



T. Elmer Cox  
Genealogical &  
Historical Library

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## NEW GALLERY EXHIBIT

# Early Greeneville

|                    |                      |                          |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 36 MRS. WYLY       | 37 W. MOORE          | 61 JONN RHEA             |
| 35 MRS. WYLY       | 38 JAS. BRITTON, JR. | 60 R. WEST               |
| 34 MRS. WYLY       | 39 MRS. OWYLY        | 59 RALPHOODS             |
| 33 MRS. WYLY       | THIRD CROSS ST.      | 58 POLES WIDE            |
| 32 JOHN RHEA, ESQ. | 40 JOHN RHEA, ESQ.   | ESTATE OF 61 D. DEADWICK |
| 31 W. MOORE        | 41 W. DICKSON        | ESTATE OF 60 D. DEADWICK |
| 42 W. R. BANGE     | 43 V. POSS           | ESTATE OF 59 BOCK NELSON |
| 44 POLES WIDE      | 45 POLES WIDE        | ESTATE OF 58 ABT. WYLY   |
| 57 COURT HOUSE     | 56 D. DEADWICK       | 55 JANN DICKSON          |
| 54 G. GILLESPIE    | 53 H. COCHRAN        | 52 JANN RHEA             |
| 51 A. HUNTER       | 50 A. HUNTER         | 49 S. M. DARK            |
| 48 B. T. GILLESPIE | 47 B. T. GILLESPIE   | 46 B. T. GILLESPIE       |
| 45 S. M. DARK      | 44 S. M. DARK        | 43 S. M. DARK            |
| 42 A. HUNTER       | 41 A. HUNTER         | 40 A. HUNTER             |
| 39 A. HUNTER       | 38 A. HUNTER         | 37 A. HUNTER             |
| 36 A. HUNTER       | 35 A. HUNTER         | 34 A. HUNTER             |
| 33 A. HUNTER       | 32 A. HUNTER         | 31 A. HUNTER             |
| 30 A. HUNTER       | 29 A. HUNTER         | 28 A. HUNTER             |
| 27 A. HUNTER       | 26 A. HUNTER         | 25 A. HUNTER             |
| 24 A. HUNTER       | 23 A. HUNTER         | 22 A. HUNTER             |
| 21 A. HUNTER       | 20 A. HUNTER         | 19 A. HUNTER             |
| 18 A. HUNTER       | 17 A. HUNTER         | 16 A. HUNTER             |
| 15 A. HUNTER       | 14 A. HUNTER         | 13 A. HUNTER             |
| 12 A. HUNTER       | 11 A. HUNTER         | 10 A. HUNTER             |
| 9 A. HUNTER        | 8 A. HUNTER          | 7 A. HUNTER              |
| 6 A. HUNTER        | 5 A. HUNTER          | 4 A. HUNTER              |
| 3 A. HUNTER        | 2 A. HUNTER          | 1 A. HUNTER              |

GREENEVILLE, TENN

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Spring 2023

# COX QUARTERLY

## POTTERY

in Greene County  
& the Lineage  
Behind It



### CLEANING HEADSTONES

The Dos and Don'ts of  
Cemetery Conservation

## THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

The T. Elmer Cox Genealogical & Historical Library is a branch of the Greeneville/Greene County Public Library

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### RECOGNITIONS

The Staff of the T. Elmer Cox Genealogical & Historical Library would like to thank the following organizations for their unwavering support: Greeneville/Greene County Library Board of Trustees, Friends of The Greeneville/Greene County Public Library, The Town of Greeneville, The Greene County Genealogical Society, Greene County Government, and all patrons, past, present and future.



## A LETTER FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Spring is a perfect time to reassess your genealogical collection or personal archive. Organizing your lineage and genealogy can be a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be. Here are a few tips that might help you get organized.

### 1. Gather your materials.

The first step is to gather all of the materials you have related to your family history. This may include birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates, census records, military records, and other documents. If you don't have any of these documents, we'd be happy to help you track some of these down at the Cox Library.

### 2. Create a system for organizing your materials.

Once you have gathered all of your materials, you need to create a system for organizing them. This system can be as simple or as complex as you want it to be. Some people like to organize their materials by family line, while others prefer to organize them by date or event. There is no right or wrong way to do it, just find a system that works for you.

### 3. Label everything.

Once you have organized your materials, it is important to label everything. This will help you find what you are looking for quickly and easily. You can use a variety of methods for labeling your materials, such as index cards, folders, or notebooks.

### 4. Keep your materials safe.

Once you have organized and labeled your materials, it is important to keep them safe. This means storing them in a cool, dry place where they will not be damaged. You may also want to consider making copies of your materials and also storing them in a different location.

Christopher D. Gose  
Assistant Director



CAMP 4492 OF GREENEVILLE, TN UNDER THE COMMAND OF CAPTAIN KIRBY E. JACKSON, OCTOBER 1935.

# THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS IN GREENE COUNTY

In 1933, the United States was in the throes of the Great Depression. Just hours after taking office, freshly sworn in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt launched the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to serve two functions: relieve unemployment and implement progressive natural resource conservation.

Roosevelt's vision was that the program would revitalize the economy by putting three-quarters of a million unemployed, able-bodied, eager young men to work. They would focus on national, state and municipal lands, planting trees, building

roads, monuments, and bridges, plus battling fires in America's national parks and forests. They would change the landscape and at the same time come to a better understanding of themselves.

With picks and shovels in hand, the men of Greene County set out to establish two camps with about 300 men in each. One was located where the Doughty-Stevens Funeral Home is now and the other was in the Cove near Lawrence Rollin's old home according to notes written by T. Elmer Cox. The men lived in tents until buildings could be erected at their camps. When



completed, each camp included a full complement of buildings: barracks, mess hall, recreational hall, bath house, latrine, supply, garage, and headquarters. The camp complex also included its own classrooms, hospital, barber shop, post office, canteen, and sometimes a theater. The buildings were frame structures heated by wood and coal burning pot-belly stoves.

T. Elmer Cox said that the CCC camp was established under a military-type system and under the command of an Army officer. Their primary duty was, as the name implies, soil conservation. The planted pine trees and did other conservation work to help reclaim land which had been damaged by years of destructive unscientific agricultural practices. "The CCC men worked to correct these problems with their projects. They constructed portions of the road to Round Knob as well as additions to the Cherokee National Forest.



Their legacy can still be enjoyed in the Cherokee National Forest at the Paint Creek campground site. The large pavilion and numerous bridges and stonework can still be seen today.



# CLEANING CEMETERY HEADSTONES

## *The Do's and Don'ts of Cemetery Conservation As An Amateur, Enthusiast, or Volunteer*

Recently there has been a revised interest in preserving the cemeteries in Greene County. Eager volunteers have come forth to offer their services when it comes to cleaning up and preserving various markers in smaller cemeteries. Here are a few things to keep in mind when approaching a project of this magnitude as an amateur or volunteer.

Any discussion about cleaning a headstone, marker or memorial must begin with a few cautions about various things you should NOT do. Foremost, never attempt to clean a gravestone, marker or cemetery memorial that does not

“belong to you.” In other words, if the deceased was not a member of your immediate family, you should not attempt any cleaning efforts without the express written consent of the owner/immediate family. For example, a well-meaning photographer faced criminal charges in 2014 after he seriously damaged numerous historic tombstones in a Surgoinsville, Tennessee cemetery in order to improve the legibility of the inscriptions before taking pictures.

In addition, do not attempt to clean a headstone, marker or memorial that exhibits physical damage or



instability. Among other things, signs of physical damage might include chipping, cracking, peeling, pitting, etc., of the surface; weathering of the inscription that renders it difficult/impossible to read; or missing portions of the marker. Moreover, you should not try to clean a marker that wobbles or might fall over or fall apart when you touch it.

Temperature fluctuations can affect the condition of cemetery monuments over time, but they can also impact the basic cleaning efforts on any given day. In short, you shouldn't try to clean a marker or headstone on an extremely hot

or very cold day. Stones such as granite and cast metal markers can be extremely hot in direct sunlight which can result in rapid evaporation of the water you need for cleaning. Colder temperatures can also impact your efforts by making you uncomfortable and hurry to finish.

Finally, never use household soap, dishwashing liquid, detergent, wax or any other cleaning product when cleaning a headstone, regardless of how safe or gentle the product claims to be on surfaces. These products can prove acidic, abrasive and leave residue on surfaces that will actually attract dirt in the future.

Materials you'll need are as follows: a minimum of five gallons of water. Choose a container that is the easiest for you to transport. You'll need at least one natural sea sponge to help with wetting and wiping down the markers and one soft bristled brush. Avoid using cheaper, colored sponges because the dyes can actually transfer to the stone and stain it. Resist the temptation to use a convenient two-sided kitchen sponge with an abrasive side for the same reason. Scraping tools should consist of plastic or wood implements such as wood or nylon kitchen spatulas, skewers. A soft toothbrush should round out your necessary tools.

Bring plenty of towels and an empty bucket for transporting/rinsing your tools. Trash bags are also handy for hauling away debris and leaves removed from around the marker. You might also consider

taking a photograph of the headstone before and after your work. Comparing the images can be inspiring for continuing your project.

After thoroughly soaking your sponge in clean water, use it to remove dirt by rubbing the marker or monument's surface in a circular motion. Some veteran enthusiasts suggest starting from the bottom, not the top. The reason for this is that you need to rinse the cleaned surfaces frequently with fresh water throughout the process. Starting at the top allows the dirty water to flow downward and possibly staining other areas you've yet to clean. For flat markers, start from one side and move to the other.

Once finished, thoroughly rinse the marker with clean water and repeat the process until you are satisfied with the results.



# GREENE COUNTY POTTERY

## & THE LINEAGE BEHIND IT

A memoir by Bertha Cox Harmon. Introduction by Christopher Gose



*Pottery has been made in Greene County, Tennessee for over 200 years. The first potters to settle in the area were German immigrants who brought their knowledge of pottery making with them. In the early days, pottery was made mostly for utilitarian purposes, such as cooking and storage vessels. However, as time went on, potters began to experiment with new forms and decorative techniques. By the mid-19th century, Greene County was home to a thriving pottery industry.*

There are many interesting accounts of pottery making in Greene County and several places with remaining evidences that establish the fact of these locations. I only know of two of these locations and both are just a few miles north of Greeneville. I lived for several years on a farm that contained one of these locations and collected many prize scraps. I have listened to many and varied stories and accounts of the work, by many relating what they had heard from older people.

I only knew one man who said that

he had seen the remains of a kiln before it fell apart. He related that it had not been in operation for some time, but that he could see enough to determine knowledge of the structure. His comments were that it was made like the Eskimo huts that he had seen pictured in school books. He said it was made with bricks and let steam and smoke out of an opening in the top, and that it had a heavy, removable door without hinges. The Method of producing the pottery must have been somewhat on a primitive level, as they apparently made all parts of



the things needed for the manufacture. It was also said that a gentle horse was trained to walk slowly while hitched to an apparatus that forced it to walk in a circle, to provide the power to mix the clay and also run the potter's wheel. Another potter's wheel was powered with a lever fed by a man's leg for much of the work.

There is an abundant stream just a few feet from where still remain many indications of the location. Also a good spring is located nearby. Along the banks of these may still be found a somewhat clear clay that would make a satisfactory mixture for pottery today. I have taken this to the school room, where we would work it with hands like it was kitchen dough, then shape it into animals or vases. These we let dry in a warm place, then painted with water colors.

There are still remaining scraps of varied colors, which still hold a very good glaze, although they have been exposed to outside extreme climatic conditions. The colors vary from black, reddish brown, different shades of brown and white. Some of the pieces indicated a straight sided utensil while some indicate that the bowl was larger around in some sections. These crocks were strictly utilitarian use for families to store milk, butter, sausage, kraut, pickles and long cooked sweets. I know of a few crocks in existence that have block letters around the rim which were pressed into the clay. I have owned one for many years which reads "HARMON HARMON." it is considered one of my prized possessions and is a one gallon size.

I have some crocks that are warped and irregular in shape. My mother-

in-law said that they had not been considered fit for sale, at the time they were made so they were given away. These served the need of the people as well as the perfect shapes and I now that they were used regularly for three generations. To me, they are works of art and have earned the rest and exhibition which they are getting today.

Captain Peter Harmon owned this pottery and it was not owned at anytime by others. It seemed to have fallen into disuse following the Civil War. In the census accounts, Peter was not the operator of the pottery. A man by the name of Benjamin A. Russell lived near Peter and was operating it in 1850. Later in the 1860 census Simon Bohannon from Surrey County, North Carolina was running it. Simon also signed Peter's will as a witness in 1868.

Peter Harmon was the son of John Harmon, who came from Pennsylvania and they were of German descent. I have no evidence of whether Peter was born in Greene County, or came when he was quite young. He was born in 1785 and was a member of the Greene County Court for a great many years and county records show that he was married twice while in office. He as a Captain in the War of 1812 and this is indicated on his monument He died on 1870 at the age of 85. He first married Elizabeth Bow-

man in 1820. It has been recalled by many that she had a very outgoing personality and was well liked by many people. She was an accomplished musician and most of her children were noted for their musical ability. Elizabeth was the daughter of Sparling Bowman who served in the Revolutionary War and his grave is so marked at Zion Cemetery in Camp Creek.

Both Peter and Elizabeth are buried at Mt. Vernon, three miles north of Greeneville, very near where they lived and where the pottery stood. Their children listed in Peter's 1868 will are as follows:

1. Eleanor B. born 1822; married Isaac Armitage. Buried at Oak Grove.
2. William R. born 1823; married Hannah Rose.
3. Kennedy B. born 1824; Married Margret B. Harmon.
4. John B. born 1825; married Temperance Stroke. Buried at Old Kidwell Cemetery
5. Sparling B. born 1826; married Catherine Carter. Buried at Mt. Vernon Cemetery.
6. Nancy Ann born 1827; married George Harmon.
7. Joseph Cutler born 1829; married Judith Pickering. Buried in New Bethel Cemetery.
8. Thomas J. born 1830; married Hannah Pickering. Buried in Cross Anchor Cemetery.
9. Lorinda C. born 1831; married

James Luster. Buried at Cross Anchor Cemetery.

10. Alexander W. born 1833; married Fatima Carter. Buried in Mt. Vernon Cemetery.


11. Robert L. born 1835; married Mary Pickering. Buried in Mt. Vernon Cemetery.

It is known that Peter and Elizabeth

were staunch Union people and had all their son involved in the war, but no more than four at any given time. All of them survived and returned to Greene County.

It appears that these people tended to live more closely to the soil, than to other professions. Because of their strong ties to the earth, their pottery legacy will live on for years to come.

The T. Elmer Cox Genealogical & Historical Library is unique in bringing together the stories and people of Greeneville and Greene County under one roof. Your donation will enable people from across the globe to explore stories such as this one and allow us to continue to research, preserve, archive and present records to the people of Greeneville and Greene County. Your gift matters.



**GREENEVILLE/GREENE COUNTY  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**ANNUAL BOOK SALE 2023**

|                           |                |                                 |
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| <b>FULL PRICE WEEKEND</b> |                | (\$2 hardbacks, \$1 paperbacks) |
| April 28th-29th           | 10 am - 6 pm   |                                 |
| April 30th                | 12 noon - 5 pm |                                 |
| <b>HALF PRICE WEEKEND</b> |                | (\$1 hardbacks, 50¢ paperbacks) |
| May 5th-6th               | 10 am - 6 pm   |                                 |
| May 7th                   | 12 noon - 5 pm |                                 |
| <b>BAG SALE</b>           |                | (\$3 per bag)                   |
| May 20th                  | 10 am - 6 pm   |                                 |
| May 21st                  | 12 noon - 5 pm |                                 |

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# LUCK & LEGEND

## EGGS THROUGH THE AGES

A definitive sign of spring and new beginnings is the humble chicken's egg. It's the object of a host of superstitions passed down by our ancestors. Here are a few that have been mentioned to thrive around Greene County:

Break an egg, break your leg;  
Break three, woe to thee;  
Break two, your love is true.

The first egg laid by a hen is said to be lucky, and in former times, the farmers would present these to their sweethearts. It is said that the person who consumes it will be protected from fever for the next twelve months. Other home remedies included rubbing a birthmark with an egg every morning and then burying the egg under the doorstep would make the blemish disappear. It was also thought that feeding ground eggshells in milk or water to small children would cure bedwetting. Some farmers warned their wives to never step on eggshells or they would go mad.

Setting eggs to be hatched was thought to be a complicated business. Eggs should always be set under the hen in odd numbers and never when there is a new moon or on a Friday or Sunday. Finding an egg that is unusually small is said to bring bad luck and could only be negated by throwing the offending egg over the barn roof. An egg with two yolks is said to signify a wedding in the future. It was also considered a bad omen if a single hen laid two eggs in one day. To go even further, if you carried collected eggs over running water, none of them will hatch.

To get a glimpse of one's true love, it's said that a person should remove the yolk of a boiled egg and fill the hollow left with salt, then consume it without having any water before going to bed. If all goes well, this will bring on a raging thirst during the night and the apparition of a future lover will appear in the person's dreams bringing water to quench their thirst.