

Moccasin Track News

Volume 1 Issue 5, November-December 2011

President's Letter to the Membership

Greetings:

I was so happy to see the Georgia chapter of the Trail of Tears Association so well represented at this year's National Conference and Symposium in Cherokee, NC. We were represented not only in the listening audience, but behind the podiums, as well. I think I can honestly say that this conference was on par with some previous high-water marks, such as the conference in Guntersville, AL – especially when it came to the quality of the presentations.

We also had a lot of opportunity to discuss where we want to go as a state chapter during the next two years or so. Here are some ideas that came to the forefront:

1. Adding more wayside exhibits at the Cherokee Removal park site in Cedartown.
2. Finishing sign plans for removal routes used in Northwest Georgia counties like Chattooga and Gordon and Forsyth, to get new signs in place along those routes.
3. Continuing our database-building initiatives by copying Georgia-related plats, valuations, and claims, to assist us in cross-referencing this material.
4. Getting new sites certified, such as Carters' Quarters in Murray County, the Old Federal Road section in Pickens County, Running Waters / John Ridge home in Floyd County, the Sixes / Downing Ferry site in Cherokee County, and many of the ferry sites, as well.
5. Partner with other state chapters for capacity-building workshops and possibly even book projects and Internet-related projects.
6. Partner with in-state organizations such as Chieftains Museum and New Echota on programming and interpretation.
7. Continue our outreach efforts to members of the Cherokee Nation and the Eastern Band.
8. Develop new youth programs, and possibly even a "youth chapter" of GA TOTA.
9. Apply for new grants to continue our mission of researching, preserving, and interpreting the Trail of Tears in Georgia.

Thanks for all your efforts. I'm looking forward to a new year of work and fellowship, and I hope all of you are, as well. I'll see you at Chieftains!

Jeff Bishop

President

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Chieftains Museum and the Trail of Tears

By: Linda Baker

The next meeting of the Georgia Chapter of the Trail of Tears Association will be held at the Chieftains Museum in Rome, GA on November 12, 2011 at 10:30 a.m. Museum Director Claudia Oakes will speak about current events and future plans for the site. At the core of the museum is the two-story dogtrot log cabin which was the home of Major Ridge and his family. The “Ridge” was born in 1771 in Tennessee. In the War of 1812, he and other Cherokees fought successfully alongside the Americans against the British and the Creek Indians. He played such a prominent role in the victory that Gen. Andrew Jackson gave him the title of Major. He sent his son, John, and nephew, Buck Watie, to be educated at a prestigious mission school in Cornwall, CT where they both met and fell in love with the daughters of white families associated with the school. After much resistance from the white community, they both married and brought their brides back to Georgia. For more information about this subject, read “*America’s Trail of Tears*” by Dean Arnold. In the early 1800s, Major Ridge moved his family to a cabin on the Oostanaula River near present-day Rome. John Ridge helped his father to expand the house and holdings and Major Ridge became one of the wealthiest men in the Cherokee Nation. Buck Watie, Major Ridge’s nephew, adopted the name of the white mission board member who had taken him under his wing, Elias Boudinot. Elias (Buck) and his white wife Harriet lived at New Echota (near Calhoun, Georgia) where he published the Cherokee Phoenix, the first Cherokee language newspaper. Actually every article was printed in the Cherokee language and in English. Also happening during this time period was the encroachment of whites into the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokees, who had once occupied land covering about seven states, had by now through a series of treaties been squeezed into North Georgia, Tennessee and parts of North Carolina and Alabama. The state of Georgia wanted the Indians removed to make room for its growing population. Also gold had been discovered in the Cherokee territory. Another prominent Cherokee, John Ross, fought long and hard against removal and went to Washington D.C. several times to appeal for help from the federal government. Although the legislature was sympathetic to the plight of the Cherokees, President Andrew Jackson would not interfere with the goals of the state of Georgia. In 1835, the Treaty of New Echota was signed by a small group of Cherokees, including the Ridges and Boudinot. This treaty relinquished all Cherokee Indian claims to land east of the Mississippi River in exchange for land in what is now the state of Oklahoma. A Cherokee law had been passed several years earlier making punishable by death any cession of Cherokee land. Major Ridge knew the penalty for what he had done but felt he had to do it to preserve the Cherokee Nation. By 1839, all Cherokee land had been divided into

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lots and given to white settlers and all Cherokees not swearing allegiance to the state of Georgia had been removed to Oklahoma. This event became known as the “Trail of Tears”. Shortly after the last Cherokees arrived in Oklahoma, Major Ridge, John Ridge and Elias Boudinot were assassinated because of their involvement in the Treaty of New Echota. John Ridge’s son, John Rollin Ridge, was a young boy when his father was killed. He later moved to California and became a newspaperman and author. His book “*POEMS*” has been republished by the Georgia Chapter TOTA. The Chieftains Museum/Major Ridge Home is a National Historic Landmark and is on the National Register of Historic Places. It is also a certified site on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. This meeting is free and open to the public. We will also hold the election for President and Vice-President for the 2012-2013 term. For more information on the meeting, contact Leslie Thomas at aeriehollow@ellijay.com or by phone at 770-757-0931. For more information about the Chieftains Museum visit the website www.chieftainmuseum.org or call 706-291-9494. For more information about the Trail of Tears Association, check out www.nationaltota.org and www.gatrailoftears.org.

Georgia Chapter of the Trail of Tears Association

Minutes – Sept. 10, 2011

Meeting at the Bartow History Museum, Cartersville, Georgia

President Jeff Bishop called the meeting to order at 10:35 AM. There were 22 attendees, most were members.

Jeff asked GA TOTA Board member J. B. Tate to talk about a military button found near the site of the Fort Means removal fort. JB said that 2 buttons were found, one appearing to be from the time of removal and the other from the Civil War.

Jeff introduced Dr. Andrew Denson, history professor at Western Carolina University and member of the GA TOTA. He is attending several chapter meetings to do interviews for a book he is writing about how people in the 20th century commemorated Indian removal. The last chapter of the book will focus on the development of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and the Trail of Tears Association. He will also be presenting at the 2011 National TOTA conference in Cherokee, NC.

Due to lack of internet access in the building, Jeff could not do the originally planned talk about technology used in the GA TOTA research. He did briefly mention the wealth of info, including the TOTAbase, available to our members on our website www.gatrailoftears.org. Instead, Jeff did a

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presentation about the timeline of Southeastern Indians, starting with the Mississippian period and ending with the forced removal in the 1830s.

After a short break, the business meeting resumed at 12:30 PM.

We were welcomed by museum director Trey Gaines who told us the history of the 1867 courthouse which has been home to the museum since December of 2010. Trey also invited us to tour the museum after our meeting.

The minutes of the July 2011 GA TOTA membership meeting were approved as read by Jeff Bishop. There was no Treasurer's Report.

Secretary Linda Baker reported on the following:

- The Sunshine Fund is used for members who are ill or have suffered a loss. We have made several donations to wonderful causes using this fund so that we do not need to use money in our treasury. Thank you to all who have contributed; look for the yellow rain boots at our meetings.
- Nominations are being accepted for President and Vice-President for the 2012-2013 calendar years. Jeff Bishop and Leslie Thomas have been nominated and are agreeable to serving another term. Nominations close on Sept. 15th. The election will take place at the November meeting.
- Anyone wanting to become a member of the TOTA at this time of the year should mail in the membership form after Oct. 1, 2011. This will ensure that your membership will be good through 2012.
- The Forsyth County Board of Commissioners voted to allow archaeological work at the possible site of the Fort Campbell removal fort.

Board member Peggy Stanfield reported that GA TOTA had a booth at the Running Waters pow wow in Rome on Labor Day weekend. We made about \$100 on Saturday and due to the threat of bad weather, we took down the booth and did not set up on Sunday.

Board member Dola Davis reminded everyone about the National Conference to be held in Cherokee, NC from Oct. 3 – 6, 2011.

Jeff spoke about the need to curate the artifacts we have found so far at the removal sites. Our archaeologist Ron Hobgood has suggested that they be stored at the Moundville Curation Facility in Alabama. This facility is approved by the National Park Service and cheaper than some other sites. The general feeling among members was that these artifacts should stay in Georgia. A motion was made and passed that the artifacts be stored at Moundville with the understanding that we can retrieve them at a future date and move to another facility. Jeff will ask Ron to document the Georgia curation sites

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along with their fees and send to Linda Baker. Linda will forward this to the Board for discussion and determination of where to permanently store these and future artifacts.

Donna Myers, President of the Friends of New Echota, spoke about some upcoming events at New

Echota State Historic Site. Details can be found at www.friendsofnewechota.org. The 50th anniversary of the designation of New Echota as a State Historic Site will be celebrated on May 12, 2012. Because our bimonthly meeting would normally take place that Saturday, a motion was made and passed that we move our May 2012 meeting to a different weekend so that our members can participate in and support the New Echota event.

Billy Wayne Abernathy reported that the chimney in the Green Hotel in Cave Spring has fallen down. The hotel is now roped off. Research is ongoing into the age and original ownership of the log cabin within the hotel.

John Johnston, also with the Cave Spring Historical Society, spoke about an educational grant he is going to apply for. He intends to take the story of the Trail of Tears into the classroom through digital means and “discovery” boxes. Norma Houck said she has experience with these educational tools so Jeff asked her to work with John. John welcomes ideas about how to bring the Trail of Tears to life for students; he can be reached at 706-777-8546.

Linda Fletcher, Treasurer of the Friends of Red Clay, spoke about upcoming events at Red Clay State Historic Site and at Prater’s Mill. Email Linda at lbeap10@yahoo.com for more info.

Bill Barker, Chattooga County historian, spoke about his ongoing research in that county. He has received help from Cherokee Nation citizen Joe Scraper, a descendent of Chief Scraper who lived in the area. He has also made contact with a descendent of Cherokee agent Hugh Montgomery. She sent to Bill a copy of a removal plan done by Montgomery. Jeff praised Bill for his efforts and said that this is a good example of what can be done in each county. Anyone wanting to contact Bill for help getting started in his/her county can reach him at william6377@msn.com.

Thank you to all who donated a total of \$16.60 to the Sunshine Fund.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Baker, Secretary

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Latest on the Cabin at Cave Springs



Sure seems way larger than we anticipated.

<http://www.cavespringga.blogspot.com/>

Vann House's Jeff Stancil

Send him a get well card. Jeff had a nasty spill from a ladder a few days ago and could use some cheer. He suffered broken ribs and a collapsed lung.

Jeff Stancil

C/O Chief Vann House

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Things To Do This Fall

DANIEL BLAKE SMITH book signing November 14th in Chattanooga

If you are planning to go to the book signing and would like a copy of the book AN AMERICA BETRAYAL, CHEROKEE PATRIOTS AND THE TRAIL OF TEARS which is to be released November 8th in time for the book signing on November 14th please let Cleata Townsend of Audubon Acres and the TN Chapter of the TOTA know so she can reserve a copy for you. You can pre-pay to insure you get a copy by calling Cleata at 423-892-3690. She can take your credit card information. She can also see to it you get a copy mailed, if you can't make it to the signing. The book signing will be at the Concord Baptist Church, 7025 E. Brainerd Rd., Chattanooga, TN 37421 (Exit 3 East off of I-75) on November 14, 2011 at 7 p.m. Smith offers his view of why neither assimilation nor Cherokee Independence could succeed in Jacksonian America. He was a speaker at the Illinois Conference for 2010.

Check out your local State Park:

<http://www.gastateparks.org/> Remember you can borrow a park pass from your local library. Some of the upcoming events include:

Amicalola Falls - Nov 24 - 11 -3 p.m. Enjoy living history demonstrations in the lower lodge lobby. Explore the magic of handmade folk toys or try your hand at churning butter. The programs are free, however reservations are required for the lodge's Thanksgiving Buffet. Call 706-344-1505.

Dahlonega's Gold Museum - Nov 15 - 5-7p.m. Come discover new information that sheds light into the gold rush of 1829. 706-864-2257

Etowah Mounds - Nov 5th - take a hayride through the park being offered at 7, 7:45, and 8:30 p.m. 770-387-3747.

Red Top Mountain - Nov 19 - Come see a presentation by the Atlanta Astronomy Club and learn more about telescopes and the stars 770-975-0055

Did you know that most state parks now offer incentives for RV camping? Check it out from the home page.

John Ross House in clash over its future

<http://www.wrcbtv.com/story/15910846/clash-over-the-future-of-historical-john-ross-house?mid=518>

Check out the Bartow History Museum's Lunch and Learn program

<http://bartowhistorymuseum.org/> somebody named Leslie Thomas will be doing the program for November 16th

New Echota Christmas Candlelight Tour

Saturday, Dec 3, 2011 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM

Candlelight, Christmas carols, hot apple cider, Cherokee stories and hand-made decorations typical of the 1820s will kick off the holiday season. 706-624-1321

Holiday Open House at the Gold Museum

Sunday, Dec 4, 2011 9 AM to 5 PM

As a gift to the community, the museum will be beautifully decorated and admission will be waived. Dahlonega Gold Museum is housed in the oldest existing courthouse in Georgia, built in 1836. 706-864-2257.

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Cherokee Christmas by Candlelight

Friday, Dec 9, 2011 until Saturday, Dec 10, 2011 5 PM to 9 PM

In 1805, Cherokee Chief James Vann opened his new brick mansion to the Moravian missionaries to hold one of the first Christmas celebrations in the Cherokee Nation. 706-695-2598.

Georgia Chapter TOTA Officers 2011

Jeff Bishop, President and National Director

Leslie Thomas, Vice-President and Communication Chair

Linda Baker, Secretary and Publicity

Linda Geiger, Treasurer

If you have received a paper copy of this newsletter, then you are not on the email distribution for this publication. If you would like to be added to this list, please contact the newsletter editor, Myra Reidy, at myrareidy@live.com. Or, you are welcome to phone call or text her at 678-428-2726.

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FROM:

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TO: