



# Tennessee Trail of Tears Association

## March 2021 Newsletter

**TNTOTA MEMBER MEETING: SUNDAY, MARCH 28, 3 PM EDST, 2 PM CDST**



Join us for a virtual members' meeting to hear Charlie Rhodarmer, Director of the Sequoyah Birthplace Museum in Vonore, TN, and one of our State Directors, talk about the bicentennial of Sequoyah completing his Cherokee Syllabary. He will explain why the syllabary was changed and why it looks the way it does today. Also, Charlie will talk about getting the Acorn printing press up and running, and the future plans of what they will be printing.

To Join the Zoom Meeting

<https://mtsu.zoom.us/j/82023862222?pwd=WGHpejF0N2pTQ3JoNWRrTUUpSeE0vdz09>

Meeting ID: 820 2386 2222

Passcode: 555682

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,82023862222# US (New York)

+13017158592,,82023862222# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

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Meeting ID: 820 2386 2222

Find your local number: <https://mtsu.zoom.us/u/key4dl9jIM>

## **FORT ARMISTEAD**

The Fort Armistead site in Monroe County, TN has been nominated as a National Historic Landmark. The site is located in the Cherokee National Forest near the community of Coker Creek. At the request of one of our chapter members, Melissa Twaroski, Acting Director of the Recreation/Wilderness/Heritage/Volunteer and Service Program for the U.S. Forest Service Southern Region, I (Vicki) recently wrote a letter to the National Historic Landmarks Program on behalf of TNTOTA to voice our support for this nomination. In the past few years, archaeological research at the site has been led by national TOTA board member Brett Riggs of Western Carolina University.

Fort Armistead was formally established in 1832 ostensibly to protect the Cherokee people from white intruders who were illegally entering the Cherokee Nation in search of gold. It was established without the permission of the Cherokees, which increases its historical importance because it is the first American fort built on Cherokee lands without their permission. As problems with intruders subsided then renewed, the fort site was abandoned then reoccupied several times. Tennessee militia reoccupied the site in 1837 and used it as a base to hunt and capture refugees from the Second Creek War who had taken refuge among the Cherokees in North Carolina. After the round-up of Cherokees began in 1838, approximately 3,000 North Carolina Cherokees were marched over the Unicoi Road to Fort Armistead where they were held briefly on their way to Fort Cass in Charleston, TN. At Fort Cass, they were held in camps prior to departure on the Trail of Tears.

## **INTRODUCING SHELBY WARD, MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**

I am pleased to announce that Shelby Ward has agreed to be our new Membership Chair. To the best of my knowledge, our chapter has never had an official membership chair before. I have asked Shelby to try to identify some ways we can improve how we attract active members and retain members.

Shelby Ward 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 has trained Knoxville Family History Center staff on the subject of African Diaspora genealogy, history, and culture. She is the 2019 recipient of the Midwest African American Genealogy Institute's Judge Lewis Nixon Scholarship. Shelby graduated from the University of Tennessee College of Law in 2011 and Howard University in 2008 with degrees in history and biology. Currently, Shelby lives in Lenoir City with her husband and two children, Bishop and Rebekah. She enjoys public libraries, modern quilts, lavender, Etsy, Star Trek, roasted Brussels sprouts, and drinking tea.

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

These are folks who have joined TNTOTA beginning 2021. One member lives in Murphy, NC and the other four represent different parts of Tennessee including Knoxville, Athens, Pulaski, and Jackson. We are glad to have you! And we thank all of our renewing members including our group members Cherokee Removal Park at Blythe Ferry, Prater's Mill Foundation, and Tennessee Overhill Heritage Foundation.

**Rory Byers**

**Faye Dunham**

**Deborah Kouklis**

**Mary Malicote**

**Peggy Tatum**

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

If you would like to volunteer to head up a committee or work on a project, please contact me at VickiRozema@Comcast.net. We need someone to edit or help with the newsletter and an education chairman. We have never had an official publicity person, but that would be nice. Or if you are interested in starting a traveling trunk project for Tennessee schools, that would be great. Contact me and let me know what your interest is.

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

We hear from both national and the host chapter North Carolina Chapter, that our national conference, postponed from 2020 due to the pandemic, is on schedule to happen this year. So, mark your calendars for September 20-22 for the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Trail of Tears Conference at Harrah's Casino, Cherokee, NC.

## **TENNESSEE RIVER CLEANUP, SATURDAY, MARCH 27, BLYTHE FERRY CHEROKEE REMOVAL PARK**

Sponsored by Morning Pointe Senior Living, Vital Buffalo Farm, Cleveland State, the CSCC Wildlife Society, Keep Tennessee Beautiful, and Land Trust for Tennessee, this will be a thousand acre clean up across several properties on the Tennessee River including TVA, TWRA, and the Cherokee Removal Park. Times are 8 am to 12 pm and 1 pm to 5 pm. Lunch will be served from 12 pm to 1 pm. Meet at 6800 Blythe Ferry Road, Birchwood. Participants are capped at 50 per shift. Sign up online at Tennessee Clean, <https://act.tnwf.org/a/thousand-acre-cleanup-fy21-20210327?fbclid=IwAR1Iehax5w-00K850kNy5GELcNg2YbaZKRfw9lzPGR4z1E00S1y6w2twTak>.



### **VICKY "SPITSFIRE" GARLAND**

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Vicky Garland on March 14. She was a victim of Covid-19 complications. Vicky was a former member of our chapter and served on the board in several capacities including Vice President and State Director. Vicky did extensive research on the Bell and Benge routes through TN and was heavily involved in supporting many efforts to commemorate and educate about the TOT including signage projects in Lawrence and Giles counties, the Trail of Tears Interpretive Center in Pulaski, and the annual commemorative walk in David Crockett State Park in Lawrence County. Our sympathies to her husband Ricky, her son Jesse, her brothers and sisters, and her many friends.