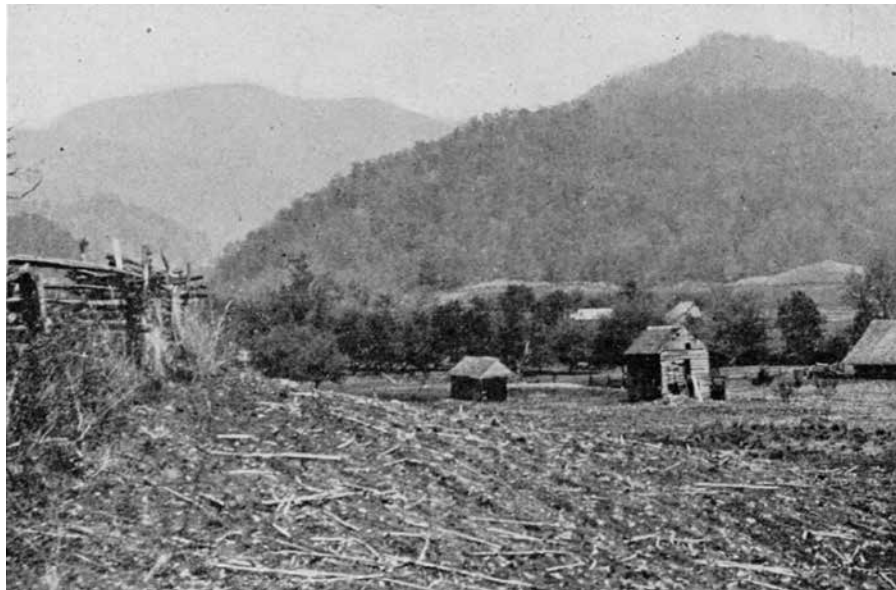


GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS Colloquy

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Enloe Farm on the Oconaluftee. From: Thomas Robinson Dawley, Jr., *The Child that Toileth Not* (Gracia Publishing Co., 1912), p. 271.

Who Were the First Settlers of the Smokies? A VIEW FROM THE PRIMARY SOURCES

Who were the earliest legal white settlers on lands that would later become the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) and where did they settle?

Various scholarly and popular accounts consistently indicate that the Oconaluftee (“Luftee”) Valley was the area first settled, and more specifically, the broad level bottoms area near the Park Visitor Center just north of Cherokee, NC—surrounding the confluence of the Oconaluftee River and Raven Fork. Most often, some combination of Mingus, Walker, Enloe, and Hughes families are mentioned as the first settlers. Claimed arrivals range from the early 1790s to shortly after the turn of the 19th century. However, the primary sources tell another story entirely.

Various writers on the Smokies have put forward candidates for first settlers. In *At Home in the Smokies*, Wilma Dykeman and Jim Stokely mentioned that “young” Felix Walker let John Jacob Mingus and Ralph Hughes settle in the “Lufty” region, with Abraham Enloe and his family following close behind in 1803. More recently Dan Pierce echoed Dykeman and Stokley when he wrote in *The Great Smokies: From Natural Habitat to National Park* that “John Jacob Mingus and Felix Walker, the first white settlers within the current boundaries



William Derris (and Red Bud), 1954. We have enhanced clips from his old home movies of the Smokies by adding folksongs performed by Knoxville musicians. (See “The Smokies Go to the Movies,” p. 3)

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Current View of the Location of the Enloe Farm. Oconaluftee Visitor Center, Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Photography by Don Casada.

of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, established permanent homesites in the 1790s, in the area around the Oconaluftee River.”

In *The Heritage of Swain County*, Bryson City researcher Elaine Sherrill Beck lists twenty names as the earliest settlers in the Luftee. Beck’s focus was not just the Park area, but the greater Luftee area. Of the four names noted above (Mingus, Walker, Enloe, and Hughes), only Jacob Mingus makes her list. Her research also suggests that the earliest arrivals were 1802 or later, not the 1790s as others had suggested.

John Hide (or Hyde) is a name which is not mentioned by Beck, Dykeman/Stokely, Pierce, or any other popular or scholarly sources, though Hyde’s credentials for being among the earliest settlers are superior to those cited above. In addition to having purchased land from Felix Walker in 1799, a state grant to Hyde entered in 1802 references “on his own beginning corner black oak.” In 1805, the Buncombe County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions named Hyde overseer of a road from Soco to Oconaluftee, indicating that he was living in the area. At the time, the land in question was part of Buncombe County. By 1808 this land was part of Haywood County; and later Jackson County, and then Swain County.

Hyde married Elizabeth Shook, daughter of an early Haywood County settler. After selling their land on Luftee in late 1815 to Abraham Enloe and purchasing four slaves from Enloe in the same year, the Hydys moved to Missouri. His life away from the Smokies was brief; in 1818, he was murdered by a slave.

Looking at evidence from census, deeds, and court records, what can be learned about claims regarding Jacob Mingus, Sr. (scouring of primary sources fails to find support for the “John” prefix), Felix Walker, Abraham Enloe, and Ralph Hughes as settlers in the Luftee area?

First, the case of Jacob Mingus. In the 1800 census, Jacob Mingus is recorded as living in Lincoln County, NC, well over a hundred miles from the Oconaluftee Valley. There is solid evidence that Mingus was in the greater Luftee area by 1808. By the 1810 census, his family was in newly-created Haywood County, which included the section of Luftee inside the Park boundary. Other public records suggest Mingus moved to Luftee sometime after 1804. In that year, the Buncombe County court named him overseer of a road to be constructed “from the ridge dividing Richland and Scott’s Creek [Balsam Gap] to where the war path leaves the foot of Judaculla Mountain.” The property Mingus owned on Scott’s Creek, some twenty miles away from Luftee, was sold to Amos Brown in 1806. An October 1808 deed between Benjamin Parks and Jesse McFarland mentions “the Ravens fork above Jacob Mingus, including a place called the Plumb Orchard.” Mingus was indisputably among the earliest settlers, but primary source evidence refutes the pre-1800 claims.

The reference in *At Home in the Smokies* to “young” Felix Walker letting Mingus and Hughes tame the wilderness is odd, since Walker was born more than thirty years before Ralph Hughes and twenty years before Jacob Mingus. He fought in the Revolution, explored Kentucky with Daniel Boone, and braved the wilds of three terms in Congress, “talking for Buncombe.” A land speculator writ large, including in the Luftee area, Walker by his own account first moved to the mountains of Haywood County in 1808. However, his Haywood home was not on Luftee, but in Maggie Valley, as denoted by a North Carolina highway historical marker. Walker noted that he lost “10,000 acres

Illegal Settlements on Oconaluftee

The term “legal” is intended to focus attention on legal settlement. No records of settlers encroaching in the Oconaluftee area prior to the running of the Meigs-Freeman line have been found, but illegal entry was a documented problem later. In 1816-17, Big Bear wrote from his “TuckeyLitch” home complaining of inequitable handling of white encroachment in lower and upper Cherokee towns, noting that intruders were “all removed off of the frontiers of Tennessee last winter” but that “it appears that the upper part of the Nation is neglected or we would have had our Lines put to right as well as the Tennessee Lines.” His claims of illegal white aliens are supported by the log of preacher Humphrey Posey, who in April, 1818 recorded that he “preached among the whites in the bounds of the Big-bear’s town on Tuckasiegy.” That sermon to whites was given more than seven miles inside extant Cherokee Nation territory. A year later, under the terms of the 1819 treaty, Big Bear reserved a 640-acre tract which embraced his town, a place now known as Bryson City.

of the best land” he had speculated on because the Meigs-Freeman line, the survey which determined the Cherokee boundary, placed his land within the Cherokee-controlled area.

Now to the Enloes. Marriage records for Rutherford County, NC indicate Abraham Enloe married Sally Edgerton in 1795. As a Rutherford County citizen, in 1807, he purchased land from Felix Walker along “John Hyde’s lower line.” Yet in 1810, the Enloes were still in Rutherford County, a hundred miles from Luftee (the census confirmed that Walker had relocated to Haywood County). In 1815 Enloe paid \$1,500 to John Hyde for 450 acres on three adjoining tracts, and eventually acquired what became known as the Enloe-Floyd Bottoms. Although Enloe owned some of Luftee’s finest bottom land, he came from North (not South) Carolina, and arrived well after the claimed 1803.

Finally, to Hughes. Multiple census records and his relatively new tombstone in the Hughes Cemetery indicate that Rafe or Ralph Hughes was born in 1786. In 1810, the young Hughes couple was living in Buncombe County, miles from Luftee. An 1824 land grant to Hughes along the Raven Fork indicated existing improvements of his making. Ultimately the Hughes family accumulated around 500 acres across Raven Fork from the Cherokee Central School, but their arrival was after 1810.

Elements of the standard Luftee litany are historical hearsay. But the evidence uncovered at this time strongly points to John Hyde as an earlier settler than either Mingus, Walker, Enloe, or Hughes on land that would later become the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Here’s hoping that some energetic young’un will, like settlers of old, let worn out soil lie fallow, clear some “new ground,” and plow into the where, who, and when of Smokies settlement.

Don Casada, Son of the Smokies

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News from the Smokies Project ANNOUNCING TWO NEW COLLECTIONS

The Smokies Go to the Movies



"Views of Gatlinburg"

The William Derris Collection has been expanded to include a new video component. Derris, owner of the Derris Motel in Townsend, travelled throughout the Smokies taking slides and recording films from the 1940s to the 1960s. Several

months ago the UT Libraries mounted a collection of 334 slides documenting primarily the East Tennessee side of the Smokies including Townsend, Tuckaleechee, Cades Cove, Wears Valley, Little Greenbrier. The most recent addition to the collection is twelve film clips created from several reels of 8mm movie film. Under the guidance of Chris Durman, a UT music librarian, local musicians created new music to accompany the silent films. The songs are all traditional Smoky Mountain tunes. The result is a wonderful blend of the old and new. You can view the clips at: <http://digital.lib.utk.edu/derris/>. Unfortunately, we do not know the names of people in the films. If you recognize any of them, please let us know.

Upcoming New Cades Cove Collection: 50 YEARS IN CADES COVE

John W. Oliver, one the descendants of the original settlers of Cades Cove, wrote three memoirs about the history of Cades Cove and the families who lived there. The memoirs, along with photographs and documents, are a part of the Dunn-Oliver Collection, donated to UT’s Special



John W. and Nancy Ann Oliver, January 26, 1901.

Collections by historian and Oliver descendant Durwood Dunn. The Smokies Project practicum student, Michelle Schabowski, digitized the memoirs and created searchable versions. The digitized originals, the searchable surrogates, and a collection of Oliver photographs will soon be available through the UT Digital Collections, offering a wealth of historical and genealogical information about Cades Cove.

New on the Smokies Bookshelf**NON-FICTION**

Cardwell, Glenn. *The Greenbrier Cove Story and A Dream Fulfilled: A Story about Pittman Center*. Insight Publishing, 2012.

Catton, Theodore. *Mountains for the Masses: A History of Management Issues in Great Smoky Mountains National Park*. Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2014.

DeLozier, Kim and Carolyn Jourdan. *Bear in the Back Seat II: Adventures of a Wildlife Ranger in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park*. Zo'o Media, 2014.

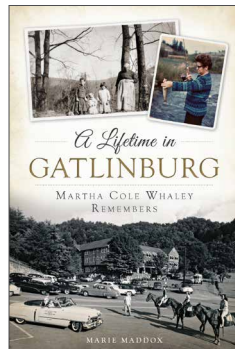
Frye, Jason. *Moon Blue Ridge Parkway Road Trip: Including Shenandoah & Great Smoky Mountains National Parks*. Avalon Travel Publishing, 2015.

Green, Missy Tipton. *Townsend*. Arcadia Publishing, 2014.

Kirk, Don. *Hatches & Fly Patterns of the Great Smoky Mountains*. Headwater Books, Stackpole Books, 2014.

Maddox, Marie. *A Lifetime in Gatlinburg: Martha Cole Whaley Remembers*. Charleston History Press, 2014

Oliver, Judge W.W. *Cades Cove: A Personal History*. Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2105.



Schmitt, A.R. *Shenandoah, the Blue Ridge Parkway and The Great Smoky Mountains: How to Have an Extremely Great Family Adventure*. The Little Philosopher Group, 2015.

Stepp, James L. and Lin. *The Afternoon Hiker: A Guide to Casual Hikes in the Great Smoky Mountains*. Mountain Hill Press, 2014.

Wise, Ken. *Hiking Trails of the Great Smoky Mountains*. Second edition. University of Tennessee Press, 2014.

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Cook, J.J. *In Hot Water*. Berkley, 2015.

Davis, Pat Meece. *The Night Dancing Stopped*. Falling Waters Publishing, 2014

Graves, Paula. *The Secret of Cherokee Cove, The Legend of Smuggler's Cave, and Blood on Copperhead Trail*. Harlequin, 2014.

Kirst, Karen. *Married by Christmas*. Harlequin Love Inspired Books, 2014.

Michaels, Fern. *When the Snow Falls*. Zebra, 2014.

Rash, Ron. *Something Rich and Strange*. Ecco, 2014.

Reid, Penny. *Beauty and the Mustache: A Philosophical Romance*. Cipher-Naught, 2014.

Sims, Janice. *Safe in My Arms*. Harlequin Kimani Romance, 2014.

Stepp, Lin. *Down by the River: A Smoky Mountain Novel and Makin' Miracles: A Smoky Mountain Novel*. Kensington Books, 2014.

Urban, Annslee. *Smoky Mountain Investigation*. Love Inspired, 2014.

JUVENILE

Frisch, Nate. *Great Smoky Mountains National Park*. Creative Education, 2014.

Holmes, Kathryn. *The Distance Between Lost and Found*. HarperTeen, 2015.

Horstman, Lisa. *Sabrina: A Great Smoky Mountains Story*. Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2015.

MUSIC

Old-time Bluegrass from the Great Smoky Mountains. Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2014. CD.

Woodpickers. *Smoky Mountain Parlor Pickin'*. The Woodpickers, 2014.

FILM

Lost Masterpiece: Kark Brown's "Stark Love." Poppie Productions, 2014.

Voices of Cades Cove. Part I: A Sense of Place; Part II Amazing Grace. Kate Marshall Graphics, Inc., 2014.

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