

BROOKSIDE CAMP



NAPOLEON BONAPARTE FEATHERSTONE

Napoleon Bonaparte (N.B.) Featherstone (1858-1938) and his wife **Luster Lee Nichols** (1860-1936) lived in the old homeplace, which they named the Rocky Mountain Inn, and rented out rooms catering to summer tourists.

Their daughter, **Ethel Featherstone** (1891-1973), did the cooking.

Their son, **Ambrose Mills Featherstone** (1896-1984), would travel by horse and buggy to Station Hillgirt to pick up guests arriving by train.

BROOKSIDE CAMP AND FARM HOUSE

In 1935, **Ambrose** and his wife **Eula** established Brookside Camp for summer tourists, primarily from Florida. They ran it until 1951. One family continued to visit until 1953. Ambrose researched the lodging in the area and determined that more cabins were needed to house tourists. The cabins were primitive, located around the pond and their home. The power plant built by Ambrose to serve the camp and their homeplace was critical to the establishment of the camp and was built first along with associated infrastructure. All of the logs for the cabins were given to Ambrose by the McMinn family of Locust Grove. The McMinn family maintained the roads and were the only neighbors of the Featherstones at that time in the area.

Ambrose was very talented and creative. He served in World War I and built communications towers in the Azores during World War II. He also worked at King Hardware, which was founded in the 1920s by Joe and Myrtle King, distant relatives of the Featherstones. It was located half a block below the train depot in Hendersonville and was the only hardware store in town. Ambrose worked there for many years until he departed for the Azores in the 1940s. The Kings depended on him, as he was very knowledgeable about the building trade and built many houses. The whole Featherstone family worked there, helping with inventory every January. All of their Christmas gifts came from there.

After the war, Ambrose returned and continued working at King Hardware before buying the Balfour Grocery Store. However, it was not successful because he extended credit to people who could not pay their bills. Ambrose worked very hard; he never had a day off. He was very kind, never cross, and never spanked the children.

Early in her career, Eula was a teacher for the McMinn family at Locust Grove Public County School, located on Locust Grove Road. She walked two miles to the school every day. There were approximately eight children. The boys were responsible for carrying firewood, and the girls carried the water. Later, she volunteered for the public library and drove the bookmobile. She also ran the cafeteria program at Hendersonville High School for 20 years, earning income after Ambrose lost his eyesight as he got older. After teaching Sunday school at Moore's Grove Methodist Church, where she and Ambrose were lifelong members, Eula would make a big Sunday dinner with fried chicken and produce from their extensive garden. They were a selfless couple, always supportive and willing to help others.



Ambrose and Eula



Cabin on Brookside Camp Road Across from Big House



The Small Grind Stone

Both grindstones were lost in the 1916 flood. The large one was found in the 1950s. Ambrose had it brought up and placed at the entrance to what was once Brookside Camp. The small stone was found in 2024 after Hurricane Helene.



The Large Grind Stone



Featherstone Family (Jack, Ann, Eula, Shirley, Richard, Dave, and Ambrose) and Pony

WHAT WAS THE CAMP LIKE?

The cabins were very primitive. Each had a stove, and sinks and water were located outside, fed by a spring and a 1,200-gallon tank. Campers would take a bucket and soap and bathe in the pond. During the day, there was hiking on Couch Mountain, pony rides, and swimming in the pond. Each cabin had a screened porch where campers could sit and relax. Ambrose and Eula opened up their house to everyone, and Eula kept lots of books. Campers would take it easy on the front porch and pick vegetables from the garden.