

MOUNTAIN ECHOES

Connecting with the spirit and history of Townsend, Cades Cove, and the Great Smoky Mountains.



■ FUNDRAISING ISSUE | 2024

There is a Story in Every Corner

Our story begins in February 1999, when a University of Tennessee archaeologist unearthed a piece of pottery that was more than a thousand years old. This discovery began an excavation that unearthed millions of artifacts buried for centuries in Tuckaleechee Cove, known today as Townsend. The Heritage Center was conceived and built in 2005 to preserve this history and house these artifacts.

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IN 2005, WHEN THE HERITAGE CENTER WAS BUILT, WE BECAME A STEWARD OF OUR REGIONAL HISTORY.

Supported by a group of responsible community leaders from both the public and private sector, the center has thrived and worked to provide programming that “teaches the mind and touches the spirit”. At the Heritage Center, you will find a compelling story in every corner.

■ END-OF-YEAR CAMPAIGN | 2024

We need you now more than ever...

Like all non-profits, fulfilling our mission depends on generous supporters like you. As a sponsor, you join other local and national businesses who are partners in preserving our museum, cultural programming, historic buildings, and artifacts. Join us as we work to meet our responsibility to maintain a cultural institution essential to the quality of life in our region.

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Jill Cable, Administrative Assistant
Lizzie McCroskey, Gift Shop Assoc.
Logan Hull, Director of Operations
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Trevor Lanier, Curator
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■ FUNDRAISING 2024-25 | BY MELODY SILVERBERG

Help Us Keep the Stories Alive

As the giving season approaches, we hope you are considering us in your plans. Gifts at this time of year help us continue our work to preserve our regional history and interpret its continued importance by telling the stories of people who have inhabited these mountains for centuries.

The history of Native Americans, European settlers, and African Americans deserves to be taught, heard and understood by us today. You can help to make sure that these important stories get told through the preservation of the historic buildings, artifacts and cultural traditions that can be discovered at the Heritage Center. **Thank you for your support.**



WE MAKE HISTORY COME TO LIFE AT THE HERITAGE CENTER

History is best experienced when we can touch it. When we can hear the stories of the people who lived it, and experience how they responded to the conditions of those times, shaping both their futures – and ours.

At the Heritage Center our core value is to tell stories that bring our ancestors to life. Instead of a dry and tedious approach, we imagine a place where one learns history from those who have a passion for it – those who make it relevant and entertaining.



History is best experienced when seen up close.

We seek to present history without focusing on dates and names, but **on the personal stories** of those who lived it.

When one experiences the galleries, artifacts, events and collections at the Heritage Center, history becomes personal. We can touch it. We discover stories about ourselves, our families, and our communities. **We become curious and inspired.** We are able to imagine how we might be related to those who came before us through the memories, images, artifacts and records of those who were there.

Join us on our mission – our shared responsibility – to maintain this cultural institution that was created to preserve and protect our shared history. It just might be more fun than school.

■ COLLECT, PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND INTERPRET

The Heritage Center Heroes | Year End Campaign

The purpose of the year-end campaign, like our annual campaign, is to fund our mission to **collect, preserve, protect and interpret** our regional history by **maintaining the assets** of the Heritage Center. Specifically, the year end campaign will focus on the

repair and maintenance of our structures and artifacts, additional interpretive signage for galleries, the Appalachian Village and the Farmstead. Each structure and exhibit is instrumental in telling the stories of the peoples who called these mountains home.

Below are some suggested levels of support, but we can design a custom plan for you. Please contact us at 865-448-0044 or email us at executivedirector@gsmheritagecenter.org to discuss your options.

■ \$10,000 Level Donation

- Cardwell Cabin 2025 (Donor Recognition in Cabin)
- Donor Recognition in Main Gallery for 2025
- Cades Cove Private Specialty Tour for 14 guests

■ \$5,000 Level Donation

- Montvale Station 2025 (Donor recognition in Station)
- 2 tickets for a Cades Cove Heritage Specialty Tour

■ \$2,500 Level Donation

- AME Church 2025 (Donor recognition in Church)

■ \$1,000 Level Donation

- 4 Free memberships for 2025, suitable for gifting
- Trillium Poster signed by Senator Howard Baker

■ \$500 Level Donation

- Gift bag from Gift Shop Collection

■ Monthly Giving Program:

- \$19.00 per month
- Heritage Center T-shirt

Why Should I Care?

We should care because **it is our responsibility**. When we created this cultural institution in 2005 to collect and protect our history, it became our responsibility to maintain it. We owe it to those who came before us – to those who made the sacrifice and investment to build it. These stories are too important to forget.

As a community, through the Heritage Center, we have worked to give our history a voice and to create a place where those voices can be captured, preserved, and heard again. It is our privilege and purpose to keep them alive.

■ **Tastes of the Smokies 2024:** Held on Sunday, October 13, this year's fundraising event featured local eateries onsite, a silent auction, cocktails, living history demonstrations, and live music from Jasper Hollow. The GSM Heritage Center wishes to extend heartfelt thanks to all the restaurants, volunteers, and patrons who worked to make the event a resounding success.

TASTES
of the
SMOKIES



■ HOLIDAY SEASON EVENTS | 2024

Christmas in the Village

For four weekends following Thanksgiving, guests and their families will celebrate the holiday season with evening candlelit tours at the Heritage Center's "Christmas in the Village". Step back in time for a pioneer celebration with living history interpreters who will act as guides through the decorated Historic Village.

Heritage Center
CHRISTMAS
IN THE VILLAGE



■ HOLIDAY EVENT SCHEDULE | 2024

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Nov 16 | Holiday Handcrafters Festival |
| Nov 29-30 | Christmas in the Village |
| Dec 6-7 | Christmas in the Village |
| Dec 13-14 | Christmas in the Village |
| Dec 20-21 | Christmas in the Village |
| Jan 25 (2025) | Winter Heritage Festival |

With generous support from...



TENNESSEEARTSCOMMISSION
Cultivate. Create. Participate.

■ HOLIDAY SEASON EVENTS | 2024

Holiday Handcrafters

Saturday, November 16, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Mark your calendars and prepare to enjoy a delightful display of creativity at the Heritage Center for our annual Holiday Handcrafters Festival! This beloved event is more than just a shopping trip—it's a cherished holiday tradition that perfectly ushers in the spirit of the Christmas season!

This year, our Handcrafters Fair is shaping up to be the biggest one yet! Showcasing the talents of more than 30 local artisans from the Smoky Mountain Region and beyond, we are proud to present a cornucopia of unique, handmade and handcrafted goods. Rest assured, there won't be a single mass-produced item in sight!

We eagerly await you on **Saturday, November 16th**. It's an ideal opportunity to find one-of-a-kind gifts for loved ones, or to treat yourself to something special! Be a part of this vibrant community event and experience the unique charm of homemade, handcrafted goods with us!



Holiday HANDCRAFTERS Festival

Remember, while the fair itself is free to enter, don't forget to bring your Christmas shopping money to purchase from this diverse selection of crafts and goods.

■ WINTER SEASON EVENTS | 2025

Winter Heritage Festival



Saturday, January 25, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Join us as we step back in time for the annual **Winter Heritage Festival** at the Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center.

You'll experience **hands on demonstrations**, practice pioneer survival skills and get a sense of how challenging life was during pioneer times.

Learn a new craft, see **historic artifacts**, and learn about the weapons the pioneers used to survive in the Southern Appalachian region.



Living History interpreters and volunteers will be on site hosting activities and games.



WINTER HERITAGE FESTIVAL



SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 2025

■ 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

HISTORY ON DISPLAY

The Truth about Southern Appalachia

The people of the southern highlands were not the caricatures presented in outsiders' biased and naive stories.

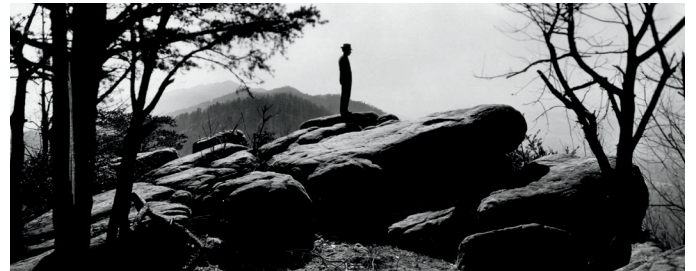
BY TREVOR LANIER, CURATOR, GSM HERITAGE CENTER

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE HAVE CALLED THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS HOME. FROM INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS TO EUROPEAN COLONIZERS, INHABITANTS OF THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BUILT AND MAINTAINED COMPLEX SOCIETIES WITH LITTLE SUPPORT FROM THEIR NEIGHBORS IN THE LOWLANDS.



After the Civil War, outsiders started to see Southern Appalachia and its residents as “a strange land and a peculiar people,” a term coined by Indiana-born author Will Wallace Harney. Looking to sell stories of “exotic” corners of the United States, writers and artists like Harney, John Fox Jr., and Mary N. Murfree wrote exaggerated tales of their experiences in the mountains. **These authors promoted stories of total geographic isolation that portrayed mountaineers as frozen in the past and unwilling to progress.**

WHILE THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS ARE UNIQUE IN TERMS OF GEOGRAPHY, THE EXAGGERATED AND SOMETIMES HARMFUL **STEREOTYPES OF MOUNTAINEER LIFE STILL REMAIN TODAY.** INHABITANTS OF SOUTHERN APPALACHIA WERE PORTRAYED WITH UNFLATTERING CHARACTERISTICS SUCH AS BACKWARDS, IGNORANT, AND VIOLENT.



Photos courtesy of the McClung Historical Collection

These images (c. 1920) from Montvale Springs, built in 1853 at the foot of the Chilhowees, suggest a society far more attuned to modern amenities than what was characterized as a “strange land with exotic people”.

Scholars and mountaineers alike have fought back against these notions, arguing that this image of Southern Appalachia was created by outsiders for monetary gain.

A new temporary exhibit at the GSMHC will demonstrate that people of the southern highlands were not the caricatures presented in outsiders' biased and naive stories.

Mountaineers moved in and out of their hollers and coves, participated in American politics, and built towns that are still thriving today.

Total isolation was the exception, and people in Southern Appalachia worked, shopped, and lived like people in any other rural area in the United States.



Little River Company Store at Fish Camp

POST CIVIL WAR COMMERCE

Like other parts of the American South, Southern Appalachia suffered greatly during and after the Civil War. The entire country underwent massive changes from 1865-1900, and southern mountaineers certainly felt those changes too.

While some railroads and industry were already in place by the 1860s, the post-Civil War decades saw increased demand for lumber and coal, two resources abundant in the southern mountains.

After mass harvesting of northeastern and midwestern lumber fields left millions of acres barren, northern industrialists like W. B. Townsend turned their eyes towards Southern Appalachia's lush forests.

Lumber companies and manipulative business leaders employed the inaccurate stereotypes of "a strange land and a peculiar people" to exploit nature and people in the southern mountains.

Little River Railroad & Lumber Co. started logging operations in Blount and Sevier Counties in 1901, after W. B. Townsend and his partners purchased over 76,000 acres of land.

Elkmont, Townsend, and Tremont all served as logging sites and residential areas controlled by the company. Creating company towns like these was standard procedure for companies all around the world, as it maximized efficiency and profits. Employees and their families lived under the watchful eye of company management, from schools, churches, stores, and even their homes.

During the height of their operation, Little River sent lumber to Knoxville, Asheville, and Chattanooga, which provided access to American ports and from there to the rest of the world.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The Great Depression (1929-1939) affected people across the globe, and Southern Appalachia was no different. Due to the region's heavy reliance on lumber and coal industries, the lack of production led to widespread unemployment. This forced many families to return to subsistence farming while still living on company property.

Many rural Americans showed ingenuity and resourcefulness, as they had to make the most of their money to survive. Just like the rest of the country, southern mountaineers leaned on their families, knowledge of the land, and limited government assistance to make it through the Depression.

Despite dealing with tough financial situations, people in the southern mountains still participated in the American economy in many ways. Families still made their weekly trips into bigger cities and towns to get supplies, food, and luxury items.

If they could not make it to town, southern mountaineers also enjoyed access to mail order catalogs like Sears, Roebuck & Co. By the early 1900s, these catalogs were a part of daily life in Southern Appalachia and elsewhere in rural America. Through increased access to electricity and radios, mountaineers were connected to their urban and rural neighbors, even during the Great Depression.

Southern mountaineers participated in politics and current events, especially through FDR's New Deal programs. Millions of people, including Southern Appalachians, routinely tuned in to hear the president's radio addresses, known as Fireside Chats, throughout the 1930s and 40s.

The Tennessee Valley Authority, one of FDR's New Deal programs, brought electricity to the southern mountains, making it possible for residents to enjoy their favorite music and shows on the radio.



A general store circa 1930



President Roosevelt dedicates National Park in 1940

THE NATIONAL PARK

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park opened its gates in 1940, and grew to become the most visited National Park in the US. As with any project of its size and ambition, it took several years and strong lobbying to make the Park a reality.

The biggest hurdle for business leaders and contributors came in the form of obtaining private land. Most lumber companies like Little River sold their land with little hesitation, and often worked out beneficial deals. However, over 1200 landowners and their families were removed from the area throughout the 1930s and 40s. Some people eagerly sold their land and moved elsewhere, while others fought valiantly to keep their generational homes intact.

Park promoters and investors, often from outside the region, were quick to use the decades-old mountaineer stereotypes in order to convince people that removing entire communities was beneficial to all.

With over 13 million visitors in 2023 and a worldwide reputation, it is clear that the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is anything but isolated. Instead of being a "strange land" filled with "peculiar people," the southern highlands have been home to many different kinds of people with diverse cultures, languages, and values.

William W. Harney, and others like him, found a convenient way to make money through his biased accounts of life in the mountains. However, the stories published by Harney, Murfree, or Fox do not represent a majority of southern mountaineers.

Great Smoky Mountains
HERITAGE CENTER

GSMHERITAGECENTER.ORG

PO Box 268, Townsend, TN 37882

Connect with the spirit and history of Townsend, Cades Cove, and the Great Smoky Mountains. Our museum offers something for everyone, from hands-on activities to tours of original 19th-century buildings and our Native American collection.

Call Today: 865-448-0044

The GSMHC would like to recognize our partners in the arts without whom many of our programs would not be sustainable.



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DON'T MISS: The Holidays at GSMHC

VISIT
TOWNSEND
TENNESSEE

HOLIDAY SEASON EVENTS | 2024

Holiday HANDCRAFTERS Festival

Saturday, November 16, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Join us at the Heritage Center for our annual Holiday Handcrafters Fair! This fantastic holiday tradition is the perfect way to kick off the Christmas shopping season!

EVENTS & TICKETS
CHECK NOW!



Admission to the Festival is FREE | Standard museum admission is in effect

MORE HOLIDAY EVENTS | PAGES 4-5

