

- **Claiborne County (TN) Progress**

Nell Quesenbery Report

September 22, 1983

THE HISTORY OF THE ZINC MINES

The following was written by Nellie Campbell and submitted by Nell Quesenbery for publishing.

The History of the Zinc Mines on Straight Creek in the 1800s

Eligah Edmondson and wife, Pash B. Owens Edmondson, came from White Mountain, Virginia, and settled near where Sandlick now is.

Later, Mr. Edmonson bought a large farm on Straight Creek. Zinc ore was found on the farm. He leased the rights to mine for a percentage to a mining company.

The work was done by pick and shovel and brought by carts run on a track, then loaded on wagon teams and was hauled to Lone Mountain. It was then loaded on the train, the work being done mostly by everymen.

Another company bought the mines. Eligah Edmondson sold the land to the mining company and bought a large farm at Bacchus, north of Tazewell. The new mining company put in machinery, and a crusher.

The ore was crushed and hauled to Lone Mountain on tracks. Houses were built to rent to the miners. There was a boarding house. Eleck Richardson ran a general store when they first started mining.

The mines closed. That ridge is still full of zinc ore. A large spring known as Burches ran a mill. It went dry while they pumped water out of it. It was about two miles toward the river.

The people that lived surrounding the mines were Edmonson, Richardson, Rosenbalms, Browns, John Soard. These families of Phelps, all related, Myers, two families of McBee, Harris, Goins. One family by the name of Hacker, they were Dutch. They had one son, Jim. His mother called him Shim. She spoke broken English. Also Perrys, Minton, Janeways, Jennings.

Toward Tazewell, below the mines, toward Clinch River, were Jessies, Walkers, Owens, several families of Ousleys, Will Grubb, Burches, Gose, Rev. Jerry Wells and Greenlees. Dr. Jasper Needham was the doctor for the surrounding communities. He rode horseback and made house calls. Jim Prat carried the mail from New Tazewell to Clinch River about that time.

George Edmondson, a son of Rev. Eligah Edmondson, a son of Billie Walker, both young men, rode to Burches Mill together in a few days. They both took sick with meningitis. Both died about the same time.

Billie Walker and Rev. Eligah picked out a cemetery now known as the Burch Cemetery. Those two boys were the first ones to be buried in the Burch Cemetery.