



# THE TOWNS HISTORIAN



The NEWSLETTER of the TOWNS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

The Towns County Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and sharing the rich history of our area. We meet the second Monday of each month at 900 N. Main St., Hiawassee, GA.

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## Well, We're Kinda Getting Back to Normal

by Sandra Green, President



It was so nice to see everyone at the two post-covid monthly meetings we've had so far. I'm hoping that it is the start of getting back to the great programs we had prior to the pandemic. I do understand the hesitancy of some members who aren't ready to be in crowds just yet. The meeting room is large enough to accommodate some social distancing and you're certainly encouraged to wear a mask if that would make you feel safer. If you haven't had a covid vaccine yet, I encourage you to do so for your sake as well as for others. Until further notice, refreshments will be limited to bottled drinks and pre-packaged snacks.

Jerry has been working diligently to schedule interesting topics for our meetings in the coming months. Let's hope we can soon put the pandemic behind us and get back to learning more about our beautiful mountains and hearing tales of those that settled this area! See you soon.

### 2021 OFFICERS

Sandra Green  
*President*

Jerry Taylor  
*Vice President*

Tyler Osborn  
*Secretary*

Frances Shook  
*Treasurer*

Mary Ann McCall Miller  
*Membership Secretary*



### HISTORIANS

Jerry A. Taylor  
*County Historian*

Jason Lee Edwards  
*Deputy Historian*



Mary Ann McCall Miller  
*Webmaster/Graphic Designer*

# 1960 CLASS OF TCHS - CELEBRATING 60 YEARS

By Kenneth Gibson, Class President and Diris Thomas Farmer



We came together from all over Towns County in 1955. We still had community schools at that time and my class of seven was the last group to attend Gumlog School. The next year they moved to Young Harris. But, going to Hiawassee was a milestone since neither of my parents had a high school education.

We were blessed with great teachers, great classmates and some of the best times we could have possibly had. It's been over 60 years since then and our class still remains close. We try to stay in touch through emails, mail, and phone.

This class is a special group of people that I have been blessed to be a part of and most of my classmates feel the same way. We were blessed to grow up in this area and in this era. We still care about each other and feel each others pain or joys. It has been something special and I for one am so glad to be part of this special class.  
Kenneth Gibson



1960



TC

When the special 60th class reunion was cancelled due to COVID in 2020, I committed to compile a book of stories from each classmate chronicling the years from graduation in 1960 to the present.

We were the last group to enter TCHS in 1955 as eighth graders from the very small community schools: Brasstown, Gumlog, Young Harris, Hiawassee, Fodder Creek, Upper Hightower and Lower Hightower. The next year elementary schools were consolidated to Young Harris, Hiawassee and Macedonia and then again to one at TC Comprehensive in 1977. My class of fifteen came from the Old Young Harris Elementary that remains as part of the Fine Arts Annex of the Young Harris College Campus.

As I became more involved with the book, my family and a group of classmates, who live in the Hiawassee area worked diligently with me to bring the book to completion! We, as a special class of TCHS, who grew up during many major historical milestones especially of Towns County, are proud and honored to share the stories and history of our 1960 Class of TCHS.

*Diris Thomas Farmer*

# The Tale of The Mobile Home - Chapter Two

by Sandra Green



If you read the March Historical Society Newsletter, you might remember that I wrote about the story of the Ernest and Jessie Sims house. In 1941 when Lake Chatuge was built, it was relocated from its original location to Main Street in Hiawassee and then, in the 1980s, it was moved again to make room for Hardee's. It now sits vacant on SR75.

At the time I wrote the article, I had not located a photo showing what it looked like when it was located on Main St. Thanks to historical society member, Doug Nicholson, I now can show you where it sat.

Above are three photos of the house. The first one shows where it originally stood. The next one is where it was on Main St and the last one is where it is now. This is just a brief story of the history of one household and the impact the building of Lake Chatuge had on the family. If only buildings could talk, what tales they would tell!

## Georgia's Youngest Sheriff

By Frances Shook



Ketron Wayne "Ket" Shook was born October 2, 1930, in Towns County to William Roosevelt Shook and Ida Ramey. He attended Towns County High School and then served two-years in the Army. He entered the service as a private and, within fourteen months, he had earned battlefield promotions up to the rank of master sergeant. He served a year in Korea with the 9th Regiment of the 2nd Infantry Division and received a purple heart for a mortar wound in the leg.

While working at an auto assembly plant in Doraville, he received word that he had been nominated to run for sheriff in the 1956 election. According to an article published in *The Atlanta Constitution*, he was "drafted" into politics. He said at the time, "Of course, I was from Towns County and knew a lot of people there, but I didn't have any idea I was fixing to be nominated for anything. I didn't have any idea of going into politics at all, but I figured it was my duty since I was nominated." He took a leave of absence one week before the election and crammed all of his campaigning into one week. On January 1, 1957, at age twenty-six,

he was sworn in as one of the two youngest sheriffs in the United States.

Sheriff Shook and his family lived in the downstairs of the Old Rock Jail in Hiawassee. He operated a radio-equipped patrol car and had two deputies on part-time basis: Fain Wood and Richard Chastain. According to the *Constitution*, "it was usually pretty quiet in the little mountain county," and the sheriff spent the better part of his time "in a routine of hunting moonshine stills and bootleggers (his biggest enforcement problem), patrolling the county's roads, and serving legal papers." However, there was occasional excitement.

He told the *Constitution* reporter how he was called out once when an intoxicated young man was shooting the furniture in his mother's house with a 12-gauge shotgun: "He ran in the chicken house when he saw me coming and I hollered for him to come out. He bounced out with that shotgun pointed out at me and pulled the hammer back...I figured the gun wasn't loaded so I started walking toward the boy. He started backing up and aimed the gun at me again, but he backed into the deputy...I sure got scared after it was all over. The gun was loaded."

Ketron W. Shook died March 8, 2007, and he is buried in Burch Cemetery.

# Historic Towns County Post Offices

By Jerry A. Taylor and Jason L. Edwards



Rural Free Delivery was a program of the United States Postal Service that began in the late 19th century to deliver mail directly to rural destinations. Previously, individuals living in remote homesteads had to pick up mail themselves at distant post offices. The following article details the historic post offices that were located in Towns County.

**BAREFOOT** post office was located on Hightower in the Barefoot community. It was created in 1904 with Bryant Hill as the first postmaster. Subsequent postmasters were William T. Stonecypher (1905), Edward C. Berrong (1907), Asbury N. Eller (1913), and Raleigh L. Eller (1917). The post office was discontinued in 1918 and the mail directed to TITUS.

**BERLONG** post office, originally proposed to be named RICH, was located in the Hightower area. It was created in 1897. Its one and only postmaster was James H. Adams. It was discontinued in 1899 and the mail directed to VISAGE.

**BRASS** post office, originally proposed to be named MANY FORKS, was located in the Many Forks community. It was created in 1881 with William A. Hunt as the first postmaster. Subsequent postmasters were James M. Black (1884), William A. Hunt (1885), and William H. Dean (1886). The post office was discontinued in 1887 and the mail directed to WARNE, NC.

**BRASSTOWN** post office was located in the old John Bryson home (Old EMC site) in 1842 with John Bryson as postmaster. It was discontinued in 1844. Reestablished in 1848 with James Cathey appointed postmaster. He was followed by David Kimsey in 1856. It was discontinued in 1866. Reestablished in 1883 in Mangum H. Bryson's home with him as postmaster. It was discontinued in 1886 and mail directed to TRACK ROCK (Union County).

**CAMPAGNE** post office was located in the "old" Woods Grove inundated by Lake Chatuge. It was created in 1880 with George W. Johnson as the first postmaster. Subsequent postmasters were Christopher G. Memminger (1891), George W. Johnson (1891), George W. Tipton (1893), Philip A. Woodring (1893), Christopher C. Moore (1898), Andy Crain (1900), and Bertha A. Woodring (1901). The post office was discontinued in 1905 and the mail directed to YOUNG HARRIS.

Of interest is the fact that Christopher G. Memminger was a mining engineer whose father, also named Christopher Memminger, was secretary of the treasury for the Confederacy.

**ELLER** post office was located on the south side of the Clayton Road between Hightower and Dick's Gap. It was created on June 4, 1883. Its one and only postmaster was James L. Hooper. It was discontinued on Dec. 17, 1883, and the mail directed to VISAGE.

**FODDER** post office was located at the Luther A. Nicholson home on Fodder Creek. He was its one and only postmaster. It was created in 1899 and discontinued in 1910. The mail was then directed to HIAWASSEE.

**GREENWOOD** post office was located in Brasstown Valley. It was created in 1848 with Martin Greenwood as postmaster. It was discontinued in 1851 and mail directed to MT. EOLIA.

**GUM LOG** post office was created in 1891 with John C. McConnell as the first postmaster followed by Altha A. McConnell (1899). It was changed to Union County in 1903. Charles N. Hill then became postmaster until it was discontinued in 1905 and the mail directed to WARNE, NC.

HIAWASSEE post office was created in 1857, following the creation of Towns County. The (Union County) SHADY GROVE post office was discontinued and the mail sent to the new Hiawassee courthouse. Andrew J. Burch was the first postmaster followed by William R. McConnell (1859), William T. Crane (1866), William Barrett (1868), John B. Burch (1869), Thomas A. Capps (1873), William R. McConnell (1876), Howell Cobb Standridge (1882), Thomas J. Hooper (1887), Robert L. Davenport (1889), Thomas J. Hooper (1893), John A. Davenport (1897), John M. Johnson (1901), followed by a long string of others.

HOPELAND post office, originally proposed to be named BOOK, was located in a shed at the William G. Taylor place on Owl Creek. Jeremiah M. Taylor Jr. served as its only postmaster from 1900 to 1902 when it was discontinued and the mail directed to MOUNTAIN SCENE.

HUNT post office was located in the area of Lower Bell Creek Church. It was created in 1883 with Henry H. Burch as first postmaster. Subsequent postmasters were Jacob N. Gibson (1886), Alex Burch (1896), and Jesse H. Gibson (1906). It was discontinued in 1906 and the mail directed to HIAWASSEE.

McTYEIRE post office was located on the present site of Young Harris College. It was created in 1887 with Robert L. Campbell as postmaster, followed by Edward A. Gray (1889), and C. C. Spence (1889). The name was changed to YOUNG HARRIS in 1891.

MT. EOLIA post office was located in Brasstown Valley. It was created in 1851 with Sumner J. Smith as first postmaster. Subsequent postmasters were Robert H. Erwin (1855), John Bryson (1857), Mangum H. Bryson (1859), James T. Rogers (1860). Discontinued 1867. Reestablished 1867. Sarah M. Bryson (1867). Discontinued 1871. Reestablished 1872. Mangum H. Bryson (1872). It was discontinued in 1876.

MOUNTAIN SCENE post office was originally located at the Wyly/Brown place on Hiawassee River. It was created in 1857 with Oliver C. Wyly as postmaster. Discontinued 1866. Reestablished 1872 with Hiram F. Brown (1872), followed by David N. McConnell (1878), Jackson W. Moore (1883), Frank Lloyd (1884), and William C. Brown (1896). It was discontinued in 1914 and the mail directed to PRESLEY.

OSBORN post office was in the area of Lower Hightower. It was created in 1882 with Absalom M. Brown as the first postmaster. Subsequent postmasters were John B. Wood (1897), Demetrious A. H. Davidson (1897), John B. Wood (1901), and Charles F. Colwell (1917). It was discontinued in 1917 and the mail directed to HIAWASSEE.

OWEN post office was located near the state line in the Brasstown community. Dora L. Phillips served as its only postmistress during its short existence from 1908 to 1909.

PRESLEY post office was located at the junction of Streak Hill Road and Hwy 17. It was created in 1899 and the first postmaster was William J. Presley. Subsequent postmasters were Julius W. Presley (1900), Allen Adams (1904), Chelcie C. Adams (1928), and Cecil Taft Adams (1932). It was dis-

continued in 1960 and mail directed to HIAWASSEE.

SHADY GROVE post office was located in the Lower Hightower area and was the first post office located in what is now Towns County. It was created in 1837 with John W. Grady as the first postmaster. He was followed by Jesse Osborn in 1839 who remained in that position until 1857 when the post office was discontinued and the Hiawassee post office established in the newly created Towns County. Of interest is that John W. Grady was the uncle of Georgia's famous Henry W. Grady.

TITUS post office, originally proposed to be named SCHLEY, was located on Upper Hightower. It was created in 1900 with John P. Berrong as first postmaster. Subsequent postmasters were Ruth Smith (1910), William Homer Berrong (1915), and Cleo Wood Berrong (1931). It was discontinued on June 30, 1958 and the mail directed to HIAWASSEE.

TREE post office was originally proposed to have been called Lenoir, Rhea, Garnet, and Seay before the name TREE was finalized. It was located at Tate City. It was created in 1897 with William Ausborn Seay as first postmaster. Subsequent postmasters were Amos L. Nichols (1905), Henry A. Shook (1906), James M. Nichols (1908), William R. Eller (1912), Elisha F. Nicholson (1913), Francis S. Nicholson (1926), and Edith Nicholson (1931). It was discontinued on Dec. 15, 1932, and the mail directed to TITUS.

VISAGE, named for pioneer Hightower settler William Visage, was located at the John H. Corn place. It was created in 1875 and John H. Corn served as its only postmaster. It was discontinued in 1913 and the mail directed to BAREFOOT.

WELCH post office was located in the area between Young Harris and Crooked Creek on the present Warne Road. It was created in 1890 with Thomas M. Nichols as the first postmaster. Subsequent postmasters were Enos R. Brown (1890), Almira C. Matheson (1895), William P. Morgan (1895), Luallen J. McClure (1901), Louisa M. Alexander (1903), and Mollie McClure (1905). It was discontinued in 1905 and the mail directed to YOUNG HARRIS.

YOUNG HARRIS post office, formerly named McTYEIRE, was created in 1891 with C. C. Spence as first postmaster. He was followed by Joseph W. Boyd (1894), Allen L. Howell (1898), and a long list extending to present day.

# Cables – An Entrepreneur Dream

by Mary Ann McCall Miller



76. In 1952, John built the building being renovated today and the old garage was torn down. The Cable Dry Goods/ Gas Station/Garage was soon to be a central hub for the Young Harris community. The store sold clothing, shoes, other dry goods, and groceries including a meat counter. It truly was a one-stop shop. The Cable family lived above the business. John being the entrepreneur, decided to rent three of the rooms upstairs to traveling patrons. In the back he had a small campground and later rented out mini-bikes. He also built the other building to the left of the store and the businesses that are there today are family members. You could say he had the first strip mall of the mountains!



Many old-timers as well as newcomers are wondering what the fate of the old Cable's Gas Station will be. Alas! The answer is known...well, maybe. I arranged to meet with Dana and Mike Cable last week to find out their plans for the landmark building in Young Harris. Mike is the son of John Cable, the owner of the builder for decades. Dana is Mike's daughter and is the creative spark of the renovation. She painted the Coca-Cola mural on the left side of the building.

As they took me through the garage and store, I felt like I stepped back into the 1950s and 1960s. The two-bay garage still has the smell of oil and grease. Then as we walked into the store, musty but beautiful wood hardwood floors, walls and shelves greeted me.

As a kid, I always thought that Cables was just a filling station. I was surprised to hear the history behind the building. The Cable family came to the North Georgia mountains in the early 1950s. "J.T." Cable (John's father) built a small garage next to the existing building today. His wife ran the "Cable's Café" that was located at the intersection of the Warne highway and Hwy.



In the 1980s John closed the doors of the business and headed to Florida. Dana and John said he collected anything and everything. In the cleanup/restoration they threw away 4 construction dumpsters of junk. When I asked the million-dollar question, what their plans are for the building, they stated "It's a work in progress." They want a place that people can relax, reminisce and enjoy downtown Young Harris. So, what will the building house? You will just have to wait and see!





## Eller Family Meets in Hayesville

by William Steve Eller

The Eller Family Association met in Hayesville, North Carolina last month. The event was held at the Hinton Center on Lake Chatuge. The EFA exists to assist all Eller and associated family lines worldwide to discover and preserve our historical past.

I was the host for this year's conference and wanted to take a different approach as far as lodging. We rented the Johnson Retreat House that has 15 bedrooms so that everyone would get to know each other better. I do believe we accomplished that goal. Every room was rented and overflow was directed to the Hinton Center RV sites and local hotels. The first day consisted of meetings and the election of new officers for the next two years. Yours truly was elected as the new president. We want to get more local folks interested in the EFA. The organization really needs some younger Eller Descendants to get involved.

The second day consisted of a trip to the Head of Tennessee Baptist Church in Dillard, Georgia where the matriarch of most all the local Eller Descendants was buried. Susannah "Sukey" Eller (born about 1787 in Sullivan County North Carolina, now Sullivan County, Tennessee) was the first Eller in Georgia (according to our research). Since we were going to be right next to the Dillard House, we just had to drop by and have lunch. The afternoon included trips to Helen, Georgia and to Bell Mountain.

The third day was Saturday and we conducted a silent auction to raise funds to help off set the cost of the conference. We also met local folks and enjoyed a meet and greet atmosphere. We conducted a photo session in the afternoon. The day was capped off with a dinner banquet. We had a great meal prepared by the Hinton Center Chef, Philip. The Chris Rumpfelt Family (Eller Descendants) was our musical entertainment for the evening.

I would like to encourage all you Ellers (and associated families) to think about joining the Eller Family Association. Our family newsletter is printed quarterly and is sent out to all members. Dan Liggett of Houston, Texas is our Chronicles Editor and he does a really great job. Please visit our family website ([ellerfamilyassociation.com](http://ellerfamilyassociation.com)) to see what is available there. If you are even remotely interested in your family roots, you will want to visit the website. Harvey Powers of Midlothian, Virginia is our Web Master. Harvey is a great asset to our family association. So, what are you waiting for? Visit the web site today to find out how to join. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

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# DONATIONS

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Thank you to the following people for  
their generous donations to the historical society.

Jerry Taylor  
*In Memory of Steve Howell*

Lemay Anderson  
*In Honor of Jerry Taylor*

Brandy Cox  
*In Honor of Jerry Taylor*

Frances Shook  
*In Memory of Steve Howell*

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