



Tennessee Trail of Tears Association

AUGUST 2021 NEWSLETTER

UPCOMING TNTOTA EVENTS

Membership Meetings:

Saturday, Aug. 21, 3 pm Eastern, 2 pm Central. This will be a VIRTUAL meeting. An email with a link or information on how to join the meeting will be sent later. Our speaker will be TNTOTA member Shelby Ward. Her presentation will focus on the Five Tribes Freedmen pre-removal and Trail of Tears preservation implications. She will screen share slides with us. Shelby lives in Lenoir City and is an attorney, Choctaw Freedman, community historian, and genealogist. She is a cofounder of the Beck Genealogical Society (Knoxville, TN) and the Oklahoma Freedmen Collective. Shelby graduated from the University of Tennessee College of Law in 2011 and Howard University in 2008 with degrees in history and biology.

Saturday, Oct. 16, 1 pm Eastern, noon Central. Meadowlands Pavilion, Calhoun, TN. The meeting will start at 1 pm Eastern, noon Central time. Former TNTOTA Vice President Laura Spann will speak about Cherokee Removal and Civil War events that happened right on the spot where the meeting is being held. After the program, weather permitting, Laura will lead a walk on the Trail of Tears route from the park to the river near the site of Walkers Ferry and then circle up by the cemetery to the grave of Sarah Elizabeth Ross and several other Cherokees. That route takes about an hour.

We hope to make this a hybrid meeting where folks can attend in person or virtually via zoom.

Memorial Walks:

Trail of Tears Memorial Walk and Sign Dedication, Woodbury, TN. Sunday, September 19. The commemorative walk will begin at approximately 12:30 pm (after Sunday service) at the Woodbury United Methodist Church, located at 502 West High Street. The walk will proceed to the nearby Cannon County Court House for a Trail of Tears sign dedication and program. For information, contact Melba Eads at melbaceads@dtccom.net.

Trail of Tears Memorial Walk and Program, Winchester, TN. Saturday, October 23.

TOTA's Executive Director, Troy Wayne Poteete, will lead the walk and will be the featured speaker for the post walk program. Contact Floyd Ayers, floydayers@comcast.com, or Kathy Pack of the Franklin County Library, 931-967-3706, for more information.

TNTOTA Tables at Festivals and Conference:

Meigs County Fair, Decatur, TN, Tues. – Sat., Aug. 3-7, 2021. Tues. - Thur. 5 pm -9 pm; Fri. and Sat. until the crowds thin out under the tent.

Cowpea Festival, Charleston City Park, Charleston, TN, Sat., Sept. 11, 2021. 10 am to 7:30 pm.

Spirits, Smoke, and Soil Festival, Coopertown, TN Sept. 11, 2021. 9 am to 4 pm.

TOTA National Conference, Harrah's Cherokee Casino, Cherokee, NC, Sept. 20-22, 2021.

Cherohala Skyway 25th Anniversary Festival, Charles Hall Museum and Heritage Center, Tellico Plains, TN. Sat., Oct. 23, 2021. 10 am to 5 pm.

2021 TRAIL OF TEARS CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 20-22, CHEROKEE, NC.

Our national conference, postponed from 2020 due to the pandemic, is scheduled for Mon - Wed., Sept. 20 – 22. The 25th Annual Trail of Tears Conference will be held at Harrah's Casino in Cherokee, NC. National TOTA included a tentative agenda with pre and post conference events, hotel information, and information on how to register for the conference in the national newsletter. You can register for the conference online through TOTA's website at <https://nationaltota.com/25th-annual-trail-of-tears-conference-symposium>. To make a room reservation at Harrah's Cherokee Casino, call Harrah's at 828-497-7777 and use Group Code #S09TOTA to get the special conference rate of \$109.00 + tax.

REMEMBER THE REMOVAL BIKE RIDERS IN TENNESSEE

After being cancelled in 2020 because of the pandemic, the Remember the Removal bike riders took to the road this year. They started their 950-mile journey at New Echota State Park in Georgia on May 31, then rode to Red Clay State Park in Tennessee. Other stops in Tennessee included the Hiwassee River Heritage Center in Charleston, the Cherokee Removal Park at Blythe Ferry, Dayton, Spencer, Fall Creek Falls State Park, Shellsford Baptist Church in McMinnville, Woodbury, Coopertown, Whites Creek, and Port Royal State Historic Park. Several TNTOTA members are involved each year in helping host the riders at the various TN stops.



Left: Remember the Removal bike riders arriving at the Hiwassee River Heritage Center in Charleston on June 1 where they were offered lunch and a cool rest. (Photo from Hiwassee River Heritage Center Facebook page.) Right: The riders reached the Cherokee Removal Park in Birchwood about 3:30 pm. The first boat of bike riders to cross the Tennessee River departed Blythe Ferry at approximately 5:30 pm. (Photo by Vicki Rozema.)

NEWS FROM MEMPHIS

Graydon Swisher II reports Tom Lee Park on Riverside Drive in Memphis is going through major renovations and is closed to the public for about a year until construction is completed. A Water Route way marker was placed there in 2014 and the construction will involve moving the way marker north of its current location. According to Memphis River Parks.Org, the move will result in a more prominent location for the marker.

A TOT route sign project in Memphis was temporarily placed on hold due to the closure of the I-40 bridge across the Mississippi River earlier this year. Because repairs are completed, the bridge has reopened and the TOT sign project is back on tract.

Back in April, Gaydon and Jason Terrell were interviewed by Our Memphis History for a one-hour podcast on the Cherokee Trail of Tears in the Memphis area including the water and Bell routes. They touched on a number of other subjects related to the Native American history of Memphis and the removal of the Chickasaws and Choctaws. To listen to the podcast, click here: <https://ourmemphishistory.com/trail-of-tears/?fbclid=IwAR06tPIKEdYXLtj0Oc6hXUvuEiYS6FDwAp6-8u9uRwwBmeXrGKzkSDPQ2j0>.

SEQUATCHIE COUNTY SIGNAGE

The National Park Service has approved a TOT sign plan for Sequatchie County. Mark Dunn of Tennessee Tree Toppers, a non-profit parasailing club, and Vicki Rozema worked with David Jenkins and Cory Donnelly of the NPS's Santa Fe Office to draw up the plan. Nine historic route signs will help mark the route used by the Taylor and James Brown detachments in November, 1838 as they crossed over Mowbray Mountain from Hamilton County into Sequatchie Valley, passed through what is present-day Dunlap, and camped at the base of the Cumberland Plateau before climbing the steep and curvy Hill Road at what is now the Dunlap Coke Ovens. Dunn has received commitments from Sequatchie County officials to supply and install the posts for the signs. Vicki is also working with Carson Camp of the Dunlap Coke Ovens Museum to get the museum certified as an official interpretive site on the TOT.



Photos on the left and right show sections of the original road bed of Henson Gap Road used by the James Brown detachment on approximately Nov. 1 or 2, 1838, and by the Richard Taylor detachment on Nov. 6. Center photo: Mark Dunn stands in front of Henson Gap. The road in the background is HWY 111. Below it, the tree line running across the photo is where the current Henson Gap Road is located which closely follows the original road through the gap. (Photos by Vicki Rozema.)

CHARLES HALL MUSEUM AND COKER CREEK WELCOME CENTER APPLY FOR CERTIFICATION AS TOT INTERPRETIVE SITES

In late July, Pam Hall Matthews of the Charles Hall Museum notified us with the great news that they and the Coker Creek Welcome Center have filed the paperwork to apply to be official interpretation sites on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. The certification effort for Coker Creek is under the watchful eye of Mary Jane Reece. Both sites are located near the Unicoi TOT route over the North Carolina and Tennessee mountains and the sites are already engaged in educational efforts about the TOT.

BRAINERD MISSION CEMETERY FLAG-RAISING, CHATTANOOGA, JUNE 9.

Several TNTOTA members including Fred Underdown, Mary Noletti-Underdown, Cleata Townsend, and Vicki Rozema attended the annual flag-raising at the Brainerd Mission cemetery which is a certified site on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Cleata brought a flag donated by the Cherokee Nation while Vicki brought a flag donated by the Eastern Band. They were delivered to us by the RTR bike riders. EBCI Principal Chief Richard Sneed was the guest speaker at the flag-raising. The DAR and SAR have protected this important site since the 1930s. Several Cherokees who were connected with the mission or who died as a result of the 1838 round-up are buried here.



Left: Annual flag-raising ceremony at Brainerd Mission Cemetery. (Photo by Vicki Rozema.) Center: Principal Chief Richard Sneed of the EBCI was the guest speaker. Right: Part of the audience at the flag-raising. Cleata Townsend is seated on the orange chair. (Center and right photos by Fred Underdown.)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

We have seven new individual members and two new group members who have joined since our March newsletter. One member lives in Carbondale, IL; one hails from Ada, OK; one lives in Andrews, NC; and the rest are from Tennessee. We are glad to have you! And thanks to all of our renewing members!

Donna Bryant
Chenae Lippard
Nancy Jo Merrell
Perry Sue Merrell
Iris Parker

Anna Smith
Amy Williams
TN State Library and Archives
TN Heritage Association

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

Pottery the Cherokee Way, Red Clay State Park, Cleveland, TN. Sun., Aug. 8. 2 pm – 4 pm.

Learn to craft your own pot. Cost is \$5. Sign up online in advance. For more info or to register: https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event_details/red-clay/#/?event=pottery-the-choke-roy.

The Three Sisters: Their Legacy in Native Culture – Part II, Moccasin Bend Archeological Park, Chattanooga, TN. Sat., Aug. 14. 2 - 3 pm. Learn how the three sisters of Native American agriculture were harvested, stored, and cooked. Bring a lawn chair. The event is free and will be located in a tin-roof shed located at approximately 200 Moccasin Bend Rd. For more info: 706-866-9241 or <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/event-details.htm?id=DF6C2BDB-92D7-09EF-96A859193FBD1D8B>.

30th Annual Fall Festival, Sequoyah Birthplace Museum, Vonore, TN. Sat., Sept. 11 and Sun. Sept. 12. 10 am to 4 pm. For more info: seqmus@tds.net or 423-884-6246.

Dedication Day and Sequoyah 200th Anniversary Celebration, Manitou Cave TOT Interpretive Center, Ft. Payne, AL. Sat., Sept. 18. 11 am to 3 pm. For more info: manitoucaveofal@gmail.com.

OTHER MEMBER NEWS

TNTOTA State Director **Faye Callaway** co-taught a class on river cane and oak basketry at the Athens Living Heritage Museum on July 17. Faye shared information about TOTA with approximately 30 participants.

On July 18, the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* published a short piece by TNTOTA President **Vicki Rozema** on what happened to Cherokees John and Elizabeth Brown during the Cherokee Removal of the 1830s. An old legend said that the Browns were forced from their home on the Tennessee River in present-day Chattanooga on the 1838-39 Trail of Tears then were later given special permission to return home. However, multiple records show that the Browns did not travel on the Trail of Tears and stayed behind to pursue U.S. citizenship and lawsuits against two Hixson brothers who took control of their ferry. The Brown cabin, which is under the protective ownership of the American Battlefield Trust, is commonly known as Brown's Tavern, a certified site on the Trail of Tears.

TNTOTA Vice President **Danielle Shelton** earned her Ph.D. from MTSU by completing her dissertation on the cultural landscape at Red Clay State Park, a certified site on the TOT. Congratulations Dr. D.!

TNTOTA National Director **Cleata Townsend** participated in a historical event for Lookout Valley Elementary fifth graders at the John and Elizabeth Brown cabin on May 21. On May 29, Cleata also attended the first annual spring festival at the Pulaski TN Trail of Tears Park in Giles County. The Giles County Trail of Tears Interpretive Center is a certified site on the Bell route of the TOT.

To submit news for the TNTOTA Newsletter, please send it to VickiRozema@Comcast.net.