

The Trail of Tears Association – September Meeting

By Linda Baker

The next meeting of the Georgia Chapter of the Trail of Tears Association will be held on Saturday, September 13, 2008 at the Etowah Indian Mounds Historic Site in Cartersville. PLEASE NOTE – the meeting will start at 1:00 p.m. This is a departure from our usual 10:30 a.m. meeting time. At 2:30 p.m., the Site museum will present a lecture by noted historian Dr. Max White on pre-historic Creek and Cherokee Indians of north Georgia. The GA TOTA meeting is free and open to the public; however, there is a fee to visit the site and hear the lecture. The admission fee is \$4 for adults, \$3.50 for senior citizens and \$2.50 for children ages 6 to 18.

Dr. White is a native Georgian and has done research in the areas of archaeology, history, ethnohistory and cultural anthropology. He is also the author of several articles in professional journals and has written two books. The Etowah Mounds Site was the home to several thousand Native Americans between 1000 AD and 1550 AD. This is referred to as the Mississippian Culture time period and it ends at around the time of Hernando DeSoto's arrival in what is now the southeastern United States. The Etowah site symbolizes a society rich in ritual. One of the mounds is 63 feet high with a flat top which was used as a platform for the home of the priest-chief. Other mounds were used for burial – nobility were buried in elaborate clothing accompanied by the items they would need in the afterlife. The museum contains many of the artifacts found during early excavation of the site: shell beads, feathers, hair and body ornaments and two stone effigies which recently traveled to several museums around the country.

The Etowah Indian Mounds Site has also initiated a project to replace the current ground cover in the area with native grasses. A combination of 8 grasses and numerous wildflowers that in the past dotted nearby fields will be planted in the next 5 to 10 years. Currently there are eight 8-foot by 8-foot plots with various grasses and wildflower specimens on display so visitors can get an idea of what the finished landscape will look like.

The Trail of Tears Association and its major partner, the National Park Service, are dedicated to identifying and preserving sites associated with the removal of Native Americans from the Southeast. We are also committed to educating the public about this tragic period in our country's history. The TOTA was created to support the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail established by an act of Congress in 1987. The Association consists of nine state chapters representing the nine states that the Cherokees and other tribes traveled through on their way to present-day Arkansas and Oklahoma. The forced removal of the Cherokees was completed in 1838.

You need not be a member to attend our chapter meetings nor have Indian heritage, just an interest and desire to learn more about this fascinating subject. For more information about the TOTA, visit the National website at www.nationaltota.org or the Georgia Chapter website at www.gatrailoftears.org. For questions about the TOTA or the January meeting, contact Linda Baker at 770-704-6338 or badnil@alltel.net.

The Etowah Indian Mounds Site is located in Cartersville. Take I-75 to Exit 288 (Main Street). Go west 2.5 miles to downtown Cartersville. Cross the railroad tracks and continue for a short way on GA 113. Follow the signs that will point the way to the Site. For more information, contact the Etowah Mounds Site at 770-387-3747. HOPE YOU CAN ATTEND!!