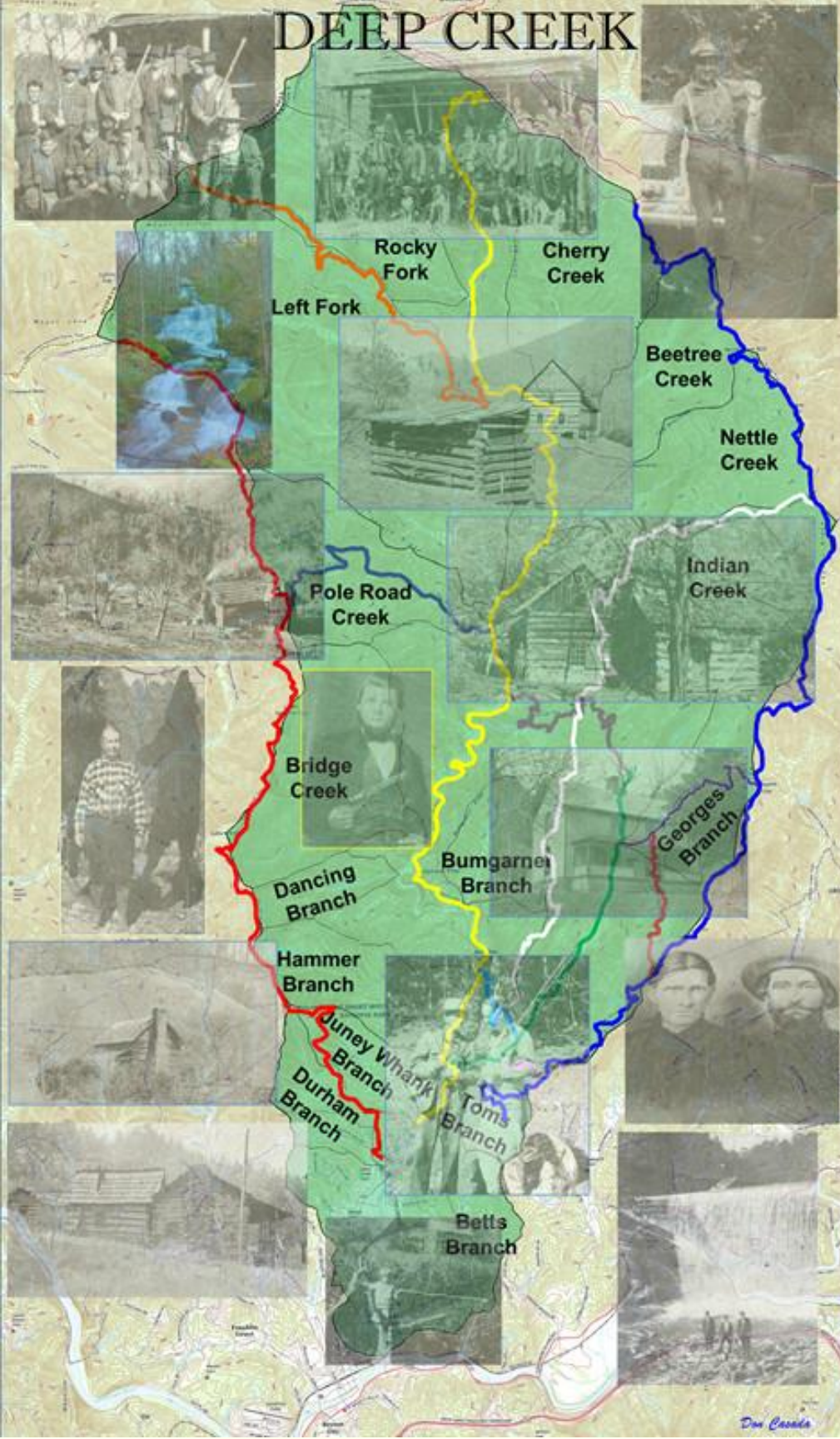


DEEP CREEK

DEEP CREEK

A place where
Minds are renewed
Hearts are restored
Souls are redeemed

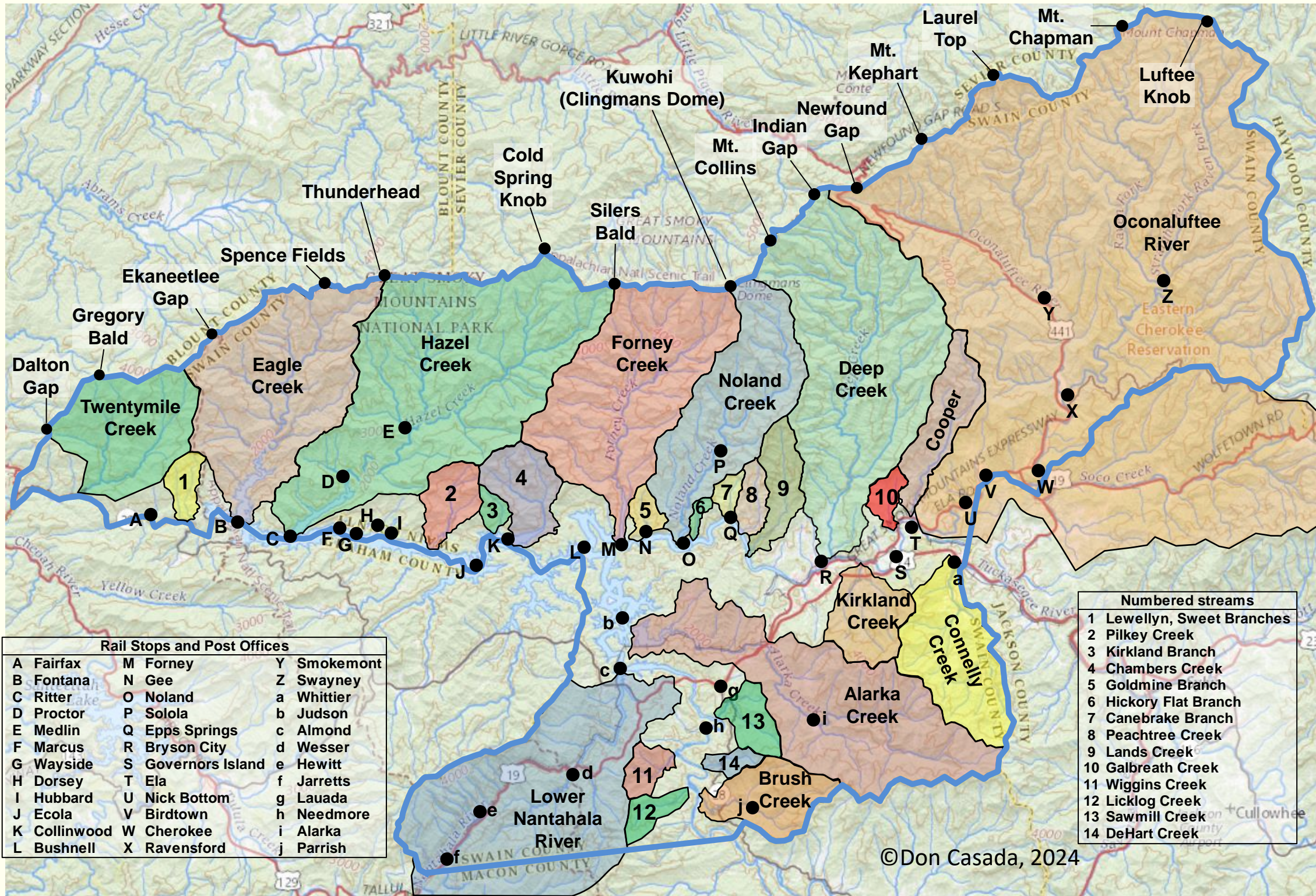
Don Casada and Wendy Meyers



Outline

- Geographic overview
- Summaries and anecdotes by era:
 - 1761 to 1820
 - 1820 to 1870
 - 1870 to 1930
 - 1930 to 2024

Swain County's streams

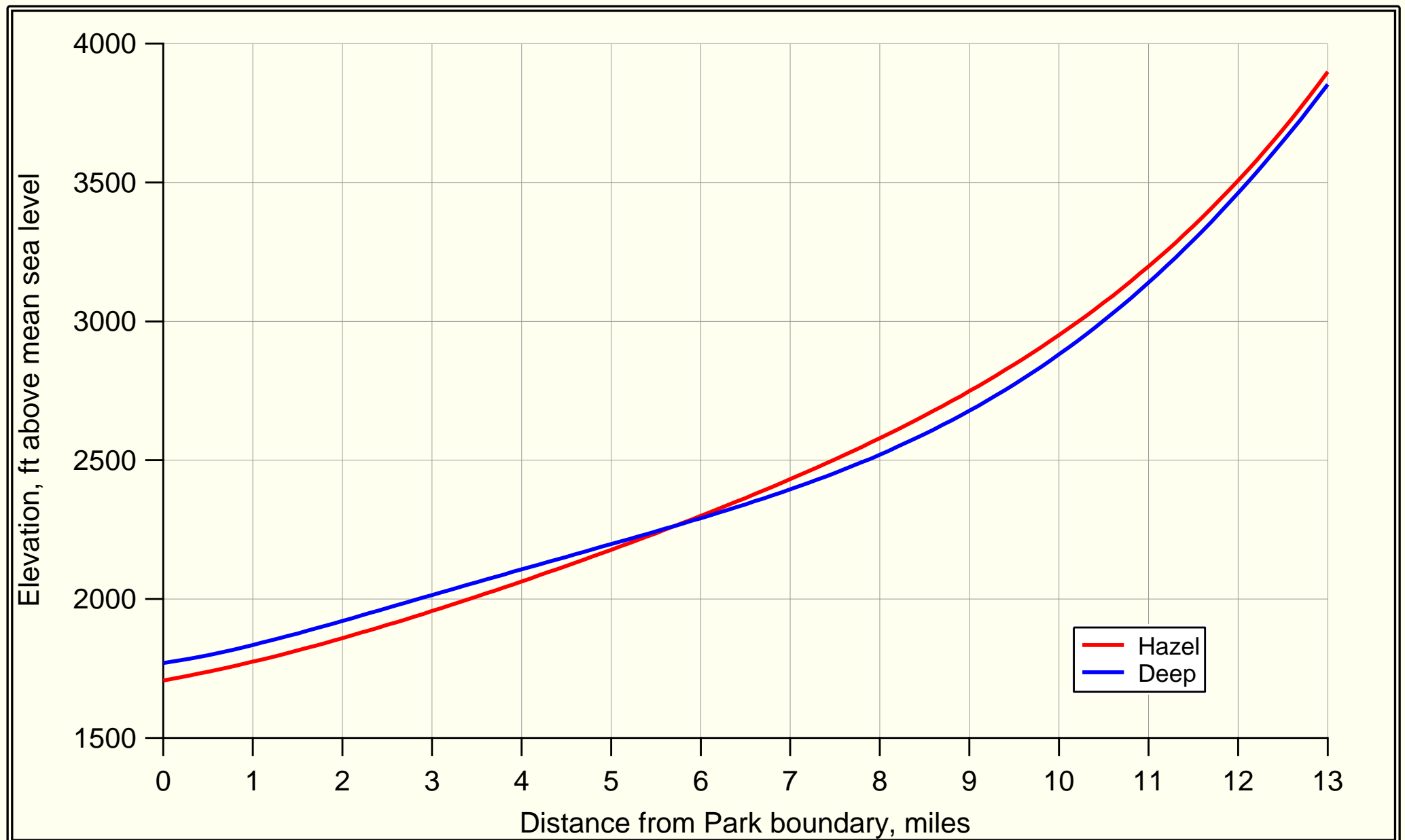


Rail Stops and Post Offices		
A Fairfax	M Forney	Y Smokemont
B Fontana	N Gee	Z Swayney
C Ritter	O Noland	a Whittier
D Proctor	P Solola	b Judson
E Medlin	Q Epps Springs	c Almond
F Marcus	R Bryson City	d Wesser
G Wayside	S Governors Island	e Hewitt
H Dorsey	T Ela	f Jarretts
I Hubbard	U Nick Bottom	g Lauada
J Ecola	V Birdtown	h Needmore
K Collinwood	W Cherokee	i Alarka
L Bushnell	X Ravensford	j Parrish

Numbered streams	
1	Lewellyn, Sweet Branches
2	Pilkey Creek
3	Kirkland Branch
4	Chambers Creek
5	Goldmine Branch
6	Hickory Flat Branch
7	Canebrake Branch
8	Peachtree Creek
9	Lands Creek
10	Galbreath Creek
11	Wiggins Creek
12	Licklog Creek
13	Sawmill Creek
14	DeHart Creek

©Don Casada, 2024

Deep and Hazel Creeks are remarkably similar in terms of stream slopes

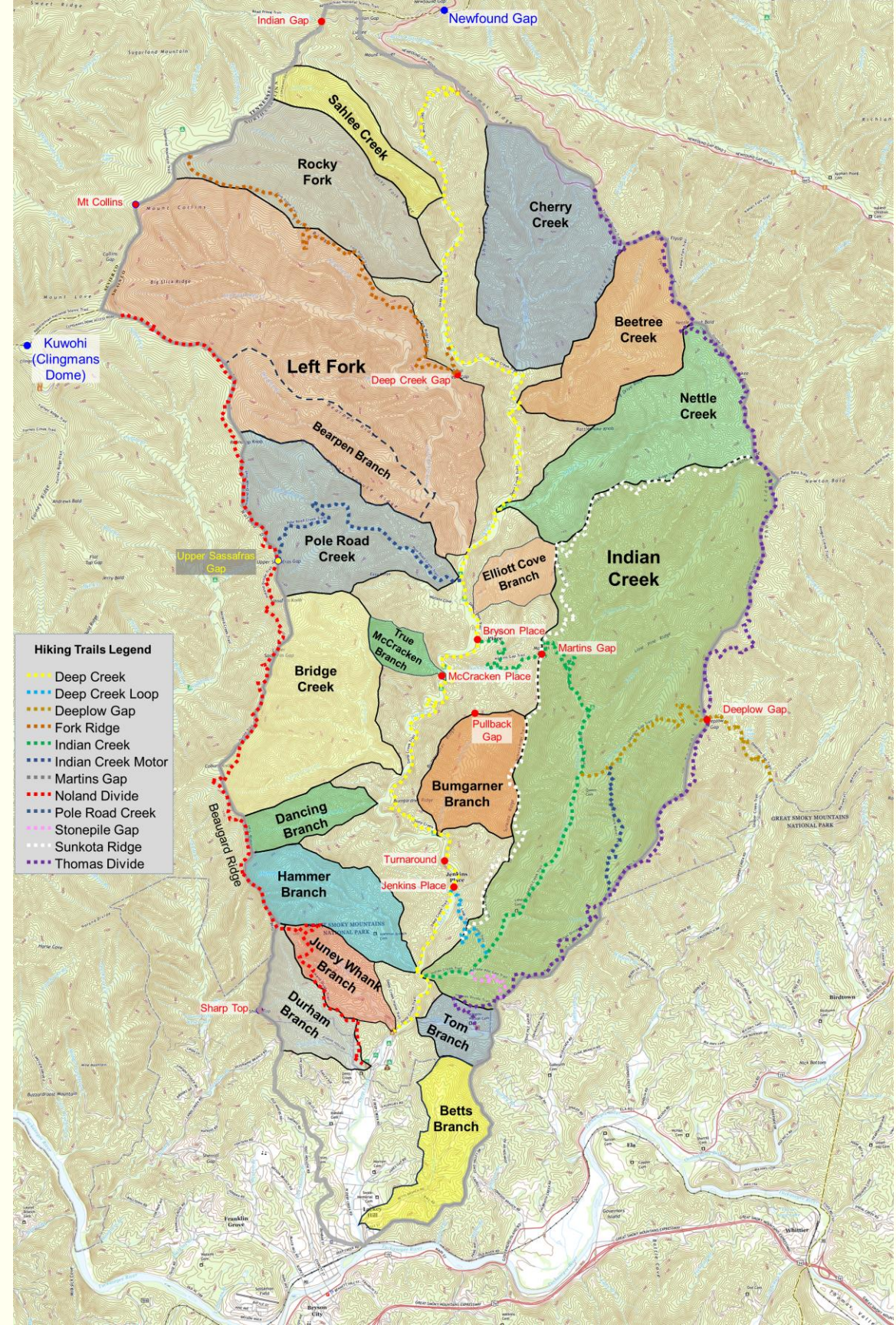


This is not apparent to anyone hiking, particularly with the climb over Bumgarner Ridge; even the short climbs above Big Rock and at Hammer Branch exceed anything on Hazel Creek below Sugar Fork.

Geographical tidbits

- Drainage area = 44 square miles
- Highest elevation = 6240 ft
- Mouth elevation = 1727 ft
- Over 70 miles of maintained trails* wind through and along its perimeter
- Numerous unmaintained trails, ranging from challenging manways to well-designed and graded wagon roads
- Eight backcountry campsites*
- For 2/3 of the drive from Newfound Gap to Clingmans Dome, you are in the Deep Creek drainage
- Much of the upper portion of the drainage is virgin timber

Earlier trails/roads



* Highest trail and campsite density of all the major Park drainages

Graphic of virgin timber sections in the Park

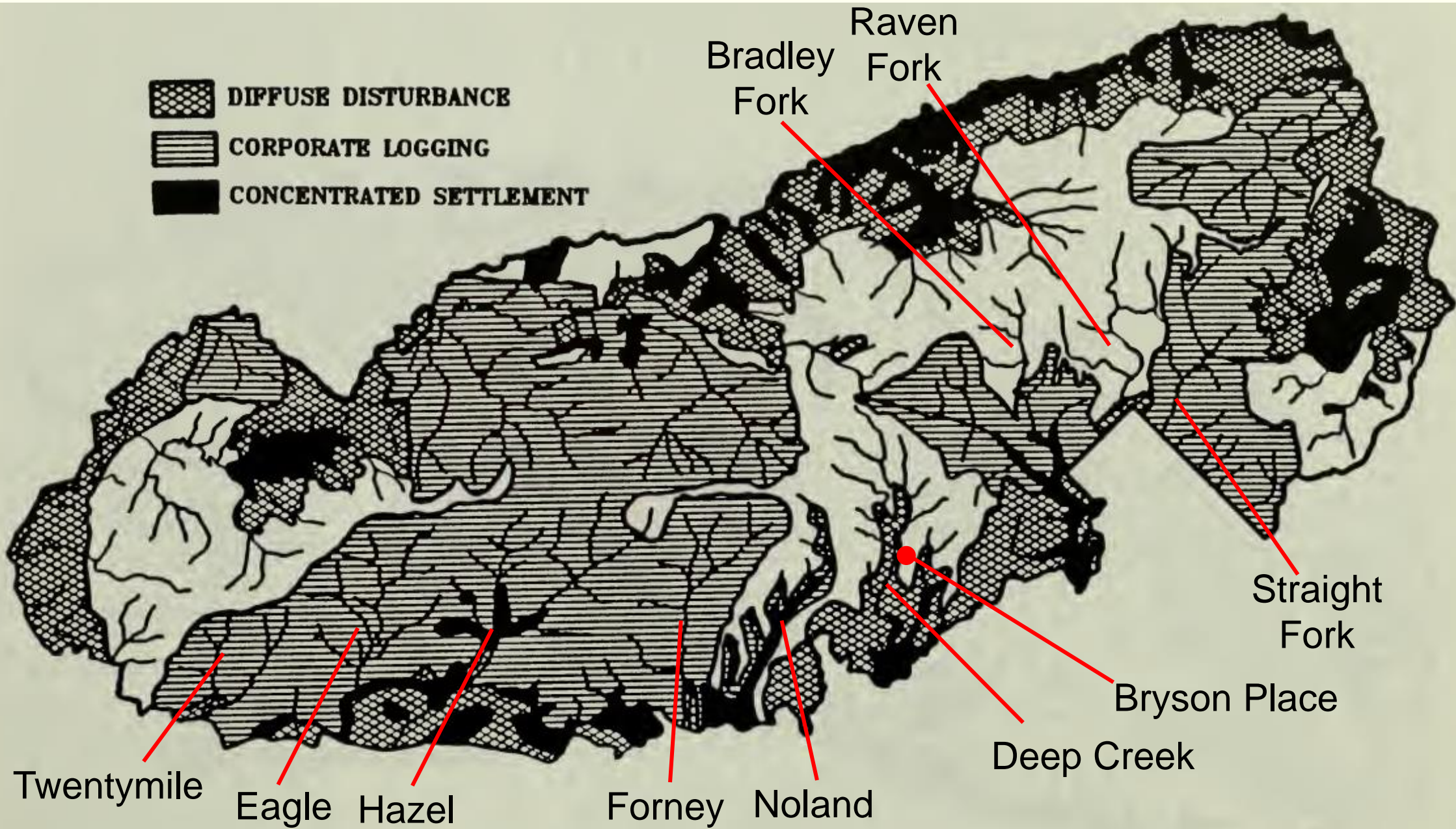


Figure 2. Diffuse disturbance closely associated with settled areas of GRSM prior to park establishment in 1934.

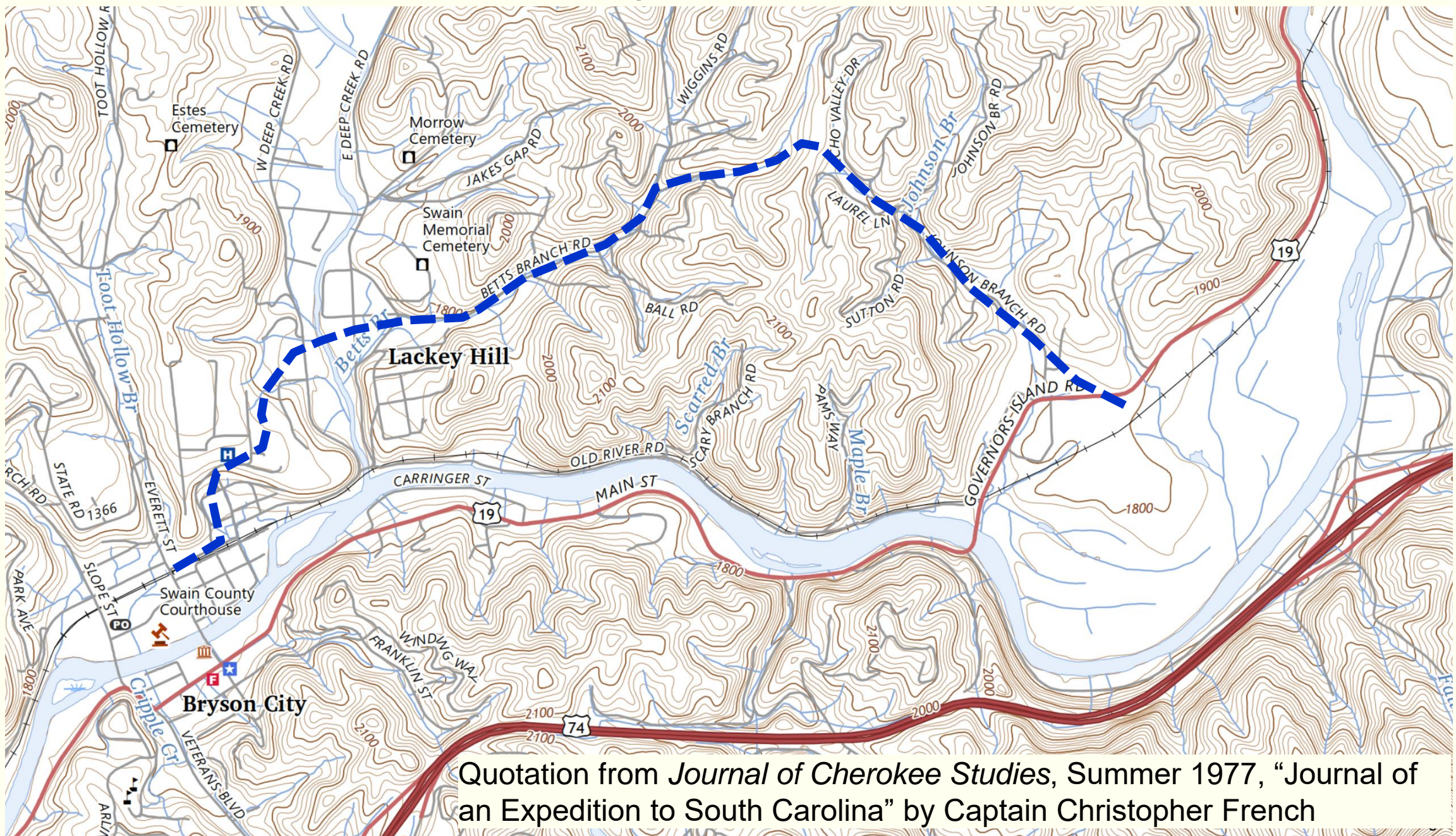
Source: Charlotte Pyle, [Vegetation Disturbance History of Great Smoky Mountains National Park: An Analysis of Archival Maps and Records](#), National Park Service, 1985.

1761 to 1820

Early descriptions and discussion of Deep Creek (and surrounding) area

- 1761 Grant punitive expedition against the Cherokees
- Late 18th century land grant rush in WNC and what could have happened, but didn't
- 1802 Meigs-Freeman survey
- Humphrey Posey log (*Latter Day Luminary*)
- Yonah Equa et al letters to R.J. Meigs
- 1819 cession treaty, 1820 Love survey and surveys of Cherokee life estate tracts on Deep Creek

Inferred Grant expedition route from Kituwah to Tuckaleechee
“...marched for Tuckareetchih, three miles, having gone through
a narrow pass for about 2 miles we cross'd a small plain that led
us to a Creek which has a good Ford.”



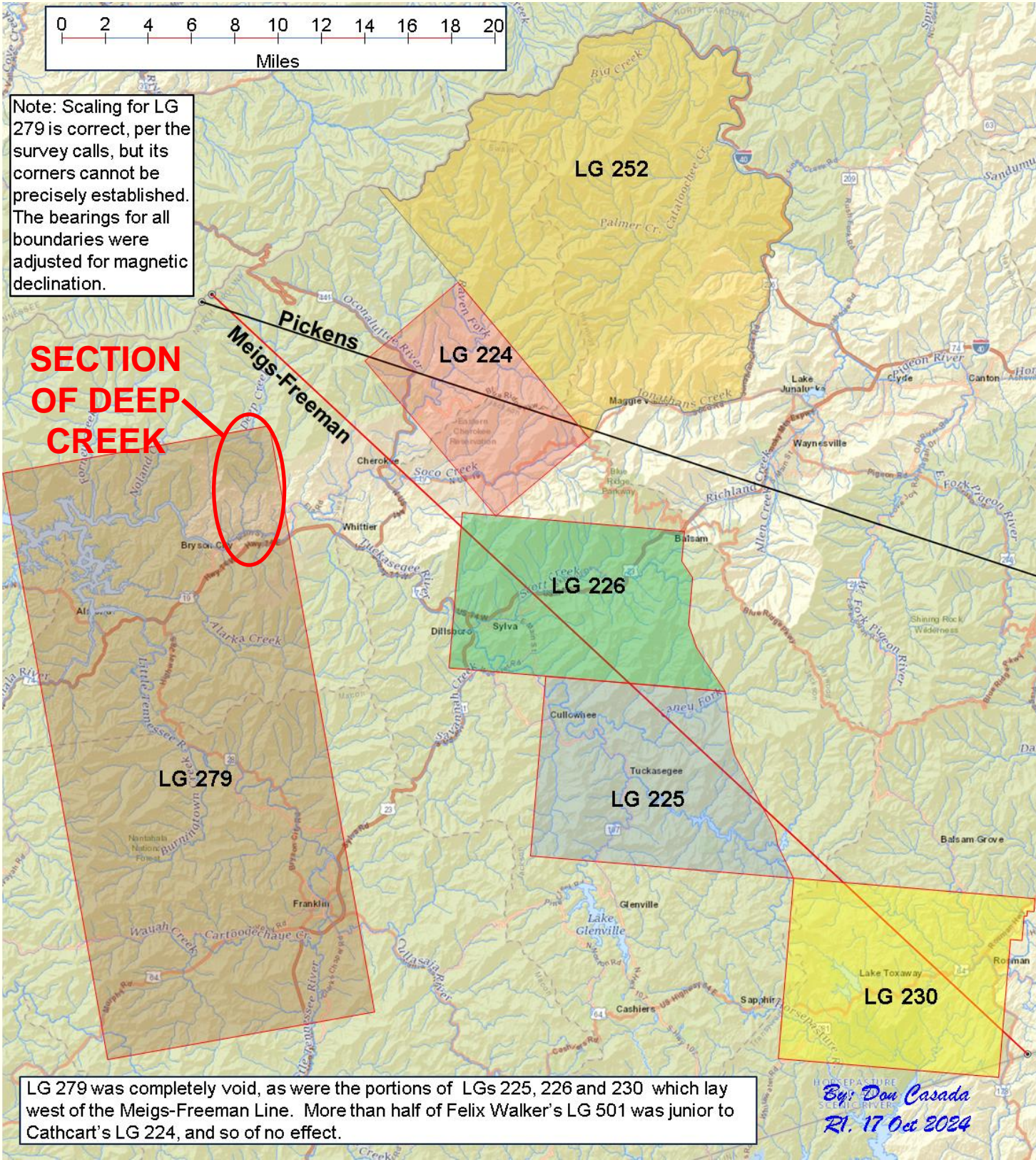
Quotation from *Journal of Cherokee Studies*, Summer 1977, “Journal of an Expedition to South Carolina” by Captain Christopher French

State land grants were issued to large chunks of WNC in the late 1790s

- In 1796 [John Gray Blount](#) acquired Buncombe land grant 252, which included everything north and west of Jonathan's Creek and the Pigeon River in Haywood County to the state line, including the entire Cataloochee and Big Creek as well as about 2/3 of the Raven Fork drainages: 176,000 acres
- Also in 1796, [William Cathcart](#) and his brother-in-law [George Latimer](#) acquired eleven separate land grant tracts in what are now Swain, Jackson, Transylvania, Buncombe and Burke Counties amounting to 367,520 acres.
- In 1797, [John Haldeman](#) and [Jacob Eshelman](#) received a 200,960 acre land grant tract which included today's Franklin and Bryson City – [and a large chunk of Deep Creek](#).
- Blount lived in Washington County, on the NC coast; he was a brother of [William Blount](#), namesake of Blount County, TN (the only senator ever evicted from the U.S. Senate)
- Cathcart and Latimer both lived in Philadelphia, PA. Both served in the Revolutionary War; Cathcart was a Surgeon, Latimer was Lt. Colonel.
- Haldeman and Eshelman lived in Lancaster County, PA.

Significant early LG portions were void on account of including territory which was still Cherokee land at the time the grants were issued

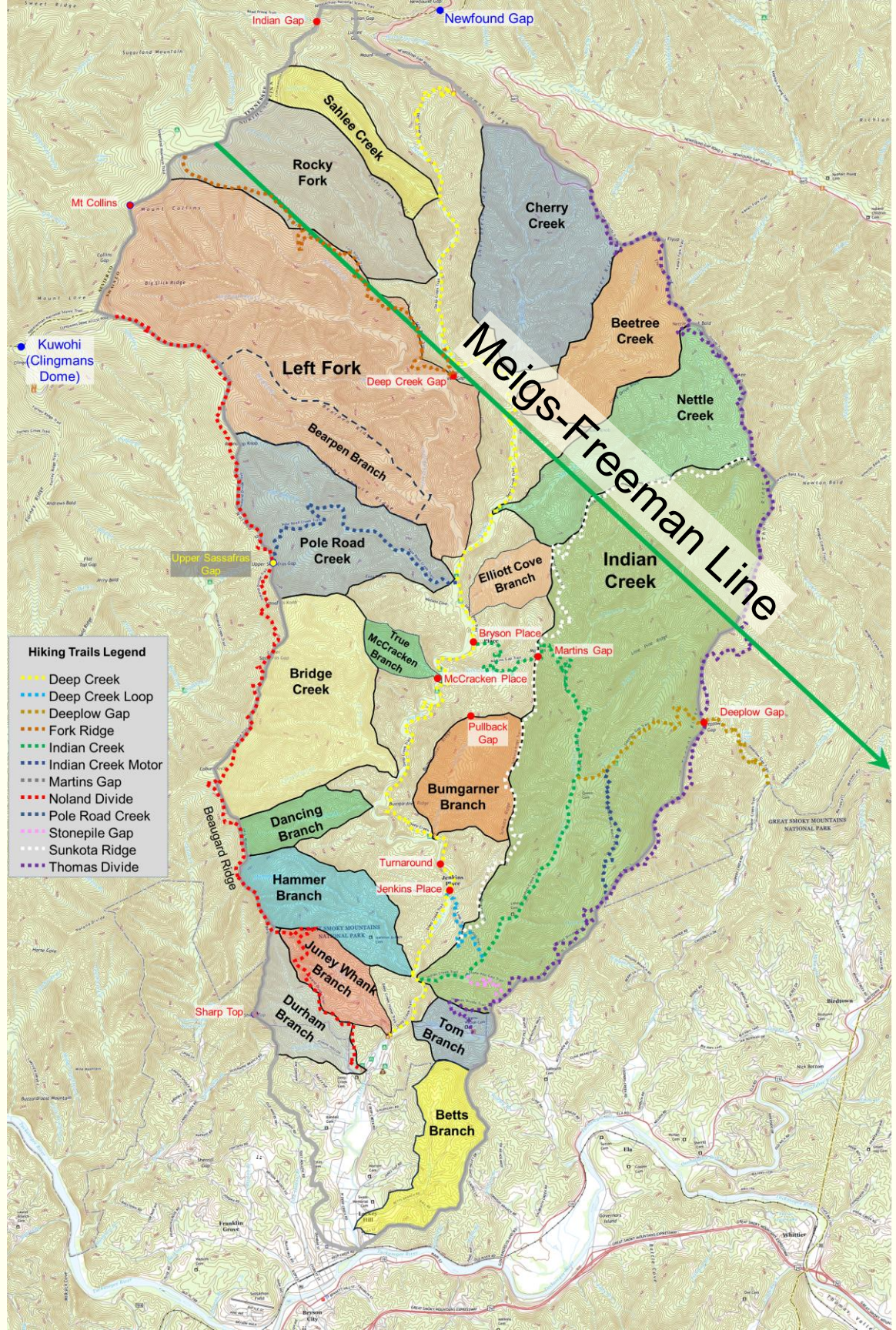
- Land issues related to the Cherokee cession boundaries went to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1840, and to the NC Supreme Court – three times – in 1889. The net effect was that the NC Supreme Court reversed the US Supreme Court decision. Net effect was LG portions west of Meigs-Freeman Line were nullified, including all of LG 279 and parts of LGs 225, 226 and 230.



Court references:
[Latimer v. Poteet](#), 39 U.S. 4 (1840)
[Brown v. Brown](#), 103 N.C.R. 213 (1889)
[Brown v. Brown](#), 103 N.C.R. 221 (1889)
[Brown v. Brown](#), 106 N.C.R. 451 (1889)

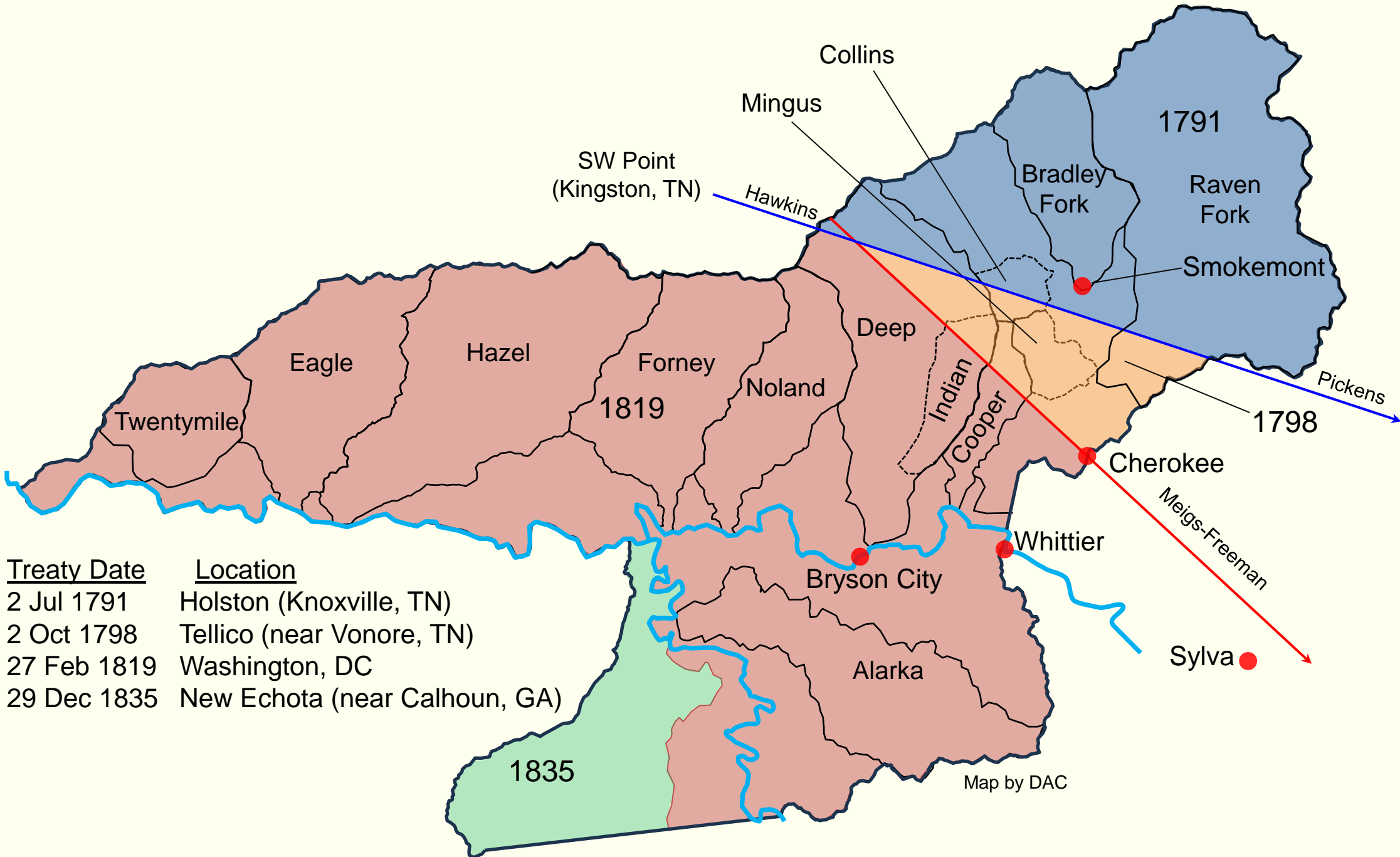
The first seven miles of the Meigs-Freeman survey of 1802 transected the upper Deep Creek drainage

- “The best woodsman or Indians could give us but little information for neither had ever explored the great Iron Mountains anywhere near that part where the direction of our line would carry us.”*
- Descending Fork Ridge: “Laurel being very thick” (Aug 17); “very thick Laurel & Briars” (Aug 18); “exceeding thick Laurel & Briars” (Aug 19)
- On August 20, when the crew reached Deep Creek, Cherokee men and an interpreter were sent to Bear’s Town (Bryson City) for food stock resupply.



* Letter, R.J. Meigs to Henry Dearborn, Secretary of War, 20 Oct. 1802.

Swain County land was ceded in four Cherokee treaties; the majority of Deep Creek wasn't open for settlement until after the 1819 treaty



<u>Treaty Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
2 Jul 1791	Holston (Knoxville, TN)
2 Oct 1798	Tellico (near Vonore, TN)
27 Feb 1819	Washington, DC
29 Dec 1835	New Echota (near Calhoun, GA)

White settlers were illegally trespassing before 1819

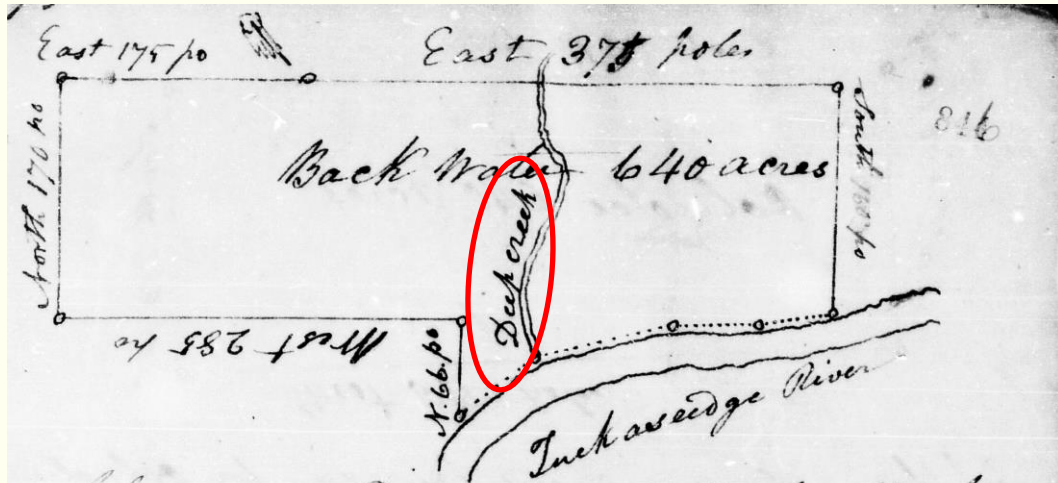
- Evangelist Humphrey Posey included multiple entries in his journal regarding whites living in Cherokee territory in 1818, including at Cowee and Big-bear's town (Bryson City).
- Yonah Equa (Big Bear) and others wrote to Cherokee Agent R.J. Meigs in 1817 and again in 1818 to complain about whites intruding among the North Carolina Cherokee and that while Meigs was preventing intrusions in Tennessee, he was ignoring the same in North Carolina.
- Big Bear had written to James Monroe, serving as both Secretary of State and Secretary of War under James Madison, in 1814, asking for assistance from the United States in dealing with whites who were making trouble in western North Carolina; it was noted that Meigs was too far removed to be of any help.

1820 to 1870

1819 cession treaty provided an option for Cherokees to remain

- Both the 1819 treaty and an 1817 treaty (with no land cessions in the area) included mechanisms for individual Cherokee families to remain on 640 acre reservations
- In North Carolina, two fee simple reservations were established per the 1819 treaty: for Big Bear (Bryson City) and Richard Walker (Dillsboro)
- In what is now Swain County, there were 13 life estate tracts: three on Alarka Creek, one in the Needmore area, three on Deep Creek, one just east of Bryson City, and four in the Governor's Island/Kituwah – Ela section
- Surveys completed in 1820 (examples follow)

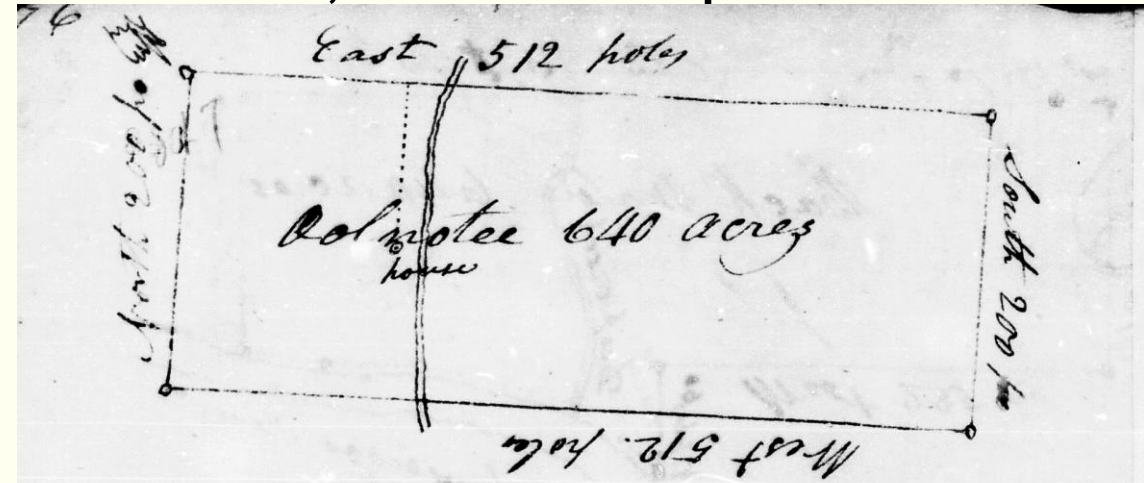
Back Water and Ool-lah-not-ee tracts, lower Deep Creek



I have surveyed and laid off for Backwater 640 acres of land on ~~Deep~~ Deep creek north side of Tuckasee River bounded ~~by~~ ^{by} ~~the~~ ^{by} ~~Big~~ ^{by} ~~Bear~~ ^{Big Bear} reservations Beginning at a black oak ~~corner~~ ^{corner} South west corner thence with ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~line~~ ^{line} East 375 poles to a stake on a high mountain thence south crossing the creek at 160 poles, thence South 160 poles to the river bank, thence down ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~river~~ ^{river} as it meanders 254 poles to two beach trees on the ~~big~~ ^{big} ~~bear~~ ^{bear} line ^{at the mouth of Deep creek at 186 poles} thence with ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Big~~ ^{Big} ~~Bear~~ ^{Bear} line north 66 poles to a black gum, thence west 285 poles along ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Bear~~ ^{Bear} line to a stake, thence North 170 poles to a stake, thence East 175 poles to the Beginning including his improvement Surveyed 19th September 1820

Darling Bulk
Alfred Brown
S. G. Bar.

Robert Armstrong
Surveyor

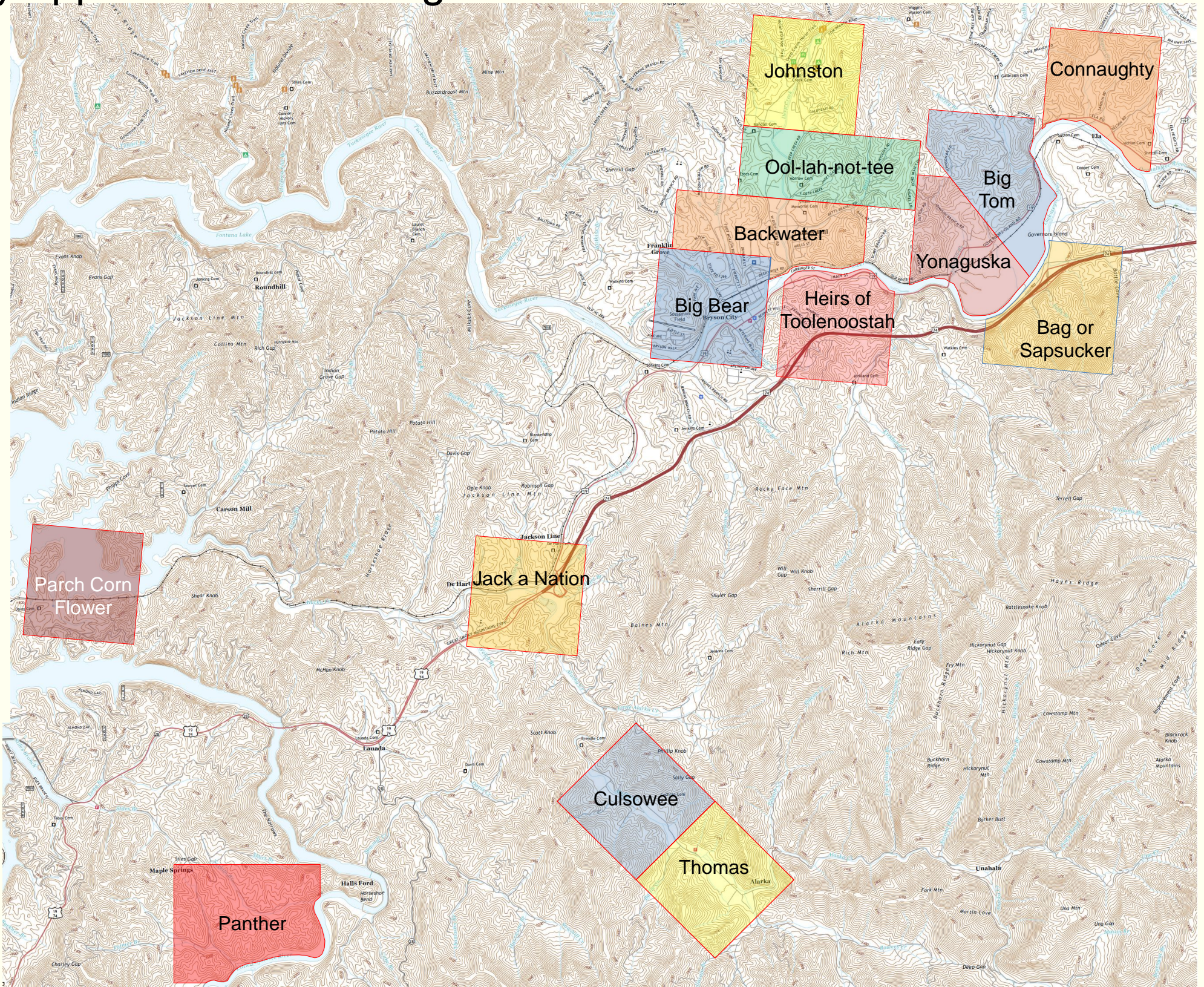


I have surveyed and laid off for ool-lah-not-ee 640 acres of land on deep creek on the north side of Tuckasee River bounded on the south side by ~~the~~ ^{Backwater} ~~reservations~~ ^{reservations} and on the north by ~~the~~ ^{John} ~~reservations~~ ^{Stons} ~~reservations~~ ^{reservations} Beginning at a post oak John Stons South west corner thence East 512 poles to a stake on a mountain crossing the creek at 165 poles, thence South 200 poles to a stake thence West 512 poles to a stake crossing the creek at 352 poles, thence North 200 poles to the Beginning including his improvement Surveyed the 19th September 1820.

Robert Armstrong
Surveyor

Darling Bulk
Alfred Brown
S. G. Bar.

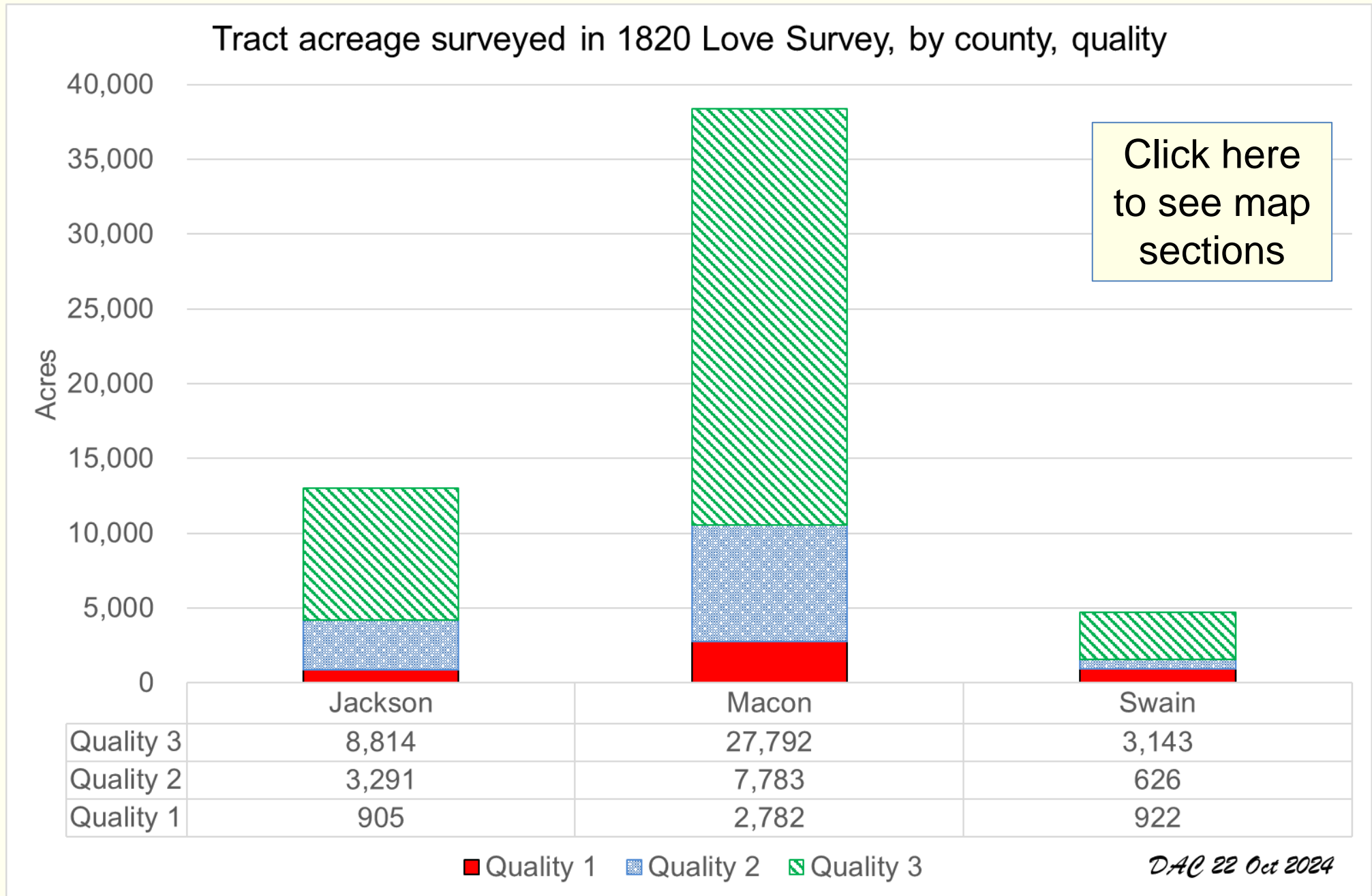
My approximations of Big Bear's and all the Swain life estate tracts



Deep Creek in the larger context of the 1820 Love survey

- The 1819 NC General Assembly prescribed (Laws of NC, 1819, Ch. 10) rules for surveying the newly acquired territory
 - Three quality levels (\$4, \$3, and \$2/acre)
 - Only lands which would bring over 50¢/acre (in surveyor's judgment) were to be surveyed
- In what is now Swain County, 45 tracts were surveyed:
 - Six on Connelly Creek
 - Nine between Goose Creek and Cherokee
 - Ten in the Kituwah/Governor's Island – Ela section
 - Six in Bryson City & Deep Creek area
 - Eleven east of Little T, south of Tuck & west of Bryson City
 - Three on north side of the Tuckasegee below town
- Only 10 of 45 tracts in today's Swain County warranted quality 1 or 2 rating

Swain County tracts which were judged worthy of surveying (compared to Jackson, Macon)

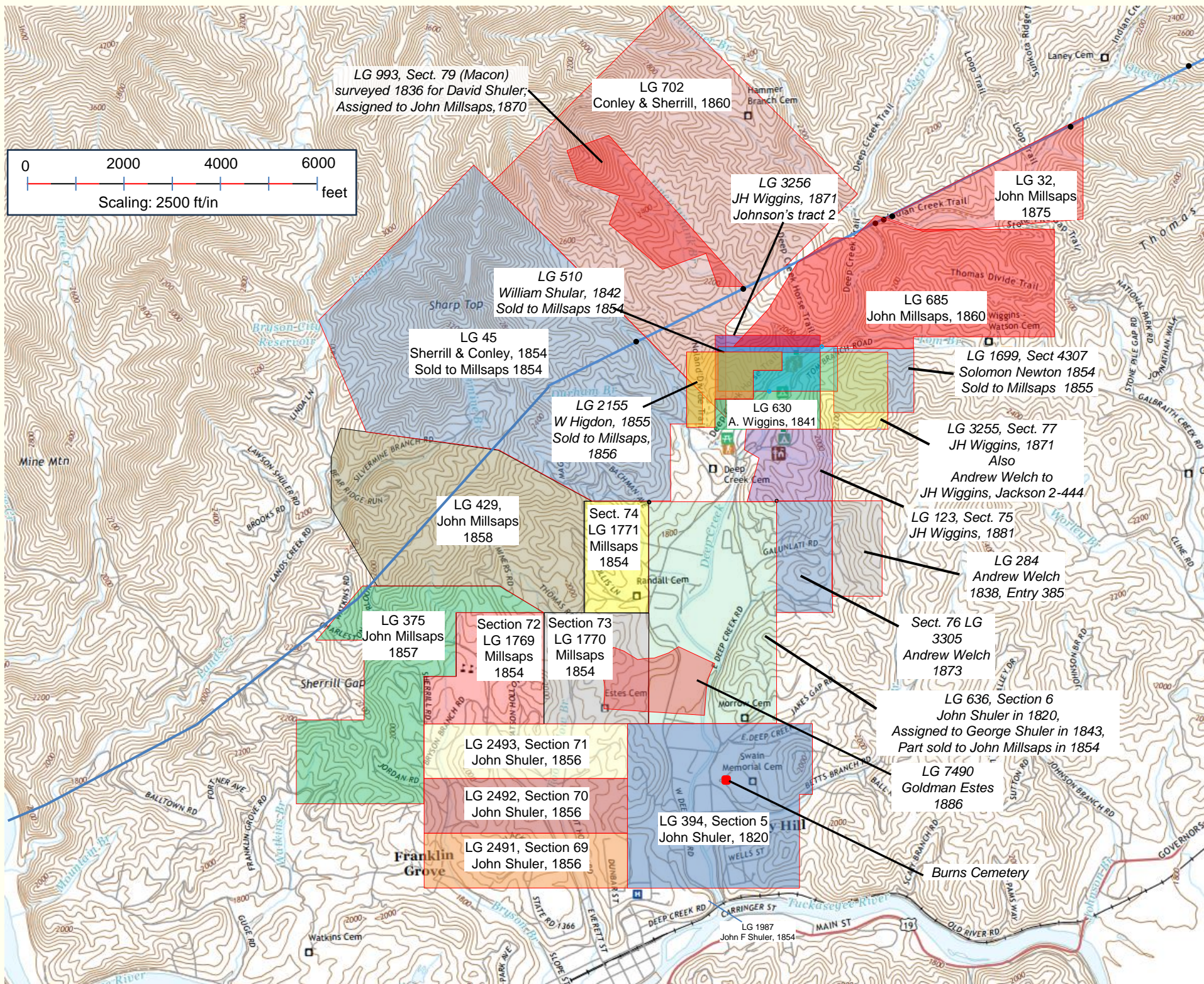


Note: The Lufty portion of Swain (above Cherokee) as well as roughly one-third of modern Jackson lay east of the Meigs-Freeman line, and so were not subject to the Love survey

Early land acquisition on Deep Creek

- John Shuler – same John Shuler who acquired Big Bear's farm (now much of Bryson City) from John Bell Love in 1841 had acquired land grants on lower Deep Creek in 1820
- Shuler deeded much of his property to his individual heirs before he died (~1869), but had earlier transferred some of his Deep Creek properties
- By far the largest owner of land on lower Deep Creek during this period was John Millsaps, Doctor of Physic (~1823-1872)
- Other early grantees included Abraham Wiggins and son James H., Andrew Welch, Solomon & William Newton

Approximations of some land grant tracts, lower Deep Creek



Items to note on previous slides

- **Overlapping tracts, duplicative purchase**

Tracts were sometimes paid for twice; for example, John Millsaps received land grants to Sections 72, 73, and 74, but also purchased them from George Shuler the same year. With the early land grants in particular, there was often overlap, examples of which are shown on the preceding page

- **Connections to the east**

The Welch, Shuler, and Newton names were connected to drainages to the east – Galbraith and Cooper Creeks. Galbraith was originally Andrew Welch's Mill Creek. Cooper was originally Shuler's Creek, for George Shuler, father of John. George was already living there in 1820 when he acquired a land grant for Section 12 of the Love Survey; the land grant referred to Shuler's Creek. George's heirs sold his property to Ebenezer Newton. In 1828, when Macon was formed, Ebenezer Newton Mill Creek was named by the enabling act as one of the new boundary lines between Haywood and Macon.

Two notable events of the 1820s

- William Davenport, in his 1821 state line survey, noted an Indian path at head of Deep Creek; other than Lufty, it was the only NC stream mentioned.
- Cherokee life estate tracts on Deep Creek (as well as elsewhere) were sold to the State of NC in 1825
 - Back Water \$ 400
 - Ooh-lah-not-tee \$1,000
 - Johns(t)on \$1,000
- The sale of the life estate tracts did not mean absence of Cherokee life on Deep Creek

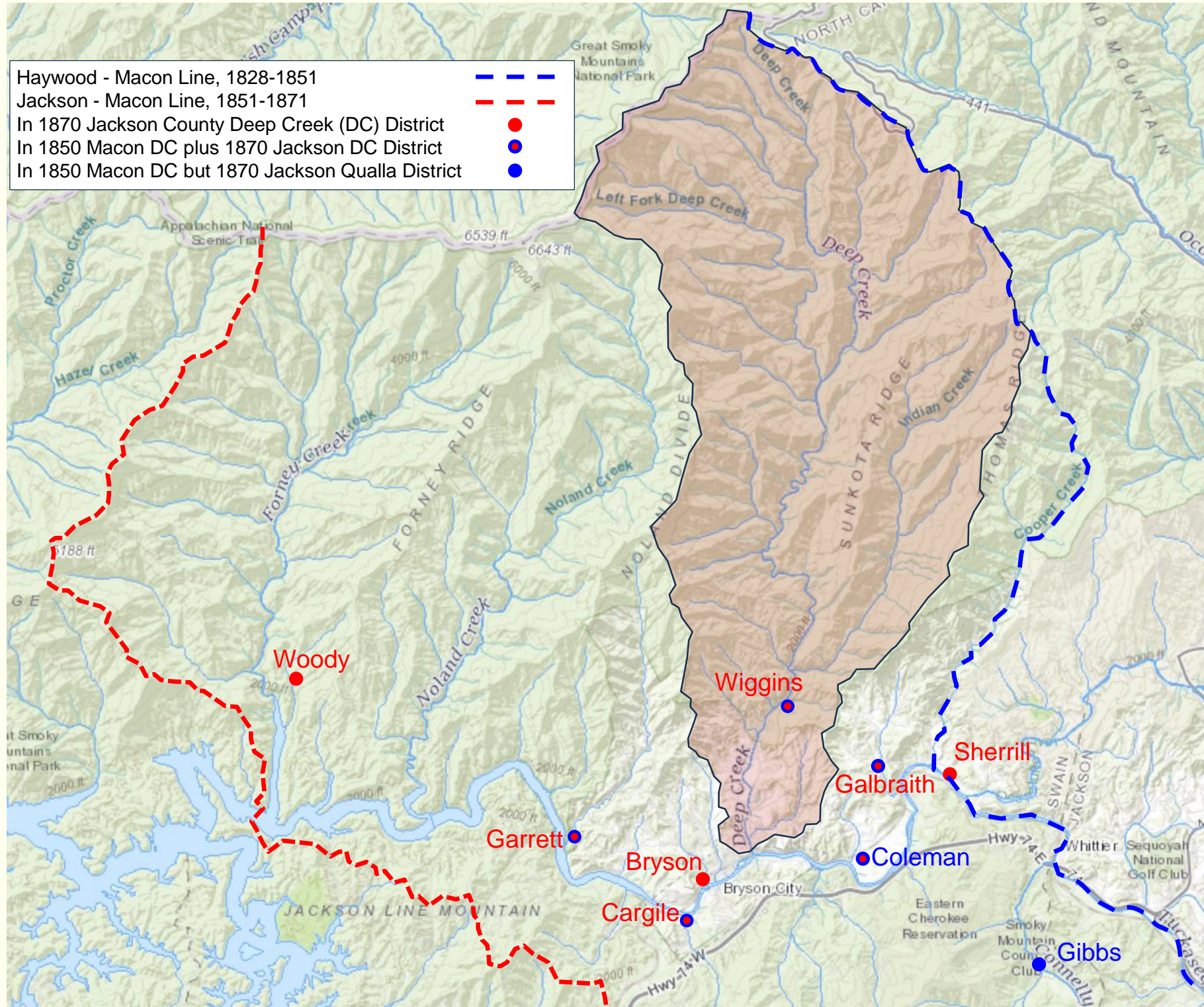
Important perspective: “Deep Creek” referred to more than just the drainage



From W.G. Williams
military map of 1838
(courtesy of Paul Webb)

“to Deep Cr Settlement
On Tuckaseege River”

Deep Creek Census District residents, 1850 Macon, 1870 Jackson Counties

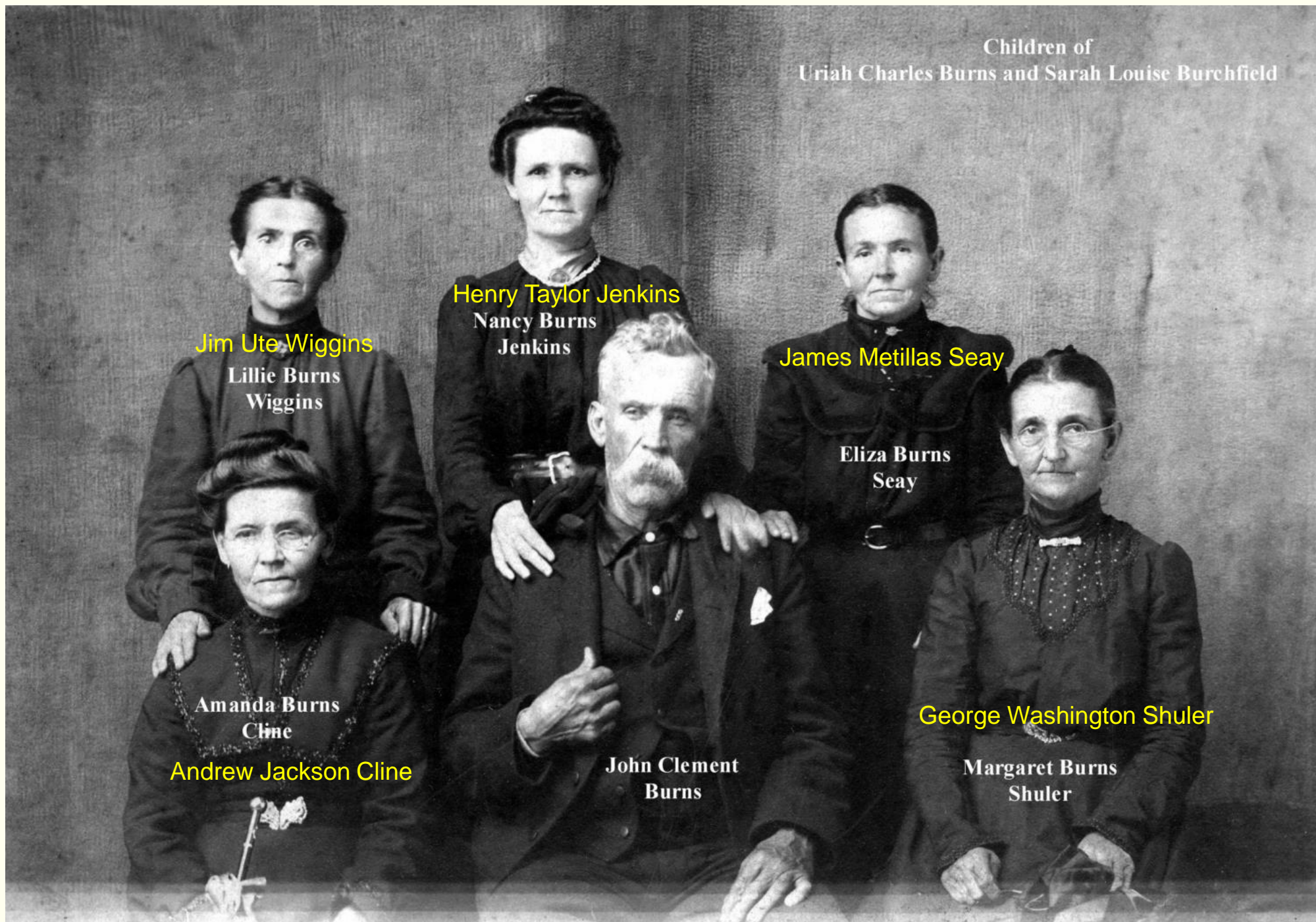


Civil War Era:

A time of considerable community and even intrafamily strife

- The family of Uriah Burns and Sarah Burchfield lived near the mouth of Betts Branch; two sons – William Asbury and Noah Hezekiah – enlisted in the NC 16th Infantry. Noah was injured in battle at Seven Pines, VA on May 31, 1862; Asbury was killed at Mechanicsville less than four weeks later.
- Their brother-in-law, George Washington Shuler (son of John who has been mentioned), enlisted in the 3rd Tennessee Mounted Infantry – a Union outfit. Interestingly, G.W.'s twin brother, Thomas Jefferson Shuler, enlisted in the NC 29th Infantry (Confederate).
- Their mother's brother, Robert L.D. Burchfield, enlisted in the 3rd NC Mounted Infantry – the infamous outfit known as Kirk's Raiders.
- Another brother-in-law, James Metillas Seay, enlisted in the Thomas Legion (Confederate), but went AWOL and deserted; R.L.D. Burchfield recruited him and he also served in Kirk's Raiders.
- Uriah Burns himself was killed at home in 1862 in a case involving resisting arrest. One of those who shot him was his brother-in-law, R.L.D. Burchfield. Another who – according to family lore – shot him was another brother-in-law, Smoke Burchfield, who left the area and lived out the balance of his life in Cades Cove.

Six of the children of Uriah Burns and Sarah Burchfield



1870 to 1930

(with a few trips out into the future)

Traveling preachers and creek fords were a part of early life – and death



Reverend WH Conner, of this county, was in Charleston a few days since with a wagon and team, and on leaving town he asked a young man named Bryson to assist him in crossing Deep Creek just above the town. On reaching the creek Mr. Conner mounted the lead horse, while Bryson remained in the wagon; when near the middle of the creek, the water being deep and swift, the horse became unmanageable. Mr. Conner got off the horse and called to Bryson to carry him only and stood tottering in the water for a moment. Bryson, seeing something unusual was the matter, reached him as quick as possible, and held his head above water until help arrived. He was then taken out of the creek, into a neighbor's house in a semi-conscious condition, in which condition he has remained ever since. He has not spoken since his hurried call to Bryson as he leaped from his horse. But little hope is entertained of his recovery.

Asheville Citizen, 6 Mar 1887.

Recollections of Fate Wiggins

“Back when I was a boy, there was only three houses in Bryson City: old Johnny Shuler, Alf Cline, and Lucy Ann Cline. I’ve saw all this place in wheat and corn on both sides of the river.

Deep Creek was settled up with about six families on it – when I can recollect – up here of white people, and above there they was Indians. Several Indian families lived up Indian Creek and Deep Creek.

Indians lived by hunting, mostly. The white people farmed steers mostly – just a few horses.”

James Lafayette “Fate” Wiggins (1860-1954) was a son of Moses Loftin Wiggins and Louisa Shuler (who later married Billy Morris). In 1882, Fate married Mary Beard, daughter of James Beard and Elizabeth Jane Parris of Indian Creek. Fate and Mary are buried in the Deep Creek Cemetery on land which Fate had purchased from Zeb & Maude Morris in 1910. When he and Mary sold the property to Tom Lollis in 1911, they excluded “one half acre in and around the Grave yard.”



Front: Mary Beard Wiggins, Betsy Jane Parris Beard
Rear: Lou Wiggins Branton, Bonnie Branton Anderson
with Pauline Anderson (around 1932)
Source: Kevin Conrad

1870-1900 was a period of Deep Creek immigration

- While families which were already in the area, such as the Burns, Cline, Millsaps, Shuler and Wiggins clans, kept a strong foothold, new families began to arrive in the Deep Creek area, with names from Beard to Worley
- Pre-Civil War, the upper end of the white settler range was around the Deep Creek campground. Many of the newly arrived moved further up Deep Creek and its feeder streams – Durham, Juney Whank, Tom & Hammer Branches, and especially Indian Creek.

The Bryson Family: their mill



The Bryson combination grist mill and saw mill was located at the creek mouth, just above the lower bridge (same location as today's bridge).

(Click either image for larger, annotated version)

Source (both): [Stearns-Grueninger Collection, Hunter Library Special Collections](#)



The Bryson Place, around 1910



In his autobiographical sketch, Ed Bryson, grandson of Bryson City's namesake, TD Bryson, recalled: *"The house actually had three rooms – two 'all purpose rooms,' each with a fireplace, and a third room or kitchen with a small 'cook stove' and a table with benches instead of chairs."* He also pointed out the child and noted *"She was the adopted daughter of Bob and Sarah Barnett who lived there at the time."*

Photo source: purchased copy

Photographer: Kelly Bennett

Agreement between William Holland Thomas and Thaddeus Dillard Bryson

“I agree to let Col Thadeus D. Bryson have the unimproved Martin tract of land on Deep Creek including one hundred acres to be run in a square or oblong square to include the Martin improvement for the sum which the land and improvements may be valued to be worth at green back prices by John Millsaps, Wm Cathey, & Lt Wm Morris or a majority of them. And I agree to make a title for said land to the said Bryson or his Assignee upon credit being given on our contract green back rates.”

Sep. 21 1868

Wm H. Thomas

Assessment by the referees

We the undersigned referees have examined the Land and value the same at one hundred and fifty dollars in Green Back.

Oct 24th 1868

Wm L Morris

John A. Millsaps

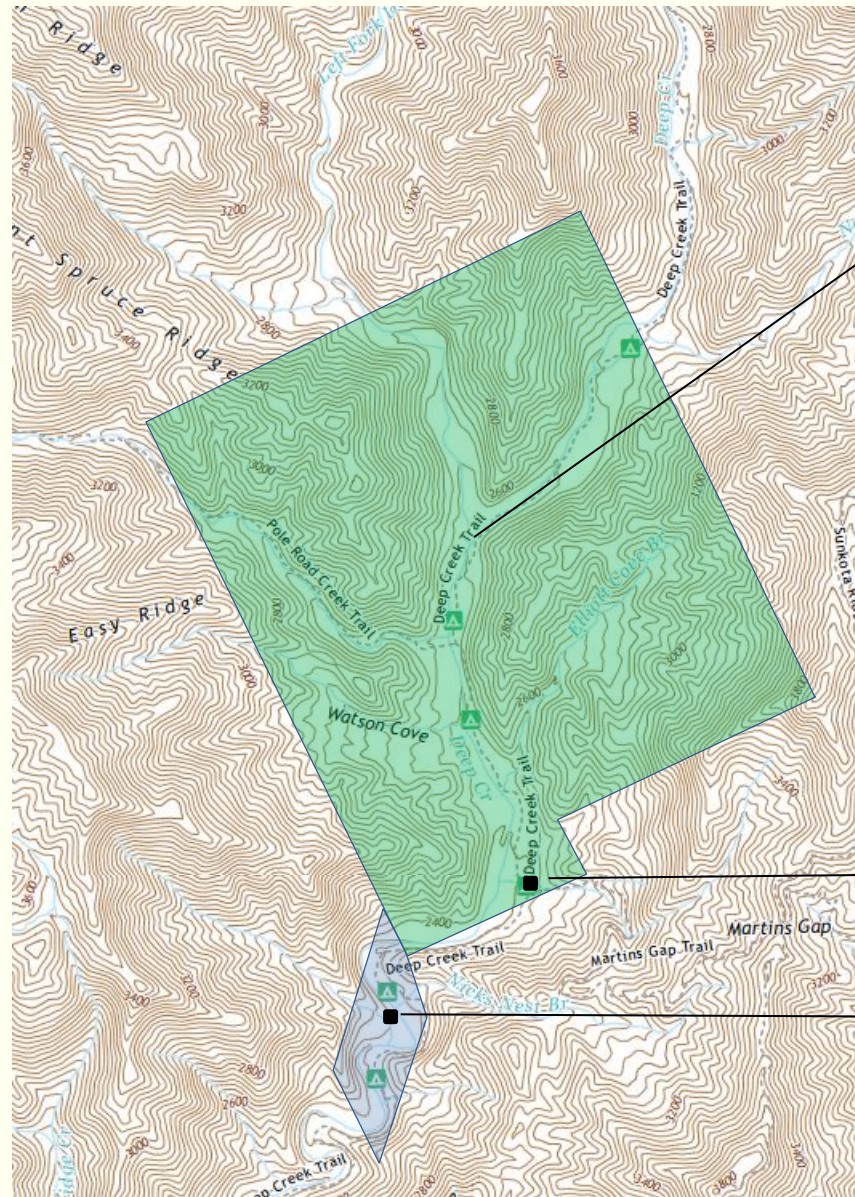
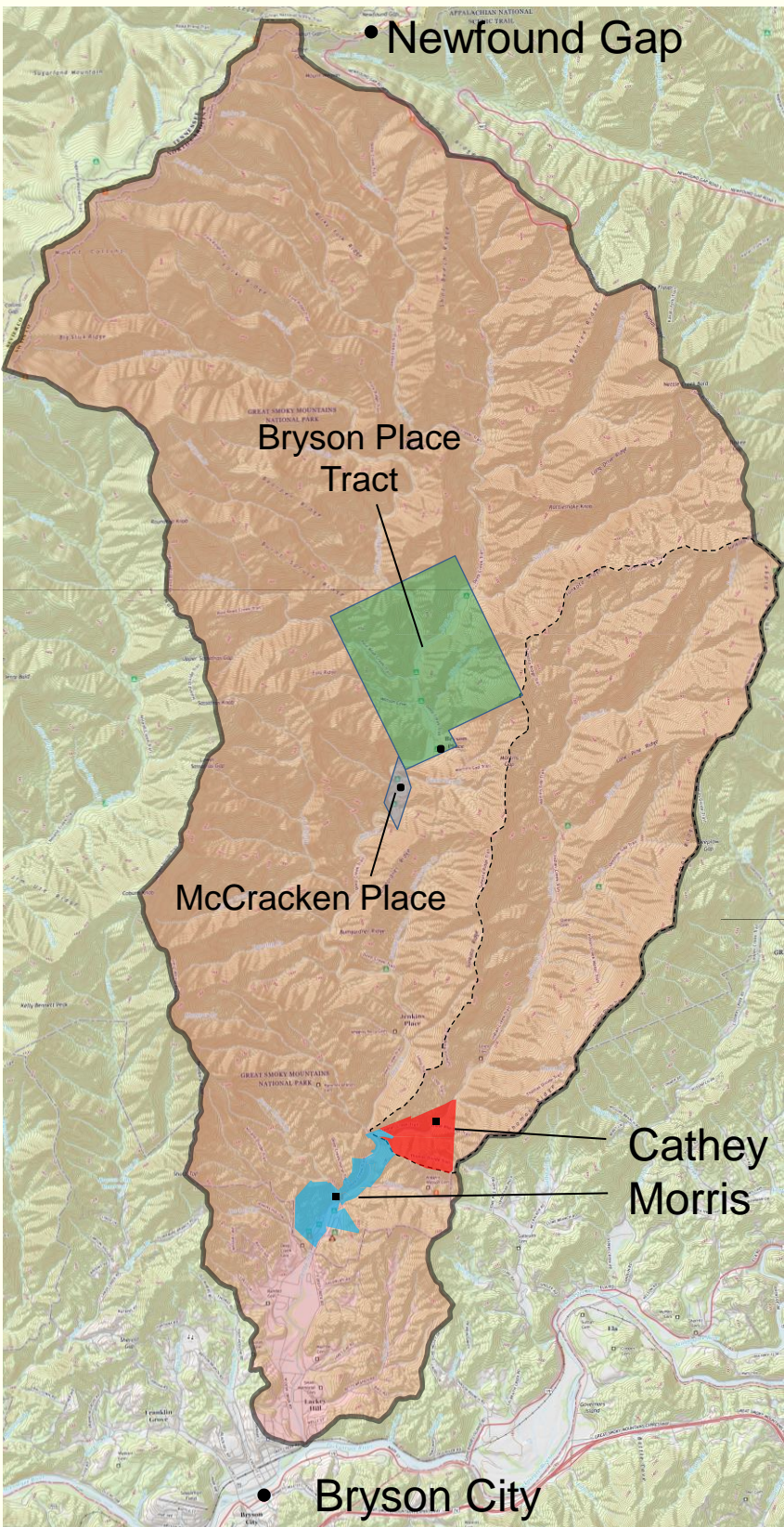
Wm H. Cathey

Note: The \$150 value applied to the 100-acre Martin Improvement portion of the 1100 acre tract which was purchased

The eventual purchase was more extensive, and included another accompanying land transaction

- On November 4, 1879, a deed for 1,100 acres of property was registered in Swain County. It was the 100 acre Martin Improvement for \$150 plus 1,000 acres of adjoining land for 33- $\frac{1}{3}$ cents per acre. Purchaser (grantee) was T.D. Bryson. Sellers R.V. Welch, R.G.A. Love, W.L. Hilliard and Samuel Love as grantors.
- The deed indicated that the grantors had purchased the property from Will Thomas, but there was certainly another consideration involved – namely that both the improved and unimproved property was within Land Grant 587. That 50,000 acre tract was then owned by Welch and his two first cousins, the named Love brothers. W.L. Hilliard was a brother-in-law of the Loves (married to their sister, Margaret). Hilliard, a physician, was also the guardian of Will Thomas, who had been declared insane.
- On the very same day, another deed from Welch, the Loves, and Hilliard was registered in Swain County. It was for 100 acres of land “on both sides of Deep Creek above and adjoining tract of land known as the Corntassel place.” The deed was to “Nellie Chis-eslie.” *The price: \$150 paid by TD Bryson.*

The Deep Creek drainage is outlined at left, with the Indian Creek portion marked with a dashed line. As can be seen, the Bryson tract was in the geometric center of the drainage. Below both the Bryson and McCracken Places are marked by dots. The Bryson family owned 1/3 of the McCracken Place tract when taken by the NC Park Commission; the other 2/3 was owned by Hoy Thomas.

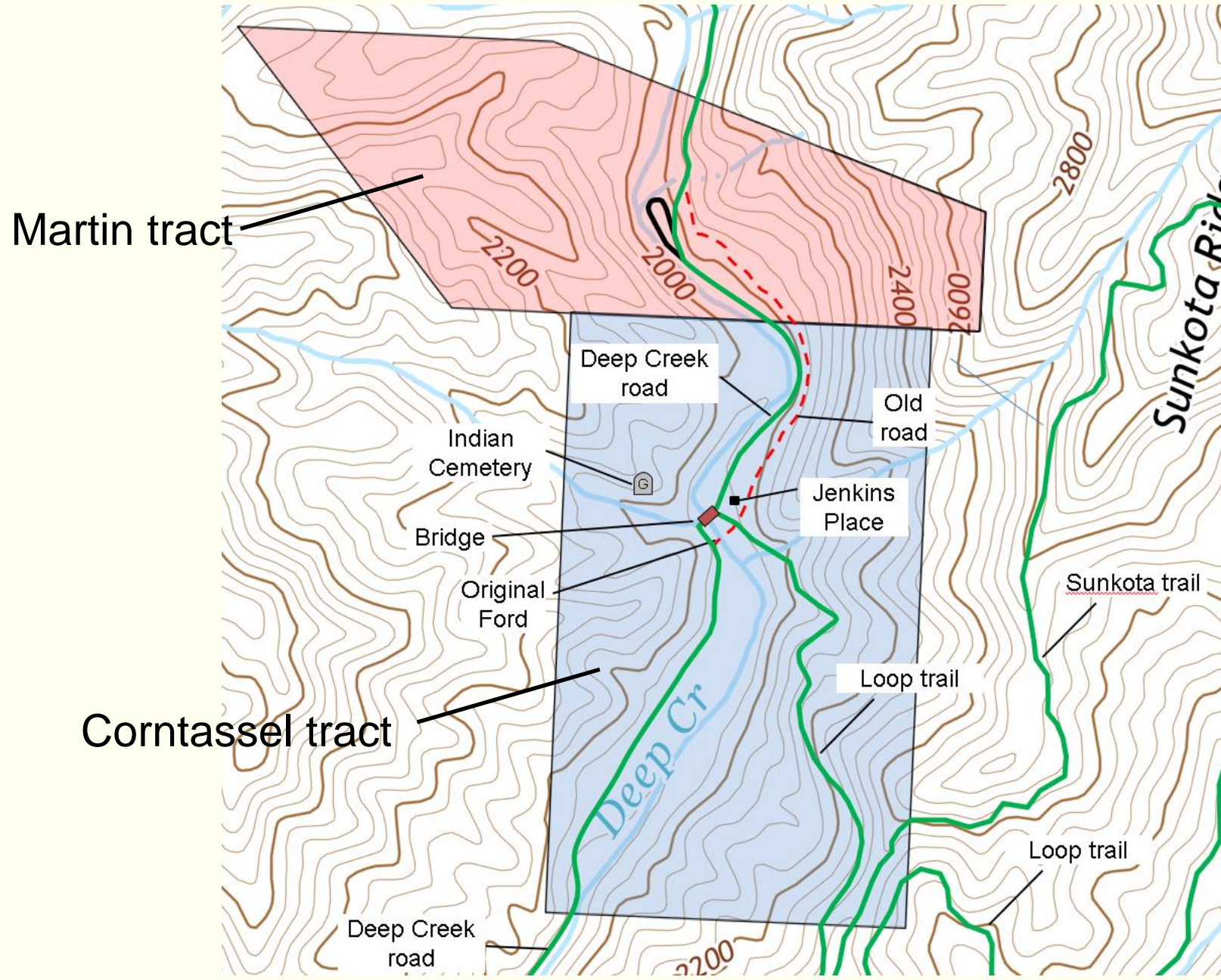


Forks of Deep Creek

Bryson Place

McCracken Place

Deed-based reconstruction of Corntassel and Martin Tracts



Nellie Martin place: Charles Grossman

...with his father Ephraim
Baumgardner. His house built about
38 years ago. Pounding mill Little
one built pounding mill. 40 yrs
ago stood at Will Jenkins place.
also an Indian Cabin stood at Turn Around
(Nellie Martin Place)
on Deep Creek. Cabin built of round log.
Chimney lined with stone & mud outside with
small poles at bottom with smaller poles
& split poles at the top of chimney. Cabin
about 12' by 14'. As a rule Indian cabins
were smaller than the White cabins.
Had 1 window in lower side opposite the
(west) (east)
creek. Door in upper side. Chimney in
north end of building. Stood just below 73

Also an Indian Cabin stood at Turn Around (Nellie Martin Place) on Deep Creek Cabin built of round log. Chimney lined with stone & mud outside with small poles at bottom with smaller poles & split poles at the top of chimney. Cabin about 12' x 14'. As a rule Indian cabins were smaller than the White cabins. Had 1 window in lower side opposite the creek (west). Door in upper side (east). Chimney in north end of building. Stood just below two big apple trees which are still standing. Floor of rough lumber. Got it from a little saw mill on Indian Creek. Nellie died and was buried near the cabin. She had her crib keys in her pocket and was buried with them. The crib door was never opened but a new door was cut in the other end. Crib stood below house of split chest logs about 8' x 5'.

May 14, 1937 notes on the Nellie Martin place captured by Charles Grossman. This is one of three pages from which the above transcription is taken. (Source: GSMNP archives)

The Martins came from Turtletown, Tennessee

	<u>TURTLE TOWN</u> Polk County
GA-A-DE-HEE	- Fifteen Cherokees, 13 fullbloods, 2 negroes. Six farmers, 3 mechanics, 8 readers of Cherokee, 3 weavers, 5 spinsters.
GA-NI-DE-HEE	- Five fullbloods, 1 farmer, 1 mechanic, 1 reader of Cherokee, 1 weaver, 2 spinsters.
GOING-UP-STREAM	- Five fullbloods, 1 farmer, 1 mechanic, 1 weaver, 1 spinster.
TURNING OUT	- Three fullbloods, 1 farmer, 1 reader of Cherokee, 1 weaver, 1 spinster.
CHU-LU-LO-GA	- Four fullbloods. One farmer, 1 mechanic, 1 weaver, 1 spinster (spinner).
BIRD PECKER	- Eight fullbloods, 1 intermarriage with the white race. One farmer, 1 mechanic, 2 weavers, 2 spinsters.
BEAN	- Six fullbloods. One farmer, 1 mechanic, 1 spinster.
MARTIN	- Four fullbloods, 1 farmer, 1 mechanic, 1 weaver, 1 spinster.

8. Are you married? Widower

9. Name and age of wife or husband: deceased

10. Give names of your father and mother, and your mother's name before marriage.

Father—English name: Chu-ah or Martin, (Mullay 544)
 Indian name: Oo na wa ga ar war u

Mother—English name: Nancy Martin
 Indian name: Sorgin ne Ghu ghu
 Maiden name: Sorgin War la lu

11. Where were they born?

Father: Turtletown Tenn
 Mother: " "

12. Where did they reside in 1831, if living at that time?

Father: Juban Creek New Swain Co. N.C.
 Mother: " " " " " "

13. Date of death of your father and mother—

Father: about 1875 Mother: about 1878

Page 2 of Guion-Miller application for Suate Martin (1908). Source: Fold3.com, Eastern Cherokee Applications of the U.S. Court of Claims, 1906-1909, Record #15711)

Martin family in Turtletown area of Tennessee (Henderson Roll) Source:

okhistory.org/research/digital/foremantrans/foreman.sup14.pdf

First page of Suate Martin's claim for Eastern Cherokee nation enrollment (part of the Guion-Miller Roll), dated February 3, 1908. It is important to note that the Cherokee spelling of the Martin family's names varied considerably by the Roll being taken. (Source: Fold3.com, Eastern Cherokee Applications of the U.S. Court of Claims, 1906-1909, Record #15711)

Suate Martin was born on Indian Creek

1. State full name— *Hester 382, Siler 702, Chapman 732, Sweattand 211.*

English name: *Suate Martin*

Indian name: *Su go da Ghu Ghu*
Choochoo # 082

2. Residence: *Birdtown*

3. Town and post office: *Birdtown*

4. County: *Swain*

5. State: *North Carolina*

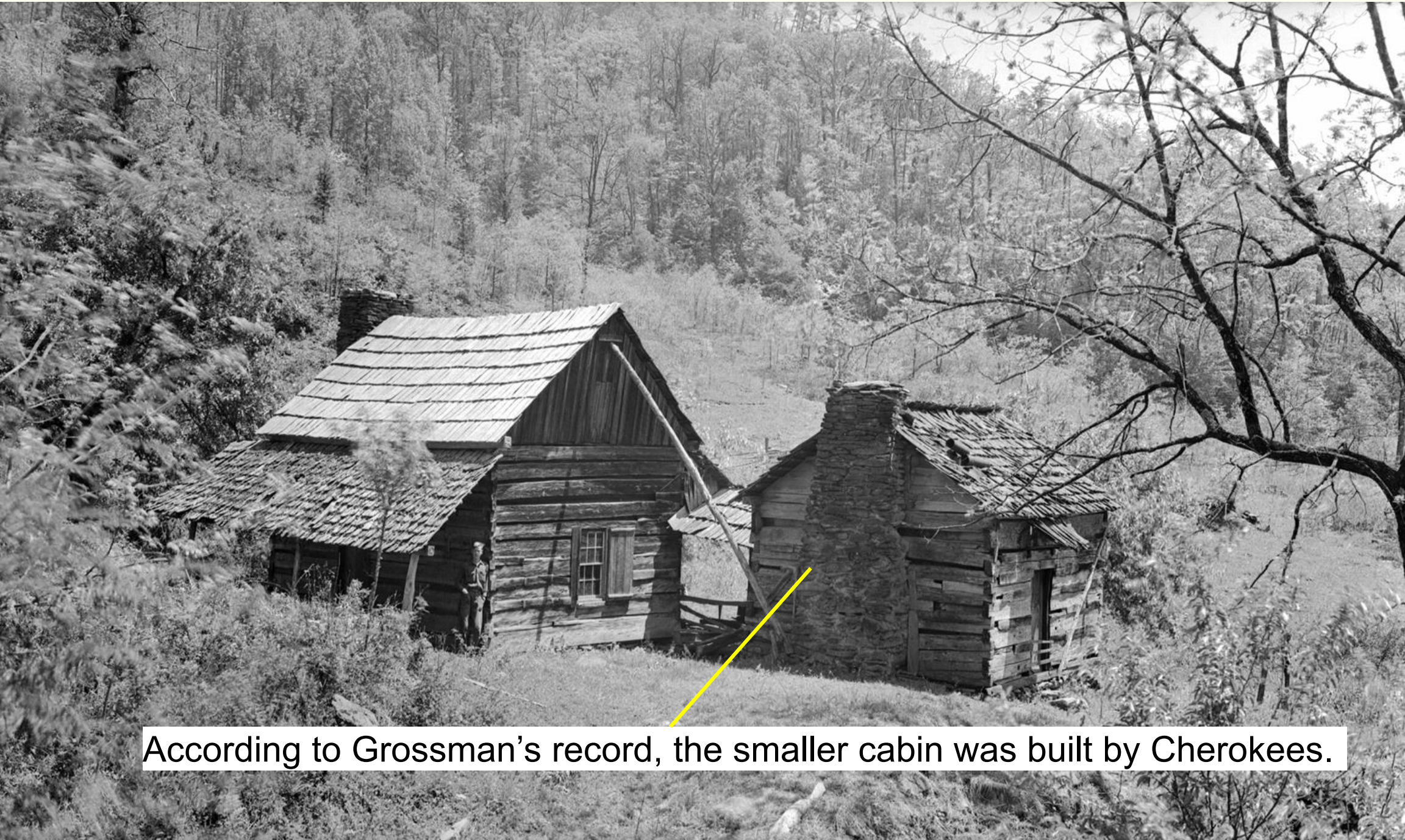
6. Date and place of birth: *1846. Indian Creek now Swain Co N.C.*

7. By what right do you claim to share? If you claim through more than one relative living in 1851, set forth each claim separately: *Self, Father and mother Oo-ne-na-ga nas-ee and So-giu-nie; Mother, mother As you guy Two brothers and two sisters viz: Wah yah ar nar ee*
X Oo de sar du ya dar; and Gar too wist tu
X So giu ni

8. Are you married? *Widower*

First page of Suate Martin's claim for Eastern Cherokee nation enrollment (part of the Guion-Miller Roll), dated February 3, 1908. (Source: Fold3.com, Eastern Cherokee Applications of the U.S. Court of Claims, 1906-1909, Record #15711)

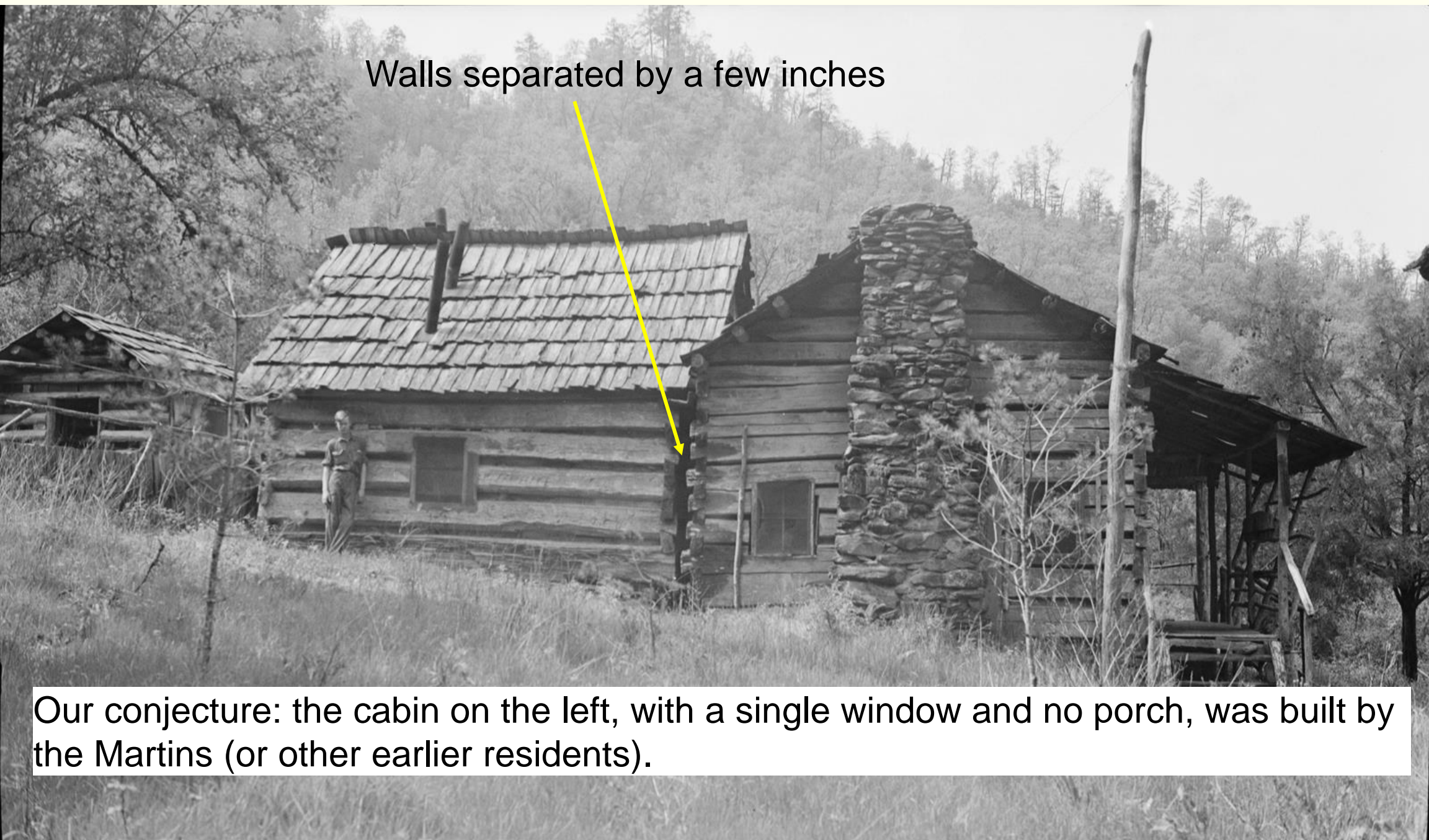
The Bumgarner Place, a mile and a quarter south of the Bryson Place on Bumgarner Branch, had a pair of dogtrot-connected cabins



According to Grossman's record, the smaller cabin was built by Cherokees.

1937 Photo by Charles Grossman, [Open Parks Network](#)

The Bryson Place cabin was also clearly two cabins, built at different times, but more closely connected (view from the north)



Walls separated by a few inches

Our conjecture: the cabin on the left, with a single window and no porch, was built by the Martins (or other earlier residents).

1937 Photo by Charles Grossman, [Open Parks Network](#)

Cherokee Burials on Indian Creek



“The upper graveyard on Indian Creek’s got several Indian graves for I went up there to help dig Bill Stiles’ girl’s grave. And I spaded up a skull. An’ I sent after Bill and Bill come up there and I says, “Now I don’t care ‘bout digging that grave if you don’t want her buried there.” “N” I says, I’d rather not tear it up.” I says, “I’d rather just fill it back up an’ cover it up like it was a grave.” He says, ‘Oh, I’d just fill it up and dig one right here.’ An’ I dug another.”

Andy Cline, 1969 interview with Robert Madden, GSMNP Historian

Sources: Picture of Andy Cline – Swain County Heritage Book; Interview: GSMNP Archives

Cherokee Burials – Deep Creek



Per Grossman records, this is a Cherokee cemetery, located high above the last bridge on Deep Creek. His documentation recorded 8 graves; only 5 are now visible. It is on property once owned by “Old Corntassel”. Might the other Martin family members be among those buried here?

The other Martin family members

15. Name all your brothers and sisters, giving ages, and if not living, the date of death:

	NAME.	BORN.	DIED.
(1)	Wah yah wance Martin	about 1842	about 1858
(2)	Gar lov wist ter Martin	1844	" 1859
(3)	Ov sander yada Martin	1852	" 1871
(4)	Sar li Klu nie	1852	" 1864
(5)	Luey Martin	1854	" 1870
(6)	George Martin	1858	living

Though Nellie had died by the time the Guion-Miller Roll was taken, she does not appear to be on Suate's list of brothers and sisters. Per census records and deed transactions, she lived from approximately 1845 – 1885. The reason for this is unknown.

Source: Guion-Miller application for Suate Martin (1908). Fold3.com, Eastern Cherokee Applications of the U.S. Court of Claims, 1906-1909, Record #15711)

Nellie Chis-e-li Martin's Cenotaph



Nellie Martin's cenotaph at the turnaround. The "Chis-e-li" spelling of her Cherokee name was pulled from the final deed transferring ownership of the Martin place at the Turnaround to Pate Shuler. (Photo credit: Wendy Meyers)

Why do we call it a cenotaph?

We don't know exactly where she is buried, but multiple elements weigh strongly against the cabin being built (and thus being Nellie buried) literally in the Turnaround.

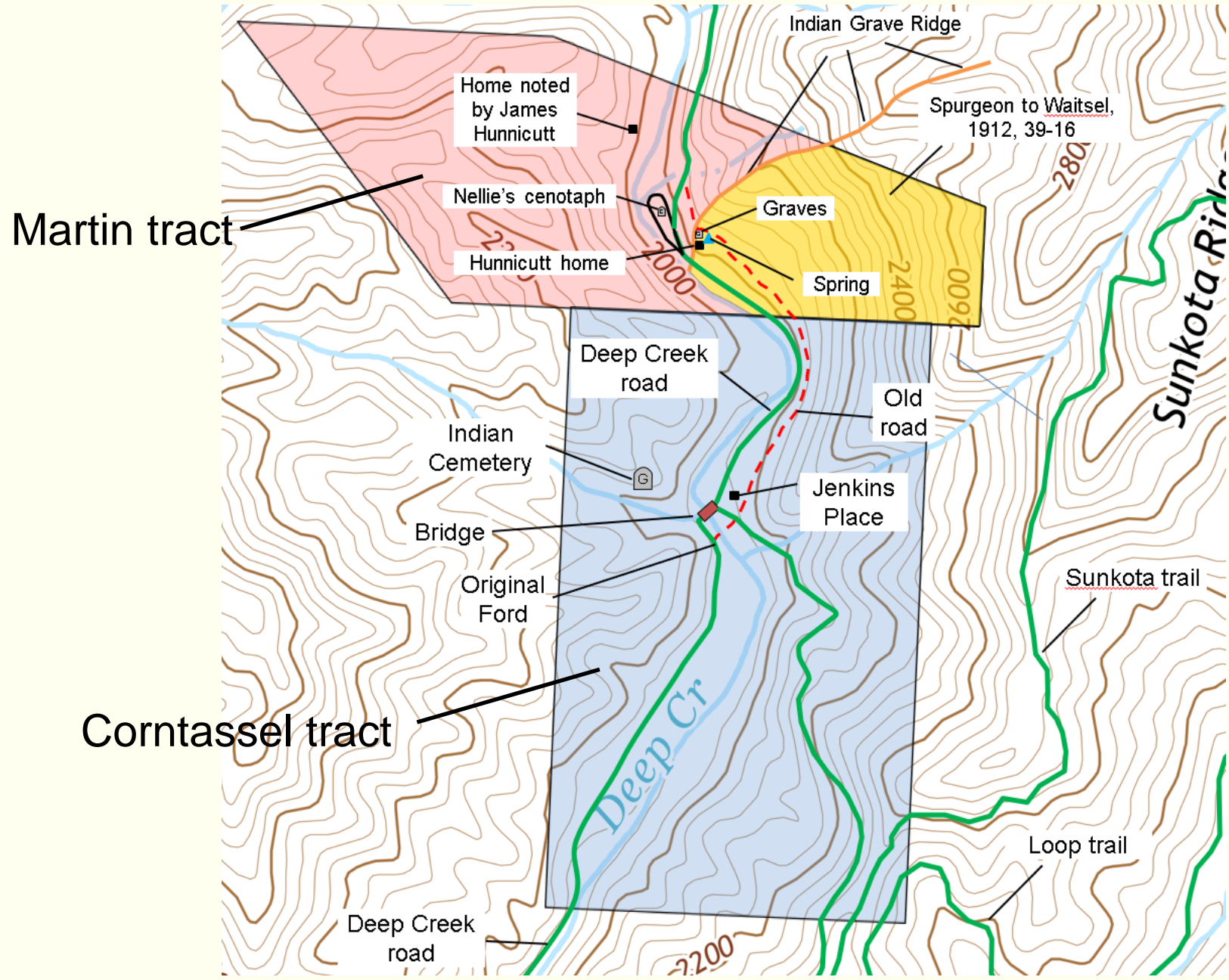
- The Turnaround is the best-laying land on the entire Martin tract
- There is no spring in the area
- Charles Grossman's words don't conform to the cabin being sited on the level ground of the Turnaround: *Had 1 window in lower side opposite the creek (west). Door in upper side (east). Chimney in north end of building....Crib stood below house of split chest logs about 8' x 5'.*
- A 1912 deed cites "Indian Grave Ridge" – which is exactly where Columbus and James Marion Hunnicutt were buried according to family tradition (and where latter day gravestones have been placed). A house stood just below the graves, and a spring lies just east of the home.

The Deep Creek Turnaround



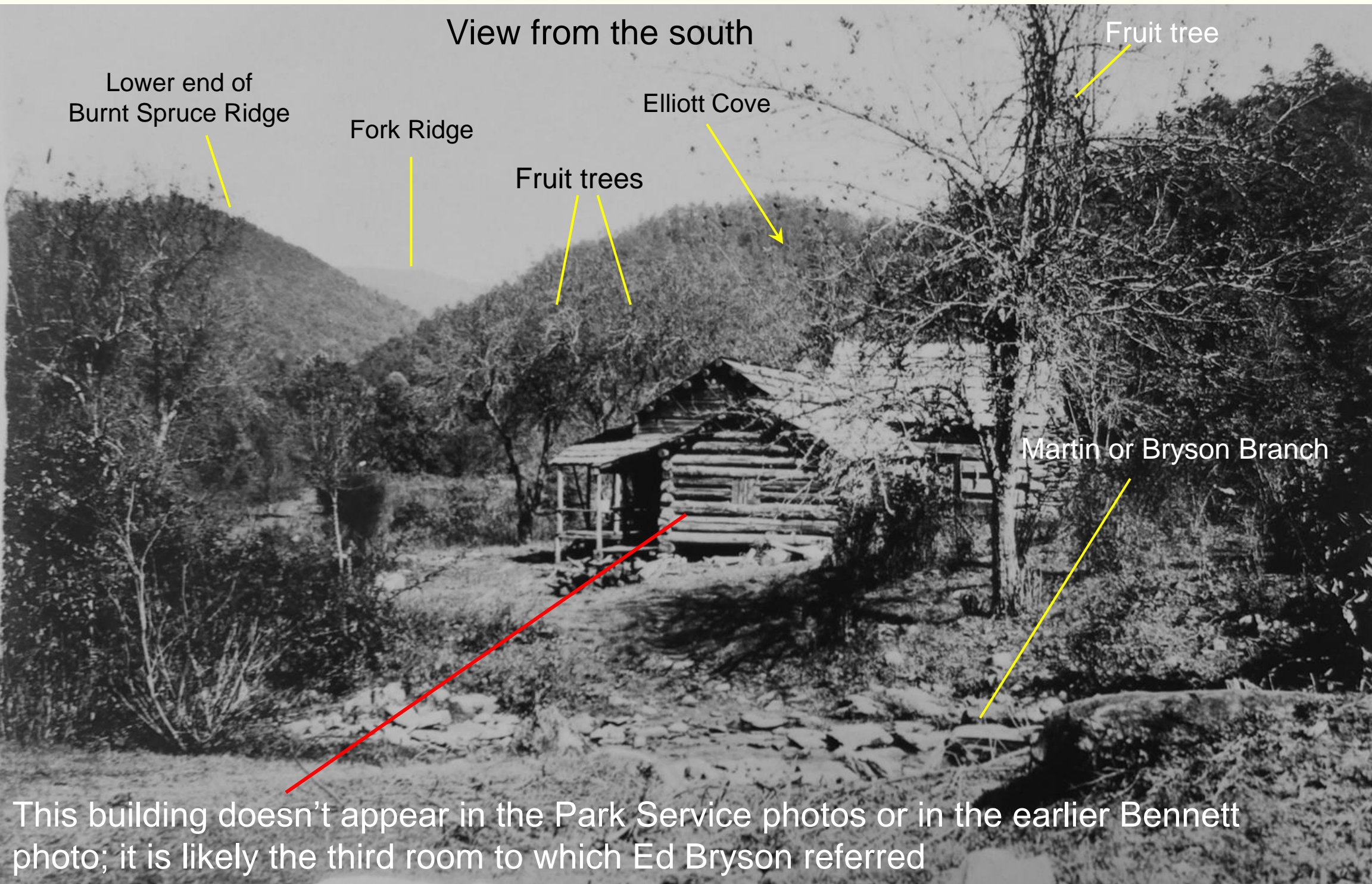
The Deep Creek Turnaround as it looked in 1937. This picture was taken from very close to the Hunnicutt home, which we believe to also be the former site of the Martins' home. (Source: [Open Parks Network](#))

Corntassel and Martin Tracts plus a tract sold by Spurgeon Hunnicutt to his brother Waitsel in 1912, local points of interest



The Spurgeon to Waitsel Hunnicutt deed included a boundary line which was referred to as "Indian Grave Ridge"

Back to the Brysons and the Bryson Place



Lower end of
Burnt Spruce Ridge

Fork Ridge

Elliott Cove

Fruit trees

Fruit tree

Martin or Bryson Branch

This building doesn't appear in the Park Service photos or in the earlier Bennett photo; it is likely the third room to which Ed Bryson referred

Source: Hunter Library, Horace Kephart Special Collection

Logging the Bryson Place

- On January 1, 1890, James Fensom and F.M. Macdonald struck an agreement with T.D. Bryson whereby they would purchase marketable timber on Bryson's tract on Deep Creek, paying Bryson four dollars for each acre cut.
- Up to 600 acres could be cut; harvesting was to be done on one acre at a time, and payment for that acre was due as soon as the timber was cut and on the bank of the creek.
- Given that Bryson had paid 33-1/3 cents per acre for the 1000 acres of unimproved land just eleven years earlier, for each logged acre, he would earn twelve times what he had paid for it.
- He likely knew that he personally wouldn't collect, however; this was a deal set up on behalf of his children. The day after the deal was consummated, T.D. Bryson died.
- Income from the logging provided financial support for the couple's children T.D., Jr, Dan, and Mary, whose ages ranged from 16 to 11 at his death. The three led exceedingly productive lives as jurist, M.D., and missionary, respectively.

Remains of a splash dam, just below the mouth of Pole Road Creek (on the Bryson tract)



Source: Hiram Wilburn, [Open Parks Network](#)

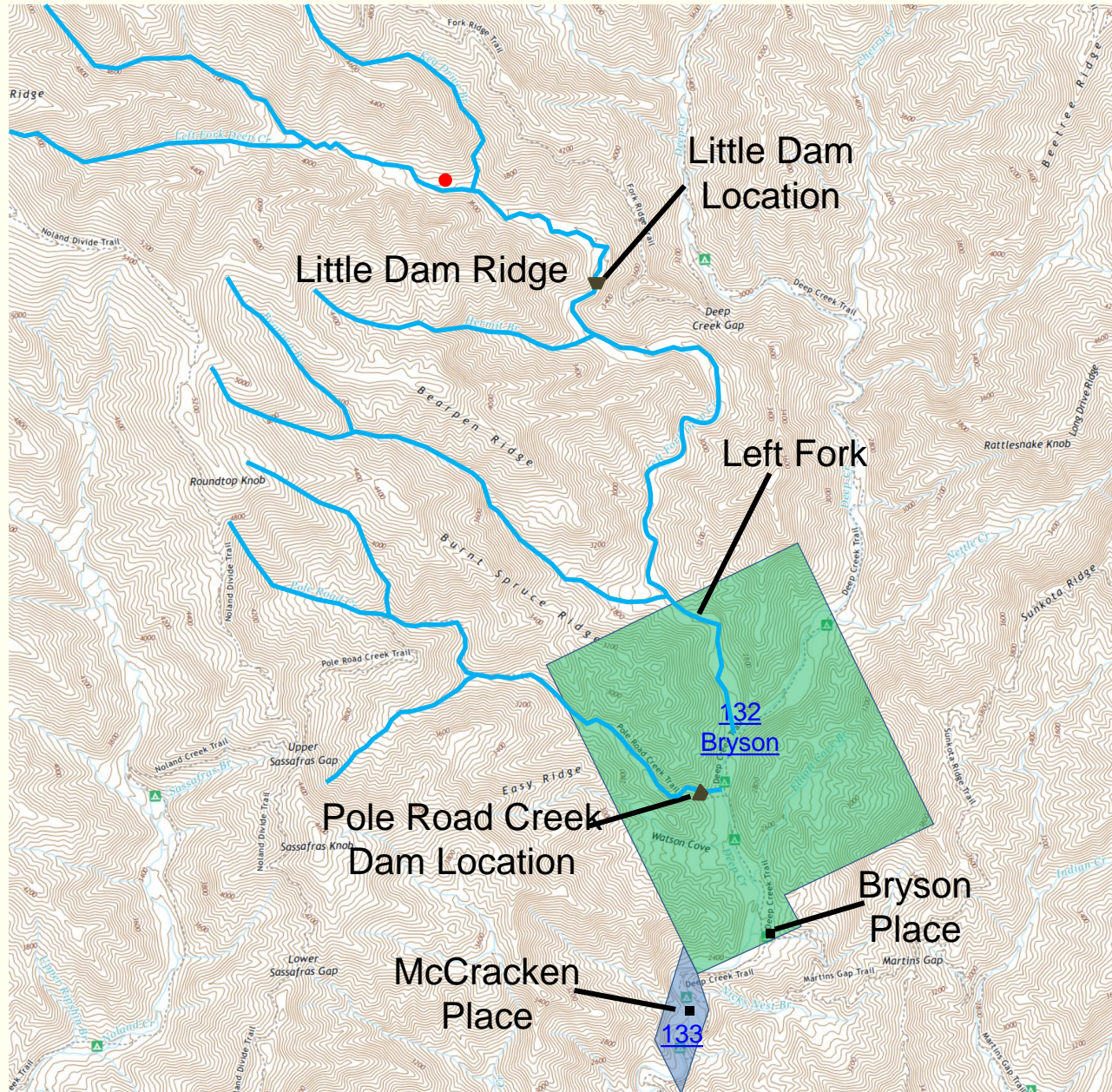
Eddie Hyatt points to a Little Dam log on Left Fork of Deep Creek



The log which Eddie is standing on has vee notches hewn into the top. This is where Little Dam on the Left Fork of Deep Creek was located; The photo was taken in 2010, well over a century after the dam was used. Submersed wood lasts indefinitely. Little Dam was located about one-third mile above the mouth of Hermit Branch (map next slide). Jim Estes recalls seeing dam base logs (cribbing) here decades earlier.

Photo Source: Heath Hyatt

Approximate location of the dam at the mouth of Pole Road Creek and another on Left Fork (Little Dam)



John G. Thomas, in the 1890s, constructed a pole tram road up this creek for the purpose of bringing out the timber. The pole road consisted of two lines of poles (small trees), parallel, laid end-to-end. The poles were 4" to 6" or 8" in diameter, and were supported underneath by cross ties, or laid flat on the ground where level and smooth enough. The car or carriage on which the logs were hauled consisted of a log framework with four cast iron wheels. The wheels had flanges that formed a semi-circular groove that would conform to the shape of the poles. The axles were so arranged that the wheels could spread apart or become narrow in order to conform to the width of the rails (crooked poles). Much timber was hauled out over this road.

Source: Hiram Wilburn, based on information from Stokes Thomas (son of John Gilbert Thomas).

In addition to the splash dams, getting logs from Deep Creek to the Coffin & McDonald mill in Bryson City depended on rain

“The last few days rain has brought many logs down Deep Creek for Coffin & Macdonald’s mill.” (*Bryson City Times*, 24 Jan 1896)

“This week’s rains has give Coffin & Macdonald one million feet of logs in their boom.” (*Bryson City Times*, 3 April 1896)

“Coffin and Macdonald’s mill shut down last Friday night after a 20 day run. Same old story; Out of logs!” (*Bryson City Times*, 7 Aug 1896)

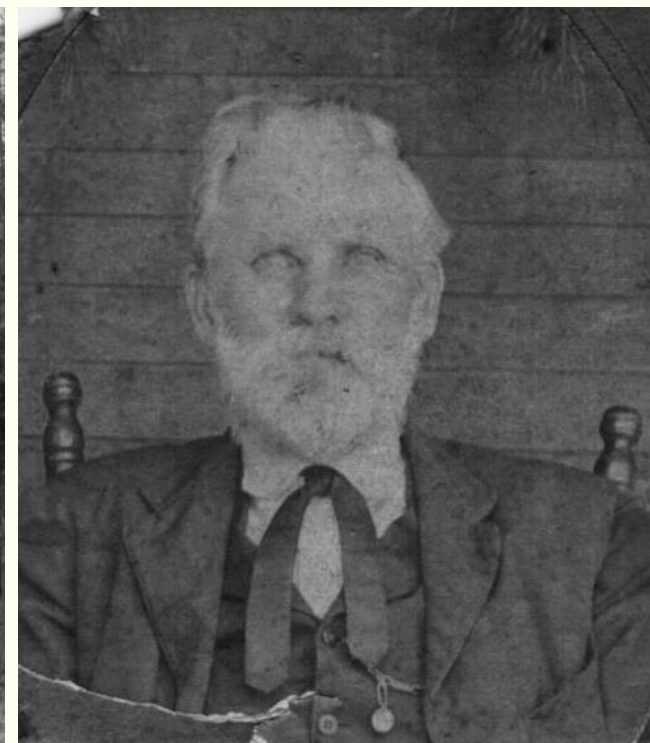
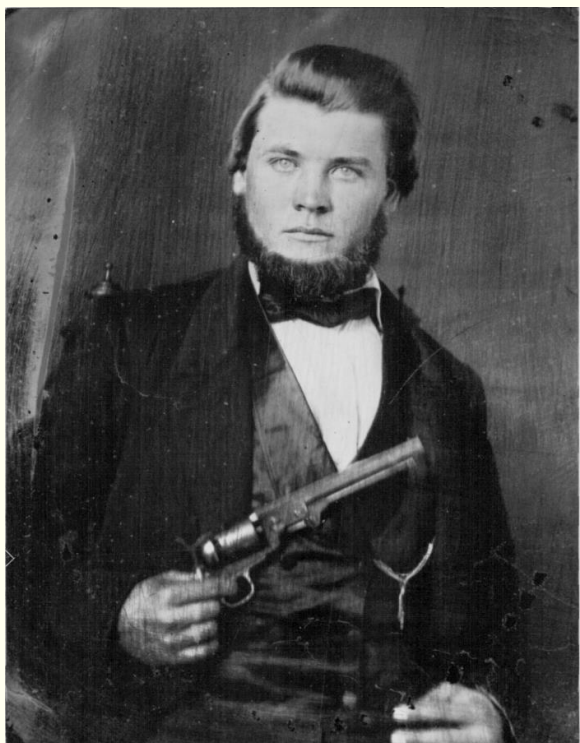
The Bryson family allowed the Bryson Place cabin to be used as a community commons; more on this later



View from the south

Source: Jim Estes

Billy Morris (1836 – 1926)



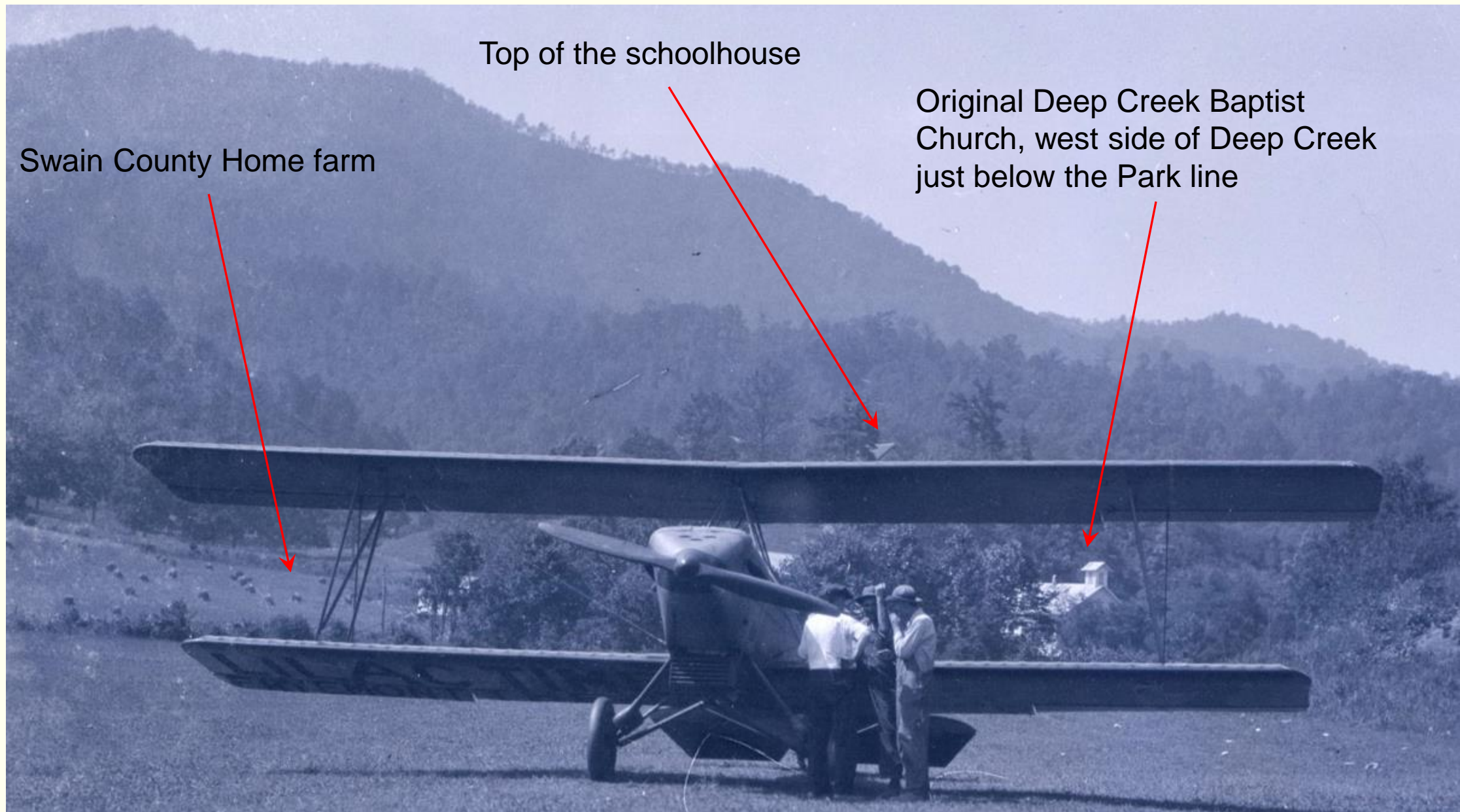
Billy served in the 29th NC Infantry (Confederate) during the war; he enlisted as a corporal and was promoted to 1st Lieutenant. He was shot in the lower left leg at the Battle of Allatoona, GA on October 5, 1864. It shattered the bone and he suffered from the injury for the rest of his life.

He built this home just south of the mouth of Juney Whank Branch. It was on the first Deep Creek property he acquired - from John Millsaps in 1871. He subsequently acquired additional property from the Millsaps estate and from members of the Wiggins family. His property lay on both sides of Deep Creek, and extended from above Indian Creek around the Park line.

In 1890, he and his wife, Louisa Shuler along with Louisa's brother, John E and his wife, Mahala, donated land for the Deep Creek School.

Photos of Billy courtesy of his 2-g grandson, Jim Estes. Morris home photo from [Open Parks Network](#).

Biplane on east Deep Creek – with school, church in background



Swain County Home farm

Top of the schoolhouse

Original Deep Creek Baptist Church, west side of Deep Creek just below the Park line

A one acre lot for the Deep Creek Baptist Church was sold by the county (out of the former County Home land) to Deep Creek Baptist Trustees in 1922 (see next slide).

Swain County deeded part of the county home land to the Deep Creek Baptist Church in 1922

THIS INDENTURE made this 4th day of September, 1922, by and between Swain County, N. C. of the first part and F. M. Phillips, Joe Morris and Joe Cassidy of said County & State, Deacons of Deep Creek Baptist Church and their successors, parties of the 2nd part:

W I T N E S S E T H:

That said party of the first part for and in consideration of One Dollar paid by parties of the 2nd part the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged doth bargain, sell and convey unto the said parties of the 2nd part and their successors the following described land in said County & State on Deep Creek and more particularly described as follows:

Beginning on an Alder on the West bank of Deep Creek said County, Dolph **Swams** corner then North 66½ W. 12 poles with **Swims** line to a stone in said line; then S. 26 W. 9 poles to a stake in a small branch; then S. 81 E. with said branch as it meanders 14 poles to a stake on the bank of Deep Creek; then up Deep Creek to the beginning, containing one acre more or less.

Should be Swaim's – for Dolph and Rebecca Swaim, whose home was just inside the Park line. No information found on F.M. Phillips. Joe Morris was a son of Billy & Louisa Shuler Morris. Joe Cassidy (Casada) was my grandpa who settled on Juney Whank Branch – a country mile above the Morris place.

Deep Creek Missionary Baptist was organized in 1913; it would have originally met in the Deep Creek School building

Official Register.—Deacons.

111

NAME.	COMMENCED.	CLOSED.	REMARKS.
<p>North Carolina Swain County October 4th 1913.</p> <p>We the Presbytery of ordained Ministers and Deacons met at Deep Creek for the organization of a missionary Baptist Church.</p> <p>Names of the Presbytery:</p> <p>S. L. Watson Chairman A. J. Hall, Questioner, Indian Creek Baptist Church J. B. Queen, Clerk, Indian Creek Baptist Church A. W. Parris Deacon, Indian Creek Baptist Church W. N. Phillips Deacon</p> <p>Bro Will Buchanan was addressed as mouth piece for the body, and was examined on the missionary Baptist faith and was sound. So the body was established with sixteen (16) members in the name of the Deep Creek Baptist church.</p> <p>May God preside over us, as we have entered into this covenant with each other. This done Saturday before the first Sunday in October 1913.</p> <p>John B. Queen, C.C. pro temp.</p>			

It appeared to be a daughter church of Indian Creek Baptist

But early Indian Creek Baptist Church records indicate that its founding members had received dismissal letters from Deep Creek Church

January 28th 1874.

We, the following Brethren and sisters holding letters of dismissal from Deep Creek Church and others did on that day above written mutually agreed to become a constituted Church of the United Baptist faith and order at the School house on Indian Creek, whereupon said members calling Brother James Beard to the Chair Brother A. W. Harris acting as Secretary called for a treasury to constitute us into a church, whereupon called for the following Brethren, viz: Elders J. M. Smiley R. M. Roberts and Allen Amburns to meet with the body on the 28th of February 1874,

Notable elements in early Indian Creek Baptist Church records

- Constituted under Articles of faith of the Valley River United Baptist Association
- Elders J.M. Smiley*, R.M. Roberts, Wesley Williams were the forming Presbytery
- James Beard, W.H. Cathey, A.W. Parris were early church leaders
- Other early family names members included Shuler, Kilbee, Stiles, Gunter, Bumgarner
- Initially met at the Indian Creek School, located on the east side of Indian Creek
- Later, a church sanctuary a separate new school were erected on the west side of the creek

* Jesse Smiley, father of John Sadoc Smiley

Girls on the west side of the Deep Creek School around 1922

The girl who is second from
right is Annie Casada (1907-
1995). Others are unknown.

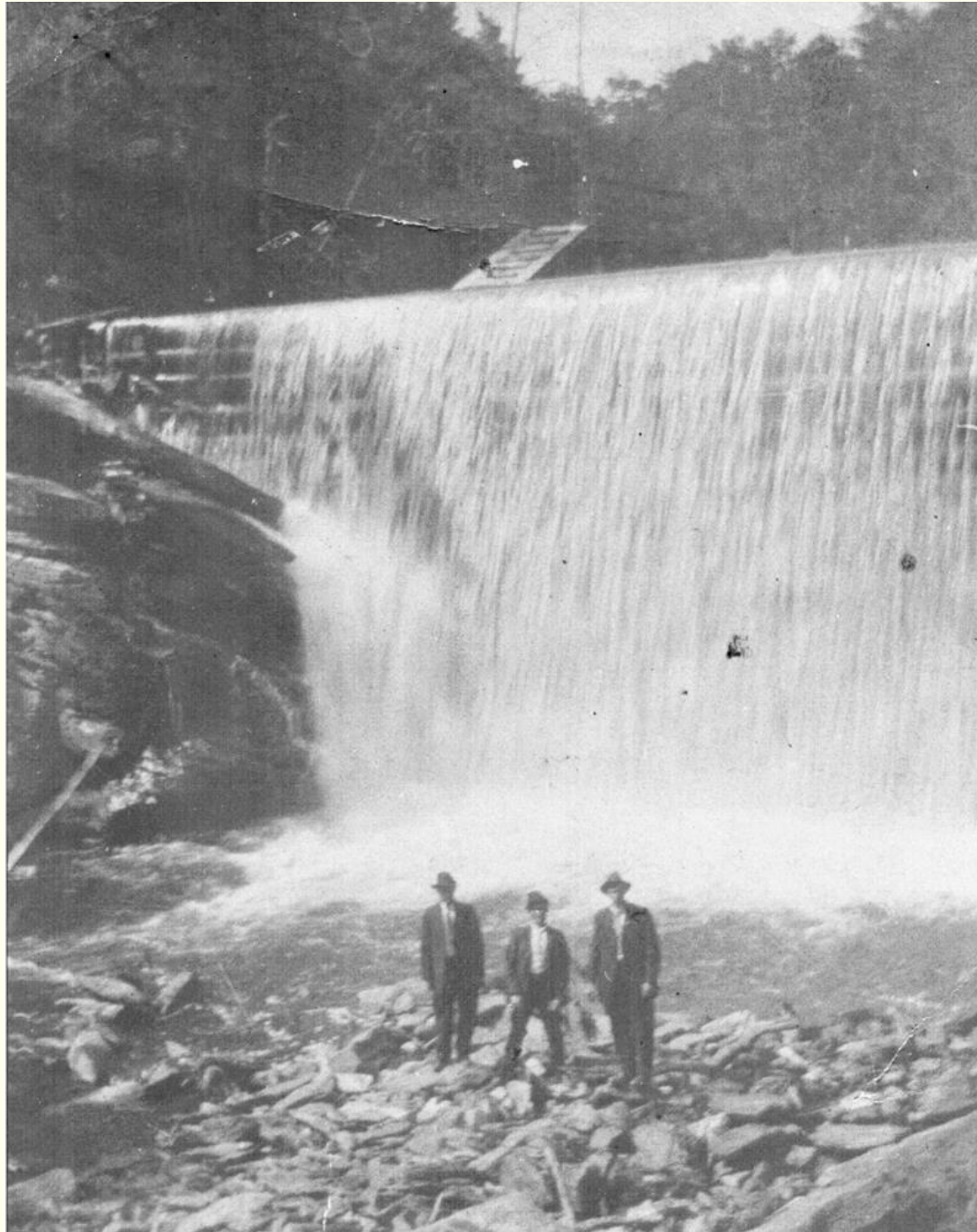
Notice the grave markers in
the Deep Creek Cemetery.
The school stood between
the cemetery and Deep
Creek.

Paths leading to the
school/church are still quite
evident today

Source: Casada family collection



In 1911, Billy and Louisa Morris sold land to the town of Bryson City for the construction of a dam and powerhouse



This was the first source of electric power for Bryson City. It was located a short ways above Big Rock; evidence is still there today.

The dam backed water up onto property owned by Marion Eppley, who sued the town; the case made its way to the NC Supreme Court.

More background [HERE](#).

Photos courtesy of Jim Estes

Nancy Morris Cathey (1848-1925) was Billy's youngest sister



Nancy Morris, younger sister of Billy, married William Hillman "Hill" Cathey (1833-1890), after he'd returned from service in Thomas's Legion during the Civil War. They moved to Indian Creek in the early 1870s, and raised a family of 6 boys and 3 girls.

Photo courtesy of Sam Ainsworth, great-grandson

Ruby Lee Cathey (1915-1979) behind the Cathey place



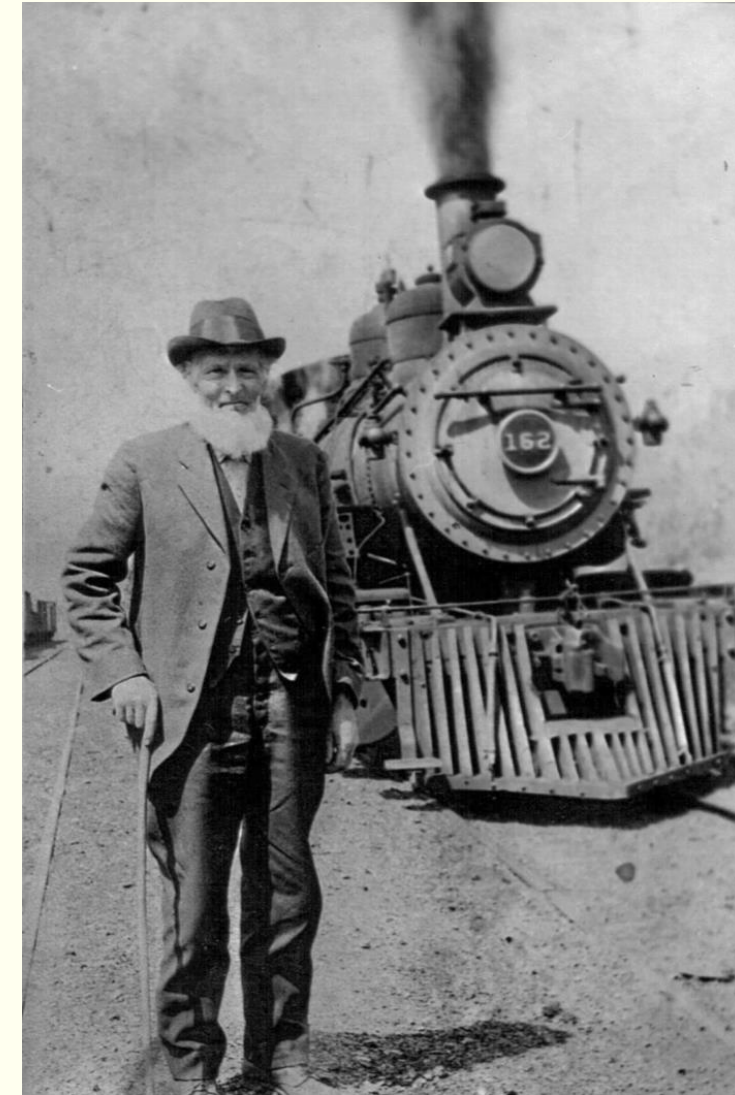
Ruby was Nancy and Hill's granddaughter, and daughter of Samuel Taylor Cathey, who moved to Arkansas as a young man.

Photo courtesy of Sam Ainsworth, son of Ruby Lee.

On up Indian Creek was the home of Louisa Conner (1841-1918) and Alfred Washington Parris (1840-1935)

The Parris place stood on the west side of Indian Creek a little over a half-mile above the Cathey place.

The couple was married in 1859, and had one son, James Robert, before A.W. enlisted in the 25th NC Infantry Regiment (Confederate). He was shot during an encounter at Malvern Hill, VA (15 miles SE of Richmond) in July 1861. The photo at right was taken at Dillsboro, likely when A.W. attended a Confederate veteran reunion at Sylva.



Photos courtesy of Wade Patterson, great-grandson

A couple of miles away was Alfred Washington Parris's cousin, Alfred Jefferson Parris a veteran of Thomas's Legion who lived with his family on the head of Juney Whank Branch. A.J. Parris died in 1898 and is buried in the Deep Creek Cemetery. Most of his family left for Texas shortly afterwards. That home place was where Joe and Minnie Casada moved to in 1915.

Several of the Parris children remained on Indian Creek

Immediately above the Parris home was the Indian Creek School. Around the bend from the school was the Indian Creek Baptist Church; on the hill above the bend which separates school and church is the misnamed (by the Park Service) Laney Cemetery – it should be the Parris Cemetery. The church, school and cemetery were established on Parris family land.

According to a granddaughter, the home built by John E. Davis, the son-in-law of A.W. and Louisa Parris was similar in design to the Parris home. Davis married Lucretia “Creacy” Parris, their daughter, and built this home up alongside the Thomas Divide.

The home was later sold to Joe Thad Queen. After his land was taken by the NC Park Commission, the home was disassembled, moved to and reassembled at the Park Visitor Center at Lufty.

On June 24, 1900, W.A. Casada, Baptist minister, conducted the marriage of Tildon Branton and Lou Wiggins at the John Davis home; witnesses: John Davis & Dolph Swaim.



Photo source: [Open Parks Network](#).

Corn crib at the John Davis/Joe Thad Queen home place



1937 Photo source: [Open Parks Network](#).

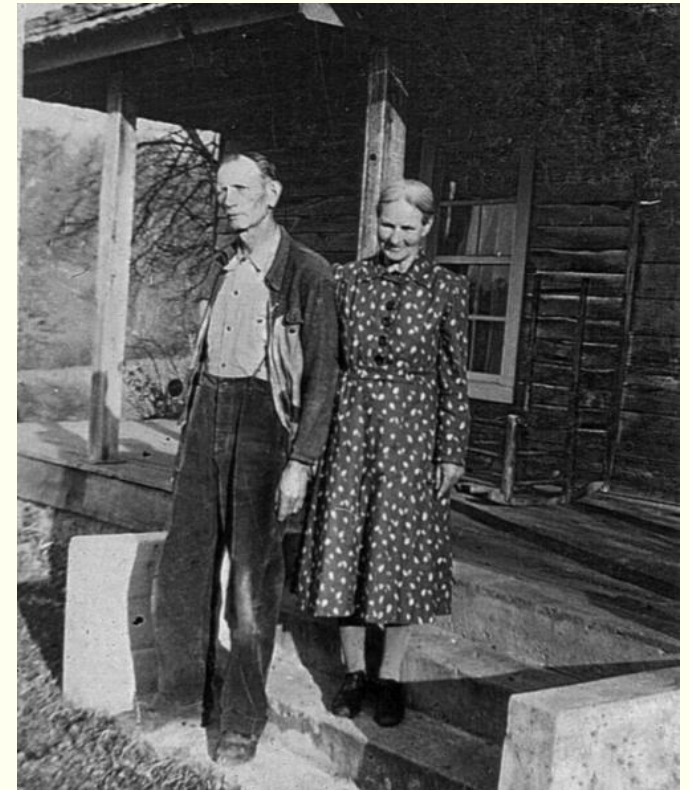
Corn crib at the John Davis/Joe Thad Queen home place (2016)



The youngest Parris daughter, Docia, married Baxter Laney. They made their home in a house originally constructed by James Beard, also a Civil War veteran and brother-in-law of A.W. Parris.



Photo Source: [Open Parks Network](#)



The home of Baxter and Docia Laney was located on Indian Creek ½ mile above the Parris home. The boxwoods at the top of the bank in front of the house are now monstrous. Note how similar the home layout is to that built by John Davis.

Baxter and Docia are pictured at right after the North Carolina Park Commission had taken their home and they'd moved to Clay County.

The photo of Baxter and Docia is courtesy of Wade Patterson, their grandson, who still owns the Clay County home place.

George Parris, a son of Docia's oldest brother, James Robert, made a home on Betts Branch. His granddaughter, Melody Guelker Greene, wrote of her childhood memories in [My Home on Betts Branch](#). Melody and her husband, Earl, now own the home and have a deep affection for Deep Creek.

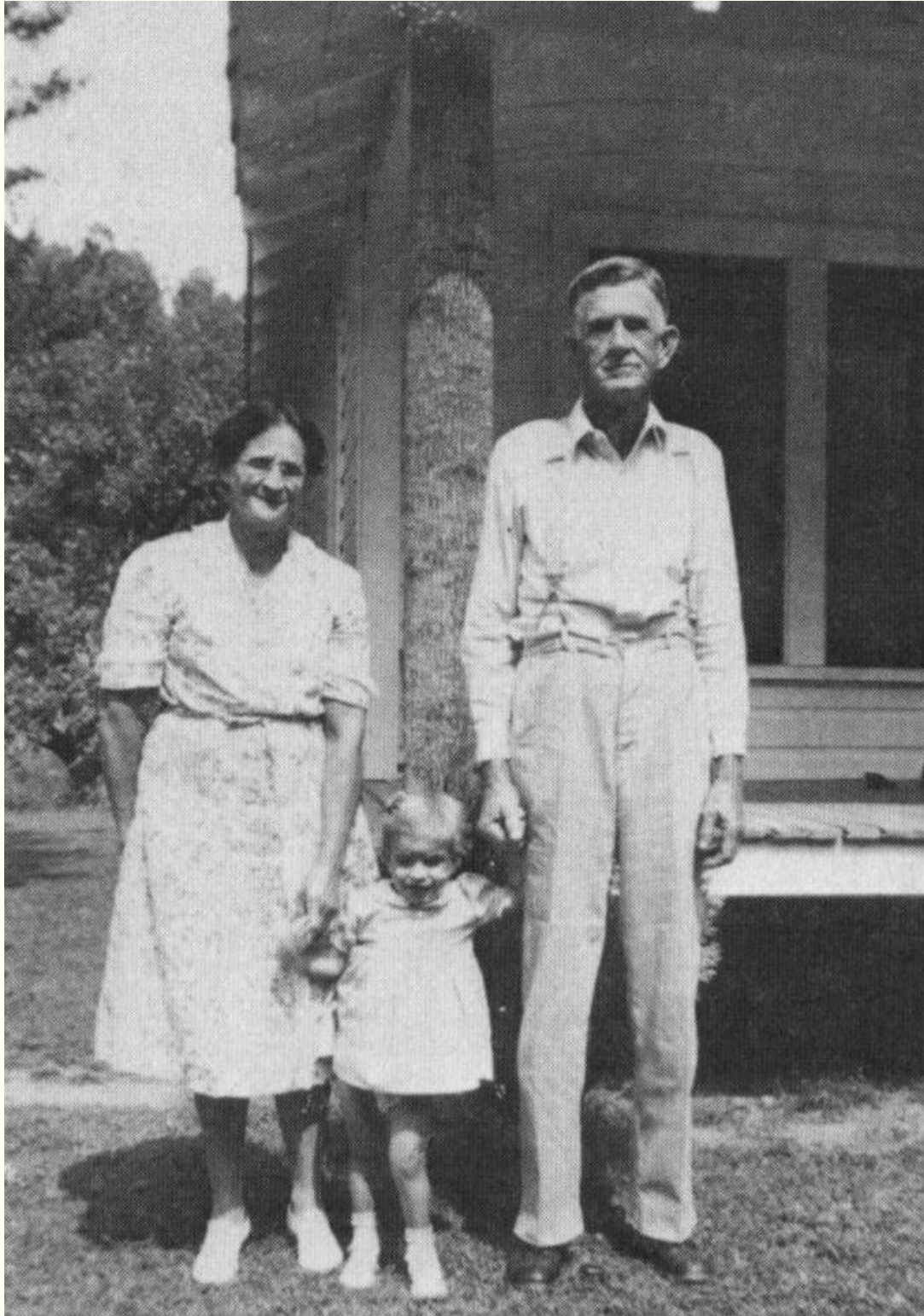
Back down the creek to the Cathey place...



April, 1925 – when the children came home for their mother's funeral; L-R (I think): Mark, Rebecca C. McCracken, John B., Nicie C. Beck, Sam, James, Grady

Photo courtesy of Sam Ainsworth, grandson of Sam Cathey

McCrackens



Left: Rebecca Cathey and Forest McCracken with granddaughter Sandra

Right: Britt, son of Forest and Rebecca, father of Sandra

In 1900, Forest McCracken bought 100 acres of land from Epp Everett, administrator of the estate of Clark Whittier

In 1886, Whittier had purchased the Land Grant 587 tract from the Love heirs

1900
I.R. Stamp
Documentary

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA—Swain County.

THIS DEED, Made this the seventh day of July, 1900, by E. Everett Administrator
of Clark Whittier with the will annexed
of Swain County and State of North Carolina, of the first part, to Forest McCracken
of Swain County and State of North Carolina, of the second part:

WITNESSETH, That said E. Everett admors of Clark Whittier do in consideration of
Three hundred Dollars, to Forest McCracken paid by
the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, have bargained and sold,
and by these presents do bargain, sell and convey to said Forest McCracken heirs and assigns, a
certain tract or parcel of land in Swain County, State of North Carolina adjoining the lands of
the heirs of Col. T.D. Bryson

and others, bounded as follows, viz.: on Deep Creek Beginning on a White oak in T.D. Bryson
line then N. 28 W. with Bryson's line 36 poles to a Chestnut, then S 17
N. 180 poles to a Black oak, then S 28 E 128 poles to a Chestnut oak, then N. 17
E. 180 poles to a chestnut, then N. 28 W. 72 poles to the beginning contain-
ing one hundred acres more or less according to survey.

In 1912, when their daughter Faye was three years old, the McCrackens sold the McCracken Place and moved to Galbraith Creek so their children would have ready access to schools

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, Smyrna COUNTY.

THIS DEED, Made this 27th day of February, 1912, by F. B. McCracken and wife
M. R. McCracken of Smyrna County and State of North
Carolina, of the first part, to C. E. Wilhide, C. Thomas and T. D. Bryson
of Smyrna County and State of North Carolina, of the second-part:

WITNESSETH, That said F. B. McCracken and M. R. McCracken in Consideration of one
Thousand 00/100 Dollars, to them paid by C. E. Wilhide, C. Thomas and T. D. Bryson
the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, have bargained and sold, and by these presents do
bargain, sell and convey to said C. E. Wilhide, C. Thomas and T. D. Bryson their heirs and assigns, a certain
tract or parcel of land in Charleston Township Smyrna County, State of North Carolina adjoining the lands of Harris Woodburn
Lumber Co. T. D. Bryson et al, and others, and bounded as follows, viz:

Beginning on a white oak in Cas T. D. Bryson's line and runs North 28° West with Bryson's line 56 poles to a chestnut; thence South 17° West 180 poles to a black oak; then South 28° East 128 poles to a chestnut oak; then North 17° East 180 poles to a chestnut; then North 28° West 72 poles to the beginning, containing 100 acres more or less.

Charlie Wilhide, Cas Thomas and TD Bryson, Jr are all buried in the Bryson City Cemetery. Wilhide later sold his share to Cas Thomas, son of the John G. Thomas who built the pole road on Pole Road Creek.

After Cas died, his widow, Hattie, sold the Thomas interest to her brother-in-law, Hoy Lee Thomas. A nice hole on Deep Creek, just above the McCracken Place, is known as the Hoy Hole.

Another, partly cut off, family photo at the Cathey home



Front left: Sam Hunnicutt Front right: Mark Cathey

Photo taken by Wayne Williams at the Bryson Place



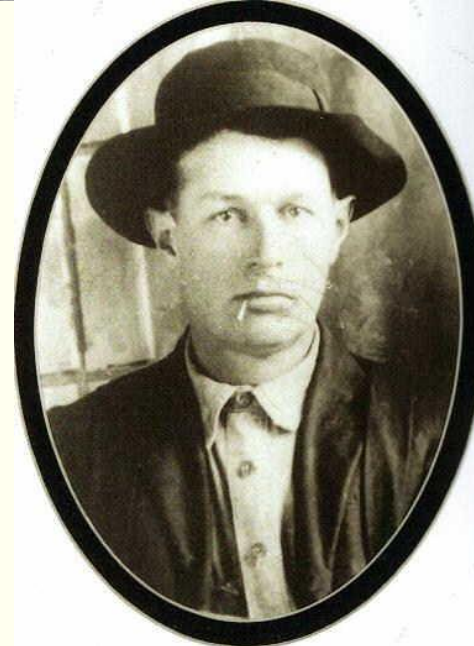
- 1: Charlie Hunnicutt
- 3: Bob Snelson
- 5: Noah Seay
- 6: Jeff Hunnicutt
- 7: Mark Cathey
- 9: Claude Williams
- 10: Granville Calhoun
- 12: Sam Hunnicutt

Photo source: Jim Estes

PhD Dissertation on Early 20th Century Mountain Society (disguised as a bunch of huntin' and fishin' stories)

20 Years
HUNTING
and
FISHING
in the Great
Smoky Mountains

By S. J. HUNNICUTT
Introduction by JIM CASADA



Digital edition (free): https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/wcu/f/Hunnicutt_20Year_OA.pdf

After Bruin in the Great Smokies

By WAYNE W. WILLIAMS
Asheville, N. C.

"I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the
bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
Such gallant chiding."

Shakespeare, Midsummer Night's Dream.

"BEYOND the Alps lies Italy." Beyond Asheville, to the west, stretches that majestic range of hills which forms the state line between North Carolina and Tennessee, and which has been so superbly described by Kephart in his classic on the Southern mountains and mountaineers, "Our Southern Highlanders." This range constitutes one of the most prominent links in the great Appalachian system, and by reason of its hazy, smoky appearance when seen from a distance has been very aptly styled the Great Smokies. In the bosom of these mighty hills I was born and reared. Generations of mountaineer blood (the Williams came from Wales) flow through my veins. No Scot ever loved his native highlands with a greater passion than I do these. Is it any wonder, then, that "when the frost is on the pumpkin and the fodder's in the shock," I should long to go in quest of Bruin, who has made these wilderness fastnesses his favorite haunt since the memory of man runneth to the contrary?

The first known book or journal article about the Smokies was written by Wayne Williams and published in *National Sportsman* in 1923

It was on Monday morning, November 9, 1920, that I caught the little Southern train at the Asheville station and headed West, on the Murphy Branch Division, as it is called, for Bryson City (65 miles), my native town, where I detrained. After a sumptuous dinner at the paternal banquet board, my father and brother Claud and I set out on foot for the Bryson cabin, which is situated ten miles North on Deep Creek, western North Carolina's premier trout stream. Hunters, dogs, and provision had already preceded us, and when we arrived late in the evening the old camp was astir. Mark Cathey, Sam Hunnicutt, and several other veteran bear hunters were there, and a score of others who had not yet won their spurs. After a hearty supper, we lay down before the two big fires to listen to thrilling stories of former chases, and to discuss plans for the morrow's hunt.

The story had also been published in the *Asheville Citizen* in November, 1922

Sam's Story Number Thirty-Four didn't quote Shakespeare, but he told a side of the story which Wayne didn't

Sam and his rank-thinning co-conspirators



Robert Snelson,
(Debbie Colville)



Sam Hunnicutt,
(20 Years)



Mark Cathey,
(Carl Grueninger, Jr)

Introduction to Sam's *Story Number Thirty-Four*

A bear hunt by Mark Cathey, O. P. Williams, myself and others. The dogs we took on this hunt were Old Muse, Boney and Wheeler; some other dogs that are not bear hounds, I will not mention. We planned to go early one morning, so we got to camp that day and were ready for an early drive next morning.

By night there were forty people around the camp; the first day we old hunters did not like too large a crowd, and I told Robert Snelson and Mark that I would get rid of some of the crowd tomorrow. Robert asked how I would do that. I told him I will get Mark to take the standers and I will let him take all that want to get rid of above the Wallow Knob and I will take all in the drive with me that I can get to go, and I will drive through Watson Cove and through Bear Creek to Cold Spring Knob and back over to Sassafras Knob and back to Elliott Ridge to camp. That will be a bogus drive; we will not start a bear and most of the people will curse bear hunting and go home and we will take the ones that stay in our club, and the next day we'll make a drive and I will guarantee a bear fight. Mark said that suits me.

So Mark took his standers and placed them seven to nine miles from camp and I took the rest of the crowd and made the bogus drive. First I waded the creek and they all waded it too; I then went through the roughest places I could find, for I was long-winded, and kept this up all day. I made the round, and some of the boys began to fall out before I had gone half way, and before I got back to camp I had only a few with me. Their dogs were loose all over the mountains dragging their chains and straps or whatever they were tied with.

When the crowd got back to camp and had eaten they began cursing bear hunting and started home. This cut our crowd down to about eleven. These I considered good bear hunters.

Sam's *20 Years* narratives indicate an egalitarian Smoky Mountain culture of the early 20th century

- Marion Eppley and Ethelberta Eppley of Newport, Rhode Island and Long Island, NY were prominent northern blue bloods
- Robert Snelson was a stand-up pillar of the community
- O.P. Williams and son Wayne were both preachers of the Baptist gospel; O.P. also served in the NC House
- Andy Orr died in Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary in Morgan County, Tennessee, where he was doing time for murder
- Sam himself enjoyed free room and board, courtesy of the county, at the County calaboose in Bryson City
- Mark Cathey was Sam's most constant companion; both were "branch water" boys who lived on Deep Creek
- There is nothing to distinguish Marion Eppley and O.P. Williams from Andy Orr in Sam's storylines. Sam's only basis of character judgment was how one acquitted one's self in the cathedral not made by hand – out under the skies of the Great Smoky Mountains.

1930 onward

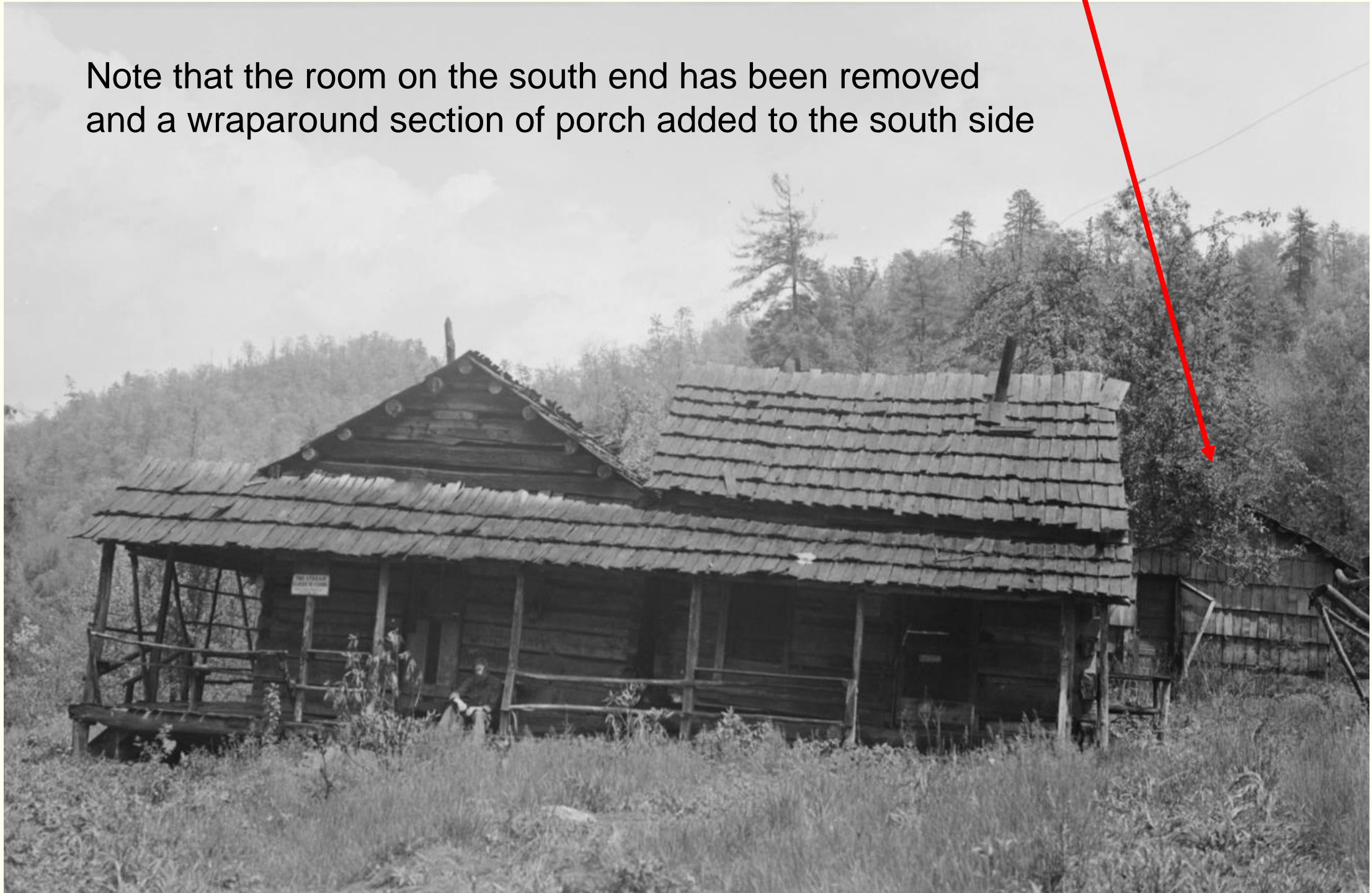
The CCC added a pair of barracks to the Bryson Place in the 1930s



Source: [Open Parks Network](#)

1937 view of the Bryson Place cabin, CCC barracks beyond

Note that the room on the south end has been removed and a wraparound section of porch added to the south side



Source: [Open Parks Network](#)

Bill Rolen, early Park Ranger, at the Billy Morris place, used as ranger quarters up until the 1960s

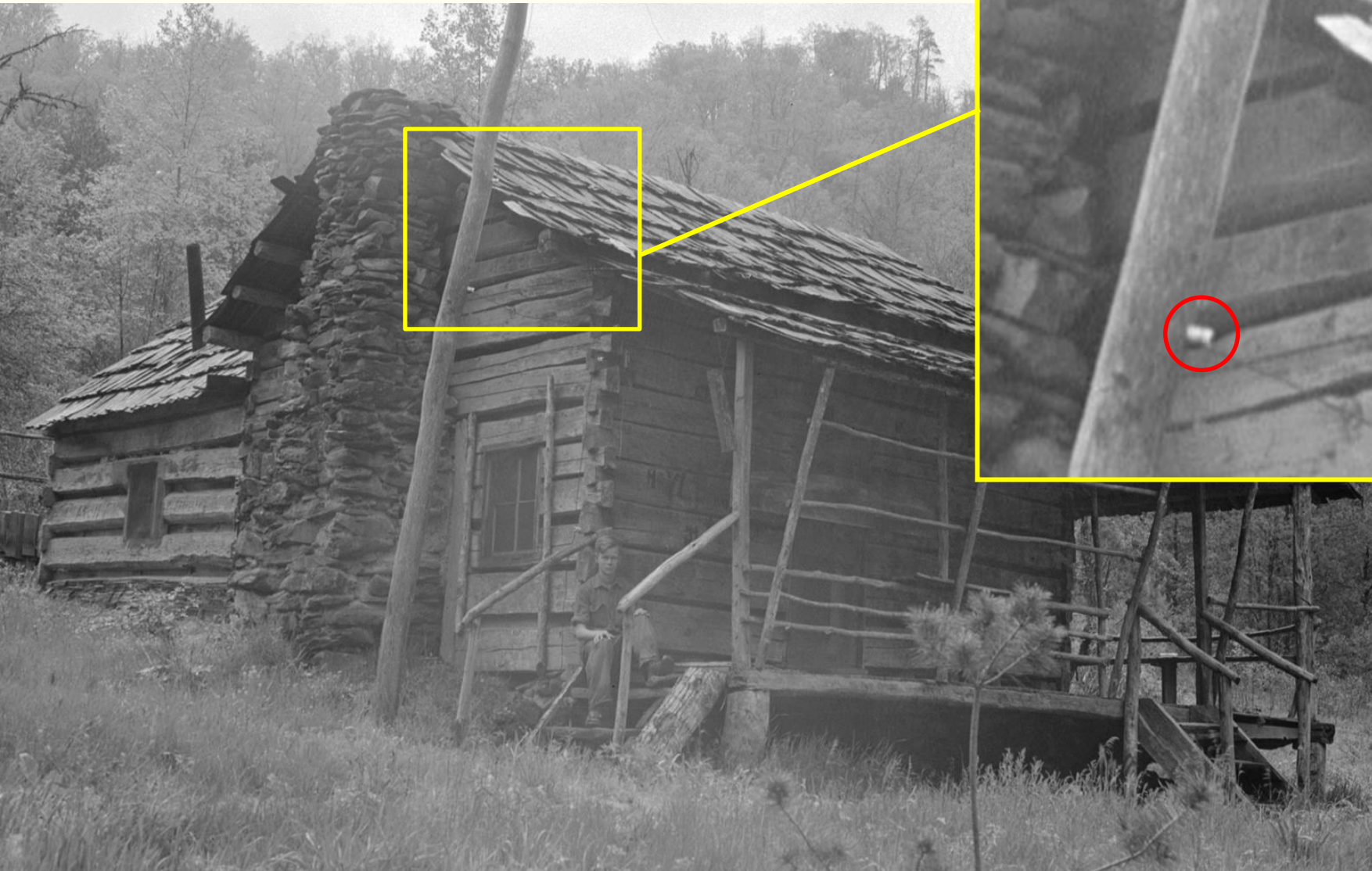


Young Billy Rolen, mid-1940s



There was telephone service to the Bryson Place

View from the northwest



1937 Photo by Charles Grossman, [Open Parks Network](#)

On the Deep Creek Trail, between the Turnaround and Bumgarner Branch



On Bumgarner Branch and Pullback



I.K. Stearns and Kip, with Deep Creek valley beyond - 1941

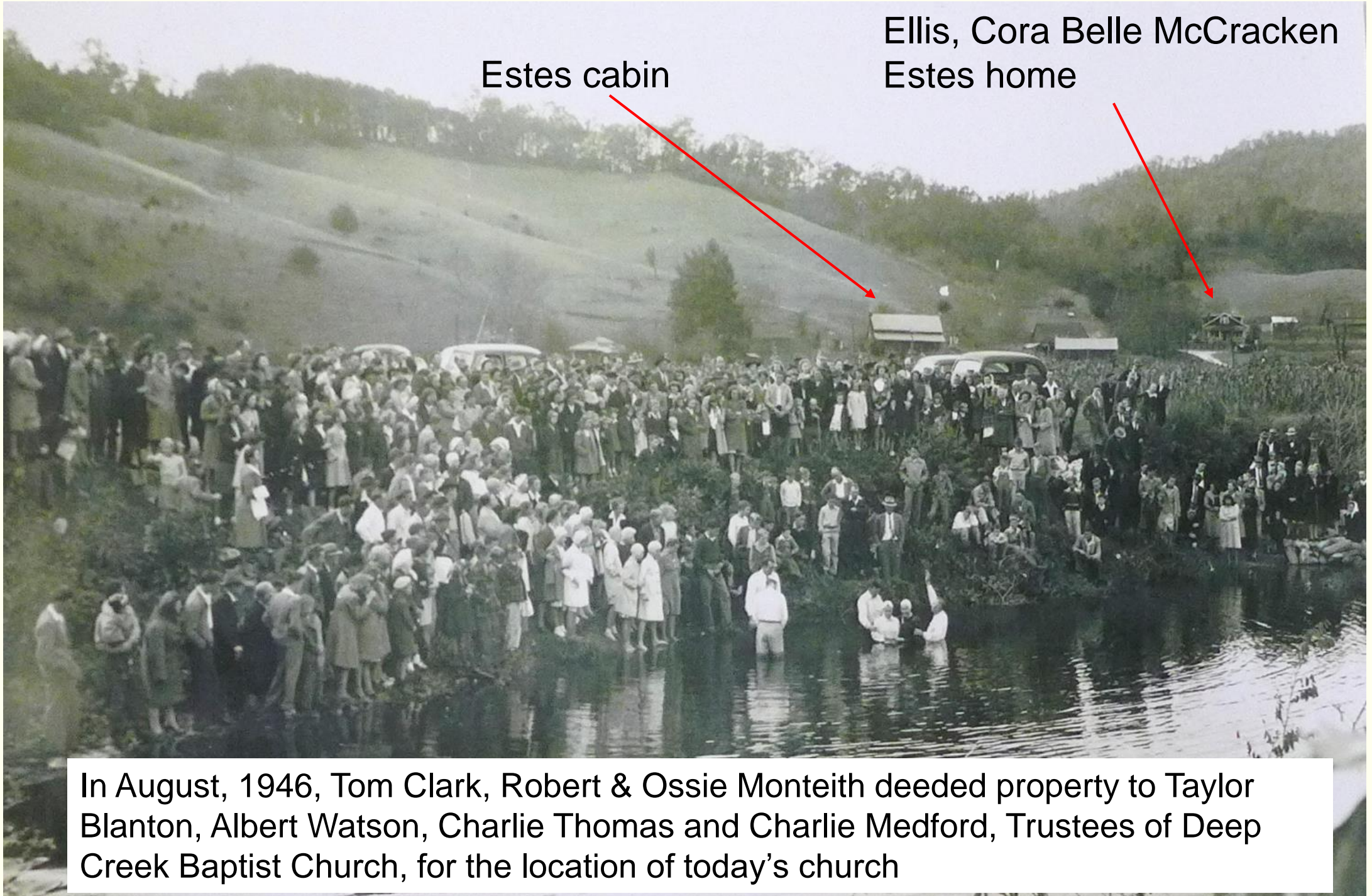


Source: [Stearns-Grueninger Collection, Hunter Library Special Collections](#)

November 9, 1947 Reeves Hole (over 60 baptisms)

Estes cabin

Ellis, Cora Belle McCracken
Estes home



In August, 1946, Tom Clark, Robert & Ossie Monteith deeded property to Taylor Blanton, Albert Watson, Charlie Thomas and Charlie Medford, Trustees of Deep Creek Baptist Church, for the location of today's church

Photo courtesy of Toby Allman, Deep Creek Baptist Church

Some Parris folks come back home



Left: Debbie & Wade Patterson and Melody Greene at Parris Cemetery
Right: Lydia Parris Vick and Docia Parris Laney (courtesy of Wade Patterson)

Hunnicut family at the home and graves above the Turnaround



Juney Whank homecomings



Photo by Wendy Meyers →

Jim Estes across from the McCracken Branch cascades



Jim is a g-g grandson of Billy Morris. His grandmother, Cora Belle McCracken, was a niece of Forest McCracken, namesake of the McCracken Place.

Mark Cathey, Our Beloved Hunter and Fisherman

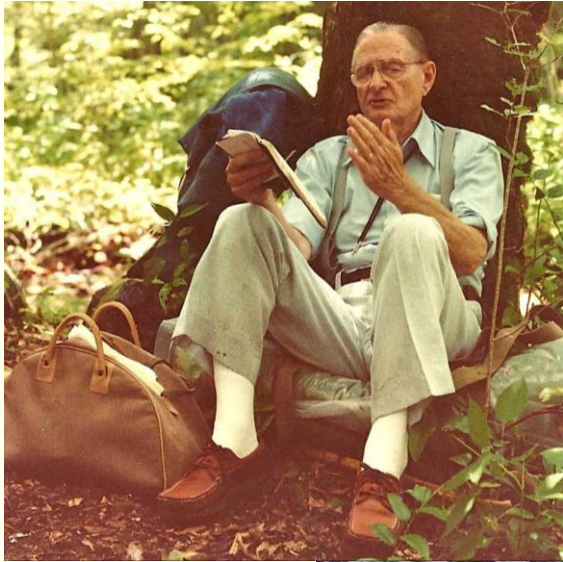


Joe Ghost, George Brown and Mark Cathey on Noland Creek; photo by I.K. Stearns

Source: [Stearns-Grueninger Collection, Hunter Library Special Collections](#)



Herbert Brown, founder of Camp Living Water



WELCOME!

Camp Living Water is a non-profit, non-denominational Christian Youth Camp and Retreat Center located in the Great Smoky Mountains of Western North Carolina.

HURRICANE HELENE UPDATE

God miraculously sheltered us from the high winds and flooding experienced throughout our region. The staff, structures, and grounds here are fine. We are now supporting local churches in providing lodging, showers, meals, and laundry facilities in Jesus' name! (James 2:15-17; Matthew 25:40; Matthew 10:42)

Thank you, it's only your prayer and support that enable these practical efforts. "So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him...and he said, He who showed mercy on him. Then Jesus said to him, Go and do likewise." Luke 10:36a-37)

OVERNIGHT

FOR THE DAY