The 17th Annual Trail of Tears Association Conference and Symposium was held in the Chickasaw Nation at Norman, Oklahoma, October 22 - 25, 2012. The Oklahoma chapter and the Chickasaw Nation co-hosted the event; this was the first time a tribe hosted. Over 165 people attended the conference, with about half from Oklahoma and half from other states as far away as California. In fact, Sarah Kirk, the eldest of all conference attendees, has traveled from California every single year for the conference since the first one in 1996.

During the conference, attendees had the opportunity to experience both Chickasaw and Choctaw culture. The Trail of Tears Association board decided that the conference should focus mainly on the Chickasaw and Choctaw removal stories this year. TOTA wanted to bring attention to the fact that, although the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail traces only the Cherokee routes by law, the Trail of Tears Association is not bound by the same restrictions and is interested in telling the story of Removal as a whole, including all of the tribes involved.

The majority of Tuesday was spent at the Chickasaw Cultural Center in Sulphur, Oklahoma. Attendees were split into three groups that rotated around several stations: the Research Center, the Spirit Forest, the traditional Chickasaw village, and lunch.

On Wednesday night, the Choctaw Nation hosted conferees at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City for a reception and cultural entertainment. Each attendee was given a miniature hand-woven basket made by the Choctaws themselves as a souvenir. While eating, a Choctaw flute player entertained guests and traditional Choctaw songs were sung. After the entertainment, attendees were able to tour the Center before heading back to Norman.

The conference concluded with lunch presentations on Thursday by two of the youth participants, Jeremy Wilson (Eastern Band of Cherokee) and Danielle Culp (Cherokee Nation). Both were riders on the Remember the Removal bike ride this past summer and spoke about their experiences on the ride.

Next year’s conference will be held in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. More information about exact dates will be sent in the next few months, and October is the likely month it will take place.
Trail of Tears Association Remembers Board Member Gail Tate King

by Sharon Freeman and Jerra Quinton Baker

Gail Tate King, president of the Alabama chapter and national board member of the Trail of Tears Association, passed away on November 8, 2012, after a long battle with cancer. She leaves behind her husband of 45 years, Marty, two daughters, Meredith and Erin respectively, and three grandchildren, Tad, Liam, and Kaylee. Erin is also expecting a daughter, Lila, in the next couple of months.

On November 17, 2012, the Alabama chapter held a tribute to Gail at the Little River Canyon Conference Center in Dekalb County. Approximately 110 people attended, including all of Gail’s immediate family, volunteers from the many archaeological investigations Gail led, and Trail of Tears Association Executive Director Jerra Quinton Baker.

Although the Alabama chapter had been established a few years before Gail joined the Association’s membership, the activity of the chapter had virtually died off completely. In 2005, Gail reinvigorated the chapter membership, brought new members into the fold, and helped focus the members’ efforts on research and documentation. The newly inspired chapter held its elections in 2005, and Gail was elected president. In fact, she was re-elected again and again because of Gail’s unwavering dedication to the work of the Trail of Tears Association, particularly in Alabama.

Gail was organized, thoughtful, and diligent, and it showed in her work with the Alabama chapter. She strove to make each chapter meeting worthwhile and the chapter members’ time worthwhile at the meetings. She was committed to hosting chapter meetings across the state so that as many chapter members could be included as possible. And not only did Gail organize meetings, but she got her hands dirty, too. In many times over the years, Gail has outlasted and out-dug the younger crew members of many an archaeology dig, mainly because of her sheer determination and desire for discovery.

Gail was so proud of many things, namely her wonderful supportive family. Marty King, her spouse, confidant, co-worker, and, more recently caregiver, was with her at every Trail of Tears Association meeting, whether it was locally in Alabama or in New Mexico for a National Park Service workshop. She also talked quite a bit about how proud she was that she and Marty had raised two strong, capable, loving, modern women in Meredith and Erin.

Gail leaves behind a great legacy for all at the Trail of Tears Association. She was a tremendous researcher, archaeologist, and historian. Her work has left us all with a greater sense of the Trail of Tears story, both in Alabama and trail-wide. May we all keep up the work of researching the Trail and telling the story of Removal. To honor Gail’s legacy, the Alabama chapter has set up the Gail Tate King Fund for Research and Record Digitization. Donations can be sent to Treasurer Larry Smith at 1345 Buck Island Drive, Guntersville, AL 35976.

Display and Exhibit Installed at Illinois Rest Area

by Sandy Boaz, Illinois Chapter

Both the southbound and northbound rest areas on I-57 just north of exit 30 in Union County were built in the 1960s, both named Trail of Tears Rest Area. The rest areas are located on the north side of a Trail of Tears segment still used as a public road today.

In the years since, neither interpretation nor information has been available onsite to explain the significance of the name. For several years, a couple of Illinois chapter board members have passionately worked to get information installed.

In March 2012, a display was unveiled inside the southbound rest stop, which provides travelers with background information on the trail, a detailed history of the trail across Pope, Johnson, and Union Counties, and specific information about nearby Campground Cemetery, a certified Trail of Tears National Historic Trail site. The Illinois chapter of TOTA, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and Southern Illinois University worked together to develop and install the display.

In September 2012, a wayside exhibit was erected outside the same rest area. The Illinois chapter provided the historical research for the exhibit, the National Park Service provided the sign, and the Illinois Department of Transportation provided the installation.
Danielle Culp, a youth participant at this year’s TOTA conference, produced a video, wrote a song, and created a piece of artwork (see below) to commemorate her experience on the Remember the Removal bike ride this last summer. The annual bike ride provides an opportunity for Cherokee Nation and Eastern Band of Cherokee citizens to traverse the route that many of their ancestors took in the removal of their people in 1838-39.

Danielle, age 22, is a recent graduate of Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. She received a bachelor of arts degree in Cherokee cultural studies on December 15, 2012.

When asked about her experience about the bike ride, she responded, “It was a life changing experience for me. I learned who I am and how strong I truly am. I was blessed with many friends on the trip who helped me with every pedal.”

To watch her 14-minute video, which includes the song she wrote, go to YouTube.com and type in the search area “Danielle Culp channels.” The first election with a title of Danielle Culp and a subtitle of We Will Never Forget is the correct video.

Joe and Cindy then camped in nearby Dixon Springs State Park.

The following day, the scouts continued their trip westward where they visited Gary Hacker, another Illinois chapter board member. Meeting at the Trail of Tears State Forest near Anna, Gary told the boys about the Cherokee’s journey across Johnson County. Gary escorted the group to sites along the original Trail, including Bridge’s Tavern, a trading post used by the 11 detachments that stands to this day. Gary also brought the group to Campground Cemetery in Union County, the burial site for several of the Cherokee who passed away during that winter. The scouts completed their expedition by driving to Ware, Illinois, near the bank of the Mississippi River.

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The Alabama chapter has completed the archaeological fieldwork for the Alabama Historical Commission’s 2012 Historic Preservation Grant. Gail King was the principal investigator and Sharon Freeman was the project director/field director for the project. Fieldwork took place in Fort Payne and Barry Springs, Alabama. A report has been submitted to the Alabama Historical Commission for approval. This was a tremendous opportunity to conduct extensive research in an attempt to locate Alabama forts from 1838. Researchers on the project feel 100 percent sure of the location of Fort Likens and of the association of the Fort Payne site with the Trail of Tears. Participants in the project had a lot of fun even though the fieldwork was a lot of hard work in all kinds of weather conditions. The volunteers were very dedicated to the project and the chapter thanks them all.

The identification of Alabama Cherokee removal forts is a paramount goal of the Alabama chapter. The chapter will continue its goals of identifying and documenting sites associated with the Cherokee Trail of Tears. Larry Smith, Gail King, Lamar Marshall, and Danny Crownover have conducted important research in Etowah, Marshall, and Jackson Counties. However, the research for further information about these counties is not finished. John Stanton has made great strides in the research of the Huntsville area, but much is left to do. Even though archaeological projects in Fort Payne and Barry Springs have provided a lot of information, there is still a tremendous amount of research to conduct in untapped areas and undiscovered primary source documents.

Researchers had great results from metal detecting and a geophysical survey conducted at the Fort Payne site and at the close of the Barry Springs project. Geophysical surveys include various types of nondestructive methods of subsurface testing such as ground penetrating radar, electrical resistivity, and gradiometry surveys. These methods offer excellent data collection and interpretation methods in a way to lessen fieldwork days and pinpoint possible feature locations, such as structural walls, post holes, and fire pits. The research potential is endless.

The Alabama chapter is in transition at the moment with the loss of Gail King, the chapter’s long-time president. But chapter members feel positive that, with Gail’s leadership as an example to follow, the Alabama chapter will continue to grow and accomplish its goals.

The next meeting of the Alabama chapter of the Trail of Tears Association will be held on Saturday, January 19, 2013. The chapter board will meet at 10:00 a.m. The membership meeting will start at 11:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at Camp Coleman, the camp of the Girl Scouts of North-Central Alabama. The Camp is located in Trussville, a suburb northeast of Birmingham, near 7712 North Lake Drive.

The Kentucky chapter has been busy during the past six months having signs installed along the trail. Signs for the Big Springs site were received in August, and many of them have been installed with the help of the Trail of Tears Commission in Princeton. The chapter hopes to finish this project soon. Also in August the chapter finished the installation of signs at the Berry’s Ferry site.

On August 23, 2012, the chapter unveiled the site identification sign at Columbus-Belmont State Park. In attendance for the unveiling was Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Secretary Marcheta Sparrow, Kentucky Department of Parks Commissioner Elaine Walker, and four county judge executives from the four counties in the area. Also in attendance were Columbus-Belmont State Park Manager Cindy Lynch and Wickliffe Mounds Manager Carla Hildabrand. Both Cindy and Carla have worked with the Kentsucky chapter for several years to get the Columbus-Belmont State Park certified.

The chapter has recently begun working with the landowner of Crider Tavern in Fredonia, Kentucky, on the certification process. This site sits right on the original route of the Trail of Tears. It was built in 1836 as a stagecoach stop, and early histories tell of some of the detachments getting supplies at this site before going to the creek to camp. When the certification process is complete, Crider Tavern will become Kentucky’s eighth Trail of Tears National Historic Trail certified site.

In July, the Kentucky chapter learned it was approved for a state grant to sign the entire 36 miles of the Benge Route in the state. The chapter plans to complete the signing project in 2013 with the help of Norma Pruitt, the executive director of the Kentucky Great River Organization. Once this project is finished, Kentucky will have the entire Trail of Tears signed in the state, with the exception of Paducah on the Water Route. This site is particularly important in the Trail of Tears story as it was the site where Chief John Ross learned of the severity of the icy conditions on the river in Illinois in the winter of 1838.

The North Carolina chapter held its final meeting of 2012 at the Jackson County Public Library in Sylva on December 8. Jeremy Wilson, one of the participants from the Eastern Band on the Remember the Removal bike ride, was the speaker for the meeting. He spoke about the various locations along the ride’s path and of what an amazing experience he had seeing the places along the route. Following Jeremy’s presentation, the chapter voted to help support a participant from the Eastern Band on the 2013 ride. The North Carolina chapter would like to encourage other chapters to raise funds for this purpose as well.

The chapter discussed raising awareness of the impact the Trail of Tears had on the people who were removed to Indian Territory. One activity that was suggested...
The Arkansas chapter had a productive year in 2012. The annual membership meeting was held at Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park in September. At this meeting, chapter members voted to re-elect the current board of directors, including John McLarty, Glenn Jones, Susan Young, Nancy Feroe, and Carolyn Kent. In addition, new advisory members were added including Bethany Henry, Kevin Eads, Dr. Jami Forrester, and Dr. Greg Kiser. After the meeting, members were able to see the Latta Home on site at the park. The Latta Home was moved to the park from its original location near Evansville and was the site of the disbandment of the Bell detachment.

At the first meeting of the new board on November 8, 2012, Bobbie Heffington, the national association treasurer, was appointed to a position on the state chapter board. The chapter is excited about the possibilities for the expanded board and has taken on new tasks for 2013 to include updating the website and developing an aggressive signage program. Research will continue on the expanded portions of trail locations in Arkansas, including the Benge and Bell Routes. Carolyn Kent is also starting additional research on the river route.

One of the outcomes at the national conference in Norman, Oklahoma, was for the Arkansas chapter to host a chapter capacity building workshop in Northwest Arkansas. There will be more information about that as details are developed. TOTA Executive Director Jerra Quinton Baker will send details out to all the chapters as soon as plans are made.

The Missouri chapter of the Trail of Tears Association was host to a historic trails workshop at the Waynesville City Hall Saturday, September 15, 2012, at 10 a.m. Deloris Gray Wood, president of the Missouri chapter, discussed how landowners can nominate a site for certification or to the National Register of Historic Places and how to do the research to verify the nomination. Waynesville Mayor Luge Hardman welcomed attendees to the city and talked about Laughlin Park at Rubidoux Spring’s and the trail development that is underway in the park. Laughlin Park is a certified site on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Keri Hicks, the tribal liaison officer at Mark Twain National Forest, spoke about the “Passport in Time” programs held in the past two years that helped identify the Benge Route in the

The Missouri chapter held its annual chapter meeting on Tuesday evening, October 23, 2012, at the Trail of Tears Association conference in Norman, Oklahoma.

Poplar Bluff Ranger District. She also gave an update on sign plans for the Northern Route in the Potosi and Salem Ranger Districts.

The Trail of Tears is just one of the seven national historic trails in Missouri. Others include the American Discovery Trail, Oregon National Historic Trail, California National Historic Trail, Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail – Fort Leavenworth Road, Pony Express National Historic Trail, and the Santa Fe National Historic Trail. Two other famous Missouri roads are Route 66 and the Butterfield Stage Heritage Trail.

The state of Missouri has over 600 miles along the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail in three land routes: the Northern Route, the Hildebrand Route, and the Benge Route. There is one campsite at New Madrid on the Water Route. Most of the Cherokees were removed using the Northern Route that goes from Jackson via Farmington, Potosi, St. James, Rolla, Waynesville, Springfield, Cassville, and onto Pea Ridge National Military Park in Arkansas. The Trail of Tears land routes in Missouri go through or touch the counties of Barry, Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Christian, Crawford, Dent, Green, Iron, Laclede, Madison, Ozark, Phelps, Pulaski, Reynolds, Ripley, Saint Francois, Scott, Stone, Texas, Wayne, Webster, Wright, and Washington Counties.

The Missouri chapter held its annual chapter meeting on Tuesday evening, October 23, 2012, at the Trail of Tears Association conference in Norman, Oklahoma.
Trail of Tears National Historic Trail News • December 2012

Trail News is produced by the partnership of the Trail of Tears Association and the National Park Service, National Trails Intermountain Region, Santa Fe.

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The Trail of Tears Association has entered into a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service to promote and engage in the protection and preservation of the Trail of Tears NHT resources; to promote awareness of the trail’s legacy, including the effects of the U.S. Government’s Indian Removal Policy on the Cherokee and other tribes; and to perpetuate the management and development techniques that are consistent with the NPS’s trail plan.

The National Trails Intermountain Region administers the Trail of Tears NHT, the Santa Fe NHT, El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT, and the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program. El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT and Old Spanish NHT are administered jointly by the National Trails Intermountain Region and the New Mexico State Office of the Bureau of Land Management. These trail and corridor programs are administered in partnership with American Indian tribes; federal, state, and local agencies; nongovernment organizations; and private landowners.

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Trail News Association MEMBERSHIP FORM
January - December 2013

Please send $10 for each additional state chapter you would like to join.

Name Mr. Mrs. Ms. Address

City State Zip Email

Phone I want to join the following state chapter(s): AL AR GA IL KY MO NC OK TN

Membership Levels
Basic Individual: $25 to $99
Patron: $500 to $999
Student: $10 (enclose ID)
Sponsor: $100 to $499
Benefactor: $1000+

Note: Sponsors, patrons, & benefactors are listed prominently in two issues of the newsletter Trail News and on the TOTA website.
Trail of Tears Association board members, staff, and other conference attendees were impressed with the demonstration of support from the National Park Service at the annual TOTA conference held in Norman, Oklahoma, in October. Superintendent Aaron Mahr brought 8 of his staff members from Santa Fe for the 4-day event. (L-R) Tribal Liaison Otis Halfmoon, GIS Specialist Brian Deaton, Interpretive Specialist Lynne Mager, Landscape Architect Kristin Van Fleet, Superintendent Aaron Mahr, Landscape Architect Coreen Kolisko, Historian Frank Norris, Interpretive Specialist Carol Clark, and Cultural Resource Specialist Michael Taylor.

Vision Becoming Reality — Using Partnerships to Develop the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail

In 1987, Congress acknowledged the significance of this tragic event in our Nation’s history by establishing the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. The National Park Service administers the Trail in cooperation with federal, state, and local agencies; the Cherokee Nation and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians; interested groups; and private landowners.

The Trail of Tears Association and the National Park Service National Trails Intermountain Region, Santa Fe have been working with trail partners to increase visibility for the trail and to develop it for visitor use. Old traces, historic buildings, and other resources are being preserved. Many sites have been certified and numerous on-the-ground projects have been completed, such as route signing, visitor-use development, interpretive wayside exhibits, and interior museum exhibits at existing facilities.

**Certified Sites**
Andrew Ross House, AL
Arcadia Valley Campground, MO
Audubon Acres, TN
Berry’s Ferry and John Berry Homesite, KY
Big Spring, KY
Brainerd Mission Cemetery, TN
Browns Ferry Tavern, TN
Campground Cemetery, IL
Cedartown Cherokee Removal Camp, GA
Chattanooga Regional History Museum,TN
Cherokee County Historical Museum, NC
Cherokee Heritage Center, OK
Chiefetans Museum/Major Ridge Home, GA
City of North Little Rock Riverfront Park, AR
Columbus-Belmont State Park, KY
Crabb-Abbot Farm, IL
Crider Tavern Complex, KY
Delta Cultural Center, AR
Fitzgerald Station and Farmstead, AR
Fort Gibson, OK
Fort Payne Cabin Site, AL
Green County Trail Segments, MO
Golconda Riverfront, IL
Gray’s Inn, KY
Hair Conrad Cabin, TN
The Hermitage, TN
Historic Road from Ross to Ridge’s, GA
James Brown Cherokee Plantation, TN
John Martin House, TN
John Ross House, GA
Junalaska Memorial and Museum, NC
Lake Dardanelle State Park, AR
Laughlin Park, MO
Mantle Rock, KY
Maramac Spring Park/Massey Iron Works, MO
McGinnis Cemetery Trail Segment, IL
Mount Nebo State Park, AR
Murrell Home, OK
Museum of the Cherokee Indian, NC
New Echota State Historic Site, GA
Petit Jean State Park, AR
Pinnacle Mountain State Park, AR
Port Royal State Park, TN
Radford Farm, KY
Red Clay State Historic Area, TN
Rockdale Plantation/George Adair Home, GA
Running Waters, John Ridge Home, GA
Sequoyah Birthplace Museum, TN
Snelson-Brinker Cabin, MO
Star City Ranch Trail Segment, MO
Tennessee River Museum, TN
Toler Farm Trail Segment, IL
Trail of Tears Commemorative Park, KY
Trail of Tears State Park, MO
Trail of Tears State Forest, IL
Tusculum Landing, AL
Vann House Historic Site, GA
Village Creek State Park, AR
Wagner Farm Trail Segment, IL
Wayside Store and Bridges Tavern Site, IL
Waterloo Landing, AL
Willstown Mission Cemetery, AL

**Federal Protection Components and Interpretive Sites**
Arkansas Post National Memorial, AR
Cadron Settlement Park, AR
Cherokee Memorial Park, Blythe Ferry, TN
Fort Smith National Historic Site, AR
Great Smoky Mountains National Park, TN
Mark Twain National Forest, MO
Mocassin Bend, TN
Pea Ridge National Military Park, AR
Shawnee National Forest, MO
Stones River National Battlefield, TN

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The Trail of Tears Association would like to thank the following for their generous upgraded membership support:

**Benefactors $1000 or more**

Cherokee Nation - $10,000
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians - $9,000

**Sponsors $100 - $499**

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Vann – $220
Denson – $180
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Don Higgerson – $100

Elmer Hogue Jr – $100 (2013)/$100 (2012)
Glenn Jones – $100
Ernest Klatt Jr – $100
John Lasley – $100
Mark Twain National Forest – $100
Gary Payne – $100
Maxwell Ramsey – $100
Kathy Robinson – $100
Ansley Saville – $100
Robbin Skinner – $100
Adam Stone – $100
Allan Ward – $100