

**Report To The Tennessee Archaeological Advisory Council
By Pat Cummins, Native American Community Representative
1/24/2014**

First of all, I would like to extend my gratitude to Gov. Bill Haslam, for my re-appointment to a third consecutive 5 year term on the Archaeological Advisory Council this past June. I'm deeply honored. To those of you who may have recommended my re-appointment, I'm grateful, thank you!

As many of you might already know, I am also the President of the Native History Association based in Nashville. 2013 kept us very busy once again conducting tours of numerous Native American archaeological and historic sites in the Middle Tennessee area. We were honored to be asked to host the MTSU Anthropology Society on a tour of the Old Jefferson / Trail of Tears segment in Rutherford County and were equally honored to be invited guests of the Rutherford County Historical Society and several other organizations where we presented our research on Old Jefferson through a power point presentation.

We continued to be deeply involved in our ongoing research to positively identify the TDOT owned 1823 Nashville Covered Toll Bridge location on the Cumberland River downtown at VMB, where the Cherokee crossed the river on the Trail of Tears in 1838.

2013 was very significant for the Native American community in Tennessee due to the 175th anniversary of the Cherokee Trail of Tears. As a result of this, The Native History Association co-hosted an informal Memorial Service at the Nashville Toll Bridge site on October 27th to mark the passage of the first of the northern land route Cherokee's who crossed the Cumberland river at Nashville in October of 1838. We are currently pursuing official NPS site certification for this site because of its relationship to the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Our sincere thanks to Mr. Gerald Kline, and TDOT Commissioner John Schroer for their tremendous support and their willingness to assist us in our efforts to preserve and interpret the site. We are also very grateful for the unending support of the NPS for their financial assistance and their efforts to coordinate all this with TDOT, and to Mr. Tim Walker, Exec. Director of the Metro Historic Commission for lending us his advice and support as well on behalf of the City of Nashville.

In June of 2013 a surface collection project permit was granted by the DOA for a surface collection of iron artifacts on the river bank surrounding the west abutment by the Native History Association. Our sincere thanks to Dr. Kevin Smith and to Mike Moore for making this project possible. The location now known by its newly assigned site file number 40DV662, has been continuously disturbed over the past 160 years, however, dozens of recently discovered surviving cast wrought iron artifacts were identified and recovered due to their association with the former bridge at the location. Much of what was recovered clearly does show a tentative correlation to the construction of the 1823 bridge.

In November 2013, the Native History Association in partnership with the NPS / National Historic Trails office, and the local non-profit, organization, Historic Nashville Inc. hired a professional engineer and 19th century bridge expert, Mr. Jim Barker of Bloomington, Ind. to investigate the west abutment and determine the actual age and authenticity of the site. Mr. Barker visited the site along with NHA Vice-President Toye Heape, volunteer Archaeologist Mark Crawford, and Save the Cumberland President, Vic Scoggin. Mr. Barker's investigation resulted in a very informative report and he further states in it, that the west bank structure is most definitely the remnant surviving 1823 abutment for the first bridge to ever cross the Cumberland river. We are hopeful that the information we now have will also help support the nomination of the structure to the NRHP under three separate criteria.

The artifacts from the surface collections were photographed and inventoried as required in my formal project report to the Division of Archaeology and these artifacts are currently in the possession of the Division. I'm hopeful that they still might perhaps provide us an opportunity to further examine the artifacts and how they were utilized in the construction of the bridge. Another interesting fact that we discovered is that the bridge was designed by a brilliant but obscure 19th century bridge engineer - Mr. Lewis Wernwag of Philadelphia of which prior to our investigation, was an unknown but very intriguing discovery.

In addition to those persons I've already mentioned who have been invaluable in their assistance, I want to

acknowledge our friend Mark Crawford III who volunteered so much time to assist in our surface collection projects. Also, Mr. Vic Scoggin of Save the Cumberland, Robbie Jones of New South Associates, along with Ben Nance, Suzanne Hoyal, and Mark Norton, at the Division of Archaeology for all their support and efforts to assist us.

In addition to the bridge project, the NHA is also continuing our work with the National Park Service and the U.S. Corps of Engineers on the Rutherford County / Old Jefferson Trail of Tears site and we're hopeful that approx. a one a half mile long trail segment will be marked with pedestrian signage hopefully by spring. In conjunction with our Old Jefferson Trail of Tears activity, we were also glad to assist in adding two more historic period archaeological sites at Old Jefferson to the state files. These include the pre-civil war era former Plantation home sites, known as Fairmont, and The Keeble Plantation house site also known as Stoney Lonesome.

Lastly, I want to note that a 2 1/2 mile newly marked segment of the original Bell Route of the Trail of Tears at Lawrenceburg, TN was dedicated at David Crockett State Park in November of 2013. This project was made possible in large part due to another fellow Native American community member and a long time friend by the name of Vicky Garland, who has worked tirelessly on projects like this for many years. Vicky was instrumental in urging the NPS and Tennessee State Parks to develop this trail segment that was confirmed through her own independent research. Toye Heape and I attended the dedication in November and we walked the entire route ourselves. When spring arrives, It's well worth the drive to Lawrenceburg to visit the Park and walk the retracement trail.

Our plans for the immediate future include documenting and sharing information relating to the Native American resistance to the settlement of Middle Tennessee by the Euro-American settlers. The accounts of the Battle of the Bluffs, the Buchanan's Station attack, and many other historical events related to the early occupation of Middle Tennessee are lacking in their historical accuracy, and we hope to perhaps bring some new perspectives and modern interpretations to many of these historic events through the recent research and investigations of local scholars. Stayed tuned to our website at - www.nativehistoryassociation.org

If anyone has any additional questions or would like any additional information on anything I've mentioned, please let me know.

Wado - Thank you!

Pat Cummins, President
Native History Association.