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Community Cultural Heritage Study Research Brief

07/09/2011

Nestled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Northeast Georgia is home to the Sautee Nacoochee Community Association. The SNCA is a non-profit organization dedicated to nurturing creativity and committed to preserving and protecting the natural and historical resources of the Sautee and Nacoochee Valley's and the surrounding area. The Association was founded in the late 1970's by a group of forward-looking community members that joined together in an effort to protect their beautiful and historic Nacoochee Valley. They were successful in having the Valley placed on the National Register as an historic district. Spurred on by success, the group formed the Sautee-Nacoochee Community Association. The Association maintains the Sautee Nacoochee Center which offers a Folk Pottery Museum, Theatre, Gallery, Art Studio, Dance Studio, History Museum, African American Heritage Site, Nature Preserve, and more. The SNCA has even established Sautee Nacoochee as an official Historic District and one of "The 100 Best Small Arts Towns in America". The program is funded in part by the Georgia Council for the Arts through appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly and by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Folk Pottery Museum of Northeast Georgia showcases the handcraft skills of one of the South's premier grassroots art forms, and explores the historical importance and changing role of folk pottery in southern life. Northeast Georgia's pottery tradition is nationally known and according to the SNCA website, "Georgia is one of the only two states with a 200 year unbroken tradition of folk pottery. Arie Meaders in particular developed decorative themes in the 1950-1960's that helped the craft evolve from producing essential household items to creating a valued and collected folk art". The Meaders family is most well known for developing the "face jug" which was originally brought over by the African slaves. By law, slaves were not allowed to have tombstones, so sometimes pottery (or if possible a face jug) served as their grave markers. The ugly face on the jug was meant to scare the devil away from your grave so your soul could go to heaven. The ugly face jug was adapted by mountain folk during the era of prohibition

as both storage for illegal moonshine and a child preventative. Shiner's would brew up a batch of moonshine and pour it into a 'devil' or 'monster' face jug and cork it. The elder's would inform the kids that the Devil was in the jug and if they opened it he would get them.



*Face Jug by Lanier Meaders*

The SNCA is currently working on the African American Heritage Site. An antebellum slave cabin was relocated to the property where it was fixed up and restored. The cabin will be used to showcase the story of slavery and experiences of African Americans in the history of White County, as well as offer an opportunity for visitors to experience living history demonstrations through the folk life traditions on display in and around the slave cabin. Although the central theme at the African American Heritage Site is the untold story of slavery in Nacoochee Valley, common bonds and threads run through the lives of black and white Valley families. Similar tools and utensils, crafts and skills, and agricultural and industrial technology were common to all, regardless of class or race, during the mid-1800's. In addition to promoting an understanding of the legacy of slavery in the Sautee and Nacoochee valleys, the center will illustrate the skills and technologies used by all Valley residents in this 19th Century frontier community. Through live demonstrations of traditional crafts, special events, guided and self-guided tours, visitors may become engaged in interactive presentations that illustrate the history of the valleys and the people who lived here.