

Reece Reunion...continued from Page 1A

Union County's Confederate veterans.

"We're all from one line of the Reece family," said Weldon Eli Reece, president of the Reece Family Reunion. "It was William Reece that came from Wales in 1709 that got the ball rolling."

Weldon Eli Reece, now 83, attended the first Reece Reunion in 1931 at the age of 2, when the gathering was held at Mossy Creek Campground in southern White County.

The William Reece line includes legendary Mountain Poet and author Byron Herbert Reece and dates back as one of the earliest families to settle Union County.

It also includes *North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald* Editor Charles Duncan, a descendant of James Roberson Reece.

Bill Honaker, the son-in-law of Hoke and Lillie Reece, was also at the event, following the publishing of his new book, "William Reece of Wales and his Descendants."

Inspired by the work and aspirations of Alice Reece Hayes, Honaker dedicated the last 18 years to the Reece Family project, completed in March.

"It was an awesome experience and you'd be amazed at the things you learn," Honaker said. "I learned how the line progressed through the Civil War and it was amazing to capture it all in this book."

The William Reece line includes veterans of every major war in the history of the United States of America.

One of those veterans was Charles William "Chuck"



The Reece Family tradition continued Sunday at the House of Prayer Family Life Center. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Honaker Jr., who served in and was wounded in Iraq in 2003. The younger Honaker is a driving force behind the erection of an Iraq War Memorial at Union County's Veterans' Memorial Park.

His father, Bill Honaker was quick to point out that the book chronicling the Reece Clan through the ages wasn't his brainchild.

"One person didn't do it all," Honaker said.

Honaker spoke energetically about how the genealogy of the Reece clan owes its existence to Alice Eliza Louise Reece Hayes.

"Alice is the one who really started gathering all the information and we dedicated the book to her," Honaker said. "We have 12 notebooks full of all the genealogy notes that she kept."

"She would have people come by the house and visit while she wrote down all of their information," Bill Honaker said. "She had prob-

ably worked on it all her life until she passed away at 89 in 1983.

"She was so dedicated and faithful," he said. "She was one of the most faithful ladies that I've ever seen. She kept a lot of the family information from being lost."

Despite the advances in modern technology and the introduction of the Internet, Bill Honaker says that good old fashioned story telling and word-of-mouth are still critical when compiling a genealogical history.

"You can look up some of the information online, but most of it isn't right and you can't depend on it," Bill Honaker said. "The information I found was so bad that I couldn't use any of it. You can gather a lot of information at reunions like this one. These are the best places to start."

A copy of the book was presented to Union County Public Library's Christa Joy Edmonds for use in the Ge-

nealogy and Heritage Room at the Library.

"It's very important to record local history at the library," Edmonds said. "People come in all the time looking for local history. We have a room dedicated to that at the library, and it contains a lot of information on the genealogy and history of the area."

The reunion also honored Preston and Glenda Reece who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Saturday.

Also, it was Preston Reece who published the 764-page Reece Family reference book.

When asked what's the secret recipe to 50 years of marriage, Glenda Reece quickly replied, "you need to marry the right person."

Preston Reece made the correct move by agreeing with his better half and added, "you must be able to compromise. And we do a lot of compromising," he said.

Park...continued from Page 1A

Sgt. Robby Brown, who was at the park, as she feared an improvised explosive device had been left behind on park grounds, Sheriff's reports show.

Sgt. Brown contacted Investigator Patrick Martin and told him of the situation. Sheriff Stephens was contacted. He called in the bomb dog and called for the evacuation of almost three quarters of the park grounds, Sheriff's reports show.

Investigators C.J. Worden and Sgt. Lamar Dyer arrived at the scene and observed the mysterious suit case and began evacuation of the park grounds, Sheriff's reports show.

Investigator Martin and K-9 Tito scanned the area and took a close observation of the mysterious suit case.

"Tito, who is trained in detection of explosive materials, didn't hit on the suit case," Investigator Worden said. "As it turns out, the suit case was filled with clothing."

"Once Investigator Martin determined it wasn't an explosive device, he opened it," Investigator Worden said. "He determined who the suit case belonged to by examining the contents of the suit case."

Union County authori-



The search came up empty at Meeks Park. Photo/Todd Forrest

ties say the man who left the suit case behind was tired of waiting on the owner of the suit case to arrive at the park and pickup his belongings. After waiting for what he thought was too long of an extended time, the driver tossed the suit case out for the owner to come by and pick up, Sheriff's reports show.

The driver returned to the scene and answered questions for authorities, Investigator Worden said.

Sheriff Stephens said that Ms. Jones was distraught that she had caused an incident that resulted in a false alarm.

"Ms. Jones did exactly what she should have done,

given the circumstances," Sheriff Stephens said.

Sheriff Stephens commended the Union County Fire Department and Emergency Management Agency for being on hand during the incident with equipment and personnel.

"Every thing was safe, and we all went home breathing a sigh of relief," Sheriff Stephens said. "We reopened the park and fortunately, the back to school event got back underway."

"We'll take these results any day as opposed to what might have happened," Sheriff Stephens said. "We'll chalk this incident up to experience."

Mash...continued from Page 1A

enjoy the festivities and sip a little "shine."

Mash Bash attendees enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by The Oaks, and enjoyed the Outlaw music brand of local legend Tommy Townsend who rode into the Ridges in a two-mule drawn wagon to the delight and entertainment of his many fans.

Townsend, who now resides in Nashville, Tenn., is a Union County native who made it big in the Country Music Outlaw genre and has a tremendous following where ever he performs.

Most recently he lit up the stage at the Anderson Music Hall during the Georgia Mountain Fair. Townsend and Waymore's Outlaws left the fans longing for more of his Waylon wailin'.

Townsend also was in town to launch his Granddaddy Mimm's Authentic Corn

Whiskey products. Free samples were given out and a lot of sipping took place.

Townsend has been busy this summer promoting his Granddaddy Mimm's whiskey.

He just returned from the Dominican Republic where there appears to be a great demand for the family recipe, concocted long ago by Townsend's grandfather, Jack McClure.

A native of Young Harris, McClure made the best moonshine and fruit brandies in the North Georgia Mountains and made a profitable living for himself and his family.

McClure's moonshine money was the difference between going hungry and meat, beans and taters on the table for many families in Towns and Union counties.

Today, Townsend hopes to recreate his Granddaddy's moonshine magic.

"We're almost there, almost ready to launch Granddaddy Mimm's Authentic Corn Whiskey," Townsend said, adding that September is the expected launch date for the recipe in Georgia.

"It's been a busy summer, but, it's been a good summer. Being able to be here and in Blairsville and spend time with family and friends means the world to me," Townsend said.

Selling moonshine is legal today, just as long as the government collects the tax revenue. And the launch of Granddaddy Mimm's whiskey products has been on Townsend's mind since January.

McClure's moonshine

recipe had been stored away in the family's memory for more than 40 years until his grandson brought it back to life.

On Jan. 25, Townsend announced his partnership with Georgia Distilling Company Inc. in Milledgeville to recreate and market his grandfather's original moonshine recipes legally for the first time.

Dubbed Granddaddy Mimm's Authentic Corn Whiskey, and Peach and Apple brandies, these mountain spirits will be produced on stills using the Jack McClure design, and built in Georgia using his secret family recipe that originated in Towns County.

The back label on the whiskey bottle urges those who partake of these spirits to "please drink responsibly and don't forget to tithe on Sunday."

Granddaddy Mimm's is not currently available for purchase, but is expected to be on Georgia shelves by September.

Meanwhile, Townsend was more than appreciative of the crowd reaction at the Kickoff Bash for the Fourth Annual Mountain Moonshine Cruz-In.

"Despite the rain, it was a great turn out for the Haulin' Mash Bash Kick-off," Townsend said. "We couldn't have been more pleased. We were praying for the rain to stay away earlier, and before that, we were praying for two mules. We want to say a special thanks to Charles Roach for making those mules appear."