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Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Baker
And Tota President Jack Baker Sign Agreement

Phoenix Giving Society Takes Flight
Principal Chief Bill John Baker expressed appreciation for the work of the Association and the dedication of its members who volunteer their time and talent.

The agreement establishes a line for routine communications between the Trail of Tears Association and the Cherokee Nation through the Cherokee Nation’s Historic Preservation Officer Elizabeth Toombs, whereby the Tribe will be kept apprised of upcoming events and activities happening on or around the routes. The Memo encourages TOTA to engage with govt. and private entities and to be an information source on matters pertaining to Trail resource conservation and protection.

Aaron Mahr, Supt. of the National Trails Intermountain Region, the National Park Service office which oversees the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail said “The Trails Of Tears Association is our primary non-profit volunteer organization on the national historic trail, and the partnership the association has with the Cherokee Nation is key to the success of achieving our shared goals on the trail. This agreement reconfirms the commitment to commemorating this vital part of our national story.”

The agreement formalizes the long term working relationship between the tribe and the Trail of Tears Association to protect and preserve the Trail of Tears routes and to educate the public about the history of the historic trails.

“Renewing our partnership with the Cherokee Nation through the MOU will enable both the Trail of Tears Association and the Cherokee Nation to work more effectively to protect and interpret for the public the many Trail of Tears sites. I look forward to what we will accomplish together in the next few years,” said TOTA President Jack D. Baker.
Student Research Advisor Appointed

Dir, Troy Wayne Poteete.

Mrs. Lowe’s credentials:

Retired Teacher, Houston Independent School District, Houston, TX.
Former Student, Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, OK.
Bachelor of Science in Ed, Oklahoma A&M College, Stillwater, OK; M Ed, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA.

Past Board Member of the Cherokee National Historical Society; Oklahoma Chapter of the National Trail of Tears Association; The Cherokee Citizen’s League of Southeast Texas; member the Cherokee Nation’s Registration Committee, confirmed by the Cherokee Council, 2010. Currently serving as American Indian Chair for the Samuel Sorrell Chapter of NSDAR, Houston, TX.

Immediate past President of the Houston Genealogical Forum, 2017.

Inquiries may be directed to the Trial of Tears Association website http://www.nationaltota.com where they may utilize the CONTACT US Link or nationaltota@gmail.com.

They will then be forwarded to Mrs. Lowe for assistance.

CONFERECE INFORMATION

Join us as we celebrate the National Trails System’s 50th Anniversary, the state of Alabama’s Bicentennial Celebration, and TOTA’s 23rd Annual Conference and Symposium. This conference has been chosen as the official event of the Trails50 celebration of the National Trails System’s 50th Anniversary. Information on the 50th Anniversary events can be found at Trails50.org. There, you will find an events map with a dot on Decatur, Alabama. Click on the Decatur dot and read more about this very special weekend.

Conference events include a walking tour of Decatur’s witness structures, a bus tour to Tuscumbia Landing for an archaeological tour of the park, scholarly programming, and a special evening of special guests leading our thoughts in remembering removal. More details coming soon!
The Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears Bike Team’s mission is to honor those that came before and sacrificed so much along the Trail. They strive to embrace the memory and spirit of our ancestors, to honor those removed, and those left along the way. The ride allows contemporary Choctaws to relate to their ancestors by experiencing the physical and mental challenges, and through them to feel the pain, fear and heartache of the Trail of Tears. The annual ride inspires tribal members to live an active, healthy lifestyle and to demonstrate determination and courage. The ride continues so the Trail of Tears for Choctaw people will never be forgotten.

The Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears Bike Team was formed by Nancy Jefferson as a way to honor her ancestors in 2011. The following year, 24 Choctaw Nation riders, along with support and gear staff (SAGs), participated in the inaugural ride. 2013, 2014, and 2015 had 13 riders and 2016 had 20. Each day different riders were responsible for researching stories of struggle along the Trail of Tears, and some of the riders shared their personal connections to those struggles.

Rider and Choctaw Nation Health System employee Mary Barrs is the descendant of the Choctaw Chief Will Durant (1937-1948). In her cultural presentation, Mary shared that Dixon Durant came to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears. He went on to become a prominent citizen, with Durant, OK being named after him. He was uncle of Chief Will Durant. Her story demonstrated that the trials and hardship of the Trail of Tears did not end with their arrival in Oklahoma. Mary led the team into Durant on the final leg of the journey in 2016.

The Choctaw Nation Trail of Tears Bike Team plans to once again take on the ride this year. The route, currently over 300 miles, requires training and preparation all year. The team hopes they contribute to the enduring legacy of the Trail of Tears for Choctaws, inspiring hope and showing the true character of tenacity and resiliency of the Choctaw people.
The MO Humanities Council has funded research to identify the trail route and witness structures in Bollinger, Laclede, Phelps and Crawford Counties in MO. The research provides in-depth documentation necessary to allow the NPS National Historic Trails Office to certify sites, and provides information for telling the Cherokee Removal Story thru signage and exhibits at those sites.

The Historic Snelson Brinker Cabin, once a rural MO Courthouse, was witness to over 10,000 Cherokees as they passed thru the Ozarks was lost to a tragic fire on July 4, 2017.

The Missouri Humanities Council is funding the rescue of the Snelson-Brinker property.

In little more than a week after the fire Dr. Steve Belko, Executive Director of the Missouri Humanities Council, Dr. Steve J. Dasovich, Division Chair, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Program Director, Archaeology, Lindenwood University, St. Charles, MO, and Erin N. Whiston, Doctoral Student, Archaeology, Binghamton University, State University of New York, did a preliminary site evaluation of the charred logs and remains of the Snelson-Brinker Cabin. The Missouri Chapter Trail of Tears Association President Deloris Gray Wood, Salem, and Board Member Dr. William ‘Bill’ Ambrose, Jefferson City, were on hand to assist in the evaluation and to gather preliminary ideas on how to salvage the history and place.

In November Dr. Belko and Dr. Dasovich headed a crew focused on a thorough clean-up of the entire site. An NPS Ground Penetrating Radar Specialist from Nebraska did a survey of the site. The Missouri Humanities Council arranged for all this activity to be by professional videographers under the direction of Dr. Monty Dobson, President of Stratigraphic Productions. 

A QR code that links to this film can be found on page 9. A full length production in which the Trail of Tears Story will be told thru the history of the Snelson-Brinker Cabin is in planning stages.

Funds raised by the Society will be initially used to assist with annual conference planning and matching funds for trail exhibit panels.

The event marked the opening of the charter membership year which will remain open through the fundraiser to be held at the October 2018 conference in Decatur, Alabama. Charter members who donate $100 or more over the Charter Membership year period receive a special charter pin. All members are recognized for their membership in the society.

Giving levels will be designated and named by the 2018 conference. Contributions are deductible as allowed by law. The Trail of Tears Association is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Contributions, memorials, and honorariums should be made payable to the Trail of Tears Association/Phoenix Society, and mailed to P.O. Box 329, Webbers Falls, OK 74470.
Walker was a well-educated Cherokee active in Cherokee Nation affairs. He was murdered by Cherokee James Foreman as he rode home from a council meeting at Red Clay in August 1834.

The murder trial, held in McMinn County, Tennessee was one of the most notable criminal cases in early TN history. The official TN Supreme court record takes up 114 pages. The case took several twists and turns through the Supreme Court of TN and went to the US Supreme Court.

Joe Guy was elected Sheriff of McMinn County, Tennessee in 2009 and serves as McMinn County Historian. Guy is a renowned regional historian and nationally published author and columnist. He often portrays Dragging Canoe.

Treaty Party Motivations and Considerations

A minority group of Cherokee leaders risked their live by signing a removal treaty, the infamous Treaty of New Echota, without tribal Council authorization. Poteete will discuss the conditions and situations in the Cherokee Nation which motivated their action. “Suggestions that these men had any pure motives for their illegal act draws ire from many Cherokees. However, 180 years have now past and we should be able to openly discuss the perspective of these leaders who helped shape the very Cherokee Nation which they are so often heartily condemned for having betrayed”, said the presenter, Troy Wayne Poteete.

“Sam Houston with the Cherokees”

Poteete’s tale draws audiences into Sam’s formative teenage years when he lived with Chief John Jolly on what is now known as Hiwassee Island in Meigs County, Tennessee. He makes real Houston’s battlefield heroics at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, captures the drama when Houston resigned as Governor of TN, amid a juicy marital scandal and fled to his Cherokee family west of the Mississippi River. The story culminates with Houston’s trial in the U.S. Congress.

Poteete served two terms in the Cherokee nation Tribal Council, a term on the Cherokee Nation Supreme Court, and is a former Executive Director of the Cherokee Nation Historical Society. Currently he is Ex. Dir. of the National Trail of Tears Association.

Portal to the West: The Landscape of Fort Cass and the Cherokee Emigration Depot

Fort Cass, in an area of northern Bradley County, now known as Charleston, Tennessee, was a collection of several encampments covering an area of 12 x 4 miles. It was the military headquarters for the entire Trail of Tears operation. Here Cherokee were assembled and held under supervision of the US Troops. Many of the encampment areas have been identified and researched. Riggs’ presentation will include both documentary and archaeological information on Fort Cass and the encampment sites.

Dr. Brett Riggs is the Sequoyah Distinguished Professor of Cherokee Studies at Western Carolina University and a research archaeologist who specializes in Cherokee studies. He is a consummate story teller with an extensive list of credits and publications.

Tennessee Symposium Schedule

10:00 a.m. Sheriff Joe Guy - The Murder of Jack Walker, Jr
11:00 a.m. Troy Wayne Poteete - Treaty Party Motivations and Considerations
12:00-1:30 - Lunch on your own
1:30 p.m. - Dr. Bret Riggs — Lecture - Portal to the West: The Landscape of Ft. Cass and the Cherokee Emigration Depot.
2:30 a.m.----Troy Wayne Poteete - Storytelling “Sam Houston with the Cherokees”
NORTH CAROLINA SYMPOSIUM
Cherokee Challenges & Tribulations: Exploring Scholarship, Memory, & Commemoration

A Symposium to Commemorate the Cherokee Removal (180 yrs.) and the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System Act

Wednesday, April 11, 2018
Western Carolina University, UC Grand Room

Contact Information:
Dr. Susan Abram - smabram@wcu.edu - 828-227-2735
Dr. Anne Rogers - rogers@wcu.edu - 828-349-1341

Pre-registration suggested, but not required. To pre-register go to:
www.wcu.edu/experience/conference-services/cherokee-symposium.aspx

Hosted by:
Western Carolina University
WCU College of Arts & Sciences
WCU Dept. of History
National Trail of Tears Association
North Carolina Trail of Tears Association.

NORTH CAROLINA SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

8:00-8:50  Jack Baker, President, National TOTA. “My Family’s Experience During the Forced Removal.”


10:10-11:00  Dr. Ben Steere, WCU Cherokee Studies Program/NC Trail of Tears Association. “Houses and Households in the Cherokee Heartland: Insights from Domestic Architecture.”

11:15-12:15  Remember the Removal Bike Riders: Will Chavez (Cherokee Nation; Ed. Cherokee Phoenix), Casey Cooper (Eastern Band); CEO, Cherokee Hospital, and others. “Never Forget: The History & Success of the Remember the Removal Ride.”

1:25-2:15  Dr. Brett Riggs, WCU Sequoyah Distinguished Professor of Cherokee Studies, NC TOTA. “From North Carolina to Fort Cass, Tennessee: Marking the Long Trail of Removal for the Mountain Cherokees.”

2:30-3:20  Jeff Bishop, Georgia TOTA. “Myths and Legends: When Science and Oral History Collide: Case Studies of the Chief John Ross House in Rossville & the Vann Cabin in Cave Spring, Georgia.”


CHECK OUT OUR OFFICIAL NEW
YouTube & YouTube Channel
& Subscribe

Watch past conference presenters. Soon to be sorted by topic.

SCAN TO GO THERE NOW

Spring 2018 • Trail of Tears National Historic Trail News 7
Trail of Tears Association State Chapter News

ALABAMA

The Alabama chapter of TOTA welcomes 17 new members! Many of these new members come to the Alabama Chapter because of the work the chapter is doing on the Tuscumbia Landing development project and the upcoming conference that Alabama will host. Two board meetings and a work/planning meeting have been held recently. Dr. Yvette Running Horse Collins of the Sacred Way Sanctuary, Interpretive Center and Museum near Florence, Alabama graciously offered her facility for two of our meetings. The Sacred Way Sanctuary is an educational and research facility dedicated to the preservation of the Native American horse and other animals that were held cared to the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas.

President Shannon Keith (Pictured above. Photo by Larry Smith) has been instrumental in bringing together various local organizations, government entities, tribal representatives, and the National Park Service that have an interest in seeing the Tuscumbia Landing area developed in a manner that will facilitate the accurate interpretation, appropriate signage, and preserve of the area’s Native American heritage.

The Alabama chapter is the 2018 Conference and Symposium that will be held in October in Decatur, Alabama at the Doubletree Inn. As with the Tuscumbia Landing project, this TOTA conference is being greatly and enthusiastically supported by area business and government entities. See related article on pg. 3.

Article by Laurie Brockman

George & Karen

FORMER GA TOTA PRESIDENT LESLIE THOMAS (RIGHT) GETS HONORED AT A RECENT CHAPTER MEETING.

Honoring our Past President

On November 11, 2017, Tony Harris and Linda Baker presented Leslie Thomas with an authentic Cherokee Woven Basket as a small token of appreciation for her faithful leadership of the Georgia Chapter over the last four years. She was and still is an excellent spoke-person for the Trail of Tears.

Our theme for 2018 is “180th Commemoration of the Trail of Tears”. All of our meetings and special events will be focused on this observance. Also we will highlight the 50th anniversary of the NPS Trail System.

The Chapter Vice-President, Walter Knapp, has developed a five-part series that will be presented at our five general meetings:

- March 10, 2018 – Exploring the Myths Concerning the Indian Removal Act
- May 12, 2018 – Roundup and Life in the Stockades
- July 14, 2018 – The Physical Journey and Arrival in Indian Territory
- September 9, 2018 – Trail of Tears Symposium led by Jeff Bishop
- November 10, 2018 - The New Life Begins in Indian Territory

Many of our certified sites are holding special events. New Echota Historical Site will be hosting a celebration of the NPS Trail System on June 2nd in conjunction of the Removal Bike Ride. They are also hosting a special Cherokee Homecoming on July 14th. The Chieftain Museum is collaborating with Berry College on March 6th for a special presentation on Cherokee Culture, and again on April 3rd with Tony Harris making a presentation on Cherokee Ethnobotany. The Vann House Historical Site will again host their “Cherokee Days” Festival in July. All of these special events will receive our Chapter’s help in publicity, support and participation.

The Georgia Chapter under the leadership of Leslie Thomas, our Site Certification Chairman, will continue to coordinate the necessary research and NPS documentation. She is also our “point-person” with all communication with the National Trail Office.

The Chapter has added a new board member: Dr. Joe Kitchens, recently retired Director of the Funk Heritage Center.

MO Chapter Well represented at Missouri Folklore Society Annual Meeting

Denise Dowling who represents the MO Chapter on the National Trail of Tears Association Board, and serves

GEORGIA (continued)
the Chapter as Sec. Treas. gave a presentation on the Benge Route in MO. Denise is Supt. of the Trail of Tears State Park.

Chapter President Deloris Gray Wood gave a presentation about the Trail route along the Mississippi from the confluence of the Ohio down to its confluence with the Arkansas River. Deloris also did a presentation on Snelson-Brinker Cabin which was destroyed by fire on the Fourth of July, last. (see related article at page 5).

**Route 66 Overlaps Trail of Tears in MO**

MO Chapter President working with Route 66 Association

Deloris Gray Wood, president of the Missouri Chapter Trail of Tears Association, attended the Route 66 Association Annual Meeting the meeting at the Tulsa City-County, February 17, 2017.

**NORTH CAROLINA**

The NCTOTA is working with Mainspring, St. John’s Episcopal Church, and the Cherokee Snowbird and Cherokee County Communities to design signs (grant through Cherokee Preservation Foundation) recognizing post-Removal communities.

The NCTOTA is hosting a free symposium, “Cherokee Challenges & Tribulations: Exploring Scholarship, Memory, & Commemoration,” Wednesday, April 11, at the University Center, at Western Carolina University (WCU), commemorating the Cherokee Removal (180 yrs.) and celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System Act, partially funded by WCU, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Department of History. Early registration is recommended (but not required) at https://www.wcu.edu/experience/conference-services/cherokee-symposium.aspx (schedule also available). Parking is in metered lots which accept credit cards. Signs will direct guests to Reid Lot in front of the UC (bell tower in front). Plan to arrive early since classes are in session.

Plans are underway to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the National Trails System Act, partnering with the Nantahala Hiking Club and Appalachian Trail Conservancy, to mark where the Appalachian Trail and the Trail of Tears Historic Trail cross in NC.

The NCTOTA’s spring meeting, at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, on February 24, was followed by a board meeting. Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians member Robin Swayney, museum genealogist/archivist, gave a tour of the archives. Once again, the NCTOTA is proud to help fund the send-off dinner at Kituwah Mound for the Remember the Removal Riders in early June and to join the OKTOTA to provide them with Butrick Journals, while the Museum of the Cherokee Indian will supply the John Phelps Diary. Two NCTOTA members are funding safety lights for some of the EBCI riders.

Sue Abram
NCTOTA President

**TENNESSEE**

In November, our chapter met at David Crockett State Park to participate in the 14th Annual Trail of Tears Memorial Walk. The

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**Snelson-Brinker Cabin Film**

The QR below connects to a 5-minute film created by Monty Dobson of Stratigraphic Productions for the MO Humanities Council. The film shows footage of the Snelson-Brinker Cabin remains and discuses the archealogical work now underway which will preserve and protect this certified site.

**SCAN QR CODE**

**DIGITAL CONTENT AVAILABLE:**

**THE SNELSON-BRINKER CABIN VIDEO**
event, organized by Vicky Garland, commemorates the Bell detachment passage through the park in 1838 and also raises food and supplies for Lawrence County veterans.

In January, TDOT approved the Bell Route sign plan for state highways in Franklin County. NPS will order the highway signs during the current fiscal year. Meanwhile, the first three Franklin County TOTNHT signs have been erected in Cowan and signs have been received for the Mountain Goat pedestrian trail for the Monteagle to Sewanee segment. The Franklin Co. Historical Society and Tennessee Chapter are also working with welding classes at Franklin County High School and Boswell Machine, Inc. to produce aluminum sign frames for the downtown Winchester signs.

Red Clay State Historic Park officials, TOTA president Jack Baker, and TNTOTA members gathered in February to dedicate a new sign at the park’s entrance. The new sign uses both English and Cherokee and designates the park as a part of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Red Clay State Historic Park was opened in 1979 and marks the location of the last Cherokee Council meetings before the 1838 removal.

Chapter members have been busy this winter with educational activities including giving talks at Johnsonville State Historic Park, Dickson County Historical and Genealogical Society, Charles Hall Museum in Tellico Plains, Charleston-Calhoun-Hiwassee Historical Society, and a 3rd grade class at Black Fox Elementary in Cleveland. In January, Cleata Townsend hosted a TNTOTA booth at the Sandhill Crane Festival at the Cherokee Removal Park at Blythe Ferry.

We have many activities planned for 2018 to commemorate the 180th anniversary of the Trail of Tears and the 50th anniversary of the National Trails System Act starting with our symposium in April (see article pg ?). Please watch our TN Trail of Tears Association Facebook page for more info.

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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 work 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 Garden at Green Meadows, GA
Cherokee Heritage Center, OK
Chiefs of Major Ridge Home, GA
City of North Little Rock Riverfront Park, AR
Columbus-Belmont State Park, KY
Crabb-Abbot Farm, IL
Criders Tavern Complex, KY
David Crockett State Park Trail Segment, TN
Delta Cultural Center, AR
Fitzgerald Station and Farmstead, AR
Fort Gibson, OK
Fort Payne Cabin Site, AL
Funk Heritage Center, GA
Giles Co. Trail of Tears Interpretive Center, TN
Green County Trail Segments, MO
Golconda Riverfront, IL

Gray’s Inn, KY
Hair Conrad Cabin, TN
Hamburger Hill, IL
The Hermitage, TN
Historic Road from Ross to Ridge’s, GA
Hawassa River Heritage Center, TN
James Brown Cherokee Plantation, TN
Jentel Farm Trail Segment, IL
John Martin House, TN
John Ross House, GA
Junaluska Memorial and Museum, NC
Lake Dardanelle State Park, AR
La Petite Roche, AR
Laughlin Park, MO
Mantle Rock, KY
Maramec 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
Paducah Waterfront, KY
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
Toleration 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 Cherokee Cabin, GA
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
Webbers Falls Historical Society, OK
Willstown Mission Cemetery, AL

**Federal Protection Components and Interpretive Sites**

Arkansas Post National Memorial, AR
Arkansas River Visitors Center/Old Post Road Park, 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
The Trail of Tears Association
would like to thank the following for their generous upgraded membership support:

### Benefactors $1000+

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### Phoenix Giving Society

Additional support now being provided by the Phoenix Giving Society. For more information see page 5.