

Prof. Mitchell's Monument Scarred.
Asheville Citizen.

Incredible as it may appear the bronze monument erected several years ago on Mitchell's Peak, to the memory of Professor Elisha Mitchell who lost his life in the exploration of Black Mountain, has been brutally desecrated, and the nature of the vandalism shows the acts to have been committed by persons who desire notoriety at the expense of the proprieties accorded by civilization to the sanctities of the grave.

A Citizen reporter, who made the ascent of the Blacks to the peak on Saturday last, has returned to Asheville and states the disfigurement of the shaft and the condition of the grave to be of the worst description.

The flattened surface of the grave of Professor Mitchell, within its low wall of rock on the highest point of the range, is but little better than a trash heap; scattered over the inclosure lie fragments of broken bottles, crushed remnants of lunch boxes, battered sardine cans, rocks from the dilapidated wall, the litter of shavings from balsam canes and refuse cement that at one time united the metal base of the shaft with its rock foundation, but which now displays a broken and unsightly joint.

The names of 68 notoriety seekers are to be seen on the monument, with residence lines from Asheville, Statesville, Marion, Weaverville, Jupiter, Newbern and Greenville, Tenn. One panel is covered with the names of a large party credited to South Toe River; another space is taken up with a bold scrawl of an initial slashed with a recent date. Many of the autographs are down without the place of residence.

Some of the marking has been dug in the metal monument with the point of a sharp instrument; others are penciled; some are roughly done in charcoal or crayon and still others had apparently been engraved with pieces of sharp edged rock. No portion of the shaft from its base to the apex has escaped the desire of the vandal—the trial of the serpent is over it all.

There are two ugly spots on the panel of the lowest section to the left of the space devoted to the inscription, that were evidently caused by bullets shot against the structure. The depth of the indentations, with the peculiar seamy cracks that spring from the centre of bullet marks, suggest the force of shots fired at close range and with intent to make the scar a lasting and a visible one.

A brutal blow, and one that must have been aimed with the malignancy of a fiend, shows on an upper panel where an axe blade has been driven clean through the metal and into the hollow of the shaft. The cut slants horizontally across the panel and at the lower corner there is a ragged tear of the metal as if the weapon had been wrenched to free it from the slit.

The monument is a shaft about 15 feet in height, that was transported with great labor to its present site in sections. The sections were set up end bolted together, after which the structure was secured to the rocks by iron guy rods. The material of which the shaft is built is a white bronze metal that gives an appearance of blocks of granite.

Big Tom Wilson, the trapper guide who aided Prof. Mitchell in the surveys of the pathless mountain heights and who recovered the corpse of the explorer from the pool at the cliffs over which he had fallen, was met in the mountains by the Citizen on Sunday, guiding a party from the Yancey side to Asheville. The disgraceful condition of the shaft that marks the grave of his illustrious friend was uppermost in the old guide's mind, and his form shook with anger as he denounced the miscreants who had caused the defilement.

He said that it was believed in the Toe River settlements that the man who had perpetrated the outrage with the axe had left the country to avoid the arrest and punishment that seemed inevitable since his act had become known.