

PRIMITIVE METHODS OF COOKING MEATS

In Alexander there are four basins chisled in rock that I know of, and there probably are others that I have not found, which were once used for the preparation or cooking of forest products and fish for food. Originally these basins were about three feet in diameter and some three or four inches deep. They are located not far from the off set or edge in a mass of rocks with a channel chisled from the hewn basin to the edge of drop-off.

The method of using these basins for cooking purposes was to build a fire inside the basin and keep it going until the rock was sufficiently heated. The fire and ashes were then removed and the venison or other food was placed therein and allowed to remain until thoroughly done. The channel just a little lower than the basin itself allowed the gravy which was roasted out of the meat to flow to the edge and drip into some receptacle which had been placed there for that purpose. The advantage of this method of cooking over that of hanging the venison directly over the fire was that the meat was thoroughly cooked without being smoked and the melted tallow or gravy was saved.

There is a dim outline of one of these basins in a ledge of rock in Ellendale Township about one-half mile north of the highway leading from Taylorsville to Lenoir. About two hundred yards west of this place the late John Anderson Teague found a "cache" or "pocket" containing over two hundred Indian arrowheads that had never been used which he sold to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D. C. Mr. Teague lived about a mile west of this place.

Another one of these basins is on the north end of the top of Rocky Face Mountain. It, too, is dimmed by erosion and would not be observed by anyone except a specialist looking for it.

Still another of these basins is near the foot of Cedar Cliff Mountain in the neighborhood of the "Ten Acre Rock". But the best preserved construction of any is on the Stirewalt Mill Creek about two miles south of Taylorsville. This one is on the flat top of a lone rock standing about four feet above the ground. It is well preserved and shows the construction fully and definitely.

The above article written by the late William E. White and published in The Taylorsville Times in 1926 was found in a scrap book belonging to Mrs. Bynum C. Deal of Davidson, North Carolina.

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