

Pocosin Mission Transcripts

00;00;00;07 - 00;00;13;05

[Song "Elisha's Eerie History" by Sydney followed by drum break.]

00;00;13;05 - 00;00;31;21

Hello and welcome to Elisha's Eerie History. My name is Elisha, and today we have a singer, dancer, creative, great friend of mine and great friend of the show.

00;00;31;21 - 00;00;40;04

So probably be back. Kaylene Alvarez-Gerstmann. Welcome. Thank you. Thank you for having me.

00;00;40;04 - 00;00;42;23

Kaylene rundown of the podcast and concept

00;00;42;23 - 00;00;52;25

we're a history podcast and we deal with the spooky, the mysterious, and the haunted. And today we're going to go over the Pocosin Mission.

00;00;52;27 - 00;00;57;18

Wow. Which is in your foothills in Greene County. Yes.

00;00;57;18 - 00;01;05;27

Throughout this, I'm going to say Pocosin, Pocosan, and Far Pocosin. All of these refer to the Pocosin Mission. Okay.

00;01;05;27 - 00;01;13;05

So I'm going to tell us about the hike we're about to go on. We're about to go on a 4 to 8 mile hike.

00;01;13;05 - 00;01;22;06

This area is known for flooding. Dead or waterlogged trees are known to fall any time. Oh S**** Which --

00;01;22;06 - 00;01;25;00

was a major flood in June of 1995.

00;01;25;00 - 00;01;33;07

and it says to expect rock and mudslides. Really? Did it rain recently. I don't think so. I think we're okay. It's been dry

00;01;33;07 - 00;01;39;18

on the trail. We're going to see a sign in all caps that says DO NOT TAKE RISKS

00;01;39;21 - 00;01;48;03

If you must hike, hike with caution. Damn. We're in danger. This is the last of any of our existence.

00;01;48;03 - 00;01;56;13

Hikers often report feeling a strange presence. Oh my gosh. Yeah. Really? Yeah. No one goes on this hike.

00;01;56;13 - 00;02;02;16

It's. It's known. Is known to be dangerous. And we'll find out why.

00;02;03;02 - 00;02;21;07

It's estimated to take 2 to 4 hours elevation gain, only 846 feet, which for us. WEAK. Weak-- the length is a lot. Last time we hiked ten miles, my feet peeled terribly like the week following did that happen to you? No. But my my feet were in so much pain.

00;02;21;08 - 00;02;23;15

Yeah. For days. Yeah, yeah.

00;02;23;15 - 00;02;26;06

Okay. Comments about the hike.

00;02;26;06 - 00;02;33;03

Adam Owls said it was overgrown and buggy. Thank God we're coming in the fall. For real. I can't with these bugs.

00;02;33;03 - 00;02;41;02

There's no mountain view or a waterfall. But there's a family cemetery dating back to the 1800s, says Shelly Rice. Spooky.

00;02;41;02 - 00;02;53;14

And then Gregg Nicole Willbucks, this comment is like not that interesting, but i thought it was just stupid and funny. He says the birds were plentiful and the use of the word plentiful was really good.

00;02;53;21 - 00;02;54;00

Plentiful

00;02;54;00 - 00;03;03;05

I'm going to put the pictures in the final video for our viewers at home, but I'll hand them to you for now. You can like, look, they're at your own pace. Awesome.

00;03;03;05 - 00;03;08;07

And these go along with the story kind of these are not them. There are not a lot of photos of this mission.

00;03;08;08 - 00;03;22;00

The readings I did included this which were these are similar missions in this area and this is the exact type of house you're going to see, the type of mountain people we're going to talk about, and you're going to see like missionaries and children.

00;03;22;00 - 00;03;24;02

So all in these photos,

00;03;24;02 - 00;03;37;23

So quick question before we jump in and I might be getting ahead of us. Yes. You said there was a family cemetery up here, which would mean that these people used to live up here. This is pre like turning this into a national park, correct? Correct. Okay.

00;03;37;23 - 00;03;40;25

me just say the sources now so I don't forget

00;03;40;25 - 00;03;44;19

a majority of my research came from

00;03;44;19 - 00;03;54;18

the Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia. I looked at copies of the Southern Churchmen, which was a

00;03;54;18 - 00;03;57;27

newspaper for evangelicals in the

00;03;57;27 - 00;04;03;25

late 1800s, early 1900s. I also got some of my research from

00;04;03;25 - 00;04;07;22

a Archdeaconry Episcopal Manifesto.

00;04;07;22 - 00;04;16;00

Those are my primary sources. I also read a manuscript written by Frederic E Neve, who will go into later He founded the Mission.

00;04;16;02 - 00;04;18;13

Sources I got secondarily

00;04;18;13 - 00;04;35;29

Miss Dixs in Virginia Beach, Virginia, left a lot of comments on some threads. Miss Dixs. She's the daughter of one of the missionaries. We're going to go into granddaughter, something like that. And big shout out to Kristie Kendall. Kristie Kendall, you

00;04;35;29 - 00;04;37;03

have written a book.

00;04;37;03 - 00;04;43;04

I'll look the name, we'll link the name of the book, but she wrote a book about a walking through history of Shenandoah National Park.

00;04;43;05 - 00;04;48;19

It's actually it seems really interesting. That does sound really interesting. And it covers a lot of things we've done.

00;04;48;19 - 00;04;49;29

it looks really good.

00;04;49;29 - 00;04;51;02

the structure is going to be

00;04;51;02 - 00;04;58;07

kind of do chronologically, but then I'm halfway there. I'm going to break it up and tell you about characteristics of the people that lived here because it's really interesting.

00;04;58;07 - 00;05;02;02

so let's dive in. Yessss. I have no idea what you're talking about.

00;05;02;07 - 00;05;03;19

It's so good. You're gonna be ready.

00;05;03;19 - 00;05;15;02

So the Pocosin mission started in 1905. And to give perspective, the census of 1930 verified 800 people lived in what is now Shenandoah National Park.

00;05;15;02 - 00;05;31;26

the Samuels family was part of the Pocosin Mission and their house stood by. They donated the land for the church. Two sisters Florence and Marian Towles began the operation at the mission. And later they worked in another mission below here, Florence and Marion were really

00;05;31;26 - 00;05;33;26

instrumental in all of this.

00;05;33;27 - 00;05;35;28

This could not have existed without these women,

00;05;35;28 - 00;05;45;16

Frederick W Neve came to Virginia from England in 1888 and he served as the rector for the Emmanuel Church of Greenwood, Virginia.

00;05;45;16 - 00;05;52;11

and he came to the Ivy Depot Virginia area, which is very close to Charlottesville. And he started work known as the

00;05;52;11 - 00;06;02;24

Archdeaconry of the Blue Ridge. In 1890, Neve began building mission churches, the first of which was St John the Baptist Church in the ragged mountains.

00;06;02;27 - 00;06;25;11

Over the next two decades, Neve planted Episcopal Church missions every ten miles along the spine of the Blue Ridge and seven Virginia counties. This is what's part of what's greaterly, known as the Bible Belt. This kind of happened throughout Virginia. In the South. Missionaries came through and tried to bring religion to the mountain people.

00;06;25;11 - 00;06;29;18

And let's first say these people were not indigenous.

00;06;29;18 - 00;06;31;16

Mostly they were white.

00;06;31;16 - 00;06;44;13

The natives were in this land first. Pocasin the name that Frederic Neve gave it is an Algonquin word and it means swampy. So it was named. Yeah,

00;06;44;13 - 00;06;49;29

So, Frederic W. Neve., I'm going to give a quote from him. He wrote a book called Our Mountain Work,

00;06;49;29 - 00;07;00;20

and he writes after my work in the Ragged Mountains had been carried on for some time, I could not help thinking what a good thing it would be if the same kind of work could be extended to the Blue Ridge, where I knew from

00;07;00;20 - 00;07;07;25

what I had heard, the conditions were very similar to those prevailing in the ragged mountains. Only worse.

00;07;07;25 - 00;07;24;11

The condition of the people had been described in the Blue Ridge Mountains as people lived in small cabins, generally one room in a lean-to or shed for a kitchen anywhere from 8 to 15 people would live in one cabin.

00;07;24;17 - 00;07;26;01

I couldn't imagine.

00;07;26;01 - 00;07;36;00

So the Towles, these are the missionaries, their names are Florence and Marion Towles and they were sent as missionaries to the eastern slopes of Appalachia.

00;07;36;03 - 00;07;40;11

Florence married Arthur Meadows and he was a local mountain farmer and

00;07;40;11 - 00;07;59;22

stayed at the Pocosin Mission for more than 15 years. Miss Marion House, which is the Sister Marion Towles, started out at the St John Baptist Mission in the Ragged Mountains and was sent by Neve to the Pocosin Mission to work, as this was seen as a great opportunity for doing good in the mountains.

00;07;59;24 - 00;08;01;13

And Neve writes that

00;08;01;13 - 00;08;09;07

Marion Towles was a woman of great earnest and zeal and was a missionary full of spirit, so that when I told her about what to do

00;08;09;07 - 00;08;11;03

in the mountains, she said

00;08;11;03 - 00;08;12;28

she was glad to go.

00;08;12;28 - 00;08;24;04

Neve walked them, the two sisters up the mountains and left them there as they went up. He said it was very dangerous to do so and there was a very peculiar storm on their way in.

00;08;24;04 - 00;08;24;12

And

00;08;24;12 - 00;08;31;28

you can read into the supernatural, knowing what's up, whatever. But it was really bad, apparently, he says. And a few minutes we were drenched to the skin

00;08;31;28 - 00;08;36;18

while lightning played around us, and the thunder crashed over our heads.

00;08;36;20 - 00;08;41;00

It took us 3 hours to ride back to town where I was staying,

00;08;41;00 - 00;08;48;23

And he said it was a very bad ride. He was soaked to the skin and his ankles were very painful, owing the stirrups, being too small on the horse

00;08;48;23 - 00;08;57;18

Not only were his feet in pain, but to add to his discomfort, there was fear that the river they had to cross would be too full to cross to get there and back.

00;08;57;21 - 00;08;58;13

Yeah,

00;08;58;13 - 00;09;06;26

It would be very dangerous. On account of the heavy rains on drawing near Neveheard the roar of the angry waters.

00;09;06;26 - 00;09;13;19

he was worried he couldn't cross it. But in reality, when he got closer, it was safe to cross. But it was very loud.

00;09;13;19 - 00;09;15;17

the Towles sisters wrote letters.

00;09;15;17 - 00;09;17;26

I was not able to access any of their letters

00;09;17;26 - 00;09;18;22

these are quotes from

00;09;18;22 - 00;09;19;13

Kristie Kendall

00;09;19;13 - 00;09;22;22

This particular section, I want to give full credit to her,

00;09;22;22 - 00;09;41;18

Florence and Marion Towles must have wondered what have they gotten themselves into on dark nights, huddled in a ramshackle cabin, terrified miles away from civilization, they recalled to hearing the thunder of flying horses, feet and the shouting yells of drunken men wild with moonshine in whiskey. Wild with moonshine and whiskey!

00;09;41;19 - 00;09;59;13

That's how I like them. Go ahead. Neve writes that the Towles Sisters felt some apprehension with regard to their safety multiple times. They would hear drunk men approaching the place and they would sit silent and paralyzed for fear until the men had passed by the cabins. Sounds died away in the distance.

00;09;59;13 - 00;10;12;24

It was noted that both women had terrible health while living in the mission. The two ladies were said to have delicate health, and one of the sisters didn't say who had to go to the hospital once a year for treatment,

00;10;12;24 - 00;10;21;04

One of the sisters went through severe operations at several different times, but as soon as she recovered, she went straight back to the mission. So she was committed.

00;10;21;04 - 00;10;28;25

So let's get into the church and we'll get into the missionaries a little bit and then we'll tell about the downfall of this empire.

00;10;28;25 - 00;10;37;05

this is my Roman Empire. Yeah. Yeah. So the first church stood to the left of the mission home.

00;10;37;05 - 00;10;44;19

And the mission home is where the preachers and missionaries lived. This church was known as the French Memorial Chapel. I love that. Classy. Yeah,

00;10;44;19 - 00;10;50;06

It was large-- It was a large white frame building with a pulpit and balconies that could seat at least 100 people.

00;10;50;06 - 00;11;05;19

Until a larger schoolhouse was built, the wooden white building acted as both regular school and Sunday school. They taught children all ages five days a week. And they organized events like bingo and Christmas pageants.

00;11;05;19 - 00;11;16;29

Once the community outgrew the church building, the Episcopal Church raised money to commission a new church, built of local stone, which we'll see. This is the what we'll see the remnants of. Ooh! Billy Graves is a local mason

00;11;16;29 - 00;11;26;25

completed the Stone Church in the early 1930s. So basically he completed the church and very soon after the mission was ended.

00;11;26;25 - 00;11;33;27

The Towles sisters with other missionaries and preachers, organized weekly church services held every Sunday. The mission workers, also

00;11;33;27 - 00;11;45;04

They tended to be elderly and sick. and they made it a point to go to every funeral up here which affected their health negatively.

00;11;45;04 - 00;11;48;00

We'll learn about their funeral practices in the mountains.

00;11;48;00 - 00;11;54;28

The mission is placed so high in the mountains that it was reported people often lived in the clouds. Wow.

00;11;54;28 - 00;12;00;13

this could explain for why there was such bad weather throughout the mission's history.

00;12;00;13 - 00;12;09;00

Sending young missionaries into the mountains Neveknew considered very dangerous. And we're going to get into why that's a quotation mark later.

00;12;09;00 - 00;12;25;14

Neve says I felt anxious sending the little missionary until I received a letter of her telling me not to be uneasy that she was getting along all right. It came with a great deal of courage, nevertheless, on her part, as there were many difficulties to be overcome and dangerous to be faced.

00;12;25;17 - 00;12;48;17

On ordinary occasions, one or more children accompanied her up the mountain road to the schoolhouse. But some days the little missionary had to go by herself, and the lonely road through the woods had its fears, as she knew not what they might conceal in the way of drunken and lawless men. Still, she knew that the children were waiting for her at the schoolhouse, and she nerved herself to the point of doing her duty.

00;12;48;17 - 00;12;55;14

The people who lived in the mountain were seen as dangerous and lawless in every regard by the Christians.

00;12;55;19 - 00;13;05;28

Were women often missionaries back then, or is this okay? The next part says note, there is no salary for women, and they worked in these positions

00;13;05;28 - 00;13;13;01

to work and they did it for religion. Women were often missionaries and there's a photo in here and I'll put it up right here in the segment.

00;13;13;01 - 00;13;13;23

the Archdeaconry

00;13;13;23 - 00;13;14;28

pamphlet. I read.

00;13;14;28 - 00;13;15;21

There's a picture.

00;13;15;21 - 00;13;17;21

of a woman surrounded by

00;13;17;21 - 00;13;26;08

children. Children. And she's a missionary. Okay. And a lot of these people did this because it was considered a good opportunity for them to become missionaries.

00;13;26;08 - 00;13;44;16

So, Fredric Neve, continues and saying one day word came up the mountain that the little missionary was sick, which caused much consternation. Sorry I want to interrupt we keep calling her the little the little missionary. What is that about? So this lady, this is a different missionary than the ones with this mission.

00;13;44;16 - 00;14;02;03

But he doesn't name he didn't name the women often. He just called them the little missionaries. He didn't give them names. He didn't respect them like that, it seems. I don't know if I don't know if this was him specific This feels like, "little lady" like that. Yeah, yeah, yeah. He doesn't give the first missionary and his manuscripts a name.

00;14;02;04 - 00;14;03;18

He just calls her a little missionary.

00;14;03;18 - 00;14;14;13

Whoever this was, I don't think she either lasted long as a missionary or maybe he's just speaking as about the women in general. But if this is one person, he doesn't give her a name.

00;14;14;20 - 00;14;16;16

Cool. Yeah. Okay.

00;14;16;16 - 00;14;17;22

one little girl said,

00;14;17;22 - 00;14;28;05

supposing she was to die, what should we do? There won't be nobody to tell us things. Then this poor little soul had been much interested in the missionary

00;14;28;05 - 00;14;31;22

that taught her. And a new world seem to have been opened in her mind.

00;14;31;22 - 00;15;01;23

And she felt that if the teacher died, they would drift back into the darkness again. And she didn't suppose that there was anybody else in the world that would take sufficient interest in them to come up and take her place. These kids, this was their only education. Well, and I know there's so much like dark history. True crime and stuff like that of the people of Appalachia because of how isolated that they were, that it's like I'm sure they were heavily dependent on these people just to come visit and talk to them and give them some sort of sense of hope or something.

00;15;01;23 - 00;15;02;11

Right

00;15;02;11 - 00;15;03;15

Frederic Neve writes,

00;15;03;15 - 00;15;12;16

It is a hard matter to keep the children quiet and hold their attention as they didn't know what discipline meant except to get a beating when the parents got mad at them.

00;15;12;18 - 00;15;14;11

As an instance for this,

00;15;14;11 - 00;15;32;21

I remember staying once with a man who had led his house for the school, and at dinner time he taught his two boys that he was going to give them the Hickory. What the he-- The next day, whereupon his wife threw light of the situation by remarking, Why don't you give them boys backs a chance to heal?

00;15;32;23 - 00;15;59;06

It seemed that he had beaten them so often and so cruelly that their backs were raw all the time. Oh, that's horrible. Surprising, therefore, that the teacher had trouble sometimes managing the children who had always been accustomed to being controlled by such severe measures. One boy was so devout to the ministry that he thought a way to help the missionary, to help her in the matter of controlling the children

00;15;59;06 - 00;16;07;22

was to give him punishment in front of everyone, give him a good thrashing just to scare the other children into being good.

00;16;07;26 - 00;16;35;12

Oh my gosh. Right. This kid's like beat me. Yeah. He's like hit me. Yeah, I know. That's horrible. This self sacrificing was not accepted by the missionaries. Needless to say, they needed Jesus. He needed it. And Neve continues in saying while on the subject. It may be as well to say that the children were by no means the only ones who were mercifully beaten.

00;16;35;14 - 00;16;55;09

The wives received their share as well. It's always the wives. And he says, I'm sorry to say it. The friend who loaned us the schoolhouse was one of the principal offenders. my gosh. So it does seem like people who had the capacity to invite people into their home and host the schoolhouse, there are people that lived decently up here.

00;16;55;11 - 00;16;59;08

And I want to make that a point because not everyone was super poor.

00;16;59;08 - 00;17;11;12

if you had more money, it seems like a lot of attention was on you. And so anyways, the man who lent the schoolhouse on one occasion some young men from our neighborhood were camping out on top of the mountaineer house.

00;17;11;15 - 00;17;14;05

He gave his wife a good thrashing.

00;17;14;08 - 00;17;28;05

The young men of the party were very indignant about it and went to call upon the poor woman's brother to see if she wouldn't teach his brother in law a lesson. Well, so many lessons being brought up. There like you beat my wife,

00;17;28;05 - 00;17;33;10

We're going to go tell your brother in law. We're going to. Yeah. Wow.

00;17;33;10 - 00;17;47;10

They found the man at the home explained the matter, But to his surprise, the man the brother showed no sign of resentment, seeming rather surprised at the proposition. And after some time, he sheepishly remarked, I

00;17;47;10 - 00;17;52;01

don't know so much about that. Beat my wife yesterday.

00;17;52;02 - 00;18;13;28

And what you're trying to say is I beat her yesterday. My own wife, strange to say, one of the women in the neighborhood who enjoyed an exemption from this brutal treatment at the hands of her husband did not seem altogether satisfied about it. She expressed her feelings to the little missionary somewhat in a way, she says. You see, Sonny, her husband was to give me a lick now and then.

00;18;13;28 - 00;18;26;14

He might put a lick on the farm at the same time. She evidently thought the reason why her husband didn't beat her was because she was too lazy. He was too lazy to do it. And that's

00;18;26;14 - 00;18;33;25

right. And it seemed to her that it would be better for all of them if he had more energy, even just to beat her.

00;18;33;25 - 00;18;36;29

The logic, The logic.

00;18;36;29 - 00;18;46;07

That's so crazy. So, ladies, listen up, if your man's lazy could be beating you. Right? We want. We want to be beat. Yeah. It's 50 shades of grey in the mountain.

00;18;46;10 - 00;18;58;02

There's only one room. Everyone has nine kids. It get's nasty. Beat me. It is also reported that one woman

00;18;58;02 - 00;19;07;11

would say that that if i were the woman that wasn't being beaten among all the other women. There would be a little bit of jealousy. It'd be like, why am I not getting this attention?

00;19;07;11 - 00;19;12;14

Right. You don't care about me! No, exactly what it was. She was like, He just doesn't care, right?

00;19;12;18 - 00;19;15;17

I'm not Yeah, like, I'm not getting beaten

00;19;15;17 - 00;19;27;21

It is also reported that one woman sold her children for \$0.25 apiece. If you can't afford to feed your children, you kind of. You have to rehome them. Right?

00;19;27;23 - 00;19;31;02

Any

00;19;31;02 - 00;19;41;07

Moonshine was very prominent and the communities, they love it. Supposedly the men often got drunk and started fighting with one another. They're beating each other now.

00;19;41;07 - 00;19;44;16

Side note, this is right before prohibition and a prohibition.

00;19;44;16 - 00;19;46;11

Fredric Neve wrote

00;19;46;11 - 00;19;53;24

The love of Brandy is so deep and the moral standards, so low that even the woman would keep and sell it

00;19;53;24 - 00;19;56;10

feminism. yeah.

00;19;56;10 - 00;20;04;19

To define the law and convict people was hard because witnesses were scarcely found to tell the truth about the liquor.

00;20;04;19 - 00;20;05;24

Well, because they get beaten.

00;20;05;24 - 00;20;11;13

why that appellation saying have you heard it goes if you hear something. No, you didn't. If you see some. No you didn't.

00;20;11;13 - 00;20;16;00

Now let's dive into the mountain people. And why they were seen as this way.

00;20;16;00 - 00;20;25;14

First, these evangelicals were one of the only people in this community that could write the mountain. People before they got educated could not write.

00;20;25;14 - 00;20;33;08

And we don't have a lot of left history from the mountain people they couldn't write or if they could, they lived in lean to shacks, things got destroyed, whatever.

00;20;33;08 - 00;20;35;01

this is very one sided.

00;20;35;01 - 00;20;41;21

there was like a thread online where a bunch of the ancestors of the Pocosin people were defending themselves. So like

00;20;41;21 - 00;20;45;01

Our ancestors were not terrible drunks.

00;20;45;01 - 00;20;55;17

Yeah, I was going to say that this mindset of judging those who are less fortunate, who aren't, you don't have this many resources as we do and stuff. I mean, it's it we do it. So like, naturally,

00;20;55;17 - 00;20;58;27

Which, you know, I'm not saying that's right, but yeah,

00;20;58;27 - 00;21;04;02

Neve admits that due to dialect barriers and due to mischief and gossip

00;21;04;02 - 00;21;06;28

stories spread wildly around here,

00;21;06;28 - 00;21;11;14

I would invite listeners to take Frederic Neve's insights with a grain of salt.

00;21;11;14 - 00;21;12;24

Neve continues to write

00;21;12;24 - 00;21;19;05

one particular locality, which was very bad, had a very bad reputation. It was high in the Blue Ridge Mountains,

00;21;19;05 - 00;21;25;24

It was so rugged and inaccessible that for some reason people had been cut off from the world and it was a case of Arrested Development.

00;21;25;24 - 00;21;36;29

They had lived to themselves year after year and generation after generation, saying nothing beyond the narrow confines of their mountain hollow and knowing nothing of the world beyond and caring less.

00;21;36;29 - 00;21;43;13

The men fish and hunt and tend to their farms. The women assist with their hoes as they did 100 years ago.

00;21;43;13 - 00;21;50;10

he says. They are not naturally dull people. On the contrary, they are very good minds and are very quick to open to impressions.

00;21;50;12 - 00;22;05;02

They have an Indian level power of observation and for that reason we have to be careful in all we do. Nothing escapes them and they follow our example and everything, even imitating our style of dress confirmation of colors as far as they're able to

00;22;05;02 - 00;22;13;22

So, they're saying that these people, they may not have like a like a traditional sense of education, but they are skilled for the environment.

00;22;13;22 - 00;22;26;06

They have this they said reference Indian, but they're referencing that indigenous are Native Americans, right? Yeah, but they have as much observation and skills as the people who are indigenous. Right. Okay.

00;22;26;06 - 00;22;32;18

And when it comes to survival, I mean, what are they going to do with a formal education in their environment anyways,

00;22;32;18 - 00;22;40;05

Know the seasons know the- The conditions of the soil. Right. Well, these things, yeah, they're experts to a different level and class. Right. Right.

00;22;40;05 - 00;22;50;05

So the most common rituals that made the evangelicals uneasy were the funeral and marriage practices of the Pocosin people. It was written that people would be buried without any service at all.

00;22;50;12 - 00;22;56;15

And then later, many months afterwards, there would be a funeral preached oftentimes

00;22;56;15 - 00;22;59;10

preached by people who had never met the deceased person.

00;22;59;10 - 00;23;03;26

So they would just be like, Hey, you, Pastor, My cousin died last week and we buried him

00;23;03;26 - 00;23;05;07

Could you say words now?

00;23;05;07 - 00;23;06;27

And they're like, I've never met your cousin. Like,

00;23;06;27 - 00;23;08;24

One funeral was reported

00;23;08;24 - 00;23;35;17

having very noisy wailing and crying of the mourners. It was so in this occasion that a lady worker appealed for them to be quiet. Yeah. In one particular woman who led the chorus of wailing seemed to be the ringleader. So the missionary took her aside and told her that she must try and control herself as she was getting the other people excited and that she, the missionary, couldn't go on with the service because it made her too nervous to continue with all the sound.

00;23;35;17 - 00;23;38;02

And they've never been to a Puerto Rican funeral, that's for sure.

00;23;38;02 - 00;23;56;11

okay. So I'm just wondering, I'm sure you're going to get into it, but I'm just wondering, like this conditioning, this generational trauma conditioning of like, don't show feelings, don't feel things, but you will be beaten if you step out of line. You're going to be like, I just I'm so interested to see, like, how this has translated to people today and the mentality.

00;23;56;13 - 00;23;59;10

missionaries being like, get your shit together. Hold it together.

00;23;59;10 - 00;24;01;14

this was just a moment to finally release

00;24;01;14 - 00;24;06;06

So maybe not just about the deceased, but it's about, you know, because they've got beaten or whatever.

00;24;06;06 - 00;24;08;27

Right. Like I could finally cry about something, right?

00;24;09;00 - 00;24;12;01

And the middle of one funeral, it was interrupted by a woman

00;24;12;01 - 00;24;14;23

to start a funeral on behalf of her daughter.

00;24;14;23 - 00;24;24;12

So in the middle of the funeral, she's, like, stands up. Pastor sir my daughter died a month ago. Could you just finish, wrap this up? My daughter,

00;24;24;12 - 00;24;27;09

we got to keep moving. It's like that's, that's what I'm hearing.

00;24;27;09 - 00;24;44;01

And one funeral I was reported a man took advantage of it selling whiskey through the pews at the church and then in another instance a man was so drunk at the funeral, he fell into the open grave while people were singing a hymn.

00;24;44;05 - 00;25;00;16

Marriage was also very untraditional in the mountains. It was very peculiar to the evangelicals. In one instance, a man met a woman and their wedding was in three days. For those three days, he had the woman sit behind him for two of those days.

00;25;00;23 - 00;25;09;18

And then on the third day, like, I guess they never saw each other. He just had the women sit behind him and he would talk to her. And then on the day before the wedding,

00;25;09;18 - 00;25;17;29

The woman, sits next to the man like how you are to me, he invites him to sit next to her and he decides like, he doesn't tell her this, but he's like, I'm not going to marry you.

00;25;18;02 - 00;25;36;14

Yeah, He goes and gets another woman to marry. Doesn't tell the woman he was engaged to. The woman comes to the wedding all dressed up, walks in, and he's getting married to another woman. That's how she found out. No one told her. She found out by going to the wedding, trying to get married.

00;25;36;14 - 00;25;41;09

my God. my God.

00;25;41;11 - 00;25;48;06

We'd be like, Can we get another funeral? Imma kill this bitch. Exactly.

00;25;48;06 - 00;25;49;18

There's going to be some wailing

00;25;49;18 - 00;25;50;12

That's fu**** up-

00;25;50;12 - 00;25;59;20

So what the evangelicals that found super weird was traditions of the mountain people.

00;25;59;23 - 00;26;26;16

It was written in the state of ignorance and superstition. Most of the mountain people lived. It was almost indescribable in certain forms of illness. They would not come the patients hair till the ninth day she was taken sick, nor would they sweep under the bed for nine days, believing firmly that either would bring bad luck. Generally death. They

believe that even financial issues could occur if they helped the sick brush their hair and sleep before the ninth day.

00;26;26;17 - 00;26;28;08

Where was this coming from.

00;26;28;08 - 00;26;43;12

rarely do the mountain people have physicians and they saw doctors as a disadvantage and they were more confident in voodoo rituals. they were known to make concoctions of gathered herbs. Okay, let's

00;26;43;12 - 00;26;52;23

talk about this. Where did they get the voodoo influence? That's not like a traditionally Mountain indigenous type of Well, so it was spelled hoodoo,

00;26;52;23 - 00;26;57;27

and I wonder if they had influence from like, the natives, from like even. I believe so.

00;26;57;27 - 00;27;10;15

Absolutely. I would hope so. I'm not sure. Enslaved people as well like because they I'm wondering culturally, like if they felt more I guess on the same like social

00;27;10;18 - 00;27;21;14

Kayleen is exactly correct. Hoodoo is a set of spiritual practices, traditions and beliefs that were created by enslaved African-Americans in the southern United States from various traditional

00;27;21;14 - 00;27;25;20

African spiritualities and elements of indigenous botanical knowledge.

00;27;25;20 - 00;27;35;06

I don't want to mislead and say that voodoo and hoodoo or whatever, like strictly only comes from people of color, whatever, because I know that Christianity also was very strong within like the African American community.

00;27;35;07 - 00;27;38;22

Right. Right. Well, it's just yeah, it's very interesting to me.

00;27;38;22 - 00;27;52;24

one of the ways to treat a sore throat was to rub the affected area with the bones of a gray horse, which I think that's just lymphatic drainage. I think that is just lymphatic drainage. You're probably right.

00;27;52;24 - 00;27;59;19

I've had more sore than I've seen gray horses in my life. Exactly. So I would be screwed, right? Yeah.

00;27;59;19 - 00;28;04;07

At the end of the mission's history, there was a large typhoid breakout

00;28;04;07 - 00;28;18;13

and the missionary women were basically nurses illness had they had very little success actually treating this typhoid breakout because people were skeptical of the medicine and were reported to pour it into the ground and pretend that they'd taken it.

00;28;18;13 - 00;28;24;03

They would just part of the gonna be like, Doctor, I finished the bottle, but they didn't believe in it. They didn't trust it. Okay.

00;28;24;03 - 00;28;26;21

Yeah. Just imagining them being like, don't drink that shit.

00;28;26;21 - 00;28;40;10

in one example of why their health was so bad, a missionary found a dead child at the foot of the bed. And then when they pulled back the covers of the bed to investigate further, they found the pies the family was to eat.

00;28;40;10 - 00;28;49;00

That night in the same bed. Why? I guess to keep it warm. The the bed warm? The bed or the child. Maybe if

00;28;49;00 - 00;28;50;03

this is what created

00;28;50;03 - 00;28;55;15

the superstitious vibes amongst the community because they were getting so sick often. How could you not be superstitious?

00;28;55;15 - 00;29;02;08

So they're trying to, like, engage in rituals to make them feel like they have some sense of control over this prevailing illness.

00;29;02;10 - 00;29;03;21

Yeah, yeah, yeah,

00;29;03;21 - 00;29;08;09

the mission continued 20 years after the sisters left. Wow.

00;29;08;09 - 00;29;10;21

Let's get into the downfall of the Pocosin mission.

00;29;10;21 - 00;29;30;00

The Pocosin community was not to last by the mid 1920s, the federal government was eyeing the Blue Ridge Mountains, including the area around the Pocosin for a new national park. In 1926, Congress authorized the development of Shenandoah, making it the first example of inhabited lands specifically set aside to let wilderness recover.

00;29;30;00 - 00;29;36;26

Not a single mountain family in Greene County agreed to sell their land. No one wanted to. HELL NO they didn't! They're proud

00;29;36;26 - 00;29;38;14

And why would they? Right!

00;29;38;14 - 00;29;41;07

What other life would they know or want, you know.

00;29;41;13 - 00;29;41;29

what I'm saying like

00;29;41;29 - 00;29;52;12

So none of them wanted to sell their land. So the federal government was forced to use eminent domain to condemn all of their properties, paying the family with funds raised by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

00;29;52;29 - 00;29;54;04

It wasn't a lot.

00;29;54;04 - 00;29;57;25

beginning in 1936, the families moved what belongings.

00;29;57;25 - 00;30;12;16

They were able to carry and left their homes and memories behind to move into the lands below. They moved into the valleys. After 75 years, most remnants of these former homes are gone, either burned down or in ruins from years of neglect and the regeneration of the forest around them.

00;30;12;16 - 00;30;15;20

Money never played an important role in the economy in these mountains.

00;30;15;20 - 00;30;17;28

So the Shiflett, the Samuels,

00;30;17;28 - 00;30;34;19

This left the residents with the little money they got for leaving few choices after this. They basically they didn't even the government didn't even give them relocation Like like they yeah, they didn't like a I mean, I don't want to say a reservation, but they didn't establish like land and say, hey, we're going to like help you.

00;30;34;26 - 00;30;42;03

They didn't do any of that. They just said, here's some cash, here's all we have. Get out, get out. Just it's displacement. It's

00;30;42;03 - 00;30;49;01

this is an example in history where religion and then the federal government displaced a marginalized group.

00;30;49;01 - 00;31;10;05

yeah, and arguably they took them from an environment where they were self-support or, you know, self-sustaining as best as we could, and they weren't having to pay taxes, I assume. Probably. Definitely not. There's no money. Yeah, exactly. So then by removing them from that environment, they are, you know, obviously they're trying to do something that like can be argued is good.

00;31;10;05 - 00;31;23;09

The Shenandoah National Park preserving the wilderness. However they're now relocating these people into society to then become taxpayers. Yeah. So this is you know there's always multiple layers as to why the government does what they do. And,

00;31;23;09 - 00;31;25;23

is tough. This is a gray area for me to like, look at.

00;31;25;27 - 00;31;27;14

It is gray. It's very gray.

00;31;27;14 - 00;31;37;10

And you could also argue that this isn't giving them an opportunity for better health and better resources. But I don't know. I don't know. It's it's a hard it's hard to grapple with.

00;31;37;10 - 00;31;54;25

And I don't think and that's why I think this place has such dark history behind it, because the people didn't leave on their own accord. They were seen as seen as hillbillies, terrible people. And so it just seems like the communities and the people that lived here truly,

00;31;54;25 - 00;31;56;01

got a bad rap and they

00;31;56;01 - 00;31;57;12

do they deserve a better light.

00;31;57;12 - 00;31;58;14

So, yeah.

00;31;58;14 - 00;32;13;18

many of the people when they left joined the Department of Agriculture in the valleys and they became farming communities. Others became skilled laborers in Luray and Sperryville, some even joined the Conservation Corps and helped build facilities for the park that displaced them.

00;32;13;18 - 00;32;23;17

between 1935, when the park was established in 1937, the National Park Service forced the resettlement of some 465 families outside of Shenandoah's boundaries.

00;32;23;19 - 00;32;45;23

By 1938, only a few holdouts remained. Some people had to be removed forcefully. yeah, you know, I expect nothing less. After hearing about how people were. They're strong. Yeah, They're like, Get the family gun! This is a "national park" now. I'm going to Nationally Park my foot up your ass.

00;32;45;23 - 00;32;49;17

today an estimated 300 black bears roam freely, freely beneath giant tulip,

00;32;49;17 - 00;32;57;00

poplars, towering 120 feet high, thick groves of pine shade, former pastures.

00;32;57;00 - 00;33;02;12

the end I'm going to do organizations to support and shout out.

00;33;02;14 - 00;33;10;07

First, I would like to support the p a, t, c, which is the

00;33;10;07 - 00;33;12;11

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club.

00;33;12;11 - 00;33;21;24

PATC. There are huge headquarters here. They have a cabin called the Pocasin mission that you have you can hike to down here. It is able to be rented out.

00;33;21;25 - 00;33;25;06

It seems relatively affordable.

00;33;25;06 - 00;33;32;15

They hold cabins. They own cabins all up and down this area. There are good organizations to support. They actually

00;33;32;15 - 00;33;42;22

collaborated with Kristie Kendall on her book. Wow. So they supported a woman in history that produced her own book. So that's awesome.

00;33;42;22 - 00;33;48;23

they also do things where they help revitalize some of these trails around here.

00;33;48;25 - 00;33;51;22

if you're into conservation, you're into conserving history.

00;33;51;22 - 00;33;55;00

They kind of do a little bit of both, and I think they do it in a respectful way.

00;33;55;00 - 00;33;56;22

shout out to them.

00;33;56;24 - 00;34;03;11

What is your take away? What do you think? well, this is so it's so interesting. I, I very

00;34;03;11 - 00;34;20;03

didn't know I really didn't know how many people were displaced from this area of the Shenandoah National Park. I just I naively ignorantly assumed that no one lived here. No one lived here, that they were just like, this inhabited chunk of land was just doing something with it.

00;34;20;04 - 00;34;45;15

Yeah. So hearing these people and how they lived, it's like I connect. I definitely connect to this like, idea of living off of the land and barter trading and all that stuff. But at the same time, like, I also empathize with the sort of helplessness of you know, sickness and disease and everything that they had to endure and the isolation from, you know, socializing from other walks of life, other types of people.

00;34;45;18 - 00;35;07;18

So I don't know. I definitely feel a lot more gray about these these stories than I probably would have going into it. Specifically, the missionaries and the importance of their work. Because, you know, for me, it's not so, so much about like the teachings that they were bringing as far as like the Bible and everything but the the goodwill and the that they were trying to provide for these people.

00;35;07;19 - 00;35;26;15

Right. You know, bringing in new information, just just giving these kids attention that they never would have had. Right. You know, in education and Yeah, yeah. Education about things and giving them an opportunity to at least make the choice of how they wanted to continue onward, how they wanted to live, if they wanted to, like, introduce medicine to their way of life, you know.

00;35;26;17 - 00;35;55;17

But yeah, that's a rough that's really rough. It made me feel very gray about, about the roles that all these people played and their perspectives of of what they thought was right, you know? Yeah, yeah. I will say one of the people that lived in the mission did go to the University of Virginia, became very successful and learned like four languages and sh**. So, you know, these people did benefit from education wise, from the missionaries, but yeah, it's very gray.

00;35;55;17 - 00;36;18;19

Okay. Kaylene So for the Pocosin mission, how would you rate it on a scale of 1 to 10 in EEhs? That place was definitely spooky. It had really spooky vibes kind of feelings that people watching me. Check some boxes for me for sure. Creepy.

00;36;18;19 - 00;36;55;02

Creepy Aesthetic You know, it was aesthetically creepy. It was giving creep. Giving creep.. Giving creep. Seven. I would give it a seven. Yeah, for the the in shambles cabin. The constant feeling of being watched. Yeah. And the weird silence that would follow. I think I would give it, like, honestly, I think I would give it, like, a seven or I'll give it a eight.

00;36;55;04 - 00;37;21;20

I with you being scared with, like, freaking me out and then, like, cause like you say, you have a spiritual connection to s**. So I'm like, if she's freaking out. I know where f*****. Yeah. I feel a little spooked. I think it was just the stress eating granola bars, that really had me like, oh she's in fight or flight.

00;37;21;23 - 00;37;34;20

And I was like, I don't know if we're going to make it out alive. And then I got home before the sun went down. Sorry, I rushed you. It's okay. God. Okay.

00;37;35;01 - 00;37;52;02

Okay. Are we good at anything else? Where can we find you? yes. So I am on Instagram. There are multiple Instagrams if you type in Kaylene @Kaylenequelinda

00;37;52;04 - 00;38;01;14

That is my main one. I have @kaylenequelinda_sings @kaylenequelindafit . I'm a Zumba instructor. I am a- I am a performing artist.

00;38;01;14 - 00;38;10;08

I am an aspiring many, many things. Yes. You know, definitely check me out. Keep, you know keep a passive eye on me as I continue to grow myself.

00;38;10;10 - 00;38;37;15

Yeah. I appreciate any support. Yeah. Kaylene is my creative friend and we get to be creative and develop our processes together, so. Yeah. Yeah. And keep the name Appalachian Ramble Tours back in the back of your mind. Yeah. As we develop that

brand as well. We got some stuff brewing. Yeah, we do. All right. Well, thank you for joining us, Kaylene and I will see you guys next time on Elisha's Eerie History. Bye!

00;38;37;15 - 00;38;50;13

[Song "Elisha's Eerie History" by Sydney followed by drum break.]

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Theme song by the talented Sydney.