farm Road in what the kids call the 'ghost house'

James Gilbert – of the Gilberts that lived below the Elliott Land and ran the blacksmith shop

I have been told that Stone Mountain Church was built because of the Earthquakes in 1874.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

New York, Saturday, March 21, 1874

*A VOLCANO IN NORTH CAROLINA**Extraordinary Agitation of Bald Mountain - Terrible Sights and Sounds - The Terror-Stricken Residents Praying During Sixteen Days.*

Knoxville, Tenn., March 20 --For the last twenty days the greatest excitement has prevailed for a distance of twenty-five miles around and in the vicinity of Bald Mountain. This mountain is situated between Crooked Creek, in McDowell County, and Broad River, the mountain also extending into Rutherford County. That portion of the range within McDowell County is generally called Stone Mountain. The first signs of alarm in this locality were witnessed on the 10th of February. This consisted in what the people call a terrible lumbering the earth seeming to quiver to a frightful extent. Some parties describe it as terrible thunder, gradually dying away in the distance, others as the roaring of heavy artillery in the distance. On the 12th of February, two gentlemen, on the highest point of Bald Mountain, known as Harris' View, which is said to be next to mount Mitchell in height, heard this strange noise. One of them says that at first it reminded him of the falling of timber and presented a strange combination of sounds and impressions. Parties living on the mountain sides and at the base heard the same noise. All think that the noise was in the mountain. One man says when he was on one side of the mountain the terrible noise was in the direction of the mountain, and when on the opposite side the same indications were observed. All feel satisfied that the noise proceeded alone from this mountain. On the 22nd February the noise had reached such a point as to be absolutely terrible. Among the persons living on this mountain are Mr. Camp, Johnston Elliott, Noah Elliott, widow Nanny, George Morgan, James Gilbert, and others. From the statements of all these parties and of perhaps fifty others, the mountain was actually shaking. The moving was as if the entire mountain was giving away. The table-ware and the furniture in the house all rocked and jolted with frightful force. It is said that the cattle have become alarmed, and have wandered from their usual range. Such was the alarm that, at about 12 o'clock on the night of 23rd, the people for miles around began to assemble at the home of a Mr. Camp, who having gone to the wood-pile for wood, became so alarmed that he fell upon his knees and began to pray aloud. Very soon the terrible quaking of the mountain was such that the great crowd now assembled engaged in prayer. At daybreak on Monday morning George Logan, a colored Baptist preacher, was sent for in great haste, and so impatient were they of his arrival that a portion of the crowd met him on the road beseeching him to come and pray and preach. The people thus assembled remained in those devotions three days, when they moved a short distance to a vacant house, the property of Harris Elliott. On the third day Billy Logan, a white Baptist preacher was sent for and came immediately. On March 3 J.M. Lumley, a Methodist minister in charge of Broad River Mission, was importuned to attend and preach, and promptly complied with the request.

From an eye-witness the scenes were described as most strange and extraordinary. The people came flocking in crowds of fifteen and twenty, including men, women and children, all presenting the most terrible state of fear, despair and penitence. On the day Mr. Lumley preached the house was literally packed, the preacher barely having room to stand. So great was the rush to hear that many climbed up the side of the walls and crowded on the joints above. Only a portion of the upper story having a floor, and not many being able to enter the house, crowded their heads in at the doors and manifested the most intense excitement. When the call was made for mourners the people rushed from all parts of the house and from the outside, with almost frantic yells and fell upon the floor and each other, all praying and supplicating in the most heartfelt and agonizing manner.

(end of article)

Excerpts from a letter from Warren DuPre, a teacher at Wofford College, Spartanburg, South Carolina, to his father Daniel DuPre, a planter, of Palmetto Plantation, St. James, Santee, has . At the time the letter was written Professor Warren DuPre was 58 years old, his father was 81.

Wofford College
April 20th, 1874

My Dear Father,

.....Well our trip to the mountains was quite amusing, although it was cold and raining most of the time. Oliver was my travelling companion, who took me along in his buggy. We had altogether six buggies and five saddle horses -- making quite a cavalcade along the road. The first night we stayed at a house three miles this side of Rutherfordton, where we supped upon tough biscuits, coffee without sugar and by a taper light wound around a greasy candle stick, that gave light enough to enable us to feel for the dishes. The next night we reached the Stone Mt. Ridge the seat of the volcanic throes, and camped in two log cabins. Oliver and myself got a good bed, in the same room with the proprietor, Mr. Elliott, his wife and children.

The students occupied an outbuilding with a warped roof, which turned a heavy thunder shower upon them about midnight. After supper, furnished and cooked by the students, we gathered around a big fire and laughed until our sides ached at the accounts of the earthquake by Mr. and Mrs. Elliott. Particularly, the latter, who had an endless tongue. The fun consisted not so much in what they said as in their manner of telling it. You would suppose the Mountain had a big bellyache, and that their house was rocked by the contortions of the entrails. Before going to bed, I took occasion to explain the different theories of earthquakes, to which Elliott and wife seemed to listen with great interest. Next morning Elliott said to Carson, one of the Seniors, "Ain't that old man in there a very smart codger? He must have read a dozen books!" The people about the mountains took up the notion that I had the power of stopping the commotion, or of abating its effects. They followed me everywhere, offered their services to do anything I wanted, and begged me not to leave them, -- would feed us all with our horses, for nothing if we would only stay with them a week. For two weeks they had prayer meetings day and night. In answer to a question, -- how they were conducted -- Mrs. Elliott said they met at some house, 50 or 60 together, and everyone just knuckled down on the floor and each one prayed for himself as loud as he could, all at the same time. You can thus form some idea of their fright and the excitement.

After ascending to the highest point of Stone Mountain, from which I took with a compass the bearings of the most prominent peaks around, and enjoyed for two hours one of the finest mountain views I ever had, we descended on the western side to Mrs. Murphy's, where we met the reporters of the New York Herald & Tribune.

****Note on Above ~ Mrs. Murphy was Zillah "Granny Duck" Owenby Murphy the widow of W.A. B. Murphy. She lived where Mark Elliott lives now on Old Fort Road. W.A. B. Murphy was Reed Murphy's Great Great Great Grandpa**

They were constantly sending off dispatches to their papers, containing exaggerated rumors, most of them a pack of lies, just to make their papers sell like hot cakes on the streets of N. York. When I began to laugh at Cowardin, the reporter of the Herald about some of his dispatches, he said, "Professor I am paid for doing this --the Herald doesn't

want any other kind -- if they are not sensational the paper will not sell. It's my business to get up the biggest volcano in all these mountains that I can; and if you will only join me I will send to Marion, N.C. for some nitroglycerine, kerosene oil and a bale of cotton, and tonight go up Stone Mt., make the biggest blast that ever was heard, then set fire to cotton soaked in oil and if we don't drive every man, woman and child out of these mountains in two hours, I'll forfeit my head. Why Sir, I could send a dispatch headed, 'VOLCANO ERUPTION IN N.C. STONE MT. ON FIRE THUNDER AND LIGHTNING AND SMOKE AND STEAM -- The Earth Rocking, -- Houses tumbling -- Cattle with their Tails Up Running and Bellowing -- People Fleeing -- and the Devil to Play Generally.' In less than one hour, Sir, fifty thousand copies of the Herald would be sold in N. York." After promising to give them an interview next day at Harris's, we left them and our party went to Hickory Nut Gap. The next morning we began climbing up to the foot of the Falls. This was the hardest morning's work I ever did; for we had to ascend over a thousand feet, sometimes almost perpendicularly by holding onto bushes and crags. After two hours we reached the foot of the Falls, which tumbles over a precipice nine hundred feet above our heads. Although it was raining hard, and we could but dimly see the falls a hundred feet above us, yet we were well repaid. It was decidedly the most beautiful sight I ever witnessed. The water of the falls seemed to descend from the clouds as we looked in showers of pearls mingled with white foam, that dashed upon the platform where we stood, then leaped and bounded from rock to rock down the mountain gorge for a thousand feet below us. After refreshing ourselves with ice and snow, bushels of which could be gathered in the crevasses of the rock, we returned to Harris's where we met our N. York reporters, and a delegation of mountain people headed by the Baptist preacher, sent to get our candid opinion about these commotions in the Mts. The interview did not last long as I was determined to be cautious in my statements of facts and opinions. As it was, an incorrect report of it was made in the Herald.

Last night I received a letter from Brig. Gen. Alverdt of Washington stating that he had seen an account in the papers of my visit to Stone Mt. and requested that I would furnish a report of it to the Philadelphia Historical Society. If the commotions continue until July, I will make a more thorough exploration during my vacation. In two days I had not time to observe much, and it will require weeks of observation and exploration to get sufficient facts upon which to base a decided opinion.

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ON A SERIES OF EARTHQUAKES IN NORTH CAROLINA,  
COMMENCING ON THE 10TH OF FEBRUARY, 1874

By Professor Warren DuPre  
of Wofford College, Spartanburgh, S.C.

*The following is an extract from a letter of the 24th April, 1874, from Professor DuPre to General Benjamin Alvord, U.S. Army:*

"My visit to the mountains of North Carolina was undertaken to satisfy myself with respect to the numerous rumors which had reached us of the volcanic disturbances in that section of the country. I could spend but two days (18th and 20th March) in the investigation, but was quite diligent in collecting facts and in extending my explorations on horse and on foot so as to cover a distance of eighteen or twenty miles. I was soon convinced that the physical disturbances were real, but many of the rumors were false, and that the truth had been much exaggerated by the fears of the people. The explosive noises accompanying the shocks and the limited area of the disturbances are peculiarities worthy the attention of scientists, and demand a more thorough exploration. The enclosed is a hasty report of my trip, which I drew up to allay, if possible, the fears of the inhabitants of the district. Stone Mountain, the site of the disturbances like all the neighboring peaks, is composed chiefly of gneiss and granitic slates, and covered with a dense forest growth. In a direct line, it is about fourteen miles from Black Mountain, or "Mount Mitchell," the highest point in the United States east of the Rocky Mountains. It lies between Broad and Catawba Rivers, both of which point to Black Mountain, while on the northwest side of the Blue Ridge, the Swannanoah and Green Rivers, tributaries of the French Broad, have their sources near the Black mountain. So many large rivers, on both sides of the Blue Ridge, heading up in this section, would indicate Black Mountain as the center of the volcanic force which lifted up these mountain ridges. I expect to visit these mountains again in July, when I shall have more time to investigate this matter.\*"

*\*Professor DuPre has been requested to communicate a report of this projected trip. Further data remain to be gleaned, as the phenomena appear to have continued, at least, up to April.*

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THE NEW YORK TIMES

THE NEW YORK TIMES
New York, Saturday, March 21, 1874
A VOLCANO IN NORTH CAROLINA

These exercises continued incessantly for sixteen days and nights, with but little intermission. During this time the people lived in common. No attention was given to labor or property. Cattle, horses, and hogs were turned to the woods and the entire people within the range of this awful excitement have concluded that they have but a few days to live. About 100 have made professions of religion. The closing scenes of this strange meeting are represented as most peculiar and wonderful. During most of this period of sixteen days the mountain had continued at intervals to present the same alarming impressions, but having prayed, shouted, sung and agonized for this long period, they separated with the promise that all would remain and die if necessary. It is said that the awe-stricken countenances, the melancholy demeanor of this vast crowd, on the breaking up of the devotions are beyond all description. A letter was received in this city to-day by a gentlemen whose mother resides near Bald Mountain, stating that near the summit of that peak an area of nearly an acre was agitated by subterranean upheavals and from which smoke and vapor issued.

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*Extracts from report above referred to, dated Spartanburgh, S.C., March 28, 1874.*

On Wednesday, the 18th of March, in company with Rev. R.C. Oliver, editor of The Orphans Friend, Mr. McKenn Johnstone, civil engineer, and the senior class of Wofford College, I started for Hickory Nut Gap, for the purpose of making such personal observations as my limited time would permit, and of collecting and sifting all the testimony that I could gather from the inhabitants of the affected region. At Rutherfordton, we were joined by Captain William Twitty, an educated gentleman, who gave us much assistance in our exploration.

To understand the bearing of the facts and testimony upon the question whether these disturbances threaten a volcanic eruption, as a preliminary, I shall describe, as clearly as I can, the situation of this mountain. Five miles east of Hickory Nut Gap, lies this high mountain ridge, bearing upon its back several peaks, the highest of which are called Bald, Stone, and Round Mountains, and extending from southwest to northeast, a distance of ten miles, in the order in which are they are named. They constitute one

mountain ridge from 3,000 to 3,500 feet high, flanking the Blue Ridge, nearly parallel with it, bounded on the east by Crooked Creek, and on the west by Broad River, which, with its narrow valley, separates them from the high ridge of mountains that border the eastern side of Hickory Nut Gap.

Directing our course along the eastern slope, we came first to the house of Rev. Mr. Logan, a Baptist minister, from whom we learned that the noises and shocks were first heard and felt in Stone Mountain, on Tuesday, the 10th of February; that they were repeated on the following Sunday, with increased severity, so much so that the people sent for him, a distance of ten miles, to hold religious meetings with them; that he and his wife heard the explosions, and felt the shocks repeatedly day and night, once causing the lightning-rods attached to his chimneys to rattle considerably, the sky being clear, and no wind blowing; that the sounds came from the direction of Stone and Bald Mountains, were at first explosive, following by a slight rumbling lasting for a few seconds, similar to a blast from a stone-quarry; that the shocks were almost instantaneous with the explosions, very rapid, making the ground tremble for a few seconds. In response to an inquiry, whether any one was blasting rock about the mountains, he replied that none could be found, and there was but one quarry, thirty-three miles distant in an opposite direction, and that had not been worked for several months past.

After going two or three miles further, we turned to the left and were ascending Fork Knob, over which the road leads to the top of Stone Mountain, when a loud explosion in the direction of Stone Mountain startled us all. It was instantly followed by a low reverberatory sound, as if descending the slope of the mountain. We felt no shocks, which was due, no doubt, to the steep and stony road over which our buggies were passing at the time. This was on the 19th, at 5 P.M. Two of our company who had preceded us a mile, and were about a half mile from the top of Stone Mountain, heard the report, and also felt the ground tremble under them. The sound resembled the suppressed but sudden report of a quarry-blast, and seemed to come through the mountain. We arrived about sunset at Mr. Elliott's, whose house is situated in a depression between Round and Stone peaks, about a half mile from the top of the latter. From Elliott's house, Round Mountain bears north 37° west, Stone Mountain south 73° west, and are about a half or three-quarters of a mile distant from each other.

**\*\*Could someone at EH help me find exactly where that coordinate is located?? Please?? Then we would know which Elliott family they were staying with.**

This house being about the center of the greatest agitation, and whence most of the exaggerated rumors had their origin, we determined to remain all night, and I kept watch until about two o'clock.

The next morning I gathered from Mr. and Mrs. Elliott, in answer to many inquiries, the following statement: "The first noise and shakes (as the shocks are very expressively, denominated by the mountain people) were heard and felt on Tuesday, 10th February -- some of them were felt as far as White House, on Cover Creek, eight miles distant.



Sunday morning these sounds and shakes were repeated with increasing severity, one a little after sunrise, another at 10, and another at 2 o'clock in the night; noises continued, some with shakes, and some without, until Thursday following, with intervals of about an hour or two. The house -- a stout log building -- shook so violently that the children became very much alarmed, all thinking it would fall. A ladder resting upon a support in the yard rattled frequently, and the ground seemed to tremble under their feet. The noise began like explosions of a quarry blast, in the northwest, and west off to the southeast, with a rumbling sound under ground. The weather was quite variable, sometimes cloudy and rainy, at other times clear and cool. The people about the mountain were very much alarmed; had preaching and prayer-meetings daily for a week or more, and forty-five new members were added to the Baptist church."

About 9 o'clock in the morning of the 20th we began the exploration of Stone Mountain. From the base to the summit it is covered with a dark rich soil, about a foot deep, partly cleared and cultivated, but mostly clothed with a growth of heavy timber, consisting of chestnut and oak. The granite slates, about the thickness of flag-stones, scattered over the surface, indicate that the formation does not differ from most of the surrounding peaks. Near its highest point several large blocks of coarse granite protrude through the soil to the height of about 10 feet above the surface. Owing to the depth of the soil and the slight exposure of the rocky formations, I could not ascertain the direction or angle of the dip. No specimens were found which resembled what are usually called volcanic rocks. The mountain appeared as calm and peaceful as if it had never been disturbed since the morning of its upheaval. It presented no cavernous depths or rugged prominences to excite the fears of the dwellers upon its slopes. A dozen or more of the mountaineers had followed us everywhere in the exploration, and although much alarmed at the frequent agitations of this hitherto stable mountain, yet they unanimously contradicted the many rumors of gaping rocks, smoking peaks, sinking caverns, melting snows, etc., with which our newspapers have been teeming for many weeks past. We remained on the summit for some time, hoping for an opportunity to determine whether the explosions came from the east or west side of the mountain, or from the ground under our feet. As nothing occurred to settle this question, we descended the western slope to Mrs. Murphy's saw-mill, about eight miles from the head of Broad River. A portion of our party, who had passed two miles around the base of the mountain, heard three loud explosions, and felt two distinct shocks proceeding directly from the peak which we had left but one hour before. This I did not hear or feel, as I was engaged at the time in taking notes of the testimony of Mr. T.J. Dalton, amid the rumbling of machinery and the roar of the mill-dam.

It is unnecessary to give, in detail, all the testimony which we collected from the people while passing along the eastern and western side of this mountain, including a distance of eighteen miles. They all concurred in the following summary: That there were certain days marked by loud reports and severe shakes; that from fifty to seventy-five shocks have been felt since the 10th of February; that the noise begins with an explosion like a quarry-blast, followed by a rumbling sound, with this exception, that those near the top of the mountain assert they appear to be under and all around them; that the reports all came from the Stone and Bald Mountain Ridge, those living on the east side point to the

west, and those on the west pointing to the east for the direction of sounds; that these reports occur as often during the night as the day, in fair weather as in foul; that the effects are felt five miles on each side of the mountain-ridge, and extend from Broad River on the southwest to Catawba on the north, a distance of twenty-five miles; that houses shake, trees with their dead leaves tremble, glasses and crockery rattle, shavings in their workshops shake and "quaver," as one expressed it.

This testimony was collected from thirty or forty men and women of different degrees of intelligence, and their remarkable concurrence in the above statement places the facts beyond the possibility of doubt.

Several hypotheses have been proposed to explain these facts. One is, that the blasting of rock about the mountains will account for all of them. Upon this point we made particular inquiry. There is certainly no operation going on about Stone Mountain, and as the work upon the tunnels in Swannanoah Gap has ceased for more than twelve months, there is no occasion for blasting anywhere else, as fine stones for building purposes, of every form and size, are scattered over all these regions. Besides, any one acquainted with the law of sound knows that the vibratory motion communicated to the matter in the crust of the earth by a blast (supposing it capable of extending to a great distance) will be felt much sooner than the undulations of the atmosphere, which transmit sounds. A person, therefore, standing a thousand yards from a quarry feels the trembling of the earth some time before he hears the sound of the blast. But in all these convulsions of the mountain the concurrent testimony is that the sounds and shocks are either simultaneous or nearly so. The blasting of rock, therefore, cannot account for this important fact.

Another hypothesis is, that these effects may be the result of electricity escaping from the mountain to the cloud, or descending from the cloud to the mountain. There is nothing in the known operations of electricity to produce effects of this kind. Furthermore, these sounds and shocks occur as often in fair as foul weather; and the sounds are altogether different as we had an opportunity of comparing them during our first night's stay upon the mountain. Electricity never explodes unless it meets with a bad conductor, and as the mountain affords it an easy transit, the explosion must take place somewhere between the summit and the cloud, or along the line of its pathway. The explosion, therefore, being in the air, must be subject to the same laws of sound as the blast of the quarry, and the same method of reasoning will apply in this case as in the other.

*\*This explanation is undoubtedly correct; the velocity of the sound-wave in the earth is the same as that of the wave of percussion; or, in other words, the two are identical. An ear, therefore, placed at the surface of the ground would at any point hear a sound simultaneously with the shock. J.H.*

The simultaneousness of the shocks and explosions proves that the sound has not far to travel through the air to reach the observer; and while the primary cause of the explosions may be deeply seated in the earth, yet the immediate cause of the sounds



may be at or near the surface. It is known that the loudness and intensity of sounds depend upon the amplitude of the sound-wave. Suppose, then, that the cause of these explosions be deeply seated in the crust of the earth, the force acting and reacting upon the superincumbent strata will import its vibrations to them and transmit through them its impulsions to the atmosphere above.\* I am inclined, therefore, to the opinion that most of the noises accompanying earthquakes are the results of vibratory movements in the earth's crust, or are the secondary effects of a force acting at great depths beneath. This opinion seems to be sustained by the evidence of the witnesses upon the summit as well as five miles from the base of Stone Mountain, all of whom concur as to the simultaneousness of the shocks and explosions. To this it may be objected that earthquake-shocks are often unaccompanied with noises, or that the former may precede the latter by several minutes. In reply, I will state that the crust of the earth is composed of different strata, some capable of transmitting vibrations that are audible and others that are not, as a string may be made to vibrate and yet produce no audible sound. Now, suppose our observer to be standing upon a section of the earth's crust which is incapable of receiving or imparting sound-vibrations, he may feel the earthquake-shocks and yet hear no noise; or, if sounds should reach him after an interval of time, they may come from a distant section capable of producing them, but which must be transmitted to his ear through the intervening atmosphere.

This discussion leads me to the conclusion that the phenomena connected with the agitation of Stone Mountain must be referred to that general volcanic or earthquake force, which seems as necessary to the economy of nature as light, heat, or electricity. I am not bold enough to venture a theory sufficiently broad to explain these peculiar phenomena. I cannot penetrate the earth to examine the configuration of its inner surface. There may be broad and high arches under which the earthquake wave may move without disturbing the crust above; or there may be deep depressions presenting walls, against which the molten tide may beat and break and send up its thundering vibrations to the summit of the loftiest mountain. All this is hypothetical and unsatisfactory. But although we are not sufficiently acquainted with the nature of this force, its modes of action and the laws which govern it, to suggest a theory capable of explaining all the phenomena, yet we may examine the facts with reference to the probability of Stone Mountain becoming an eruptive volcano. While the explosive character of the sounds, simultaneousness of sounds and shocks, and the limited area of agitation seem to indicate some local cause, yet the general rule which regulates the distribution of volcanoes on continents seems to militate against such a conclusion. Volcanoes are arranged along the border regions of continents, as between the Pacific and Rocky mountains, on islands of the coast, or oceanic islands. They are generally confined to the borders of larger oceans and are seldom found in the interior of continents. There are none in America east of the Andes and Rocky Mountains, and no remains of volcanic action have ever been found along the Appalachian range. These are important facts, indicating no chance results, but point to a natural law which regulated their geographical distribution. And when we consider, too, that volcanoes, with but few exceptions, are only a few miles from the sea or lake; that the Blue Ridge, of which Stone Mountain is only an appendage, is two hundred and fifty miles from the Atlantic, and presents no marks of former eruptive action, we cannot believe that in

these latter days it will behave itself unseemly and do violence to that natural law which planted it in the garden-spot of the South, and gave to the Carolinas the grandest, loveliest scenery on the Appalachian range.

[The following suggestions may be considered as a possible solution of the phenomena in question: It is a well-established fact in geology that the surface of the earth has undergone and is undergoing changes. The highest mountain-chains have been in past geological periods beneath the surface of the sea, as is evident from the marine shells which are found in their strata. It is also well established that some portions of the earth's surface are at present gradually rising and others slowly falling. Now, if we assume that the region around Stone Mountain is undergoing a very gradual elevation or depression, then it will follow that the rocky strata will be brought into a condition of stretching or tension which will go on until the limit of elastic cohesion is reached, when a rupture or crack will suddenly take place which must be attended with a jar, and, in some cases, with an audible sound. If the rocky strata is of the same material from the surface down into the interior; for example, granite, and the mountain being in the process of depression, the crack will take place deep in the interior. If, on the other hand, the mountain is being elevated, the crack will be at the surface. If however, the upper strata are more extensible than the deeper seated, the crack may be in the interior in the case of an elevation as well as in that of a depression.

It has of late years been suspected, from the discrepancy in later and older measurements of points on the Andes, that this mountain system is in a state of a very slow subsidence.

*If the foregoing views are correct there is no indication of a volcanic outburst; and whatever moral effect the disturbances may have on the character of the inhabitants of the region, there is little danger as to any physical changes taking place of sufficient intensity to endanger life. J.H.]*

Taken from the **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, SHOWING THE OPERATIONS, EXPENDITURES, AND CONDITION OF THE INSTITUTION FOR THE YEAR 1874**. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875, pgs. 254-260.

## NATURAL HISTORY OF THE LAND

Since we have all found arrowheads and Indian artifacts here...this is what I think.....and I have researched the land extensively but am not certain about all of this...

General Rutherford went on an 'Expedition against the Cherokee' in the year 1776. Uncle Lawrence Elliott states that he had always been told that there was an Indian Village where the Gateway Farms field is. If you look at the map (attached) this entire area could have been 'cleansed of Indians' by Rutherford and his men on their way to meet at Old Fort or Cathey's Fort. They burned crops and houses and used a 'torched Earth policy' to clear the area of Indians. But it is my understanding that the Indians knew they were coming and most of the Indians in this area simply left and never returned. Then of course there was the Indian Removal of 1835 – 1840, but by that time the Indians were already gone from this area.

