



WOMEN'S HISTORY TRAIL
Sculpture Celebration ▪ March 23, 2024
Women's History Park



WHT

Women's History Trail



SOWING THE SEEDS OF THE FUTURE

March 23, 2024, a momentous day when the Folk Heritage Association of Macon County - Women's History Trail Project is gifting, "*Sowing the Seeds of the Future*," to the Town of Franklin for all of Macon County, North Carolina. Six years of work by our strong WHT Leadership Team and many others has made this day possible. May this monumental sculpture be a central part of our community for all generations to come.

WHT LEADERSHIP:

Mary Polanski
Marty Greeble
Claire Suminski
Theresa Ramsey
Anne Hyder





Wesley & Odyssey Wofford

Academy Award winning Wesley Wofford, FNSS, is an American Figurative Sculptor who creates sculptures and monuments all over the country that are recognized on a national level. Odyssey Wofford is his Studio Director and wife of 31 years, and the couple operate Wofford Sculpture Studio in Cashiers, NC. Wesley and Odyssey had the pleasure of collaborating with Barbara McRae and the ladies of the Women's History Trail for over 6 years to bring this incredible monument to fruition. It has been an honor to take this artistic journey to bring Na-Ka Rebecca, Salley and Harriet Timoxena to Franklin, TN about the vision of "Sowing the Seeds of the Future" and his dedication to this project are deeply appreciated.

woffordsculpturestudio.com

"Sowing the Seeds of the Future"

This sculpture tells the story of three local women connected by a specific piece of land just across the Little Tennessee River. The base on which the three figures stand honors the multi-cultural foundations upon which our modern lives are built. It represents the passage of time starting with the foundation of the Noquisiyi (Nikwasi) Mound as the cultural and spiritual center of the Cherokee people, leading to the muddy early riverside town, where creek stones became cobblestone streets that eventually became Franklin. The four concentric 9's around the mound represent the four cardinal directions, and the sweeping lines are the wind, passing over the river to become water, carrying the voices and traditions of the Cherokee into the future. The seeds within the sculpture represent the crucial importance of agriculture, with corn passed down from the Cherokee and apples introduced by the colonists, and symbolize the cross-pollination of cultures and generations. The hands of the women are all touching illustrating the sisterhood of women that transcends cultural divides. This sculpture authentically portrays the uncomfortable truths of our collective history and acknowledges that our work toward equality is not complete.

It celebrates women's contributions, inspires current and future generations of girls and women to pursue their dreams, and challenges us all to learn from the past and aspire for a more equitable future.

Artist Statement – Odyssey and Wesley Wofford

Na-Ka Rebecca



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WOMEN'S HISTORY TRAIL

Na-Ka Rebecca Morris (1793–1885)

Na-Ka, a member of an illustrious Cherokee family living in the village of Noquisiyi (Nikwasi), was deeply engaged in efforts to preserve the Cherokee homeland. She was the niece of Yonaguska, a prominent Chief of the Oconaluftee Cherokees who along with his two brothers, Yonaegwa (Big Bear) and Big Tom, purposely selected reserves that contained land of significant cultural value to the Cherokee.

Na-Ka was called by her English name, Rebecca, after she married Baptist minister and farmer, Gideon Morris of South Carolina. Under the Treaty of 1819, she and Gideon obtained, in her right, a preserve of 640 acres along the Little Tennessee River, presently East Franklin. The land bordered the old Nikwasi Village and the Mound to the west. The Morris family was later burned out of their land by white settlers. They pursued compensation from the state of North Carolina and won since they had not willingly abandoned their land. Na-Ka Rebecca and Gideon bought property across the river in the new town of Franklin. Records from 1852 indicate they had moved to Valley River, Cherokee County, North Carolina. Their final move was in 1867, as they traveled with 72 family members to Indian Territory, now known as the state of Oklahoma. In the sculpture, Na-Ka Rebecca is passing corn seed to a young Timoxena Siler. Her child on her back, is tied in the traditional wrap manner and Na-ka's attire represents hundreds of years of Cherokee history. The wind carries those traditions over the river and into the future. Listen to the wind, it talks. Listen to the silence, it speaks.

SPONSOR: JEAN HUNNICUTT

FOLK HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF MACON COUNTY



Salley

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WOMEN'S HISTORY TRAIL

SALLEY (1799 - unknown)

Standing tall and proud as the central figure in the sculpture is Salley, a skillful woman who very likely spoke both Cherokee and English. She is the bridge between Na-Ka Rebecca and Harriet Timoxena and their common connection with this property by the river. Few historical documents exist to provide factual evidence; however what is known is that she was adept in household skills, including child-rearing, and versed in the many uses of native plants and animal fibers. Her experience working with wool provided her with a source of income later in life. Salley was born into slavery in about 1799, and although the exact path of her journey is unknown it may have led from Charleston to the Cherokee Village of Noquisiyi (Nikwasi). A character thought to be based on Salley appears in the book *Eoneguski* or the Cherokee Chief, written by Robert Strange in 1839. Her part in the story reflects her presence in the life of Na-Ka before Gideon Morris and Na-Ka married. Some years later Salley was sold to Jesse Siler. She brought to the Siler household the domestic skills and acquired knowledge of the land from her years in Nikwasi Village. It is reasonable to assume that she had a hand in raising Jesse's daughter, Harriet Timoxena. It is also possible that Salley maintained a relationship with the Siler-Sloan family even after she might have attained her freedom. Found among Timoxena's possessions was a note written in her hand around 1870 supporting Salley's talents, stating that she "paid Salley for the first pound of spinning today." Perhaps the seeds of change had been sown as this noble woman's worth was acknowledged in a new way.

SPONSOR: MARTY GREEBLE, FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARIAN
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Timoxena



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Harriet Timoxena Siler Sloan (1835-1900)

Timoxena, or “Tim” as she was called by her family, was the daughter of early settlers, Jesse Richardson Siler (1793-1870) and Harriet Patton Siler (1798-1877). After attending Asheville Female College, she married William “Billy” Sloan in 1856 and they had seven children. Their home was in the area by the Little Tennessee River near the property originally owned by Na-Ka Rebecca Morris and her husband, Gideon Morris. Salley, an enslaved woman of the Jesse Siler household, is believed to have cared for Timoxena as a child and likely moved with Tim and Billy as they established their own homestead. Timoxena was widowed at age 40 but with her skills and determination, along with Salley’s help, she assumed responsibility for her household. Family lore portrays her as a “plump, whole-souled person with a hearty, infectious laugh, a lover of good company and good food, full of sentiment and never one to speak unkindly of another. Timoxena Sloan’s life was a beautiful example of faith and confidence in Divine guidance.” Strong, frugal, and well-educated, Tim was skilled in the domestic arts and able to make her own medicines. Timoxena appears twice in the sculpture, once as a young girl on Salley’s hip receiving corn from Na-Ka Rebecca, and again as a grown woman striding into the future. Timoxena’s right hand is on her pregnant belly; her left is clasped with Salley’s. They are connected by time, place, and spirit—enduring the challenges of the moment, but always with hope for the future.

SPONSOR: DESCENDANTS OF JESSE R. AND HARRIET P. SILER
FOLK HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF MACON COUNTY

WHT SCULPTURE COMMUNITY CELEBRATION MARCH 23, 2024

10:30 am

Preshow: *Dave, Scott & Delphine, "Blue Jazz"
Delphine Kirkland "A Change is Gonna Come" (Sam Cooke)

The Unveiling! 11:00 am

Welcome: WHT Leadership

Invocation: Rev. Janet Jacobs Greene

Remarks: First Lady Kristin Cooper

Recognitions: Special Guests

Unveiling: Wesley and Odyssey Wofford, WHT Leadership, Rebecca Stacey
and Children

Dedication: Mayor Jack Horton

Artist Remarks: Wesley and Odyssey Wofford

Trail Plaques: WHT Leadership, Sam McRae

Meet the Women: Na-Ka Rebecca – Former Chief Joyce Dugan
Salley – Ann Miller Woodford
Timoxena – Kate Jones

Dance: Jada Bryson and Dance Arts Co-op Members, "A Way Home"

Post Celebration: Refreshments / Ubuntu Chorus

*Susan Pepper & Laila Messer, **Cherokee Storyteller Kathi Littlejohn
Conversation with Wofford Studios – Wesley and Odyssey

The celebration continues in the downtown area with music, food & fun! (See insert)

**With Support from the Town of Franklin, TDA, TDC & Individual Donors
Thanks to the *Arts Council of Macon County and
Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center for entertainment sponsorships.

**UP TOWN – Gazebo/Square
Musical Entertainment**

1:00 pm • Tom Estes & Wyatt Duvall

1:45 pm • Blue Jazz

2:30 pm • Susan Pepper & Laila Messer

Scottish Tartans Museum

2:00 pm Kathi Littlejohn

Cherokee Storyteller

Roving on Main Street

Wyatt Duvall • Lady & the Tramps

Both the Trail and the sculpture began as thoughts in the fertile mind of Barbara McRae. Barbara was a journalist, a historian, a naturalist, a visionary, and a trailblazer. She had particular interest in researching the lives of significant Macon County women whose accomplishments and influences had been unknown or forgotten. In 2017, Barbara met the sculptor, Wesley Wofford, a chance encounter that sparked the creation of Sowing the Seeds of the Future. Barbara had been thinking about the interconnected lives of Na-ka Rebecca Morris, Harriet Timoxena Siler Sloan, and Salley, the enslaved woman, trying to imagine what their everyday lives might have been like in early-19th century Franklin. Wesley immediately embraced the challenge of bringing them to life in a work of art. In May 2018, he presented the maquette – the miniature prototype – of Sowing the Seeds of the Future to the Folk Heritage Association of Macon County and he was enthusiastically commissioned to go ahead with the sculpture.

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WOMEN'S HISTORY TRAIL

Barbara Sears McRae (1942-2021)

was a boldly imaginative and quietly effective community leader who played a key role in many significant public projects in Franklin and Macon County, including the Little Tennessee River Greenway, Macon County Historical Society, Mainspring Conservation Trust, and the Nikwasi Initiative. She was editor of the Franklin Press, vice-mayor of Franklin, an avid naturalist and local historian. The visionary behind the Women's History Trail and the sculpture, Sowing the Seeds of the Future, Barbara encouraged us to walk in the footsteps of some of the diverse women who made their mark here. She saw how the interconnected stories of the three women depicted in the sculpture still resonate today. Admired, respected and beloved, Barbara left us these words: "Open your hearts, share your thoughts and ideas, listen to others, trust them and work together."

SPONSOR: THE FRANKLIN PRESS

FOLK HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF MACON COUNTY





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Women's History Trail

SOWING THE SEEDS OF THE FUTURE Sculpture Project/Park Donors

Donation: \$25,001+

The Estate of Barbara McRae
Sam McRae
Town of Franklin

Donation: \$10,000 - \$25,000

Phil & Sharon Drake	Macon County Commissioners
Don Fisher	Ken & Amy Murphy
First Citizens Bank	Stan & Mary Polanski
Jean Hunnicutt	Larry & Kendra Rasche
Jim McRae Fund-NCCF	Tourism Development Committee-Site Work Grant

Donation: \$1,000 - \$9,999

Jess & Debbie Austin
Cowee School Arts & Heritage Center
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Sculpture Site Work
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Donation: \$101 - \$999

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Jean Wright

Sculpture Project/Park Donors, cont.

Donation: \$1 - \$100

Beverly Barnett	James & Margaret Freeman	Amy Pruitt
Charles & Lorna Beck	Ingrid George	Billy & Sandi Rickles
Melanie Blakeslee	Pete & Henrietta Haithcock	Kathryn Sellers
Molly Bracknell	Kelli Kurczewski	Edward & Jane Shatley
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Care Partners Hospice	Kirk Lovenbury	Rita St. Claire
Joann Clark	Marsha Luczak	Streets of Franklin
June Creagan	Thomas & Elena Marsh	Heritage Association
Jeanne Dairaghi	Katha Massey	Roberta Swank
Olivia Dorsey	Memorial UMW	Douglas Woodward and
Elaine Eisenbraun	Gordon Mercer	Patricia Severin
Chris Fenninger	Betty Merrill	Joyce Young
Suzanne Fosselman	Edward J. Moore, Jr.	
Helen Lucille Fouts	Vic & Margaret Perry	

WOMEN'S HISTORY TRAIL PROJECTS - RECOGNIZING MACON COUNTY WOMEN

WHT TRAIL: The Women's History Trail (WHT), a project of the Folk Heritage Association of Macon County is dedicated to discovering and sharing stories of Macon County's remarkable women from the past through various public art mediums and markers along a designated walking trail.

SCULPTURE PROJECT: Narrative about three early women who played significant parts in the early years of Macon County's settlement led to the concept of a public sculpture based on their interconnected lives.

WHT MACON MATRIARCH: The Women's History Trail has recognized not only the importance of lifting up women in our past, but also the significant women of our present times – individuals who have truly had a positive impact on our community and our lives. WHT seeks to honor these women from our local elders by selecting an annual WHT Macon Matriarch.

WHT BARBARA SEARS MCRAE ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP: To encourage young women in their pursuit of educational goals, the WHT Barbara Sears McRae Academic Scholarship is given annually to a graduate who embraces community involvement, volunteerism, and academic achievement thus leading the way for advancement as they prepare for the future.

FOLK HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF MACON COUNTY

The FHAMC, a local non-profit organization established in 2005, is dedicated to the preservation of the culture and folkways of the Southern Appalachian Mountains by providing living experiences and preserving the heritage of Macon County, North Carolina.

The Women's History Trail (WHT), established by the FHAMC in October 2018, is an in-town walking trail honoring women of Macon County who have made significant contributions to the community throughout its history. Adopting local historian Barbara McRae's vision to showcase the legacy of women who helped shape the area's past, the WHT honors industrious women whose diverse lives were connected by strong bonds of ingenuity and endurance. Stories shared about these three women connected to this land in the tumultuous years of early settlement inspired the FHAMC to commission sculptor Wesley Wofford to create "Sowing the Seeds of the Future." This park is the trailhead of the WHT situated between the river and the Noquisiyi (Nikwasi) Mound. It serves as a gateway to Franklin and provides a place to come together, share stories, learn from the past, and inspire generations to Sow the Seeds of Their Future.

FHAMC-WHT LEADERSHIP:

MARTY GREEBLE, ANNE HYDER, BARBARA MCRAE,
MARY POLANSKI, THERESA RAMSEY, CLAIRE SUMINSKI

DEDICATED MARCH 2024



Some of the FHAMC Board members making heritage plans.

Folk Heritage Association of Macon County Board of Directors

Officers/Executive Board

Chairman: Anne Hyder
Vice Chair: Marty Greebe
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Member at Large: Mark West
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Mary Polanski
Evelyn Southard
Claire Suminski

FolkHeritageAssociation.org



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WOMEN'S HISTORY TRAIL

Margaret Setser Ramsey (1931-2018)

Born in the Cartoogechaye Community, Margaret was the daughter of Joseph Franklin Setser and Harriet Slagle Setser and is a direct descendant of Jacob Siler, one of the first settlers in this area. Married to Albert L. Ramsey, she partnered in the operation of the family dairy farm and raised four children (Becky, Diane, Joe, and Ralph). Margaret worked as the Outreach Supervisor for Macon Program for Progress and supported local artisans as Manager of Maco Crafts Co-op. Margaret deeply loved the outdoors, fishing, hiking, and sharing stories of these mountains. An avid quilter and seamstress, she was involved with others to develop and produce nationally recognized quilt projects such as the Original World's Largest Quilt. She was an active volunteer with a heart for social justice and received numerous awards for her service. Margaret was an unforgettable voice and champion for the betterment of Macon County. With a life-long passion for preserving local history, she helped establish the Franklin Folk Festival. Founding the Folk Heritage Association of Macon County is considered one of her greatest contributions to our community.

SPONSORS: BECKY AND TOM ESTES, THE FAMILY OF DIANE RAMSEY FORSYTH, JOE AND THERESA RAMSEY, AND RALPH RAMSEY

FOLK HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF MACON COUNTY



**Deep appreciation to the following for helping make
the Women's History Park and our celebration of
this momentous event possible:**

SITE

Richard Clark and everyone at Clark & Company
Joe Sanders
Town Franklin Council
Town of Franklin Employees/Staff

MEDIA

Tony Angel Media

CELEBRATION EVENTS and ACTIVITIES

Dedicated Volunteers
East Franklin Elementary School
FHAMC Board of Directors
Franklin/Nantahala Chamber of Commerce
Franklin NC Police Department
Friends of the Greenway
Jerri Fifer
Lazy Hiker Brewery
LBJ Job Corps SGA
Macon County Transit
Mainspring Conservation Trust
Outdoor 76
New Century Scholars
On the Veranda Restaurant
Walmart Supercenter
Winding Stair Farm Nursery

**Thank you to these individuals for giving freely of their
time and talents:**

Janet Jacobs Greene (Timoxena Monologue)
Ubuntu Chorus



WOMEN'S HISTORY TRAIL
is a project of the
Folk Heritage Association of Macon County

