

# The Teresita Gazette

Olden Times in Macon County, NC & News of the History Scene Today  
Teresita Press • P.O. Box 1114 • Franklin NC 28744 • www.teresita.com

March 2000

## History of Otto published

*Two Centuries of Otto History, 1789-1999*, by Ralph Henson (1999), hardcover, 112 pp, \$18.

Though it was settled during pioneer days in the 1820s, the Otto community was not christened until 1882, when postmaster Isaac Bradley chose this name for his new post office. Otto remained a sleepy farming community until 1908, when the railroad arrived, stimulating the timber industry. A boom town grew up around the railroad depot here and was temporarily incorporated (1909).

Mr. Henson points out in his preface that Otto and the surrounding township of Smith-bridge is similar in character and history to other rural communities of Macon County. His book, however, is proof of the unique and fascinating stories that can be found in every place.

Several others contributed articles on specific topics to this wonderful celebration of a vibrant rural community.

*Two Centuries* is available from the Macon County Historical Museum, local bookstores and other outlets.

## Your News Here!

Send us news of heritage exhibits, publishing events, programs, family reunions, etc.

## Highlands Life in 1883

(From *The Blue Ridge Enterprise*, A.F.Clark, publisher, Nov. 20, 1883.)

A drove of Thanksgiving Turkeys passed here for Walhalla one day last week.

Excavations are in progress for the foundation of the Presbyterian Church and stone and lumber being placed on the ground.

The wind blew cold and furious on Thursday Nite from North West and fires in the Mountains could be seen in all directions. Some fences were burned.

Several Strangers have arrived in Highlands during the last week.

Dr. Frost is expected soon. Jack Frost has, however, made his appearance ahead of the Doctor.

Mrs. Bingham's beautiful residence at Kalalanta, in spite of numerous delays in obtaining finishing material, still progresses, and will be completed in a modern style, by Dec. 1st.

Forty Choice business lots on main str. 33 by 50 feet at \$100 to \$200, per lot 20 business lots on 4th str. 33' by 50' \$25 to \$50 per lot.

## Highlands House

Good rooms, good tables, satisfaction guaranteed. Terms for winter \$20 per month. Special rates for families. Joseph Fritts, prop.

## Highlands First Presbyterian Church

A plate issued in 1985 commemorated the 100th anniversary of the church. On reverse:



"The First Presbyterian Church, the oldest church edifice in Highlands, stands on a lot donated by town founder and wife, Mr. and Mrs. S.T. Kelsey.

"Sisters Mrs. S.P. Ravenel and Mrs. Clarissa Burt built the church at their expense. It was dedicated to the Glory of God on September 13, 1885, with Rev. James E. Fogarie as minister. In 1929 the church was reorganized by Asheville Presbytery with Rev. Charles R. McCarty as first year-round minister."



"Paul ran off with Mama's umbrella to see Margret's picture taken." — F.T. Smith photo

## Tax Assessors, 1883

**Burningtown:** S.T. Ramsey,  
H.H. Ray, P.C. Wild,

**Cartoogechaye:** L.H. Enloe,  
W.C. Kimsey, A.H. Slagle

**Cowee:** John S. Gibson, W.F.  
Potts, A. Hall

**Ellijay:** J.J. Arnold, Wm. H.  
Higdon, B.M. Allen

**Highlands:** S.W. Hill, M.I.  
Skinner, J.W. Dobson

**Millshoal:** C.C. Berry, John T.  
Berry, John Ammons

**Nantahala:** A.P. Munday,  
Zebidee Barnes, W.H. Cochran

**Smithbridge:** W.T. Anderson,  
L. Howard

**Sugarfork:** R. Russell, J.L.  
Corbin, J.C. Henderson, J.M.  
Keener

## Tax Listers, 1883

**Burningtown:** Joseph Morgan

**Cartoogechaye:** T.S. Siler

**Cowee:** M.J. Mashburn

**Ellijay:** J.B. Gray

**Highlands:** J.N. Arnold

**Millshoal:** John Elmore

**Nantahala:** J.M. Forrister

**Smithbridge:** L.H. Garland

**Sugarfork:** J.M. Keener

## Highland Market Prices

November 1883

Wheat	\$1.25
Rye	0.90
Flour	3.50 per 100 lbs.
Corn meal	1.75 per 100 lbs
Butter	0.20 per lbs.
Eggs	0.12 -.15 per doz.
Pork	0.06 per lb. fresh
Mutton	0.06-.10 per lb.



*An early photo of The Triad, a Rustic Revival style lodge on Billy Cabin Ridge, Highlands.*

## Brittain Slave Records

Benjamin Brittain was listed as the owner of 11 slaves in 1830. Records show Brittain used the slaves frequently as collateral in loans. One, Esther, and her youngest child were finally lost when a business deal soured:

1828 Brittain mortgaged to Robert B. Vance estate Esther and children Boston, Will and Ransom(1) (Bk. A, 189, 224)

1835, Mortgaged to Vance estate: Esther's two youngest children, Sarah and Clarissa (Bk. A, 265)

1838, Brittain & J.K. Gray mortgaged to Henry Grady and John Hall: Esther, abt. 35, and her child (Bk. B, 701)

1838, Brittain mortgaged to Thos. J. Roane: Isam, Boston, Wilson, Ransom, Esther, Lawson, Dick, Jane, Sary, Clary (Bk. A, 573)

1838, Brittain mortgaged to Jesse Pendergrass, Geo. Carson and John Hall: Isham, Ned, Boston, Willson, Ransom, Susan, Marlborough, Easter, Jane, Sarah and Clarey (Bk. A, 616)

1839, Sheriff Eli McKee sold at courthouse in Franklin, to satisfy judgment against Benjamin S. Brittain, a Negro woman Esther, about 35, and her child Betsey, about six months, to N.W. Woodfin and Wm. H. Thomas, for \$660.

## Press Editor in Highlands

*Franklin Press*, Oct. 31, 1894

"It was our good fortune to stop with clever Dave Norton and his good wife who know full well how to run a hotel, especially with the assistance of their daughter, Mrs. Frost, who well understands the art of introducing and maintaining an atmosphere of enjoyment suited to any company that may be so fortunate as to call at the Central House. We fell into Uncle Dave's care Wednesday night and soon found we were at Democratic headquarters, for the Democratic candidates for the county offices all came in soon after dark and took lodging.

"Early after breakfast on Thursday morning, we took a walk alone over the top of the Blue Ridge to the magnificent place of Mr. S.P. Ravenel. Just as we were entering the premises we were joined by Mr. Barak Wright who escorted us up to Mr. Ravenel's handsome residence where we met Mr. and Mrs. Ravenel and their son S.P. Ravenel, Jr. Mr. Ravenel escorted us around a short while and showed us his fine spring, and Lover's Leap, and a few of the points of interest."

## Teresita Press Titles

*Franklin's Ancient Mound: Myth and History of Old Nikwasi* (McRae), \$6.95

*Little Journeys, A Photo Tour Guide through Historic Macon County*, (Hildegard Sandhusen), \$10.95

*Macon County in the 1850 Census* (McRae & Leverette), \$22

Records of Macon County, NC, 1849-1858 (McRae) \$25

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