



**Trail of Tears Association, Tennessee Chapter Newsletter  
February 2017**

**CHAPTER MEETING: Saturday, March 18, 2017, 12:00 pm Eastern time, 11:00 am Central time, History Branch and Archives of the Cleveland Bradley County Library in Cleveland, TN.**

The annual meeting of the Tennessee Chapter of the Trail of Tears Association will be held at 11:00 am Central, 12:00 pm Eastern at the Cleveland Bradley County Library at 833 N. Ocoee St. in Cleveland. This is an elections meeting. Members must be present to vote and their dues must be paid for 2017 to be eligible to vote.

The offices that will be voted on are President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, 3 State Directors, and one National Director position. Cleata Townsend is in the middle of her 4-year term as a second National Director so her term does not expire for 2 more years. All of the nominees were invited to submit a brief statement or bio for publication in the newsletter but not everyone did.

**The nominees are:**

**President - 2 year term: Debbie Moore, [bradleyfolks@aol.com](mailto:bradleyfolks@aol.com)**

I am Debbie Moore a lifelong resident of Bradley County, Tennessee. I graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and have been employed with the Bradley County School for 38 years. I have done extensive family and local history research including making five local history documentaries with my husband. I released a book, Confederate Voices in 2012. The book received a national award from the United Daughters of the Confederacy for outstanding preservation of local history.

I have attended four National Trail of Tears Association meetings. I am looking forward to working with everyone and I plan to donate a lot of time and energy to the Tennessee Trail of Tears.

I am presently working on a book about the 1836 Cherokee Property Evaluations for the Ocoee District. The book is scheduled to go to the printer in June 2017.

**Vice President - 2 year term: Laura Spann, [laurabspann@gmail.com](mailto:laurabspann@gmail.com)**

I grew up in Calhoun, McMinn County, Tennessee, received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Tennessee, and now live in my husband's hometown of White Bluff in Dickson County. Following an 18-year career in Information Systems and Quality Management, I received a Master of Arts in Education and worked in the elementary education field for eight years. After retiring, I pursued my interest in local history, began assisting the Charleston-Calhoun-Hiwassee Historical Society with researching Cherokee connections to the area, joined the TOTA and have attended the past three national conferences. I am currently reviewing the 1817 and 1819 Cherokee reservations in the Hiwassee Land District to establish the location of Cherokee family homes prior to removal and to prepare a map as a resource for Cherokee descendants interested in locating and visiting their ancestors' homes.

**Secretary - 2 year term: No nominations**

**Treasurer - 2 year term: Erin Medley, [erin.medley@tn.gov](mailto:erin.medley@tn.gov)**

I graduated in 2000 from UTC with a Bachelor's Degree in Parks and Recreation. I started my career as a Park Ranger in 2002 at Booker T. Washington State Park. I transferred to Red Clay in 2006 and was

promoted to Park Manager in 2013. During my 11 year career at Red Clay I have collaborated with the Cherokee Nation and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians on four historical events at our park. They are as follows: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Joint Council Meeting of 1984, 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Trail of Tears event, the Cherokee Heritage Festival, and the first ever Tri-Council meeting at Red Clay. I am extremely excited about this opportunity to get more involved with the community and to be a part of this organization.

**There are 4 nominees for 3 State Director positions - 3 year terms each:**

1. **Shirley Lawrence**, [shirleyclawrence@aol.com](mailto:shirleyclawrence@aol.com)

2. **Graydon Swisher**, [go2swish@bellsouth.net](mailto:go2swish@bellsouth.net)

3. **Doris Tate Trevino**, [tandt05@bellsouth.net](mailto:tandt05@bellsouth.net)

4. **Vicki Rozema**, [vrozema@comcast.net](mailto:vrozema@comcast.net)

I live in Harrison and have been a member of TNTOTA for approximately 20 years. I currently serve as newsletter editor and as state director and have served as secretary in the past. I am on the chapter's education committee and I recently joined the national organization's new research committee. I earned my Ph.D. in history from UTK in 2012 and have written several articles and 3 books on Cherokee history including *Voices from the Trail of Tears* (2003). Some goals for TNTOTA that I hope to work toward with the help of our new board include establishment of membership and publicity chairs, recruitment of new, active members, new education projects, and development of online education and research resources.

**National Director - 4 year term: Vicki Rozema**

National directors are not official members of the state board, so it is common for national directors to hold state board positions in addition to the national position. That is why I am running for both National Director and State Director.

### **BELL ROUTE SIGNAGE PROGRESS**

The Bell Route signage project continues to make progress. Floyd Ayers met with Franklin County Historian Jerry Limbaugh and Historical Society President David Moore last month to answer questions they had about old Franklin County roads and the Bell Route. Doris Tate Trevino provided Shawn Pitts with copies of vouchers pertaining to the Bell Route through McNairy County to assist in mapping the route through Selmer and McNairy. The Bell Route crossed the Tennessee River at Ross's Landing and travelled by land following a route that largely parallels today's U.S. 64. Present day Tennessee towns on the Bell Route include Charleston, Chattanooga, Cowan, Winchester, Fayetteville, Pulaski, Lawrenceburg, Waynesboro, Savannah, Selmer, Bolivar, and Memphis, among others.

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE SURVEY**

TNTOTA's education committee met on January 12 at the Cherokee Removal Park in Birchwood to respond to a request from the national organization for information on past, current, and future educational activities. The survey from national's education committee addressed questions about what types of educational materials each state chapter used in its education efforts and asked the chapters for input on how the national organization can provide additional resources to help meet the educational needs of the chapters. Just a few of the many subjects discussed by our chapter's education committee include the need to develop "travelling trunks" to be loaned out to schools, TNTOTA speakers, and other orgs to help educate about Native American history and culture in Tennessee including the Trail of Tears; development of school curriculum materials including downloadable materials, videos and DVDs, and

educational coloring books; database of speakers available to talk about the Trail of Tears and Cherokee history and culture; development of additional maps and other images and the sharing of existing ones; use of bibliographies, the chapter newsletter, and internet resources for educational purposes; and many more exciting ideas that could supplement our educational activities. If you would like a copy of TNTOTA's responses to the national survey, please email me at [VickiRozema@Comcast.net](mailto:VickiRozema@Comcast.net) and I will email you a copy.

### **2017 DUES ARE NOW DUE**

All 2016 TNTOTA members should have received a membership/dues renewal form from the national TOTA office either via email or U.S. postal service. If you did not receive your form, you can email me at [VickiRozema@comcast.net](mailto:VickiRozema@comcast.net) and I will send one via email OR for a hardcopy, contact Roy Barnes, Project Administrative Specialist at the national office at TRAIL OF TEARS ASSOCIATION, 412 N HWY 100 SUITE "B", P.O. BOX 329, WEBBERS FALLS, OK 74470, PH: (918) 464-2258, [nationaltota@gmail.com](mailto:nationaltota@gmail.com).

Members whose dues are not received in Little Rock by March 1 will be dropped from membership and mailing lists by national. A payment of \$25 entitles you to national membership and membership in one state chapter. Each additional state chapter membership costs another \$10.

### **2017 NATIONAL TOTA CONFERENCE, OCT 16-18, POCOLA, OK**

The 2017 national conference is scheduled for October 16-18 at the Choctaw Casino Hotel in Pocola, OK. To make reservations, call 800-590-5825 and ask for the Trail of Tears Room Block Rate of \$69 + tax. The Arkansas chapter of TOTA will host the conference.

### **2016 NATIONAL TOTA CONFERENCE, OCT 3-5, DALTON, GA, Report by Vicki Rozema**

Attendance was very good at the national conference and included a lot of TNTOTA chapter members. Wally Leary, current TNTOTA national director, presented the annual report for our chapter. Wally, Cleata, and Vicki attended the National Board meeting and have signed up to serve on national committees. Vicki joined the new research committee chaired by Brett Riggs of Western Carolina University, while Cleata is on the education/interpretation committee, and Wally is on the collaboration committee which works with the various tribal entities.

Conference programs covered a wide variety of topics including the use of dendroarchaeology to study the Green Hotel in Cave Spring, Georgia, DeSoto's travels in northwest Georgia, and John Latty's research on the Georgia militia in the Cherokee Removal. Highlights included a day of field trips to important Cherokee sites in Georgia, a TOT sign dedication at Chickamauga Battlefield, and the groundbreaking for a history trail in Charleston, TN. Red Clay State Park also hosted a dinner on the last night of the conference where Troy Poteete presented a program about Cherokee families from Tennessee who emigrated to Indian Territory.

The new national research committee has set several goals and deadlines which are too numerous to cover in this newsletter. Very briefly, however, one is to find a new repository for research that people can access easily. New problems have developed with access to the repositories at the Sequoyah Research Center at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock and so it was discussed that TOTA would talk to Western Carolina University about the possibility of setting up an online repository with them. It is hoped that TOTA members doing research on the Trail of Tears would voluntarily place copies of their research at WCU for others to access. Another goal is for each chapter to set up a chapter historic preservation officer position. This person would be a contact person for the National Park Service, National Forest Service, national office of TOTA, any other people and entities about sites and segments on the TOT in

the state. For more on the national education/interpretation committee, please see the article on the survey in this newsletter.

I want to thank TNTOTA members who donated door prizes for the national meeting in Dalton. The names I know about are Doris, Cleata, Vicki, Carolyn, Carlos, and the Leary family. I believe some other door prizes were donated by Tennesseans, but I'm not sure who. Cleata assisted in handing out all of the door prizes to the winners. Shirley and Cleata placed informational brochures about the Trail of Tears in Tennessee on the table that our chapter purchased. Vicki also set out sign-up sheets for folks who wanted to request more information on the chapter.

## PHOTOS



Left: Cleata Townsend, Doris Trevino, and Shirley Lawrence at the commemorative walk and sign dedication at Blythe Ferry in Birchwood on Nov. 12. (Photo by Debbie Moore.) Right: Members enjoy a pot luck lunch on September 24 at a meeting at Audubon Acres in Chattanooga. (Photo by Vicki Rozema)



Left: Darlene Goins, Debbie Moore, Joe Bryan, Luajeon Bryan, Laura Bryan Spann, and Fred Underdown at the national TOTA conference dinner at Red Clay State Park on Oct. 5. (Photo by Vicki Rozema.) Right: Vicki Rozema presents a program on the Trail of Tears at the McMinn County Historical Society in Athens on January 8. (Photo from the McMinn County Historical Society Facebook page.)

## **OUR CONDOLENCES**

To the family and friends of GATOTA President Leslie Thomas. Leslie's husband Rod passed away on Nov. 30, 2016. "Those we love don't go away, they walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near; still loved, still missed, and very dear." – Unknown

### **◆ Tennessee Events:**

#### **MTSU POWWOW, TN Livestock Center, MTSU campus, Murfreesboro, Fri. thru Sun., Feb. 24-26**

MTSU's Native Student Association is reviving the Middle Tennessee State University Powwow on February 24-26, 2017. The powwow staff is currently engaged in a crowdfunding effort to finance the event which will include intertribal dancing, native drumming, a frybread cookoff, native crafts and vendors, storytelling, and an indigenous issues forum.

For more information on the powwow, visit <https://www.facebook.com/indigenouspeoplespowwow>. To donate to the fundraising effort, visit their Go Fund Me site at <https://www.gofundme.com/mtsu-indigenous-peoples-powwow>.

#### **SPRING LECTURE SYMPOSIUM, Red Clay State Park, Cleveland, Sat. Mar. 11, 9 am - 2 pm**

Red Clay State Park will host a group of speakers at the Visitor Center on March 11 from 9 am to 2 pm. Admission is free. Speakers include Gerald Hodge, Director of the Tennessee Overhill Association, Chris Young, NPS ranger from Chickamauga-Chattanooga NP and Moccasin Bend, Kelly Holdbrooks, Executive Director of Southern Highlands Reserve, and Anita Finger-Smith, a licensed Cherokee genealogist for the Eastern Band of Cherokee. Call the park at 423-478-0339 or visit the park's website at [http://tnstateparks.com/parks/event\\_details/red-clay/#/?event=spring-lecture-symposium-2017](http://tnstateparks.com/parks/event_details/red-clay/#/?event=spring-lecture-symposium-2017) for more information.

#### **GARRISON WEEKEND, Fort Loudon State Park, Cleveland, Sat. Mar. 25, 10 am - 5 pm and Sun. Mar. 26 10 am to 2 pm**

Fort Loudon hosts several living history encampments every year where soldiers in colonial British uniform and other costumed actors portray tradesmen, blacksmiths, laundry women, medical personnel, and even an 18<sup>th</sup> century Cherokee encampment. For more information, call the park at 423-884-6217 or visit their website at [http://tnstateparks.com/parks/event\\_details/fort-loudoun/#/?event=FLSHA-colonial-trades-garrison-16](http://tnstateparks.com/parks/event_details/fort-loudoun/#/?event=FLSHA-colonial-trades-garrison-16). Dates of other 2017 Garrison/Living History weekends include May 20-21, Aug. 12-13, Oct. 21-22, Nov. 11-12, and Dec. 2.

### **◆ Georgia Events:**

#### **GATOTA GENERAL MEMBERS MEETING, Forsyth Historical Society, Cumming, Sat., Mar. 11, 10:30 am**

GATOTA's next meeting is on Saturday, March 11 at the Forsyth Historical Society. George Pickle and John Salter will do a presentation on the Federal Road and Blackburn/Bufington communities.

#### **EXCERPT FROM LETTER FROM 2D LT. EDWARD DEAS TO GEN. GEORGE GIBSON FROM PADUCAH, KENTUCKY, DECEMBER 28, 1835:**

"General: On the 21<sup>st</sup> I had the honor to address you from Tuscumbia, Alabama, on the subject of emigrating party of Creek Indians, now on their way to the west. At the time I wrote it was intended to proceed at least as far as Memphis by land, but the day after travelers arriving from that direction gave

such extremely unfavorable accounts of the state of the roads that it was decided to take water at Tuscumbia, which was done accordingly. The Indian ponies were, as usual, sent on by land under charge of agents, and a sufficient number of volunteers from the Indians to take proper care of them. The party arrived at this place to-day, at 9 o'clock a.m., on board the steamboat *Alpha*, and two keels, and landed, and will proceed this afternoon, as soon as the necessary provisions can be procured and placed on board." (From *American State Papers, Military Affairs*, Vol. 6, p. 773.)

Note from Vicki: If you have read previous TNTOTA newsletters, you are aware that I have always included first person accounts of the Cherokee Removal. I wanted to do something different in this issue and include an account from the Creek Removal that involves Tennessee. It is important to remember that not only Cherokee detachments, but also Creek, Chickasaw, and Choctaw detachments passed through Tennessee as well. The "voluntary" detachment of 523 Creeks in the above excerpt left Autauga Co., Alabama on Dec. 7, 1835 and travelled north to Tuscumbia, Alabama. From there, they planned to travel overland to Memphis, but due to the poor condition of roads in west Tennessee, they decided to travel by water via the Tennessee River through west Tennessee to the Ohio River then back down to Memphis via the Mississippi River. The steamboat and keel boats stopped each night while travelling on the Tennessee River and the Creeks made encampment. At Memphis, Deas ordered the boats to be moored on the west bank in an attempt to prevent the emigrants from having access to alcohol in Memphis, but a number of Creeks crossed the Mississippi River to purchase supplies in the city. The horses travelled overland through Tennessee to Memphis where they were ferried across the Mississippi to the west bank. The emigrating Creeks disbanded four miles from Fort Gibson on February 3, 1836. Lt. Deas conducted other detachments of emigrating Creeks as well as Cherokees. Other detachments of emigrating Creeks travelled through parts of Tennessee including several hundred who had taken refuge among the Cherokees.

**MY THANKS** to Floyd Ayers for providing info on the MTSU powwow and the Franklin County signage efforts and to Doris Trevino for information on McNairy County Bell Route research. Thanks to Shirley Lawrence for arranging the upcoming March meeting at the Cleveland Bradley County Library and to Debbie Moore for providing photos of the sign dedication at Blythe Ferry Cherokee Removal Park and helping identify several folks in the photos.

I want to issue an extra special thank you to Carolyn Jones and Floyd Ayers, TNTOTA's outgoing secretary and treasurer, respectively, for their constant support of the newsletter. They have frequently provided information and photos for the newsletter and have done a great job keeping our membership records and master TNTOTA email address and postal service lists up-to-date so that members can receive the newsletter. They have done great jobs as secretary and treasurer and I will miss working with them in those positions.

If you have any news that you feel is appropriate for the newsletter and that other members might be interested in, please send it to my email address at [VickiRozema@comcast.net](mailto:VickiRozema@comcast.net).