

Joe Eller's Gold – The Newton Mine

Joseph "Joe" Eller (1803-1880) is apparently the son of Susanna "Sukey" Eller (abt 1787-1864).ⁱ It appears "Sukey" was unmarried and the children, illegitimate. While there are some questions about the line, there is no question that Joe Eller is among the most interesting folks in our Family History.

Joseph Eller bought lot 131 in the 18th District of Towns County (Upper Hightower) from John H. Newton.ⁱⁱ This is believed to be the "Newton Mine."

"This mine is located in the 18th district of Towns County, on lot 131. It extends along both sides of a small stream, which enters Hightower creek from the east. The worked portion of the mine covers an area of less than three acres, and lies in a narrow hollow, formed by the foot-hills, that lead down, from the main ridge, to within a few yards of the creek. Gold is said to have been discovered here, many years ago, by Joseph Eller. His attention was first attracted, by some water-worn gravel, which his dog had exposed, while making an excavation for a burrowing animal. This led to an examination of the gravel deposits, beneath the overlying soil; and they were found, to be rich in gold. The work of washing the gravel was begun, immediately, by Eller, assisted by others; but, owing to the want of a sufficient amount of water, the work progressed slowly. The gravel, frequently, had to be carried, some distance, to running water. However, regardless of this difficulty, it is said, that the mine paid handsomely."ⁱⁱⁱ

Apparently, this land is still in the hands of the Eller family. The gold apparently attracted the attention of the Eller family that stayed behind in Buncombe, NC. John A. Eller of Weaverville tells the story (EFC, Vol.II, #1, p.9) of Joseph Eller (1792-1863) (the son of Jacob and Mary Biffle):

"It seems that in the early days of the Civil War, Joseph Eller would disappear from Buncombe County, NC, for a period of time. He returned home on his horse with his saddle bags full of gold, according to the story. The only explanation he ever gave for his absence was that he had been "fighting the war." No record of his service in the Civil War has been found.

He hid the gold and after his death in 1863, many hours were spent by relatives and others trying to find Joe Eller's gold." Perhaps the gold came from his nephew in North Georgia.

ⁱ Eller, Calvin Neal; 2932 Homeway Drive, Beavercreek, OH 45385 in Eller Chronicles, Vol. IV, #2, p.62.

ⁱⁱ Taylor, Jerry, "Hearthstones of Home, Foundations of Towns County Georgia," Vol. I, Editor Jerry Taylor, 1983 (PO Box 101, Young Harris, GA 30382).

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.