

Etowah River Gold Mine Tunnel

Location: Tunnel, According to several surveys the entry channel lies in LL142 the balance lies completely in LL178 Lumpkin County Ga. Approximately Three and ½ miles Down River from Castleberry Bridge.

Work began in 1880 by a lone miner known only as, “The Dutchman “at the upriver entrance, he partially opened, only a few hundred feet’ and then he disappeared. It stayed in that condition until The Blackshear Family from Mobile Ala. bought the land in 1930? Along with 10 other 40 acre Land Lots all lying in the Dahlonega Gold belt total 440 acres. They created the mining company “The Etowah Gold and Power Company”. In 1930-31 Fifty (50) men with Dynamite, pick and shovel finished the diversion tunnel, in less than a year, dammed the river just past the entrance, (Part of That dam exist today, as the island you see in river middle on that spot).They diverted the entire river flow through tunnel, to dry up river around the mile+ horseshoe bend from tunnel entrance to Tunnel exit, that enabled them to mine a dry exposed river bottom for gold. The Tunnel varies from 9’ to 12’ wide x 7’ to 12’ high, the length is 1233’ feet long through the Quartz and blue granite mountain which rises 240’ above the river. The tunnel drops 10’ in elevation over the total length, from entrance to exit. Two 4’ diameter air shafts, located approx. 300’ from entrance and 300’ from exit, for ventilation, were bored from the ground level above down to tunnel with well boring equipment brought to site by horses and wagons, Those old road cuts, built in the late 1920s and early 1930’s, to gain access to tunnel location, and later were used by Moonshiners, still visible through this historic property today, along with eight disabled groundhogs used for cooking The moonshine mash. Some of those Old roads and Trails, I reclaimed and developed into all-weather gravel roads that I use today.

My Dear Friend, the late Charles Clinton Davis Jr, known as (C.C. Davis) was 12 years old during the tunnel building operation and spent the summer alongside his father, Charles Cleveland Davis, who was the Tunnel Engineer, foreman and mining operations manager.

Mr.CC Davis and I became fast friends after I bought the property in 1984. Mr.CC shared all his memories of those days In the 1930s with me, including the information above, along with a c1931 Map of property showing locations of old roads to tunnel, mining operation details, mines, pits , Headquarters house, Water reservoir and camp location of the 50 workers and their drinking water springs which I revived and use today.

I first walked through the entire tunnel (at low water level) with young Charlie Davis, Mr. CC Davis’ son in 1982, then I Canoed through a few months later in 1983 prior to buying the property. During the Twenty seven year period 1984-2011 , I “run” the tunnel in either a Canoe, Air Boat, Bass boat or Tube an average of twenty times per year. I Developed roads across the Mountain from Tunnel Exit to very near Tunnel entry for Quick access to launch and take out your water craft. General public launches from Castleberry Bridge approx. two

(difficult) hours up river from tunnel and take out approx. one hour down river at Hwy 136 Bridge.

As far as I have been able to find, (researching over twenty years), this is a one of a kind, "River diversion Tunnel, for Gold mining purposes", in the USA; and all done with private money. I could not locate anything even similar to this Beautiful and incredible feat of engineering, In the U.S.A.

Also, after clearing about an acre of land along Riverside for a vegetable garden, in 1985, I recovered over two dozen arrowheads and many pottery shards of Cherokee and Etowah Origins. I have c1832 first maps of area and Maps of the Dahlonega Gold belts - three main belts run through this property.

This narration and knowledge is from a former owner of portions of the property.