



Tennessee Trail of Tears Association

FEBRUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER

Greetings from Harrison! (Formerly known as Vann's Town, named for Cherokee businessman Joseph Vann.) The board has been busy planning for the coming year. Check out the events listed below. The first member meeting is scheduled for April 29 as a symposium, but we will also plan some regular meetings which we hope will be both in-person and virtual.

In addition to the dates below, be sure to mark your calendars for the 2022 National Trail of Tears Association Conference to be held at Harrah's Casino and Hotel in Cherokee, NC, Mon.-Wed., September 19-21. The Cherokee, NC conference was originally scheduled for 2020, then postponed to 2021 due to the pandemic, and postponed once again to this fall. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the NC chapter for their patience and work in re-scheduling twice.

If you have not already renewed your dues for 2022, you are in danger of having your name dropped from the TOTA and TNTOTA newsletter lists. Dues are good from January 1 to December 31 and are considered overdue if not renewed by March 1. To renew online, please go to <https://nationaltota.com/become-a-member>. There is also an option at the national TOTA website to print a form to mail your dues.

– Vicki Rozema, President

APRIL 29 - TNTOTA SYMPOSIUM, RED CLAY STATE PARK

We are planning a spring symposium for April 29 at the pavilion at Red Clay State Park. We will have a catered lunch sponsored by the Bradley/Cleveland Chamber of Commerce and the Park. More details such as times will be provided when they are finalized. It is hoped that the symposium will be presented in-person as well as virtually, if technology permits.

Our speakers and their topics for the event will be:

Jim Ogden - Moccasin Bend & Brown's Ferry

Stefanie Haire - Cherokee Civil War Database

Danielle Shelton - Red Clay's Cultural Landscape

Andrew Denson - (topic to be determined)

TNTOTA INFORMATION BOOTHS at 2022 events:

August - The Meigs County Fair (we don't have exact dates yet)

September 10 - International Cowpea Festival and Cook-off

September 10 & 11 - Sequoyah Fall Festival

Date TBD - Red Clay Cultural Event

Date TBD - Vital Farm Buffalo Blessing (probably October)

We would also like to sponsor tables at Sequoyah Birthplace Museum for Statehood Day (Saturday, June 4) and Sequoyah Remembrance Day (Sunday, August 7) and other opportunities as they become available, but we need more volunteers. If you would like to help us at one of these events, please let us know. You will not have to do it on your own.

2022 OFFICIAL TNTOTA-SANCTIONED TOT MEMORIAL WALKS

September – Woodbury Commemorative Walk (we don't have exact date yet)
October 22 (Sat.) – Winchester Memorial Walk

FALL 2021 TNTOTA Tables at Festivals:

TNTOTA set up an informational table on Saturday, October 9 at the 12th Annual Vital Farm Blessing of the Buffalo in Georgetown. TNTOTA members who attended report that the event was the busiest ever with some cars apparently needing to be turned away. Shirley Lawrence, a long-time TNTOTA member, helped organize the event.

TNTOTA also set up an informational table at the Cherohala Skyway 25th Anniversary Festival which was held at the Charles Hall Museum and Heritage Center in Tellico Plains on Saturday, October 23, 2021. Laura Spann set up TNTOTA's table next to another TNTOTA member, Mary Jane Reece, who was representing the Coker Creek Heritage Association. Mary Jane answered questions about the Cherokee Removal in the Coker Creek area. An estimated 10,000 people attended the festival.



Left: Board members Danielle Shelton, Melba Checote Eads, and Darlene Goins are pictured in front of the TNTOTA table at the Blessing of the Buffalo celebration at the Greg Vital Buffalo Farm in October. Right: Display at the Cherohala Skyway Festival created by Laura Spann, featuring information on Tellico Plains and the 80-mile removal route of 3,000 North Carolina Cherokees from Fort Butler (Murphy, NC) to Fort Cass (Charleston, TN).

TRAIL OF TEARS MEMORIAL WALK AND SIGN DEDICATION, WINCHESTER, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2021. TNTOTA, the Franklin County Historical Society, and the Franklin County Public Library hosted a TOT memorial walk and program on October 23, 2021. It was beautiful weather for the walk which was very well attended. TNTOTA's very own Floyd Ayers and Kathy Pack do a great job every year working with folks at the library and the historical society to put this together. After the walk, Troy Wayne Poteete, executive director of the National Trail of Tears Association, gave an informative talk at the library about Major Ridge and the Treaty Party. The Bell detachment, which went through Winchester in 1838, was known as the Treaty Party detachment because John Adair Bell was one of the signers of the illegal 1835 Treaty of New Echota which forfeited eastern Cherokee lands.



Left and center: TOT Memorial Walk at Winchester. Walkers led the group and were followed by two wagons and folks on horseback. Right: David Moore, Vice President of the Franklin County Historical Society, and Troy Wayne Poteete, Executive Director of the Trail of Tears Association, at the memorial walk.

NEWS FROM MEMPHIS

Graydon Swisher II reports that TOT route signs have arrived for installation on U.S. 64. The TDOT office in Jackson has them and will put them up when weather permits. Graydon plans to organize a dedication ceremony for Memphis and for neighboring Fayette County where some of the signs will be placed.

NEWS FROM SEQUATCHIE COUNTY

TOT route signs have been delivered to the Sequatchie Highway Department. The Tennessee State Highway Department will supply poles and hardware. The locations of where the signs will be erected have been reported to the 811 Call Center to have the sites checked for utility lines. Mark Dunn, who has been working on this project for nearly a year, is hopeful the signs will go up soon.

There are plans by the Sequatchie Valley Electric Company to build a large substation and a tower on Henson Gap Road on the Taylor Route of the Trail of Tears. Several miles of power lines and multiple support towers to carry the lines from the substation are also planned. TNTOTA's Vicki Rozema and Sequatchie County resident Mark Dunn have spoken with TVA about the plans. The substation, power lines, and towers should not affect the location of the new TOT route signs, but there are other concerns about the plans for the new substation including possible disturbance of the original TOT road bed and a possible campsite used by the two detachments who travelled this route in 1838. Local residents planned to meet with the CEO of SVEC in January about the location, but the meeting was postponed because the CEO had covid. If plans proceed, TVA is required to conduct some archaeological tests along the TOT and to notify multiple tribal entities. The Cherokee Nation has already been notified and we will continue to monitor the situation.

NEWS FROM MEIGS COUNTY

On January 26, the TN Historical Commission voted to approve the nomination of the Georgetown Road TOT segment to the National Register of Historic Places program. The short, .12 mile segment of original roadbed, parallels TN State Route 60, and was travelled by the

Elijah Hicks and Situwakee detachments. This nomination by the TN Commission means placement of the Georgetown Road segment on the National Register is not complete, but it is one step closer. Congratulations to TN State Rep. Greg A. Vital, owner of the property, for this significant recognition and for taking steps to protect the TOT segment. TNTOTA member Amy Kostine of MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation, was one of the main authors of the National Register of Historic Places report.

2022 REMEMBER THE REMOVAL BIKE RIDE

Great news! We recently received word that the RTR bike ride is a go for 2022. It was cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic and was scaled down in numbers of riders in 2021 for the same reason. Several of our members are involved in supporting the riders by assisting locations like the Hiwassee Heritage Center, Red Clay State Park, and Cherokee Removal Park who host the riders. TNTOTA also helps underwrite the cost of food at two locations.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

VICKY GARLAND CELEBRATION OF LIFE. DAVID CROCKETT STATE PARK, LAWRENCEBURG. Jimi Stewart, nephew of Vicky Garland, invites everyone who knew Vicky and about her work on the Trail of Tears in Giles County to join friends and family at her Celebration of Life. It is scheduled from noon to 6 pm CST, Saturday, March 19, 2022 in Shelter #1 at David Crockett State Park in Lawrenceburg. Vicky was a long-time member of TNTOTA who served on the board in several capacities.

HOUSTON AND THE CHEROKEES. FRANKLIN COUNTY LIBRARY, WINCHESTER. Saturday, March 19, 6 pm CST. TOTA Executive Director Troy Wayne Poteete will be at the Franklin County Library to do a program on Sam Houston and the Cherokees.

DAVY CROCKETT AND THE CHEROKEES. FRANKLIN COUNTY LIBRARY, WINCHESTER. Sunday, March 20, 2 pm CST. TOTA Executive Director Troy Wayne Poteete will present a second program at the Franklin County Library. Sunday's topic will be Davy Crockett and other lesser-known TN benefactors to the Cherokee such as Rev. Elizur Butler of the Brainerd Mission.

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM, RED CLAY STATE PARK. Wednesday, March 9, 8-10 pm EST. Because the regular daytime hours when the museum and visitor center are usually open make it difficult for some people to visit, the park is hosting a special night when the museum will be open to visitors. The evening will include showing an interpretive film, a self-guided tour through the museum, and a program by Ranger Logan. The event is free but donations are welcome. Because numbers must be limited, registration is required. For more information: call 423-478-0339, email logan.cammarata@tn.gov, or register online at https://tnstateparks.com/parks/event_details/red-clay/#/?event=night-at-the-museum.

OTHER MEMBER NEWS

TNTOTA Vice President **Danielle Shelton** started a new job with the Cleveland Office of the Cherokee National Forest on February 14. She will serve as the Forest Heritage Program Manager. We are very glad that this position will allow her to stay in Southeast TN and will allow her to work on projects related to Cherokee history and heritage and the TOT.

On October 24, BBC Radio 4's Sunday morning program aired a segment which included content about Minerva and Wallace Willis, who were Choctaw-Chickasaw Freedmen. The segment focused on the Willis's Negro spiritual legacies. TNTOTA's **Shelby Ward** was interviewed for this segment because she is a descendant of Wallace and does genealogy and historical research.

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