

Sunburst and Other Logging Operations in the Bethel & Cold Mountain Region DVD

By Bethel Rural Community Organization's Historic Preservation Committee

Director/Editor/Videographer: Douglas Chambers

Producer: Evelyn Coltman

Narrator: Craig S. Messer

Musical Background: Possum on a Whale

DVD Production Company: Disc Makers

Bethel Rural Community Organization (BRCO) released its five-year-in-the-making *Sunburst and Other Logging Operations in the Bethel & Cold Mountain Region DVD* (hereafter referred to as *Sunburst*) on December 12, 2018. We were hoping for a Christmas season boost but were overwhelmed at the response. The first order sold within two weeks. After one hundred years, Sunburst Village's legacy was still so significant in the area that people were clamoring for a copy for themselves and for gifts. Sales outlets placed buyers on lengthy waiting lists for the DVD after the initial sell-out. The DVD has sold throughout North Carolina as well as to such distant states as Arizona, Maine, and Washington. The DVD is sold through BRCO's website as well as at two local museums and two shops.

FILMING INFORMATION

Douglas Chambers (dougchambers.net) is the videographer/director/editor who spent hundreds of hours filming, editing, and deciding what information to keep and what to delete. Evelyn Coltman, Chair of BRCO's Historic Preservation Committee, is the producer whose task it was to select locations, speakers, write some of the narration material, and proofread as well as make all appropriate contacts for speakers, filming sites, and sales locations. Craig S. Messer is the narrator. Background music is provided by a youth group of musicians who specializes in traditional Appalachian music: Possum on a Whale. Disc Makers handled DVD production.

Sunburst was one of the largest and most significant logging villages in the western region of North Carolina during the early 20th Century with ties to the founding of Champion Paper and Fiber Company, now Evergreen Packaging. The historic village, as well as the original Sunburst location, was situated in the area where Sunburst Campground, Lake Logan, and Lake Logan Conference Center exist today. The Sunburst documentary that details historic logging operations in Bethel consists of four parts: Origins of Sunburst, Life in Sunburst, Logging Lifestyle and The End of Sunburst, and Sunburst's Legacy. The DVD also includes segments about logging before and after Sunburst as well as special features.

Twenty participants, including two with life experience connections to Sunburst, appear on the DVD: Lorna Ashe, Phyllis Barnett, Wayne Carson, Rose Earnest, Horace M. Green, Zac Guy, Cheryl Haney, Danny Heatherly, Harold Heatherly, Carroll Jones, Gerald Ledford, Mike McLean, Susan Merrill, Ann Melton, Lewis Oats, Jr., Bruce Pace, Pat Powell, Sam Powell, Mark Rogers, and Maude Rogers. The musical group, Possum on A Whale, provided 14 songs for the video, and we conducted the filming and editing of the music while also producing a separate CD of the group's songs. Wide-ranging oral and documented historical accounts include topics such as original Sunburst and "bastard" Sunburst, business and social life in the village and logging camps, the early conservation movement involving Carl Schenck's Biltmore Forest School that had its origins at Vanderbilt's Biltmore House before transferring to Sunburst, the association with Inman Chapel, African American involvement, train and rail history relating to the village and logging operation, the Champion connection to the story as well as Lake Logan Conference Center's project to collect and document the Sunburst history that occurred on its grounds. In addition, Zac Guy with Appalachian Antique Hardwoods details his family history with the wood products industry. Harold Heatherly, Carroll Jones, Pat Powell, and Sam Powell take the viewer to the East Fork of the Pigeon River, the Lenoir's Creek Farm, and the heights of Cold Mountain to discuss the Lenoir and Powell family logging operations. Danny Heatherly details how his family connection with the Powell family hardwood lumber business led to his own current innovative wood-product company in Bethel: BarkClad.

Sponsors for the DVD include the following: Carol Litchfield, Evergreen Packaging, Blue Rooster Southern Grill, Lake Logan Conference Center, Peak Dentistry, Nancy Armstrong and Jim Lynn, Evelyn and Richard Coltman, and Maria and Carroll Jones. The production is dedicated to the memory of Horace M. Green, a DVD participant who passed before being able to view the finished production.

FILMING PRODUCTION FACTS

First Footage Shot: October 10, 2013 – Cheryl Inman Haney & Phyllis Inman Barnett interviews at Inman Chapel

Last Footage Shot: August 31, 2018 – Danny Heatherly interview at BarkClad building

Time from First Shot to Last Shot: 4 years, 9 months, 22 days = 1,756 days

Time from First Shot to Final Edit: 5 years, 1 month, 3 days = 1,860 days

Hours of footage shot - Interviews: 15 hours, 7 minutes, 27 seconds, 6 frames

(15:07:27:06) Hours of footage shot - B-Roll: 12 hours, 37 minutes, 13 seconds, 6 frames (12:37:13:06)

Total Hours of Footage Shot: 27 hours, 44 minutes, 40 seconds, 12 frames (27:44:40:12)

Number of People Interviewed: 16 for "Sunburst," 20 total for "Sunburst" and all extra features Number of Locations where footage was shot: 28

Number of individual shots in footage: 1534

Number of Photo Files Used During Editing (includes multiple copies of some photos): 483

Number of Photos Used In All Final Videos: 288

Number of Files (All Types) Used During Editing Process: 2552 - Footage: 1534 - Photos: 483 - Stock Footage (Anything not shot specifically for this project): 174 -

Titles: 125 - Narration: 34 - Music: 16 - Sound Effects: 22 - Other Audio: 27 - Renders: 114 - Sequences: 23

Number of Files Used In Final Edit Only: 1074 - Footage: 467 - Photos: 288
- Stock Footage: 20 - Titles: 113 - Narration: 31 - Music: 14 - Sound Effects: 6 - Other
Audio: 8 - Renders: 104 - Sequences: 23
Number of Shots In Final Edit: 716
Number of Shots In Combined Extra Features: 397 "Sunburst"
Video Length: 1:57:36
Extra Features Combined Length: 1:03:12
Total Length of All Videos: 3:00:48:00
Total Hard Drive Space In Use At Time of Completion: 2.69 TB = 2,685.32 GB

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Sunburst Village and logging operation has cast a long shadow and played with the minds of local citizens, students of history, and writers for decades. Around many a store counter or exterior bench, locals have fondly recalled the people and events at Sunburst. A 1978 local class of Bethel Junior High students, under the tutelage of Hugh K. Terrell, compiled a book of interviews with Sunburst residents titled *Sonoma, Valley of the Moon, Sunburst*. The romanticized legacy even extends to Ron Rash's New York Times best-selling novel and movie, *Serena*. George Frizzell, special collections librarian at Western Carolina University, indicates that Rash combined semblances and impressions from Sunburst and two other Haywood County logging operations in order to create his novel. Sunburst Village's state historic marker, application written by Cheryl Haney, is unusual for a logging village. But World War I aircraft required the timber supplied by Sunburst, thus earning the village a state signage designation. Bethel Rural Community Organization's Historic Preservation Committee recognized the potential for engagement regarding the Sunburst story and began researching and contacting individuals who knew the story or were directly or indirectly connected to the Sunburst narrative.

Sunburst and Other Logging Operations in the Bethel & Cold Mountain Region DVD revisits the early 20th Century logging operation on the West Fork of the Pigeon River that resulted in construction of Champion Paper and Fiber (now Evergreen Packaging), a company that has provided substantial employment opportunities for more than a century in Canton, North Carolina. Sunburst was one of the largest and most significant logging villages in the region, and its iconic name is emblematic of a romanticized recollection of lumber barons, lumberjacks, and logging camps that salted the mountains via a series of rail lines after the turn of the last century. Environmental anxiety resulted from the timber legacy, and, as a result, forest conservation and the Biltmore Forest School also found an early role at Sunburst. On the lighter side, a spirit of camaraderie centered around social activities, education, religion, small hotel and mercantile businesses, as well as a mingling of Caucasian and African American cultures in Sunburst Village. While the DVD may idealize the community spirit that enveloped those who resided at Sunburst, there is also recognition of the danger and difficulty of the lives of Sunburst residents who eked out a living in a harsh environment.

While the DVD pays tribute to Sunburst and its history on the West Fork of the Pigeon River, focus also centers around logging efforts that preceded Sunburst as well as those that have

continued to thrive in Bethel Community. The Powell family's five brothers and two sisters brought a hardwood lumber commercial enterprise to Haywood County with three base camps on the East Fork of the Pigeon River in the Cold Mountain region during the late 1920s just as the Sunburst operation ceased. The Powell family participated in lumber businesses for more than 100 years, and this DVD, as well as an earlier study in BRCO's *Legends, Tales & History of Cold Mountain*, Book 4, is the first time the Powell story has been collected and documented. Two major Powell lumber interests branched from that early assignment of bringing out hardwood lumber to be processed at factories further east that enabled North Carolina to become a premier state for furniture production. Today, two other wood products business in Bethel pay homage to their earlier historical roots: Appalachian Antique Hardwoods and BarkClad.

DESERVING OF RECOGNITION

BRCO is a community organization, like many organizations of its type, that has a benevolence, food pantry, and education emphasis. The group, unlike many community clubs, however, is also focused on rural preservation as well as on collecting and documenting history. The NC Society of Historians has presented BRCO's Historic Preservation Committee and its members with three state history awards for its *Legends, Tales & History of Cold Mountain*, Books 1-6, by Evelyn Coltman (2010), *Walking in the Footsteps of Those Who Came Before Us* DVD (2012), and *From New College to Springdale* DVD (2016). In addition, the Historic Preservation Committee developed the *Cold Mountain Heritage Driving Tour* CD as well as the *Sunburst Sessions* CD by Possum on a Whale, an outgrowth of the Sunburst DVD. The CDs and DVDs are all produced by Douglas Chambers Productions and are available through BRCO's website and at local sales outlets.

With its most recent *Sunburst* DVD, BRCO has not only collected historical data about the iconic logging industry that carved pathways through the early 20th Century Western North Carolina mountains but has also detailed current wood products operations. BRCO has created an impressive documentary worthy of attention by historians and scholars while also being of interest to anyone attracted to local history.