

# The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

*Merely level  
out of the*

**An Inventory of Trail Resources in Cherokee,  
Clay, Graham, Macon, and Swain Counties**

**Brett Riggs and Lance Greene  
University of North Carolina  
Research Laboratories of Archaeology  
and  
the Trail of Tears Association, North Carolina Chapter**

**Revised and updated report submitted to the National Park Service,  
Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico**

**2006**

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## **Inventory and Evaluation of Trail of Tears Associated Sites in Southwestern North Carolina**

### **Introduction**

The summary dispossession and military deportation of more than 12,000 Cherokee citizens from their southeastern homelands in 1838–1839 was a defining episode in American history. The federal government’s Indian Removal policy abandoned the moral high ground that the United States had claimed at its inception, and the resulting Indian removals of the 1830s and 1840s signaled the loss of American national innocence to the first frenzies of Manifest Destiny. Under legal color of the 1830 Indian Removal Act, the U.S. federal government, with the endorsement and support of states and private citizens, cajoled, bribed, deceived and bullied land cessions from Indian leaders, then forced emigration upon entire societies in America’s own “ethnic cleansing.”

The most widely known of these forced “removals” was the infamous Trail of Tears emigration of the Cherokee Nation. After the Jackson administration foisted the fraudulent Treaty of New Echota upon the Cherokees, the vast majority of the Cherokee Nation refused to acknowledge the treaty, which required that the Cherokee people relinquish their eastern homelands for territory in “the Arkansas.” When the treaty specified deadline for “voluntary” emigration expired, the U.S. Army and state militias arrested thousands of Cherokee citizens, confined them in internment camps, then forced their exodus to present-day Oklahoma. As much as a quarter of the Cherokee population, mostly the elderly and very young, perished during this dark passage. With these deaths, the Cherokee Nation lost much its archive of historical memory and saw its future hopes dashed during the cruel winter of 1838-39. Once in Oklahoma, the Cherokee Nation, wracked by political and civil turmoil and violence, struggled to rebuild itself in an alien land. Almost miraculously, the nation re-emerged as a model of “civilized” society, patterned after Anglo-America, but truly pluralistic in content and outlook.

The tragedy of the Trail of Tears and the remarkable rebirth of the Cherokee Nation are testaments to the courage, perseverance and resilience of the Cherokee people, and their struggle resounds to the present day to inform our national conscience and consciousness. To commemorate the travails of the Cherokee people, the U.S. Congress authorized creation of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail as part of the National Trails System administered by the National Park Service. The defining legislation (PUBLIC LAW 100-192), passed in December 1986, amends the National Trails System Act to include:

"(16)(A) The Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, a trail consisting of water routes and overland routes traveled by the Cherokee Nation during its removal from ancestral lands in the East to Oklahoma during 1838 and 1839, generally located within the corridor described through portions of Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma in the final report of the Secretary of the Interior prepared pursuant to subsection (b) of this section entitled "Trail of Tears" and dated June 1986. Maps depicting the corridor shall be on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The trail shall be administered by the Secretary of the Interior. No lands or interests therein outside the exterior boundaries of any federally administered area may be acquired by the Federal Government for the Trail of Tears except with the consent of the owner thereof. "(B) In carrying out his responsibilities pursuant to subsections 5(f) and 7(c) of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall give careful consideration to the establishment of appropriate interpretive sites for the Trail of Tears in the vicinity of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, Fort Smith, Arkansas, Trail of Tears State Park, Missouri, and Tahlequah, Oklahoma."

The National Park Service is assisted in the development, interpretation, and protection of the trail and its constituent properties by the National Trail of Tears Association, a non-profit citizens’ group incorporated in 1993. State chapters of the Trail of Tears Association formed in Alabama,

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Tennessee have conducted or commissioned a number of trail studies and resource inventories and have assisted with interpretive and preservation efforts within their respective states. This updated technical report details the conduct and findings of one such inventory effort undertaken in southwestern North Carolina as a challenge cost-share arrangement between the National Park Service and the North Carolina Chapter of the National Trail of Tears Association, and includes results of additional documentation studies undertaken beyond the scope of the original agreement. The immediate goals of this study are identification, inventory, and documentation of archaeological sites that are important to understanding the events, processes, and context of the 1838 Cherokee removal. Achieving these goals is essential to the long-term preservation and interpretive enhancement of Trail of Tears related sites in southwestern North Carolina, and will provide the basis for National Park Service certification of these resources as official components of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

### **Study Objectives, Materials, and Methods**

This study examines archival evidence, remnant landscapes, and archaeological evidence to document 28 sites associated with the 1838 Cherokee removal from southwestern North Carolina (Figure 1; Table 1). The data are used to construct frameworks of historical significance for these sites, to conclusively locate these sites on the modern landscape, and to evaluate the physical integrity, setting and content of these resources. These compilations of documentary and archaeological data are submitted to the National Park Service Long Distance Trails Program as a supplemental update to the “High Potential Historic Site listing in the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management and Use Plan,” and will be used to support certification of the sites as components of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and nomination of potentially eligible sites to the National Register of Historic Places.

The 28 sites were initially identified as study targets based upon multiple primary narratives that establish either the direct and important roles that these sites played in the broad, programmatic sweep of the Cherokee removal, or their association with historical personages who played important roles in the removal, or which identify sites that are representative of classes of resources important to understanding the context of removal. The various classes of resources (i.e., military installations, roads, public facilities, private residences) are documented by a diverse array of contemporary and near contemporary records. The military installations in southwestern North Carolina are most extensively documented by U.S. National Archives Record Group 393, Microfilm M1475, “Correspondence of the Eastern Division of the Army of the Cherokee Nation,” and RG92, “Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General.” These records also document the construction, maintenance, and use of particular road routes by the U.S. Army. Public facilities in the study area are documented by a number of sources. Roadside stands (waystations) that played a role in the Cherokee removal (i.e., Hunter’s stand, Rhea’s stand, Burnt Stand) are mentioned in military correspondence and orders and in the journals of Lts. Charles F. Noland and John Phelps. Other facilities, such as the Valleytowns Baptist Mission and the Aquohee District Courthouse, are documented by narrative accounts such as missionary Evan B. Jones’ letters and daybook (Jones 1826-1842), and George Featherstonhaugh’s travel journal (Featherstonhaugh 1847). Private residences are most extensively documented by the 1835 War Department Census of the Cherokee Nation, the 1836–1837 federal valuations of Cherokee properties (Welch and Jarrett 1837), and various bodies of spoliation claims filed by Cherokee families in the aftermath of the removal (Ross Papers 1838-1843; Records of the Fourth Board of Cherokee Commissioners [RG75]).

The physical locations of these sites are primarily documented by the field notebooks of surveys conducted in 1837–1838 by the United States Army Corps of Topographical Engineers



Table 1. North Carolina Trail of Tears inventory study sites.

site	NC site no.	UTM coordinates			field reconnaissance			archaeological confirmation			archaeological data recovery			site condition
		zone	easting	northing	*	*	*	*	*	*	site ownership			
<b>U.S. Army installations</b>														
Fort Butler	not assigned	[16]	769748	3887156	*					private (multiple)	heavy residential development			
Fort Delaney	not assigned	[17]	242488	3897950	*					private (multiple)	heavy residential development			
Fort Hembree	not assigned	[17]	242176	3880529	*					private (multiple)	light residential development			
Fort Montgomery	not assigned	[17]	245661	3912313	*					private	light residential development			
Fort Lindsay	not assigned	[17]	267209	3917691	*					TVA/USDA F.S.	inundated/heavily deflated			
Camp Scott	not assigned	[17]	256874	3895895	*					Duke Energy	inundated			
<b>Roads</b>														
Unicoi Turnpike	31Ce680				*	*	*			multiple public/private	various			
Great State Road	31Ma642				*	*	*			multiple public/private	various			
Old Army Road	31Ch467				*	*	*			multiple public/private	various			
Georgia Road	31Ce686				*	*	*			multiple public/private	various			
<b>Stores/Stands</b>														
Hunter's Store	not assigned	[16]	769748	3887156	*					private (corporate)	industrial development			
Burnt Stand	31Ce672	[16]	752428	3900456	*	*	*			USDA F.S.	wooded			
Rheat's Stand	not assigned	[16]	763088	3890098	*					TVA	inundated			
<b>Public facilities</b>														
Aquohee District Courthouse	31Ce338	[17]	229314	3884086	*	*	*			private	agricultural			
<b>Townhouses</b>														
Tusquitee	not assigned	[17]	241588	3880501	*					private	destroyed by highway			
Chimleanatlee	not assigned	[17]	265000	3913578	*					TVA	inundated			
Notely	not assigned	[16]	762803	3876916						private	light residential development			
Shooting Creek	not assigned	[17]	254516	7878446						private	n/d			
Cootlohee	not assigned	[16]	762216	3889156						TVA	inundated			
Tallula	not assigned	[17]	251510	3906340						private	n/d			
Konahete	not assigned	[17]	244008	3898315						private	heavy residential development			
Valleytowns Baptist Mission	31Ce661	[17]	231774	3883990	*	*	*			private	agricultural			
<b>Private residences</b>														
Wacheecee	not assigned	[16]	760781	3898093	*					private	destroyed by highway			
Acquone housesite	31Ma604	[17]	258055	3894061	*	*	*			Duke Energy	inundated			
Situwakee	31Cy265	[17]	231564	3882701	*	*	*			private	agricultural			
John Welch	31Ce673	[17]	236160	3897538	*	*	*			private	agricultural			
John Wayne Jr.	31Ce627	[16]	749596	3895397	*	*	*	*	*	TVA	inundated			

(USNARA Cartographic Archives). These manuscripts, together with the composite map of southwestern North Carolina that army cartographers assembled from the survey data, depict hundreds of Cherokee and Anglo-American residences, roads and trails, public facilities, and military installations; these documents are key to reconstructing the cultural landscape of southwestern North Carolina at the time of removal. The sites selected for this study, with the exception of the Aquohee District Courthouse, are depicted by the Army survey notes (with varying degrees of precision). These contemporary map data are augmented by the 1837 Reuben Deaver survey notes and map of the study area, which define land lots and property boundaries (many of which are still extant), and which reference approximate locations of Cherokee homes and facilities. The 1850 Fox survey of the Western Turnpike provides precise locations for the Old State Road, as well as the John Welch home and other domestic sites.

Correlation of these historic cartographic records to the modern landscape of southwestern North Carolina was initiated by general comparison of the 1838 "Map of the Portion of North Carolina..." with modern 1:100,000 scale topographic maps of the region to achieve approximate site placements and references to appropriate topographic features. More precise locations of sites and facilities were determined through detailed projection of the recorded lines of the Army surveys (based upon both survey calls of bearing and distance and map sketches) onto modern 7.5' USGS topographic quadrangles and aerial photographs. Initial field reconnaissance of these sites attempted to identify landmarks referenced by the 1837–1838 surveys to gain the perspectives on the landscape that the Army surveyors depicted in the field notebooks, and thereby place the sites in proper relation to topographic features. Such placement allowed investigators to make preliminary assessments of site locales to determine ground conditions in the immediate vicinity of target sites and to determine potential for resource survival (after 165 years of subsequent land use) before investing in more intensive archaeological survey. Site conditions were documented with still photography and narrative notation. Once initial field assessment determined that a site had not been obliterated or rendered inaccessible by development, investigators employed a variety of methods to identify actual archaeological resources. In situations where cultivation or other activities (e.g. reservoir inundation/fluctuation) exposed soil surfaces, intensive surface inspections sought temporally diagnostic artifacts (e.g. ceramics) to confirm site use during the Removal Period. Where vegetation or soil overburden obscured original site surfaces, investigators resorted to shovel test sampling (hand excavation of 30cm<sup>2</sup> units) at intervals no greater than 10 meters to recover diagnostic materials from presumed site matrices. In addition, investigators systematically scanned target sites with metal detectors in efforts to locate concentrations of diagnostic metal artifacts. Investigators then prepared scale plans, and, in most cases, topographic maps of confirmed archaeological sites; these plans were referenced to fixed points evident on 7.5' quadrangles or aerial photographs.

Once distributions of temporally appropriate materials were documented at target sites, investigators attempted to locate intact archaeological contexts (e.g. pit features; garbage deposits) by close interval (one-meter) sampling with a small diameter soil auger or by selective hand-excavated trenching and exposure of undisturbed surfaces. If such contexts appeared imminently threatened by ongoing or anticipated actions (i.e., cultivation, erosion, construction), investigators excavated the contexts to achieve data recovery. All such contexts (primarily cellar pit features) were mapped within the overall site plan, photographed, and diagrammed to scale. The matrices of these pit features were then hand excavated in their entirety. Pit features were bisected along their long axes to expose longitudinal stratigraphic profiles, and excavated with respect to natural and cultural stratigraphy. Feature profiles and final excavated morphologies were documented with still photography and measured. With the exception of soil samples retained for flotation processing, all excavated soils were water screened processed through ¼" mesh and window screen to recover

artifacts and other culturally related materials. Ten-liter soil samples from each stratigraphic unit of each were retained for flotation processing for recovery of ethnobotanical and microfaunal remains. All recovered materials were placed in zip-lock plastic bags and returned to laboratory facilities for initial stabilization, cleaning, cataloguing and analysis.

### **Site Significance Considerations**

Selection of the study sample was based upon criteria of potential historic and archaeological importance framed in the significance guidelines rubric of the National Register of Historic Places. As stated by the National Historic Preservation Act [36 CFR Part 60(a)], essential criteria of significance for property listing in the National Register include:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. that are associated with events that have made significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Each of the sites selected for this study has demonstrable and direct linkages to Cherokee mass removal of 1838, and therefore derives historical significance with reference to Criterion A, being “associated with events that have made significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.” The military installations and roads considered here were the actual physical theaters of Cherokee concentration, detention, and forced marches, the substantive acts for which the “Trail of Tears” is most infamous. Among the public facilities, the Anglo-American operated stands situated along the Unicoi Turnpike not only stood witness to the Cherokee exodus, but served as stations for Army express riders and lodging for officers; they may also have functioned as encampments for contingents of Cherokee prisoners en route to Tennessee. The traditional Cherokee townhouses and the Baptist mission functioned as information and organizational centers for Cherokee political opposition to the New Echota Treaty and removal, and are, therefore, important to understanding the larger context of removal. The individual Cherokee home sites represent the “very doors,” the ultimate points of origin, from which the multilinear Trail of Tears issued. Although the specific removal stories of each household are not known, all of these sites are representative of a class of properties “associated with events that have made significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.” In addition, the homes of historical personae John Welch, Wacheesee, and Situagi, who played noteworthy roles in the broad sweep of the Cherokee removal, may also be judged important by their association “with the lives of persons significant in our past” (Criterion B).

Because most of the resources considered in this study (with the exception of historic roadbeds) exhibit no surviving architecture or other above-ground evidence, it becomes essential to establish the qualities of archaeological contextual integrity and significant archaeological content in order to satisfy National Register Criterion D, applicable to sites “that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.” The primary goals of this study are positive identification and evaluation of archaeological evidence that is specifically referable to Cherokee homes, military installations, public facilities and transportation routes associated with the 1838 removal. Such contexts would almost certainly yield archaeological data that illuminates the Removal period and informs our understanding of the historical and cultural setting of the Cherokee removal, “information important in ... history.”

**Study Context**

The study area (Figure 1) encompasses the southwesternmost corner of North Carolina, and includes all of present-day Cherokee, Clay, Graham counties, as well as portions of Macon and Swain counties. These areas, which total approximately 1,112 square miles or 711,680 acres, are located west of the crestline of the Nantahala Mountains and south of the Little Tennessee River, and comprised the northeastern corner of the former Cherokee Nation at the time of the Treaty of New Echota.

This mountainous region encompasses the Nantahala, Tusquittee, Valley River, Snowbird, Cheoah and Unaka ranges, and borders the Great Smoky Mountains to the north. Elevations within the study area range from 1168 feet (356 m) AMSL along the Hiwassee River at the Tennessee state line to 5429 feet (1655m) AMSL on Hooper's Bald. The topography of the area is generally rugged and highly dissected, and more than 85% of the project area exhibits slopes greater than 20°. Although landforms in the area exhibit over 4000 feet of relief, Removal Period Cherokee residences and agricultural improvements appear to have been restricted to the zone below 2800 ft AMSL. Cherokee residential occupation within the project area was particularly concentrated within the large basin areas around present-day Murphy, Hayesville and Andrews and in the Cheoah River Valley around present-day Robbinsville.

The project area is drained by the upper Hiwassee and upper Little Tennessee river watersheds. The Hiwassee River and its major affluents, the Valley and Nottely rivers, are located in the southern half of the project area. The Hiwassee River is also fed by a number of major creeks within the Murphy–Hayesville Basin, including Shooting Creek, Tusquittee Creek, Brasstown Creek, Peachtree Creek, Hanging Dog Creek, Persimmon Creek, Beaverdam Creek, and Shoal Creek. The northern portion of the project area is bounded by the Little Tennessee River and includes the Little Tennessee River and its tributaries, the Nantahala and Cheoah rivers, and Stecoah and Tuskegee creeks. The Cheoah River is fed by Tallulah, Snowbird, Santeetlah, Yellow, Buffalo, and East Buffalo creeks.

This region encompasses the former Valley Towns, an eighteenth century Cherokee geographic and sociopolitical division equivalent to the Lower Towns of South Carolina and Georgia, the Middle Towns of the upper Little Tennessee River Valley in North Carolina, and the Overhill Towns of Tennessee. After *circa* 1790, the Cherokee settlements in the project area were also known as part of the Upper Towns, distinguished from the new Lower Towns of southeastern Tennessee, northwestern Georgia and northeastern Alabama. After 1820, the project area was subsumed within the Aquohee and Tahquohee districts, judicial and administrative divisions within the Cherokee Nation established with the formal organization of the national government (Cherokee Nation 1852).

In 1830, when the U.S. Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, southwestern North Carolina was a mosaic of traditional tribal towns interspersed with wagon roads, churches, schools, stores, inns, courthouses, gristmills, ferries and other hallmarks of western modernity. Like the rest of the Cherokee Nation, the people of the Aquohee and Tahquohee districts had adopted many aspects of southern Anglo-American agrarian economy and lifeways over the previous three decades. The Cherokee Nation had established itself as a constitutional republic with American-styled governmental structures and legal codes; native literacy spread rapidly among the Cherokees, and Protestant Christianity made significant inroads throughout the nation. These developments led contemporary western observers to declare the Cherokees a “civilized tribe” that conformed to western ideas of progress and order.

During the 1830s, most of the Valley Towns Cherokees lived the quiet lives of subsistence farmers, in many respects similar to those of southern frontier whites. Most Cherokee families dwelled in small, cribbed log cabins with dirt floors and stick and clay chimneys on farms of five to

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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10 acres. They produced small crops of corn, beans, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, peaches and apples and raised stocks of horses, cattle, hogs, and chickens. The rapid spread of western agrarian lifeways in the Valley Towns region prompted Evan Jones to note in 1826: "...in this vicinity *which has always been deemed the darkest part of the Nation* [emphasis added], agriculture, Female industry, general knowledge, good order, and decency of appearance are making very sensible progress...(Jones 1826a)." Still, in 1835 J.P. Evans referred to the Valley Towns region as the "part of the nation least influenced by civilization. The fact is there are but few individuals amongst them, who have not conformed in some degree to the customs and manners of the whites. But there are communities that cling to their old customs as much as possible..."

These dispersed farming communities (Figure 2) formed a series of traditional tribal towns or *gatugi*, civil, religious and political organizations that effected group decision-making, ritual and ceremonial observances, and cooperative assistance and charity at the local level. Each town maintained a townhouse (*gatiyi*) or council house, a council of elders, and a group of officials who organized and oversaw community activities. As J.B. Evans noted (ca. 1835):

In the chartered limits of North Carolina... the Cherokees are divided into towns and clans. By towns is not to be understood a cluster of dwellings contained within a small space, as amongst the whites, ... but a small colony, generally embracing some miles in extent. In the same sense, Cherokee village is to be understood (Evans 1977:10).

Until the Unicoi Turnpike opened southwestern North Carolina to commercial traffic in 1816, the region was markedly conservative, homogeneous, and poor, as Barber (1808) observed "at least twenty years behind the rest of the nation." The new road linked the Valley Towns to American markets, brought western goods, people, and ideas into the study area. After the 1819, Cherokees displaced by the Calhoun Treaty land cessions (Royce 1887) streamed into the Valley Towns. The emigrants included a number of Anglo-Cherokee *métis* families, such as the Welches, Morrisises, Taylors, Downings, Englands, Rapers, Buffingtons and Hawkins, who settled among the Valley Cherokees, and provided models for the westernization of "the darkest part of the Nation." These wealthier, more westernized Cherokee families generally maintained larger, more elaborate farms of 25-200 cultivated acres with extensive orchards of peach, apple, and cherry trees. Such families lived in well-constructed hewn-log houses with wooden floors and shingled roofs, surrounded by separate kitchens, stables, shops, and, in a few cases, distilleries and gristmills. With the assistance of hired laborers or black slaves, these more westernized Cherokee families produced large quantities of corn and livestock for sale to American markets.

The new road also brought Anglo-Americans to live, work, trade, preach, and teach in the Valley Towns. Anglo-Cherokee planters hired white tenants to work their farms; after 1828, many whites moved onto farms abandoned by Cherokee emigrants to Arkansas. Anglo-American and Anglo-Cherokee entrepreneurs established a number of stores in the Valley Towns during the 1820s. These stores brought the commercial manufactured goods of the world to Cherokee doorsteps, and spurred at western-styled consumerism in that "part of the nation least influenced by civilization." Stores such as A.R.S. Hunter's at Murphy, David Thompson's at Brasstown, N.B. Hyatt's at Hayesville and Robert Hanks' at Marble extended credit to Cherokee customers and provided local outlets for Cherokee goods and produce (Cherokee Claims Papers 1838–1842; Hunter 1836–1838; Welch and Jarrett 1837).

In 1820, the Baptists founded a mission and school for Cherokee students at Peachtree; these facilities soon became a major avenue of instruction and acculturation for the Valley Cherokees (McLoughlin 1990). Under the direction of Rev. Evan Jones, the mission established schools and preaching stations throughout much of the project area. The mission and associated schools trained Cherokee students in material and academic skills, disseminating western lifeways in "the darkest part of the Nation."

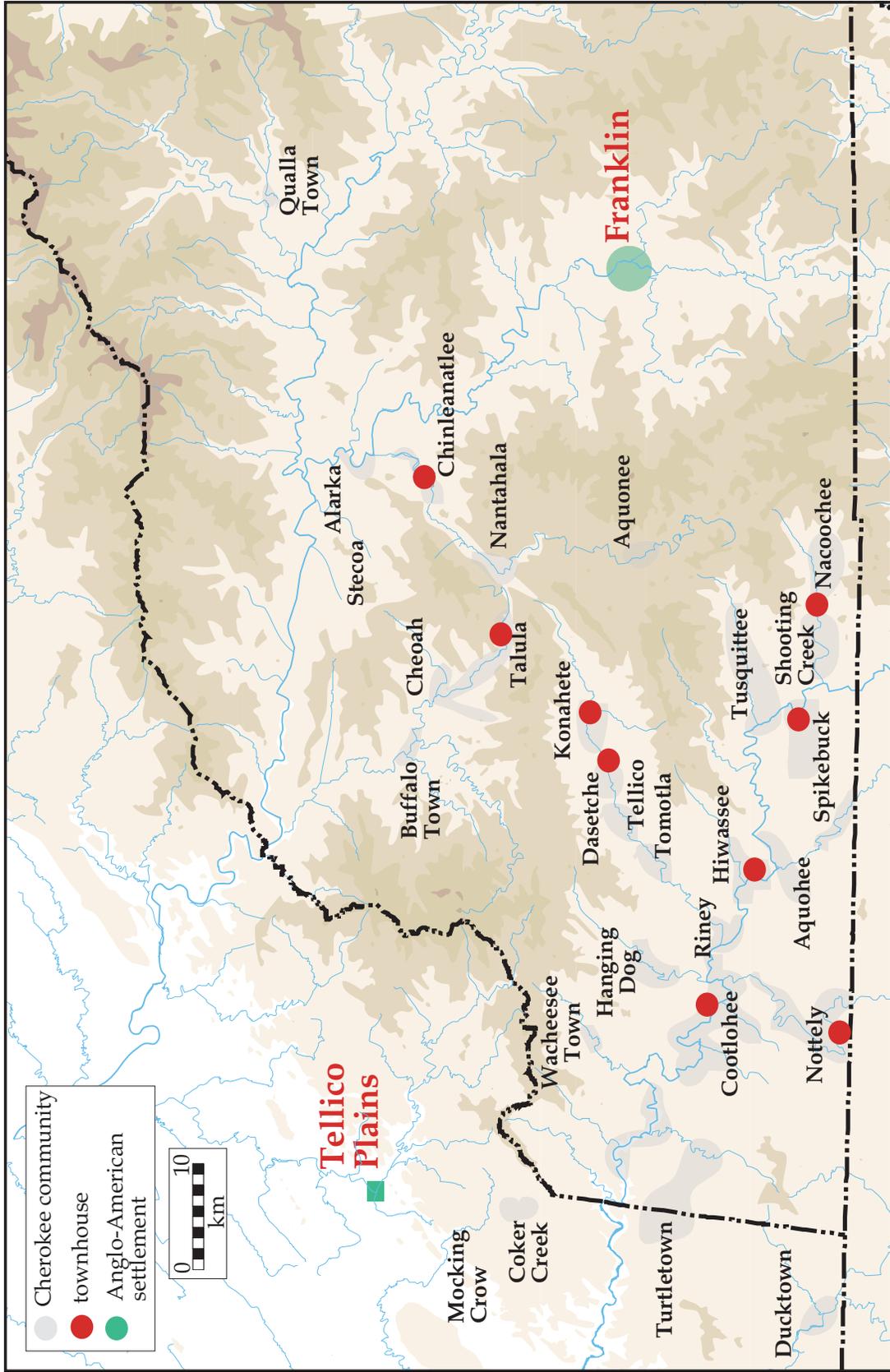


Figure 2. Cherokee communities in southwestern North Carolina, circa 1835-1838.

The uniquely syncretic modernization of the Valley Towns communities was abruptly truncated by the 1838 military deportation of the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee removal of 1838 was the culmination of a 30-year push by the United States government to “extinguish” tribal land rights east of the Mississippi to make room for American expansion. In 1802 President Jefferson signed the Georgia Compact, whereby the state of Georgia relinquished claim to Alabama and Mississippi territories to the federal government in exchange for a pledge to expunge tribal claims to land in Georgia at the first opportunity. The federal government adopted two strategies to extinguish corporate tribal landholdings. First, the government instituted a program of agrarian subsidies and instruction for the Cherokees and other native groups in an effort to transform communalistic tribal groups into constituencies of yeoman farmers who held individual properties in fee simple. Simultaneously, the government attempted to effect land exchanges with eastern tribal groups to promote Indian emigration across the Mississippi. The 1803 Louisiana Purchase provided the United States with a western outlet for exchange with eastern native groups.

Between 1804 and 1807, Federal agents exacted a series of questionable land cessions from corrupt Cherokee leaders and provided a land exchange for Cherokees willing to emigrate to the Arkansas region of the Louisiana Purchase. In response, a nationalist anti-removal faction led by prominent *métis* seized control of the Cherokee national council in 1807 and outlawed territorial cession as a capital offense. The more centralized council organization dealt effectively with the U.S. government, and staunchly resisted the loss of Cherokee lands until 1816, when the federal government forced a succession of treaties upon the Cherokees. The treaties of 1816, 1817 and 1819 exacted more than four million acres of Cherokee territory, and reopened federally sponsored emigration of Cherokees to Arkansas. To better resist this renewed threat, the Cherokee national government developed a more formal and centralized structure, and in 1827 adopted a national constitution that established a tripartite constitutional republic with a bicameral legislature, an executive branch and a Supreme Court modeled after those within the United States government.

After gold was discovered on Cherokee lands in Georgia in 1828, the state of Georgia redoubled its efforts to see the Compact of 1802 honored. Georgia feared that a Cherokee republic might prevent the ultimate total cession of Cherokee territory, and unilaterally extended its dominion over Cherokee lands. Georgia militias disbanded the Cherokee government in New Echota, destroyed the Cherokee press, and terrorized Cherokee communities. The state of Georgia (where 60% of the Cherokee Nation resided) appropriated Cherokee lands and redistributed property to Georgia citizens through the 1832 lottery. It then left the physical dispossession of the Cherokee occupants to the lottery winners, who evicted thousands of Cherokees from their homes.

The U.S. presidential election of Andrew Jackson in 1828, and passage of Jackson's Indian Removal Act in 1830, doomed the Cherokee Nation in the east. The federal government not only failed to protect the Cherokees from Georgian aggression, but also directed its agents and commissioners to use every means (including bribery, deception and intimidation) to secure the complete removal by the Cherokee Nation. Eventually, federal agents (aided by Georgia's harassment) broke down Cherokee cohesion, and a rump council signed a cession treaty at New Echota in December 1835. Although 90 percent of the Cherokee population rejected the treaty, the United States Congress ratified the agreement and the federal government began measures to force the Cherokees to comply. The “Patriot Party” Cherokees and their Anglo-American advocates mounted a strong lobbying effort for the nullification or amendment of the treaty. The Cherokee National Council prescribed capital punishment for the treaty signers, and members of the minority Treaty Party hurriedly emigrated to Oklahoma to avoid assassination. Guided by the Cherokee National Council and Principal Chief John Ross, most of the Cherokee populace rejected the cession treaty and refused to evacuate their lands and emigrate to the West.

The people of the Aquohee and Tahquohee districts strongly opposed every removal scheme that the federal government forwarded in the 1820s and 1830s. Valley Towns residents published memorials and memoranda against land cession and emigration, confounded federal emigration enrolling agents, stymied the 1835 War Department census of the Cherokee Nation, and soundly rebuffed federal agents B.F. Curry and John Schemerhorn when they attempted to convene a treaty conference in the Valley Towns in September 1835. The Ross-led nationalists regarded the mountain region as its political stronghold; the U.S. War Department viewed southwestern North Carolina as a hotbed of Cherokee resistance and a potential powderkeg if the military forced removal. After congressional passage of the New Echota treaty in 1836, wild rumors of impending Cherokee uprisings and resistance conspiracies led B.F. Curry, the federal agent in charge of Cherokee removal, to dispatch Tennessee Volunteers under Gen. John E. Wool to the Valley River region. Wool and his troops confiscated the firearms of the mountain Cherokees, and demanded that the leaders of the mountain settlements acknowledge the New Echota Treaty and prepare the population for removal. Wool summarily arrested a number of headmen who refused to cooperate with his demands, and expelled Baptist missionary Evan Jones from the Cherokee Nation for complicity in political resistance against the treaty.

Wool discovered that the North Carolina Cherokees were pacifistic, but also that they were stubborn in their opposition to the illegal treaty and prospect of unjust removal. Despite a critical food shortage in the Valley settlements in the summer of 1836, Wool observed:

Those in the mountains of North Carolina during the summer past, preferred living upon the roots and sap of trees rather than receive provisions from the United States... Many have said they will die before they will leave the country (Wool 1837).

Wool and his troops, who had grown increasingly sympathetic to the plight of the Cherokees, withdrew from the Valley Towns in August 1836, but left two companies in place at Camp Huntington near the mouth of the Valley River. This post grew into Fort Butler, the military headquarters for the Cherokee removal from southwestern North Carolina.

Despite intense lobbying efforts by the Cherokee delegation in Washington to have the Treaty of New Echota annulled, the U.S. War Department continued its preparations for execution of the removal treaty. Federal valuing agents for Cherokee properties conducted detailed appraisals of Cherokee farmsteads in the project area in the winter of 1836–1837 so that individual Cherokees could receive compensation for their improvements in accordance with Article 9 of the New Echota Treaty. Throughout 1836 and 1837, it became increasingly apparent to government agents that the Cherokees of southwestern North Carolina would not comply with the mandatory schedule for self-emigration, and the government prepared to exact a forced military removal. The army constructed additional cantonments for garrisons of troops in the project area, including Fort Hembree (now Hayesville), Fort Delaney (now Andrews) and Fort Lindsay (now Almond). To facilitate the anticipated removal operation in southwestern North Carolina, the U.S. Army undertook a detailed reconnaissance of the Cherokee country in the winter of 1837–1838, and mapped trails, roads and Cherokee communities throughout the area.

As the treaty-specified deadline for emigration (May 23, 1838) approached, the federal government rejected the frantic, last minute calls for renegotiation from Cherokee delegations in Washington. Although anxious, Cherokee citizens in the Valley Towns maintained a calm appearance, building new homes and planting crops in a purposeful show of opposition to the treaty. Capt. L.B. Webster wrote home from the project area on the eve of the Removal:

We arrived at Fort Butler on the 7th [June 7, 1838], but did not establish camp till today, which is on the north side of Valley River just above its entrance into Hiawassee, and about one mile from the Fort. We are said to be in the thickest settled portion of the Cherokee Country. There are about six thousand in our neighborhood-- their houses are quite thick about us, and they all remain

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quietly at home at work on their little farms, as though no evil was intended them. They sell us very cheap anything they have to spare, and look upon the regular troops as their friends... These are innocent and simple people into whose homes we are to obtrude ourselves, and take off by force. They have no idea of fighting, but submit quietly to be tied and lead away...(Webster 1838a).

Meanwhile, state militia and federal troops took their posts at forts throughout the Cherokee Nation, ready to commence the military mass arrest and deportation of Cherokee citizens from their homes at President Van Buren's directive. These forces, styled the "Army of the Cherokee Nation" were headquartered at Fort Cass (present-day Charleston, Tennessee) under command of Major General Winfield Scott. Scott appointed Brigadier General Abraham Eustis commander of the eastern division of the army, based at Fort Butler (present-day Murphy). Eustis' federal troops, who occupied Fort Butler, Fort Delaney and Fort Hembree, were largely responsible for the removal of Cherokees from the Hiwassee River basin in North Carolina. North Carolina militia commanded by Colonel James Gray Bynum (but under control of the regular army) were charged with removal of Cherokee populations in the upper Little Tennessee River basin.

Military operations in North Carolina were suspended until the second week of June 1838, in part to stage the stream of the thousands Cherokee prisoners who poured into the internment camps and removal depots, in part to stem the type of abuses suffered in Georgia. Fatigue details of state and federal troops began gathering Cherokee prisoners into the North Carolina forts on June 12, 1838. These operations were, for the most part, characterized by military propriety, although some instances of wanton abuse are documented. The Mink of Valley Town swore that:

...he was taken prisoner by the military and put in jail [at Fort Delany] 18 days for no other cause than a disinclination to come to the west and [was] much abused by the soldiers, and but for an aunt that fed him, he might have starved (Mink 1842).

Mink's aunt testified:

She was the person that fed him while under arrest by a vile band of soldiers who tormented the claimant in every way they could invent and would have starved him but for her own sustainance (Sarah 1842).

Another Cherokee, John Welch, deposed that "Genl. Eustis' Florida soldiers with a horde of other equally worthless white men were rioting in and plundering him of his property" (Welch 1841).

Most of the Cherokees in the project area were quickly gathered into local camps and forts, then marched to Fort Butler for concentration in larger groups of 100-1300 individuals to be conducted under military escort to the major emigration depots at Fort Cass (Charleston, Tennessee) and Rosses Landing (Chattanooga, Tennessee). The first group of Cherokee prisoners departed Fort Butler for Fort Cass on June 18, 1838. Brevet General Abraham Eustis noted:

The first detachment of Cherokees, about 380, left here this morning under escort of Capt. Munroe's company, 4th artillery ... Another party of about 690 will move tomorrow under escort of Capt. Webster's Comp. 1rst Artill. The roads are represented to be in such bad condition that it is estimated to be at least 7 days march from here to Calhoun ... (Eustis 1838a).

By the end of June, the military roundup and deportation of Cherokee citizens from southwestern North Carolina appeared practically complete. On June 24, 1838, Eustis observed:

The whole number of Indians which have been collected in North Carolina is something more than 3000. A few are still hiding in the recesses of the mountains. A number of families have obtained permission from the Superintendent of Emigration or his Agents, to remain and become citizens of North Carolina... It is my belief that in four or five days everything will have been done (Eustis 1838b)

The regular removal operations actually continued in southwestern North Carolina through the third week of July, when the militia was disbanded and garrisons of federal troops withdrawn.

Several subsequent expeditions revisited the region in pursuit of fugitive Cherokees through the late summer and fall of 1838; these military actions were terminated in November in response to the infamous *Tsali* affair (Finger 1984, 1991; King 1979), and the remaining Cherokees were granted exemptions from deportation.

When groups of Cherokee prisoners from North Carolina arrived at the main emigration depot at Fort Cass in June and July 1838, they took up temporary residence in internment camps along the eastern prong of South Mouse Creek on the military reservation. These and thousands of other Cherokee prisoners languished through the hot, drought-ridden summer of 1838, confined to the military reservation and beset by Anglo-American bootleggers, swindlers, thieves and gamblers. Disease, particularly whooping cough and dysentery, raged through the Cherokee camps, and mortality among children and the elderly was staggering. Daniel S. Buttrick, a Congregationalist preacher stationed at the Brainerd mission near Fort Cass, recorded the misery and chaos of the camps:

July 2; A child died at the camp last night and the friends wished it to be buried here; but while we were making preparations, word came that it was buried near the place where it had died. Soon after a measure was brought for a coffin to bury an aged black man, who had just died. Thus we are becoming almost familiar with death (Buttrick 1998:11).

July 22; Soon in the morning two measures were brought for coffins, one of a child, and the other of an aged woman. Death is becoming a familiar event. Two are likewise buried today at the camps two and a half miles distant. We understand that from ten to twenty die daily at the Agency (Buttrick 1998:20-21).

October 5; Arrived at the camps, pitched our tent near those of brother McPherson. The night, however, was rendered particularly distressing by the almost constant yells of drunkards, passing and repassing to and from a whisky shop set up by a white man to ensnare the poor Indians (Buttrick 1998:37).

Although some emigration contingents traveled west by boat in June, dropping river levels precluded further water travel, and the Cherokees faced an overland trek of almost 1,000 miles. With the Cherokee population already weakened by disease, Chief Ross and the Nationalist party leadership feared that an army-conducted overland emigration to Oklahoma in the summer would be disastrous, especially since reports of cholera outbreaks filtered east from the Arkansas River country. Cherokee leaders petitioned General Winfield Scott to postpone the emigration to Oklahoma until fall, after the “sickly” season had elapsed, and to grant the Cherokees the “privilege” to supervise their own emigration. The military, ready to wash its hands of the removal debacle, granted the Cherokees' request, and agreed to self-conducted emigration with military escorts.

The overland emigration of Cherokee prisoners to Oklahoma commenced in September 1838 with thirteen emigration detachments organized under the command of leaders from various districts. The majority of Cherokees from southwestern North Carolina emigrated in the detachments led by Jesse Bushyhead (a Cherokee Baptist preacher), *Situagi* (the headman of Hiwassee Town and the Aquohee District judge) and *Chuwaluka* (Old Bark of Taquohee). Rev. Evan B. Jones of the Peachtree Baptist mission assisted as conductor of *Situagi's* detachment and J.D. Wafford, a prominent Cherokee *métis* and interpreter for Jones, assisted with *Chuwaluka's* line. The *Situagi*, Bushyhead and *Chuwaluka* emigration detachments reached Indian Territory in February and March 1839 after great travail; these groups suffered a total mortality of more than 15 percent en route (Thornton 1990). Once in Indian Territory, the majority of Aquohee and Taquohee District Cherokees settled in Delaware District, where they attempted to reconstitute their respective communities and sociopolitical organizations of the Old Nation (McLoughlin 1990, 1993).

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Despite the scope and efficiency of the military removal efforts in North Carolina, more than 10 percent of the Cherokee population of the project area avoided or evaded arrest and deportation and remained in the region after the conclusion of the military operations (Finger 1984, 1991). These included several families with intermarried whites (i.e. Welches, Morrises, Rapers, Colvards, Fallens, Hensons, Smiths, Taylors) who were exempted by virtue of dual citizenship rights. A number of well-to-do *métis* families procured official permits (from Superintendent of Emigration Nathaniel Smith) to remain in North Carolina through their demonstrated ability to “manage their own affairs,” and their potential to become “useful citizens.” Preston Starrett, a Cherokee countryman (intermarried white) employed by the federal government as an interpreter and enrolling agent, issued emigration waivers for almost 200 Cherokee fullbloods before his commission was rescinded. An undetermined number of Cherokees hid in the mountains for months to avoid arrest (Finger 1984, 1991; King 1979). Many of these were encouraged to hide by Anglo-Cherokees who remained at home under special permit. Col. J.G. Bynum, commander at Fort Montgomery wrote: “I collected yesterday about 80 Indians—they had all received orders from [John] Welch on Valley River to leave home & take to the mountains” (Bynum 1838a). Welch, Gideon Morris, Nancy Hawkins and other wealthy Anglo-Cherokees helped support these fugitives with food and intelligence about military movements (Porter 1838). Despite such aid, the fugitives suffered tragic losses. *Dickageeska*, a leader of one of the main fugitive contingents, recalled

...when the troops commenced collecting, he and his family kept out of the way ... he and his family were deprived of the means of subsistence and compelled to subsist on the sap of trees and roots, and nearly all the children belonging to his people died, only about two children remained out of a population of near 100 persons (Dickageeska 1843).

When they emerged from hiding in the fall of 1838, Cherokee survivors of such ordeals faced an uncertain future in a land now overrun by Anglo-American settlers. Most of these Cherokees lacked shelter and food stores for the upcoming winter, and many would have perished had they not been taken in by Anglo-Cherokee and Anglo-American families (Hayes 1843, Shuler 1843). Their immediate prospects for survival were tenuous, and their situation was exacerbated by constant fears of arrest and expulsion. Many of the former residents of the project area sought sanctuary in the Qualla settlements on Soco Creek (now Jackson County, North Carolina), where they joined their “citizen” Cherokee kindred who had been exempted from removal by their peculiar citizenship status and their residence outside the old Cherokee Nation. Yet an 1840 census of the eastern Cherokees (Thomas 1840) indicates 98 Cherokee households (410 individuals) that remained or re-established in the project area. Some of these were Westernized Anglo-Cherokees who obtained state citizenship and retained their homes and property through removal. These families were particularly concentrated at Peachtree (i.e., Smiths, Hensons, Ruddles, Timsons), Marble (i.e. Welches, Morrises, Taylors, Hawkins) and Nottely (i.e., Rapers, Wards). More than half of the Indians who remained in southwestern North Carolina were conservative, monolingual fullbloods who, as noncitizen free persons of color, were barred by state law from land ownership and other privileges. As they sought to re-establish small subsistence farms, these families were forced to occupy marginal unclaimed state lands as squatters, or to obtain permission from sympathetic Anglo-Cherokees and Anglo-Americans to occupy their fee simple properties (Finger 1984). Following the example of William Holland Thomas at Quallatown, several wealthy Anglo-Cherokees in the project area (i.e. Elizabeth Welch and Gideon Morris) purchased lands for the dispossessed Indians to occupy (Hindman 1841a, 1841b). In some instances these purchasers used their own funds to procure land with the understanding of future repayment; others used the fullbloods’ monies and simply held nominal titles for legal convenience. This strategy allowed Cherokee families to rebuild small traditional communities as distinct enclaves in the northern and western parts of the old Valley Towns area (Finger 1984, 1991, 1995; Fourth Board 1846–1847;

Mullay 1848; Neeley 1991; Thomas 1840). One such community coalesced in the Valley River Valley near Marble on the holdings of John Welch and Gideon Morris; another large group established in the Cheoah Valley at Buffalo Town. Other, smaller groups formed at Alarka, Hanging Dog, Beaverdam, and Turtletown.

These enclaves, although loosely affiliated with each other and the Cherokees of the Qualla and Sandtown settlements, maintained themselves as autonomous communities throughout much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Most Cherokee families continued living much as they had prior to the removal, subsistence farming on dispersed farmsteads, herding livestock in the open woods, and fishing, hunting, and gathering to supplement their farm production. Cash incomes came from wage labor on the farms of whites or as contract labor on roads and railroads. Although surrounded by whites and in daily contact with white neighbors, the post-Removal Cherokee enclaves maintained distinct social, cultural, and material practices. In 1840, a white settler in the Valley River area observed "...they are forming settlements, building townhouses, and show every disposition to keep up their former manners and customs of councils, dances, ballplays and other practices...(Barnard 1840)." Charles Lanman, who traveled through the region in 1847, noted:

About three-fourths of the entire population can read in their own language, and though the majority of them understand English, a very few can speak the language. They practise to a considerable extent, the science of agriculture and have acquired such a knowledge of the mechanic arts as answers them for all ordinary purposes, for they manufacture their own clothing, their own ploughs and other farming utensils, their own axes, and even their own guns. Their women are no longer treated as slaves, but as equals; the men labor in the fields, and their wives are devoted entirely to household employments. They keep the same domestic animals that are kept by their white neighbors, and cultivate all the common grains of the country. They are probably as temperate as any other class of people on the face of the earth, honest in their business intercourse, moral in their thoughts, words and deeds, and distinguished for their faithfulness in performing the duties of religion. ...They have their own courts and try their criminals by a regular jury. Their judges and lawyers are chosen from among themselves. They keep in order the public roads leading through their settlement. ...Excepting on festive days, they dress after the manner of the white man, but far more picturesquely. They live in small log houses of their own construction, and have every thing they need or desire in the way of food. They are, in fact, the happiest community that I have yet met within this Southern country... (Lanman 1849:96).

In 1868, the U.S. Congress recognized the Eastern Cherokees as a separate tribe, and the various communities began a process (by fits and starts) of political unification that resulted in a single central government in 1875. With the establishment of a federal agency and agency supported schools and other facilities at Yellow Hill in the Qualla settlements, families from the outlying enclaves began to gravitate to Qualla Boundary, and communities such as Sandtown and Turtletown dwindled away. The study area communities at Cheoah (now Snowbird), Valley River (now Tomotla) and Hanging Dog (now Hanging Dog and Grape Creek) have persisted as discrete enclaves, and their descendants now constitute one of the six townships represented by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' council.

The survival, persistence, and resurgence of these communities in their pre-Removal homeland is a testament to the remarkable strength and resilience of the Cherokee people. Their story of resistance, accommodation, and adaptation is a key element in understanding the Trail of Tears, which is as much about the unjust and unwarranted disruption of the Cherokee people by the U.S. government and the quiet moral strength of the Cherokee response as it is about the physical exodus of the Cherokee Nation.

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### **Fort Butler**

Fort Butler, located in present-day Murphy, North Carolina (see Figure 1), was headquarters to the Eastern Division of the Army of the Cherokee Nation during the military removal operations of June and July, 1838. The fort, with nearly military encampments, hospital, offices, barracks and other facilities, was the holding area for Cherokee detainees from North Carolina and a staging ground for the forced marches of Cherokee prisoners to the primary internment camps and emigration depot at Fort Cass (now Charleston, Tennessee). More than 3000 Cherokee prisoners passed through Fort Butler in the initial stage of the Trail of Tears exodus. As headquarters for the military removal from southwestern North Carolina, and the central location at which North Carolina Cherokees were gathered, Fort Butler is arguably the most historically significant Trail of Tears associated site in North Carolina.

Fort Butler was founded as Camp Huntington by Wool's July 1836 expedition to Valley River. Col. Nathaniel Smith and five companies of Tennessee Volunteers established the camp (named Huntington for the nearby post office at A.R.S. Hunter's store) in a commanding position on the south side of the Hiwassee River to control the intersection of the Franklin Road (Great State Road) and the Unicoi Turnpike. After the expedition withdrew to the Cherokee Agency (at Fort Cass, Charleston, TN) in August 1836, Wool dispatched a two companies of Tennessee Mounted Volunteers to maintain a garrison and establish a formal post at Huntington, and in October 1836, he directed Quartermaster Abner Hetzel construct winter "huttage" for those troops. Soon thereafter the "post at the mouth of Valley River" was officially designated Fort Butler. When George Featherstonhaugh visited the Valley River region in August 1837, Fort Butler was still a bare-bones post:

About 2 P.M., we ascended a hill to Fort Butler, a temporary camp with a block-house built for the State troops upon this occasion: from hence we rode a mile to Hunter's, a tavern kept by a person of that name who had been long in the Cherokee country; it was most beautifully situated upon an eminence commanding a view of the Hiwassee... (Featherstonhaugh 1847: 286).

In October 1837, the U.S. Army established a series of additional posts throughout the Cherokee Nation, in North Carolina adding Fort Lindsay at the mouth of the Nantahala River, Fort Delaney at Valley Town, and Fort Hembree on the Unicoi Turnpike near Tusquittee. During this episode, Fort Butler was expanded to include officers' quarters, a hospital, and a quartermaster's office. Troop strength at Fort Butler was nominal, and the post was largely abandoned in December 1837 when U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers survey teams used the fort as their base of operations for mapping the region. One surveyor, most likely J.C. Frémont, sketched the fort in December 1837, rendering the only surviving contemporary representation of the forts built for the Cherokee removal (Figure 3).

A company of North Carolina Mounted Volunteers commanded by Lt. Abner Montgomery reoccupied the post early in 1838; these troops, and others dispatched from Fort Cass upgraded the facility with additional buildings,



Figure 3. Sketch of Fort Butler, December 1837 (probably by J.C. Fremont) (United States Army 1837–1838).

ovens, shops, and, most likely, an enclosing picketwork or palisade. By early spring 1838, it was apparent that the Cherokees would not emigrate of their own accord, and the army began stockpiling arms, equipment, and provisions at the forts for the impending military operations. Hetzel requested transport of “camp and garrison equipage” and office furniture to Fort Butler and the other forts in April 1838.

Major Gen. Winfield Scott assumed command of the U.S. Army of the Cherokee Nation at Fort Cass in April 1838, divided the army into three administrative divisions, and designated Fort Butler as headquarters for the Eastern Division. Scott also ordered that:

The quartermaster here will as soon as practicable, send to Fort Butler, one hundred and fifty pack saddles, seventy mess pans, one hundred camp kettles and eight hundred haver sacks...The officer on Ord [ordnance] duty at this place will immediately cause to be sent to Fort Butler two hundred and forty muskets, with their accoutrements, one hundred thousand musket cartridges, kegs of rifle powder with a proportionate amount of lead and eight thousand flints...(Scott 1838a).

Scott directed Brigadier Gen. Abraham Eustis to take charge of the Eastern Division of the army based at Fort Butler. Eustis took post on May 28, 1838 at the head of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiments, which had sailed from Florida to Charleston, then marched inland to Fort Butler. Other troops stationed at Fort Butler included two Rutherford County companies of the Third Regiment North Carolina Volunteer Militia.

Following the chaotic militia roundup of Georgia Cherokees in late May, Scott suspended further removal operations in North Carolina, Tennessee and Alabama until June 12, 1838. Because army intelligence considered the North Carolina Cherokees the most likely to resist the military removal, Scott personally came to Fort Butler to observe the resumption of the military operations and to be on hand in case of hostilities (Phelps 2000; Scott 1838b). Troops from Fort Butler and its satellite posts deployed into the surrounding Cherokee communities on June 12 and began the military detention of Cherokee citizens without serious incident. Lt. John Phelps of the 4<sup>th</sup> Artillery noted:

On the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. the Regiment with the exception of one company left camp under the command of Col. Fanning, and marched out among the mountains five or six miles to the east. Some of the Indians were already coming in, and being informed that many of them were collecting at a place of worship of theirs [Peter Oganya’s Baptist church at Brasstown], seven companies of us marched thither and bivouacked. By night fall about a hundred had assembled... On the 13<sup>th</sup> some of the troops returned and by the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> we were all in with nearly a thousand Indians (Phelps 2000: 24-25).

Winfield Scott, satisfied that the Cherokees would not break out in a war of resistance, returned to Fort Cass on June 15, and wrote his superior, Secretary of War J.R. Poinsett:

I am just from the mouth of Valley river, Brigadier General Eustis’s headquarters, eastern district, Cherokee country. He began collection of Indians on the 12<sup>th</sup> instant. About fifteen hundred have been brought in or reported, when I left him yesterday morning, and he had not heard from any of his distant posts. One large party from that district I know to be now on the way to the agency, voluntarily — that is, without capture and without escort; and I think it probable that a thousand more will in like manner proceed to the same place. No resistance had been offered or was apprehended (Scott 1838b)

The Cherokee prisoners brought into Fort Butler during the first military sweep spent less than a week in camps on the banks the Hiwassee River before troops moved them to the “emigration depot” at Fort Cass and the Cherokee Agency. The first group of Cherokee prisoners departed Fort Butler on June 18, 1838. Eustis reported:

According to the reports I have received, the number of Indians, collected at the several posts in North Carolina, amounts to about 2500. I shall start the first detachment of them from this post for Calhoun [Fort Cass] this afternoon or tomorrow (Eustis 1838c)

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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The first detachment of Cherokees, about 380, left here this morning under escort of Capt. Munroe's company, 4<sup>th</sup> artillery. Another party of about 690 will move tomorrow under escort of Capt. Webster's Comp. 1st Artill. The roads are represented to be in such bad condition that it is estimated to be at least 7 days march from here to Calhoun... (Eustis 1838a).

The flow of Cherokee prisoners from the outlying forts through Fort Butler and on to Fort Cass and the Cherokee Agency proceeded rapidly through late June and early July:

About 1300 Indians have left this post [Fort Butler] for Calhoun, and something more than that number may be expected here on tomorrow and the next day, who will be immediately sent forward. After this, there will remain in this district only a few stragglers, and such families as have permission to remain permanently in North Carolina (Eustis 1838d).

Capt. Washington, with Companies B & G 4th Regt. Artillery under his command left here [Fort Butler] yesterday afternoon for the Cherokee Agency, having under his charge about 1100 Indians-- 300 Indians will arrive here today from Cheowah & in two or three days about the same number from Fort Lindsay & Camp Scott. The whole number of Indians, which have been collected at the several posts in North Carolina is something more than 3000. A few are still hiding in the recesses of the mountains, & a number of families have obtained permission from the Superintendent of Emigration or his agent to remain and become citizens of N.C (Eustis 1838b).

The Indians from Fort Lindsay will not arrive here until tomorrow evening. I expect to be able to send off the last detachment of Cherokees from this district on Wednesday the 4<sup>th</sup>... ( Eustis 1838e)

By late June, Eustis considered the army's duties in southwestern North Carolina near completion:

It is my belief that in four or five days every thing will have been done, which can be accomplished by the troops in this district, and I hope by the 10th July to have discharged from service all the NC militia (Eustis 1838b).

Lt. John Phelps' diary indicates that Eustis left for Fort Cass on July 10, but that the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Artillery regiments remained at Fort Butler another two weeks before marching to Augusta, Georgia to ship out for New York (Phelps 2000:57). Withdrawal of the main forces from Fort Butler in mid-July signaled the end of the first round of military operations in the region, but a small contingent of troops under Lt. H.L. Scott returned to Fort Butler on August 22, 1838, and used the fort as a base of operations from which to pursue Cherokee fugitives in the mountains. Another expedition to find Cherokee fugitives, commanded by Lt. C.H. Larned, moved into Fort Butler in August; these troops occupied the fort through October 1838, when the military operations shifted focus to the Little Tennessee River Valley.

In January, 1839, the North Carolina legislature formed Cherokee County from the ceded Cherokee lands of southwestern North Carolina, and the newly established town of Murphy was designated as county seat. The county assumed control of the abandoned Fort Butler facilities, and established a courthouse and jail in some of the existing structures. In 1844, Cherokee County built separate brick courthouse and jail buildings, and presumably abandoned the wooden structures that the army had erected on the hilltop above Christie's Ford. When Lanman visited the area in 1847, he made note of the ruins of Fort Hembree, but did not mention Fort Butler, even though his route passed within 200 yards of the old post.

### Documentary Evidence and Field Investigations

The location of Fort Butler is best documented by the U.S. Army Corps of Topographic Engineers surveys conducted Nov. 1837-Feb. 1838. Because the survey teams were based at Fort Butler, many of the lines of survey either originate or terminate near the fort, at an established benchmark on the Hiwassee River side of the Unicoi Turnpike at Christie's Ford. As indicated by survey notes and the survey sketchmap illustrated in Figure 4, the fort was situated on a hilltop overlooking the turnpike road approximately 210m (600ft) south-east of this benchmark. The position of the benchmark is estimated as approximately UTM co-ordinate 769,880e/3,886,490n. One line of survey, Capt. Pillans' Feb. 27, 1838 reconnaissance of the Georgia Road, departs from this benchmark, proceeds south 38°12.5' east for 254 ft, then south 54° east to a second station. From this second station, Pillans noted that Fort Butler was S48°W, the fort's hospital was S71°W, and the quartermaster's office was S56°W. He then proceeded S20°30'E to the third station, and estimated that Fort Butler was now N83°12.5'W, the hospital was N50°30'W, and the quartermaster's office was N34°30'W. These notes establish a triangulation that fixes Fort Butler (UTM 769,825easting, 3,886,180northing) on the hilltop that present-day Hitchcock Street now transects, and places the hospital (UTM 769,895e/ 3,886,302n) along present-day Fifth Street (Figure 5).

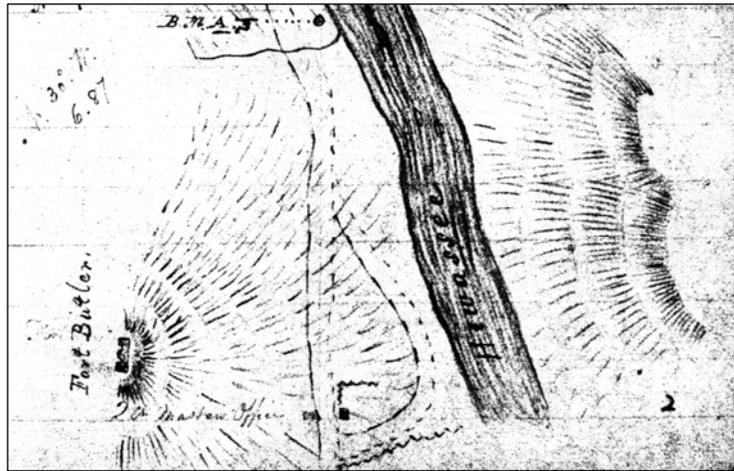


Figure 4. Army survey sketchmap depicting Fort Butler, the quartermaster's office and the survey benchmark along the Unicoi Turnpike, Dec. 1837 (Stimson 1837).

One line of survey, Capt. Pillans' Feb. 27, 1838 reconnaissance of the Georgia Road, departs from this benchmark, proceeds south 38°12.5' east for 254 ft, then south 54° east to a second station. From this second station, Pillans noted that Fort Butler was S48°W, the fort's hospital was S71°W, and the quartermaster's office was S56°W. He then proceeded S20°30'E to the third station, and estimated that Fort Butler was now N83°12.5'W, the hospital was N50°30'W, and the quartermaster's office was N34°30'W. These notes establish a triangulation that fixes Fort Butler (UTM 769,825easting, 3,886,180northing) on the hilltop that present-day Hitchcock Street now transects, and places the hospital (UTM 769,895e/ 3,886,302n) along present-day Fifth Street (Figure 5).

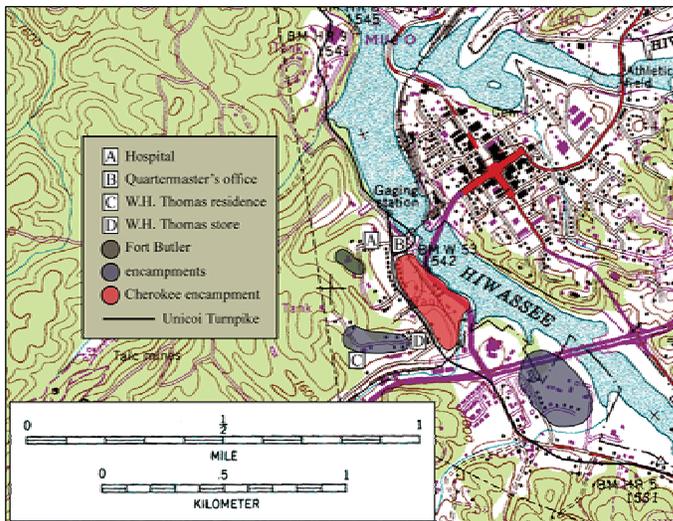


Figure 5. Reconstructed locations of Fort Butler and associated elements based on Army based on Army survey data and Phelps diary.

Lt. John Phelps' diary (Phelps 2000) presents a July 1838 sketch (Figure 6) of the Fort Butler area to illustrate the course of thunderstorms around the camps of the 4<sup>th</sup> Artillery encampments. Phelps notes that his regiment moved their camp from the riverbottom to a hilltop "near the fort," and his sketchmap indicates the first encampment (H.R. Old Camp), and the second encampment (cursive "c"). On the next elevation to the northwest is a "+" mark, presumably designating Fort Butler in the Hitchcock Street location.

This reconstruction stands at odds with the conventionally accepted placement of the fort on the hilltop



Figure 6. Phelps' July 1838 sketchmap of the Fort Butler locality (Phelps 2000).

regarding the location of Fort Butler was obtained. Everything he knew about the site had been passed on to him some ten or twelve years ago by a then ninety-year-old man who recollected going to the courthouse with his father when he, the informant was a child. At that time, which could have been as early as 1870, or so, he said he remembered seeing a fence, which,, according to Mr. Tetherow “ran along the hillside about halfway down, cornered there, cut across the spring, then came down the backside, went past the railroad spur deadend, cornered again and ran towards that big pine tree...(Demmy 1970:46).

The 1966 investigations located no material evidence of Fort Butler; Demmy recounts:

Exploratory excavations based on this scant evidence were begun on March 18, 1966. A 150-foot trench was dug down the hill slope south of Tetherow's shop in an effort to cross a now filled ditch which presumably held the stockade posts. This effort proved futile. On May 23 and 24, exploratory trenches were again dug in an effort to intersect the stockade ditch. A 70- foot trench was dug in a hollow about 250 feet west of the shop building and a 125 foot trench was dug in the area of the spring, about 600 feet west of the shop building. These efforts, too, proved fruitless (Demmy 1970:46).



Figure 7. Fort Butler monument at site of July 1838 regimental camps.

adjacent to Fort Butler Street, approximately one block south of the Hitchcock Street location. The city of Murphy maintains a one-acre tract with a stone monument to Fort Butler (Figure 7) on the Fort Butler Street hilltop. This locus was the scene of extensive archaeological testing in 1966, when Stanley South and George Demmy attempted to locate evidence of the fort palisade or other constructions on the city's property. Demmy (1970) explains the rationale for testing this location:

It was from Mr. [Elbert] Tetherow either directly or indirectly that all of the local lore and information

Demmy did not interpret this lack of positive evidence as reason to question the traditional placement of Fort Butler, but rather suggested that:

Primarily, on the basis of lacking contradictory evidence, it may be concluded that the courthouse in the memory of the site's primary informant was once one of the original structures of Fort Butler and that the[brick paving] remains west of the shop, sparse though they may be, are the remains of that building. It is evident that if the development of the site of Fort Butler includes the erection of representative structures, it will be based on a paucity of evidence... (Demmy 1970:47).

It is likely that the area that Demmy and South tested in 1966 was, in fact, the site of the July encampment of the 4<sup>th</sup> Artillery, a brief occupation that likely left little diagnostic evidence. The probable Hitchcock Street hilltop

location of the actual fort was not investigated during the 1966 fieldwork, apparently because this location was not city property and was not under consideration for interpretive development.

Recent archaeological field reconnaissance of the presumed Fort Butler locality (as documented by multiple lines of military survey, 1837-1838) determined that residential development since the 1966 investigations have largely obliterated or obscured the original surfaces occupied by the fort and its dependencies. The hilltop transected by Hitchcock Street has been heavily graded for house seats along the south side of the street in the area where Pillans' 1838 survey indicates the fort. House lots in this area have been cut one to two meters below the original ground surface; grading to this extent has probably eliminated any intact archaeological contexts associated with the fort, with the possible exception of vestiges of palisade trenches around the fort perimeter. As indicated by the December 1837 field sketch of Fort Butler (Figure 3), all of the buildings were of horizontal cribbed log construction, a building technique that does not require fixed, earthfast foundations. It appears likely that most of the fort buildings were situated on stacked fieldstone piers, with little or no subsurface intrusion. Possible subsurface facilities associated with the fort might include subfloor cellars (although food storage was not a priority for the garrison), powder magazine safeties, latrine pits or trenches, and palisade trenches. Removal of one to two meters of soil from the site would predictably obliterate any such facilities, with the possible exception of a powder magazine. Recent reconnaissance of the site of Fort Armistead (Coker Creek, Tennessee) identified a probable powder magazine safety, a two meter by two meter by two meter stone lined pit.

The probable site of the Fort Butler hospital is located along Fifth Street, approximately 175m northwest of the probable Fort Butler site. This property was, until recently, occupied by a large ranch-style brick residence (Figure 8), and the surrounding lot appears to have been extensively leveled for construction. Demolition of this house (Figure 9) afforded an opportunity for surface inspection of the property, but no evidence of Removal period occupation (other than a single polychrome hand-painted whiteware sherdlet) was identified. This property is also the site of a large marble pyramid monument (Figure 10) erected over the graves of A.R.S. Hunter (1783-1844), his wife Elizabeth and grand-daughter Eliza. It is possible that Hunter was interred adjacent to an existing army cemetery situated near the hospital. Phelps' 1838 diary indicates the deaths and interments of several soldiers, including William Nicodemus, during the military occupation. Arthur's 1914 "Western North Carolina: A History" notes that in 1905/1906 the U.S. Army disinterred a number of graves associated with Fort Butler and relocated the remains to a military cemetery in Marietta, Georgia.

Surface inspection of recently denuded area adjacent to the Fort Butler monument on Fort



Figure 8. Probable site of the Fort Butler hospital (ca. 1999).



Figure 9. Probable site of the Fort Butler hospital (ca. 2004).



Figure 10. A.R.S. Hunter grave monument.

Butler Street, a locality that probably corresponds to the July 1838 camps of the 4<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment, identified no diagnostic materials referable to a Removal era occupation. Potential “signature” artifacts associated with the army camps might include uniform buttons and other clothing hardware, ammunition (i.e. .69 cal. lead balls, musket flints), ball clay tobacco pipes, and beverage bottle (e.g. dark green wine or rum bottle) fragments.

### **Evaluation and Recommendations**

Fort Butler (1836-1838), the command center for the military removal of Cherokees from southwestern North Carolina and adjacent parts of Georgia, was the bottleneck through which more than 3000 Cherokee prisoners (20% of the Cherokee Nation) passed in the first leg of the Trail of Tears. As such, Fort Butler is the most inclusive site in North Carolina related to the Cherokee and military experiences of the removal, and is clearly one of the most historically significant resources associated with the Cherokee removal in North Carolina. Piecemeal documentation suggests that

the military installation sprawled over several acres, with the fort proper consisting of one or more cribbed log blockhouses enclosed by a vertical log palisade. Other documented components include cribbed log officers’ quarters, a blacksmith’s shop, a hospital, a quartermaster’s office, and brick bread ovens, as well as open-air encampments of soldiers and Cherokee prisoners. Detailed re-evaluation of cartographic evidence (i.e. notes of multiple army surveys) determined that Fort Butler and its associated facilities were primarily located along Fifth and Hitchcock Streets in present-day Murphy, N.C., approximately 200m–300m northwest of the area previously interpreted as the fort site. Field reconnaissance of this locality revealed extensive disturbance due to modern residential development, and it appears likely that the core fort area has been largely obliterated. It is possible that evidence of outlying facilities or disjunct fort components (e.g., palisade ditch segments; latrine trenches) or peripheral trash deposits may survive on the margins of this area.

It appears, therefore, that the core of the original Fort Butler site lacks essential archaeological integrity, and no longer retains qualities of integrity of setting or integrity of feeling. Lacking such qualities of integrity, the site of Fort Butler cannot be included in the National Register of Historic Places, despite a high degree of historical significance. Because Fort Butler remains a pivotal site for developing understanding of the Cherokee Removal from southwestern North Carolina, it is recommended that the site locality should be marked with appropriate interpretation and designated as a site for public education as part of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

## Fort Delaney

Fort Delany (Oct. 1837-July 1838), located in present-day Andrews, North Carolina, was the U.S. Army's removal era post in the heavily populated upper Valley River region (Figures 11, 14). The fort was situated near the convergence of primary routes from the upper and lower Nantahala River Valley and the Cheoah River Valley, and connected to Fort Butler via the newly constructed state road. During the military operations of June and July 1838, troops stationed at Fort Delaney

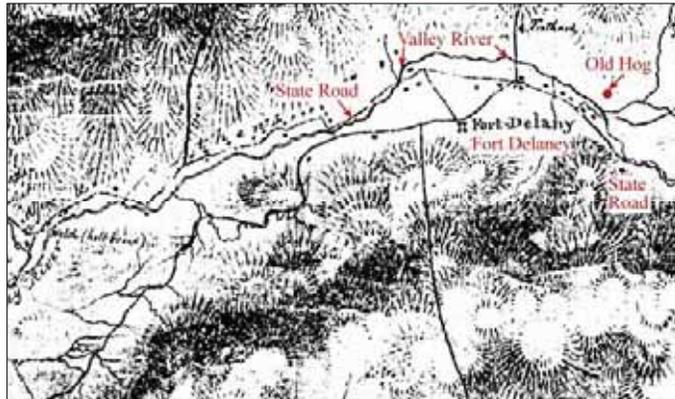


Figure 11. Portion of the 1838 Army Corps map of southwestern North Carolina depicting Fort Delaney and the upper Valley River Valley.

arrested several hundred Cherokee citizens from the Valley River communities of Konahete, Daseti, and Tellico, assembling prisoners at Fort Delaney before transferring them to Fort Butler. Hundreds of other prisoners from the Cheoah, Nantahala, and Little Tennessee river communities probably rested at Fort Delaney en route to Fort Butler, and the post at Andrews witnessed as many as 1500 Cherokee detainees, 10% of the total Cherokee population deported to Oklahoma.

The fort was founded by East Tennessee Mounted Volunteers in early October 1837 pursuant to orders by Colonel William Lindsay, Army commander of military forces in the Cherokee Nation:

Order No. 14 Capt. Caldwell with his company Tenn Vols will without unnecessary delay repair to the head of Valley River and select a suitable position at or near Hog's, a Cherokee, where he will take post until further orders. He will proceed to erect huts and stables for the company and other buildings necessary for the Post, as soon as practicable after a plan here with furnished (Lindsay 1837).

Lindsay's orders also indicate that plans for each post were prepared and distributed prior to construction. It is likely that the fort included a vertical log palisade enclosure with cribbed log blockhouses as corner bastions. Fort components probably also included officers' quarters, facilities such as a blacksmith's shop, magazine, and hospital, and winter "huttage" for enlisted men. On October 9, 1837, Lieutenant A.R. Hetzel, the army quartermaster stationed at Fort Cass, Tennessee, noted:

Sir, I have the honor to transmit herewith a rough map exhibiting the positions of the different stations in the Cherokee Country. Within the last four days five new posts have been established intended to be permanent for the winter, consisting at present of but one company each...Capt. Caldwell-Tenn vols [Tennessee volunteers] -head of Valley River (Hetzel 1837a).

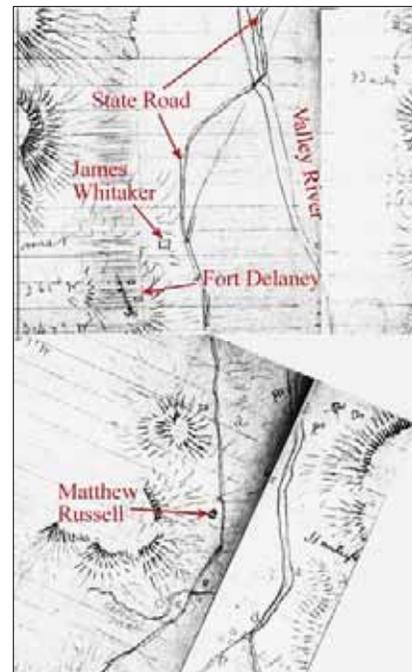


Figure 12. Location of Fort Delaney adjacent to the state road on 1837 army survey map.

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Captain Thomas G. Caldwell's troops wintered at Fort Delaney in 1837-1838 (Figure 12). Caldwell's tenure was marked by a minor controversy in dealings with local Cherokees. James Whitaker, whose home was situated near the fort, reported that Caldwell called a meeting of Cherokee leaders in March 1838 at which he pointedly questioned them on their intentions regarding emigration, strongly recommended their submission to the terms of the New Echota treaty, and privately interviewed John Welch and Culsatahee. Caldwell reportedly queried Welch as to the Valley Cherokees' course of action should Chief Ross's mission to Washington fail, to which Welch replied he himself would travel to Washington, beat Ross, and conclude the "business of the Nation." This supposed conference was viewed as undue interference in tribal affairs, but inquiry into the matter perished for lack of credible evidence.

In early June, 1838, Capt. Isaac Hick's Burke County Company (Company E) of the North Carolina Volunteer Militia (72 men) took station with the Tennessee troops at Fort Delaney (Eustis 1838f). Beginning June 12, 1838, troops stationed at Delaney began detention and transport of Cherokee citizens in the upper Valley River Valley. Those Cherokees who submitted without protest were processed without incident. Others, who objected to the military detention and deportation, were treated roughly by the state troops. The Mink of Valley Town swore that:

...he was taken prisoner by the military and put in jail [at Fort Delaney] 18 days for no other cause than a disinclination to come to the west and [was] much abused by the soldiers, and but for an aunt that fed him, he might have starved (Mink 1842).

Mink's aunt testified:

She was the person that fed him while under arrest by a vile band of soldiers who tormented the claimant in every way they could invent and would have starved him but for her own sustenance (Sarah 1842).

The Fort Delaney garrison operated until the end of June, first clearing the upper Valley River Valley, then monitoring the groups of prisoners brought through from forts Lindsay and Montgomery and Camp Scott. By July 5, the North Carolina troops had mustered out and the Tennessee troops vacated the fort. Thomas' store, located at the fort's margin, continued to operate, and was known alternately as the Valley Town or Fort Delaney establishment. The fort locality was near the core of the community that developed around James Whitaker's home and the Valley River Baptist Church; this area was designated Jamesville in 1841 (Williams 1984). With the establishment of Andrews in 1891, the Fort Delaney site was incorporated within the city limits. Local tradition contends that the last log blockhouse stood at the present intersection of Tatham Street and Conaheeta Avenue until 1895, when it was moved to Fairfield Road to serve as a barn on the Whitaker farm. As indicated by the 1926 Sanborn insurance map of Andrews, the city lots laid out across the former site of Fort Delaney were sparsely occupied and built upon during the 1920s, but occupation of the site area grew increasingly dense by the 1960s. This residential



Figure 13. 1838 Army Corps sketchmap of Fort Delaney and surrounding topography. Annotations (in red) added.

development has almost completely obscured the Fort Delaney site. A marble monument erected by Robert Barker in the 1960s marks the traditional site of Fort Delaney at Tatham Street and Conaheeta Avenue (Figures 16, 17).

### Archaeological Reconnaissance

U.S. Army Corps survey records (see Figures 12, 13) place the site of Fort Delaney atop an elevated flat on the southeastern side of Valley River Valley at the southwestern edge of present-day Andrews, North Carolina. Correlation of the more detailed Army sketchmap (Figure 13) with the 1990 7.5' Andrews quadrangle (Figure 14) indicates a square fort area (oriented N17°W) that covers approximately 3.42ha (8.45 acres). The probable fort area is bounded by UTM coordinates [zone 17] 242,325e/2,898,043n, 242,511e/3,898,086n, 242,549e/3,897,893n, and 242,374e/3,897,860n. It is likely that this extensive area includes troop camps as well as the formal fort enclosure, which probably encompassed an acre or less. The northwestern corner of the fort area, as mapped in 1838, is situated near the intersection of Tatham Street and Connaheeta Avenue, and coincides with the memorial for the last blockhouse of Fort Delaney. This reconstruction places Thomas' store one block west, at the intersection of Tatham Street, Cheoa Street and Stecoah Street.

The probable fort area is situated on an ancient, dissected alluvial terrace. The site area is relatively level, and elevation of the site is approximately 1,810 ft. (550 m) AMSL, approximately 100 feet above the Valley River Valley floodplain. The terrace segment occupied by Fort Delaney is bounded on the northeast by Town Branch and on the southwest by Tucker White Hollow branch; one or both of these water sources probably supplied the fort.

Archaeological reconnaissance of the Fort Delaney locality in April 2002 (Figure 15) consisted of pedestrian survey throughout the residential neighborhood that overlays the former fort. All surface exposures, including garden plots, road cuts, and erosional features were inspected for diagnostic removal period artifacts and features. Although these surfaces revealed abundant materials that date to the late 19<sup>th</sup>- early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (this may have been a dump area for fledgling Andrews), no artifacts referable to the 1830s were discovered. It is likely that the 10 month occupation of this landform by 70-150 troops would produce an archaeological signature that includes widespread debris such as ceramic tobacco pipe fragments, brass buttons, dark olive green or olive amber bottle glass, gunflints and lead musket balls, ceramic dishes fragments, and

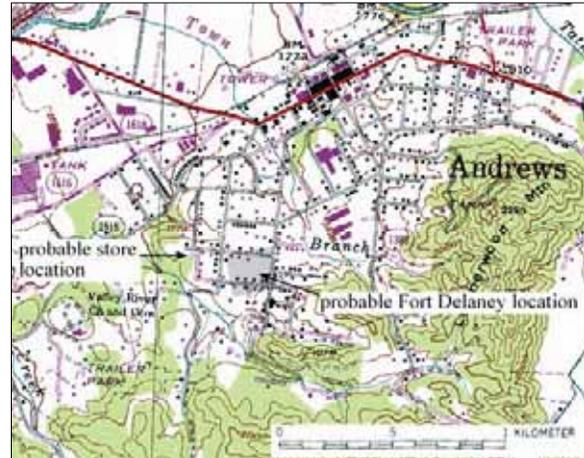


Figure 14. Probable location of the site of Fort Delaney indicated on 7.5' USGS Andrews quadrangle.

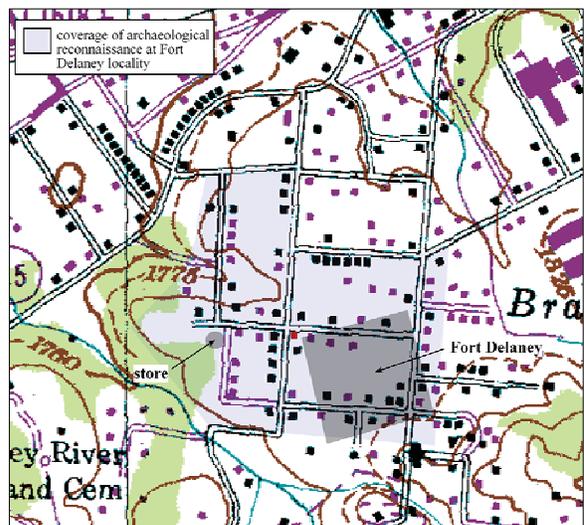


Figure 15. Enlargement of Fort Delaney locality in present-day Andrews, NC. Blue shaded area indicates extent of reconnaissance (adapted from USGS 7.5' Andrews, NC quadrangle).

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nails and other construction hardware from the fort itself. Documented occurrence of such materials within surface exposures would provide an initial clue for determining the location of subsurface archaeological contexts (eg. cellars, magazines, privies, palisade ditches, refuse dumps) that would connote continued archaeological integrity of the fort site. In the absence of such materials, it is difficult to conclusively assert the presence of Fort Delaney in this location, and exploratory subsurface testing on private residential properties is problematic without specific targets. While it is apparent that residential development has obliterated or obscured much of the fort site (Figure 16), relatively open areas in the backs of house lots between Tatham and Collette streets may still contain relatively intact archeological elements associated with the fort occupation.



Figure 16. Residential neighborhood at the intersection of Tatham Street and Connaheta Avenue at the northwestern corner of Fort Delaney. Note monument at lower left.

### **Evaluation and Recommendations**

Relatively detailed cartographic evidence places the site of Fort Delaney within a residential neighborhood in present-day Andrews, North Carolina, approximately bounded by Connaheta Avenue, Tatham Street, Colvard Avenue, and Collette Street (Figure 15). Although field reconnaissance of this locality did not specifically identify any archaeological materials or contexts referable to the Removal Period occupation of Fort Hembree, neither did the assessment eliminate the area from future consideration. Despite substantial residential development of the Fort Delaney site, a substantial portion (1-3 acres) of the presumed site area appears relatively unmodified (in residential backyards). Thus, the potential National Register eligibility of the fort site as an archaeological property cannot be discounted (or asserted) until more intensive archaeological testing either demonstrates the presence or lack of contextual integrity. The site is demonstrably “associated with events that have made significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history,” but lacks standing architecture and other readily visible evidence of the primary period of significance. In addition, the superposition of the residential neighborhood severely effects the fort site’s integrity of feeling. Nevertheless, the site of Fort Delaney is an important locus for understanding the context of the Cherokee Removal from the Valley River Valley, and, like the other Removal era military sites in southwestern North Carolina, should be marked with appropriate interpretation and designated as a site for public education as part of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.



Figure 17. Obverse and reverse views of the Fort Delaney monument at the intersection of Tatham Street and Connaheta Avenue.

## Fort Hembree

Fort Hembree (Figures 18, 19), located in present-day Hayesville, North Carolina, was the U.S. Army's post for the collection of Cherokee prisoners from Tusquittee, Shooting Creek and surrounding communities of the upper Hiwassee River Valley. Fort Hembree, along with forts Lindsay and Delaney, was established in early October 1837. As noted by Quatermaster Abner Hetzel on October 9, 1837, Fort Hembree was garrisoned by Captain Joel Hembree's company of Tennessee Volunteer militia:

Sir, I have the honor to transmit herewith a rough map exhibiting the positions of the different stations in the Cherokee Country. Within the last four days five new posts have been established intended to be permanent for the winter, consisting at present of but one company each.... Capt. Hembree near the Georgia line on the Hiwassee River (Hetzel 1837b).

There is scant record of the fort over the next few months, except Hetzel's observation that "Information has been received at this office that the Q. [quarter] Master [Vaughn] at Fort Hembree is concerned in a store and is giving his attention to private, neglects his public business (Hetzel 1838a)". At the end of May 1838, Captain William Connelly's Company (Company C, Burke County Volunteers) of the Third Regiment, North Carolina Volunteer Militia took post at Fort Hembree. During the first two weeks of the Cherokee removal the North Carolina and Tennessee troops gathered approximately 1000 Cherokee prisoners around Fort Hembree, then marched this large contingent along the Unicoi Turnpike to Fort Butler. On June 22, 1838, Lt. John Phelps noted their passage: "Upwards of a thousand Indians passed by [Camp Hiwassee] today from Fort Hembree eighteen miles to the east of this, where they had been collected" (Phelps 2000:32). During the brief (week-long) encampments at Fort Hembree, a number of prisoners were stricken with illness and died. Claims filed by surviving relatives indicate that *Ool-scos-sit-teh*, *Cely*, *Nicy* and *Te-neh* perished at the the fort (Axley 1851), and their graves and others are likely located around the fort site.

The militia abandoned the fort at the end of June 1838 and the civilians who moved into the valley after the removal reused fort buildings for a number of purposes. A store and post office operated on the fort premises until the founding of Hayesville in 1861. The Thompson family

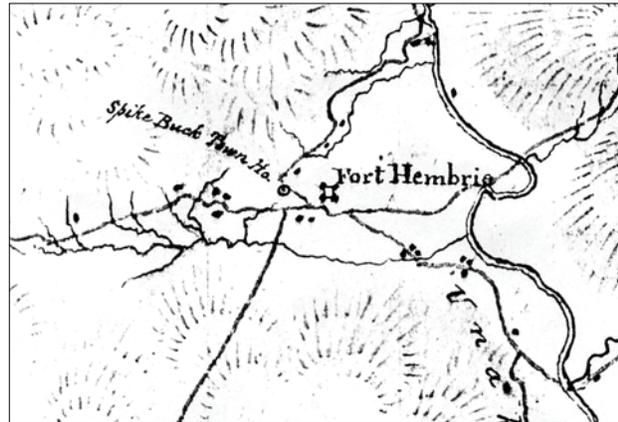


Figure 18. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps map of southwestern North Carolina illustrating Fort Hembree and its surroundings.

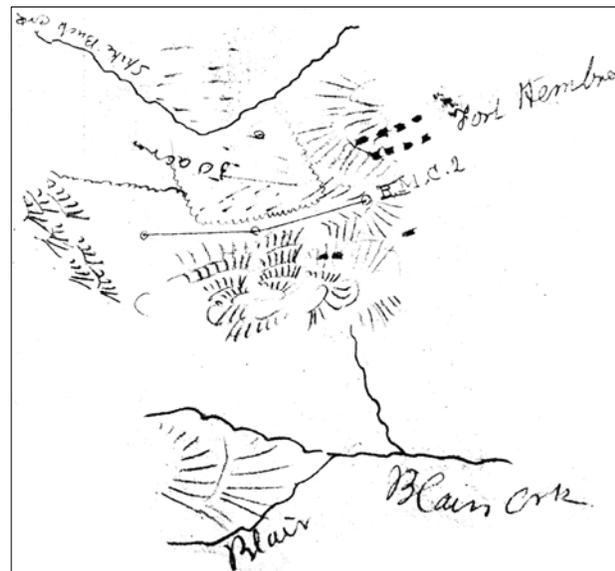


Figure 19. 1838 Army Corps sketchmap illustrating Fort Hembree location.

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contends that the (now demolished) family homeplace (Figure 20) at the site of Fort Hembree actually incorporated a hewn log building that was officers' quarters associated with the fort.



Figure 20. Photograph of the Thompson house (ca. 1920), reputed to be the site of the Fort Hembree officers' quarters.

In 1847, only nine years after the removal, journalist Charles Lanman traveled through the region, and passed the ruins of Fort Hembree: The principal novelty that I noticed on the road to this place was the spot known as Fort Embree. The only evidences that there was ever a fortification here are a breastwork of timber, a lot of demolished pickets, and two or three block-houses, which are now in a dilapidated condition. The site is a commanding one, and takes in some of the grandest mountain outlines that I have ever seen (Lanman 1849:380).

Lanman's account is informative in several respects. He observed multiple blockhouses, a timber breastwork (chest-height defensive wall), and pickets or palisades that presumably enclosed the fortification. This is the most detailed description of any Removal era fort in southwestern North Carolina. Because forts Hembree, Delaney, and Lindsay were built at the same time according to standardized plans provided by the War Department, it is likely that these other forts included similar features. Lanman also notes the deteriorated condition of the fort only a few years after its construction.

### Fort Hembree Site Location and Archaeological Investigations

Army survey records, maps, and written accounts indicate that Fort Hembree was situated 18 miles east of Fort Butler along the Unicoi Turnpike between Sweetwater Gap and the Hiwassee River (Figures 1, 18, 21). The site of Fort Hembree is atop Fort Hill, between Town Creek and Blair Creek, approximately 1.3 km west of the Hiwassee River. Fort Hill is a broad, relatively level ridge that rises 40-80 feet above the surrounding terrain to offer a commanding view of the area. As indicated by Army survey sketchmaps, the fort was arrayed as a rectangular facility (approximately 200ft x 600ft) that occupied much of the level ridgetop, with the western end of the fort extending to brow of the hill where the slope begins to drop steeply. The hilltop is now a sparsely developed residential neighborhood; four properties with three private homes occupy the fort area, which is bounded or transected by Fort Hembree

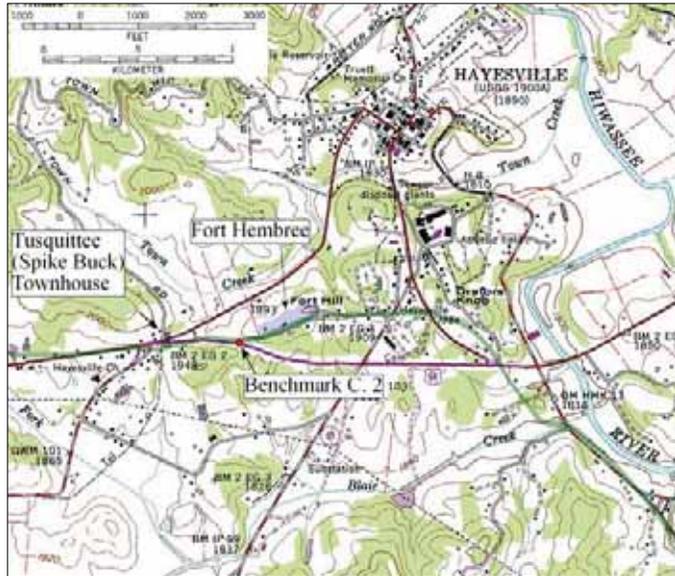


Figure 21. Detail of the Hayesville, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating mapped locations of Fort Hembree, the Tusquittee Townhouse, and the Unicoi Turnpike.

Road.

Initial archaeological reconnaissance of the Fort Hembree locality entailed intensive pedestrian survey of a four hectare area that extends from the intersection of Fort Hembree Road and U.S. 64 eastward along Fort Hill approximately 430 meters (see Figure 22, blue shaded area). All surface exposures, such as garden plots and erosional features, were closely examined for diagnostic artifacts referable to the fort or its Removal-era military occupation. No such materials were evident, despite substantial exposed surfaces available to inspection. Subsequent to the pedestrian survey, investigators excavated a series of 30cm shovel test units arrayed at 10m intervals across a small pasture or hayfield and adjacent pine grove at the center of the presumed fort location (Figure 23); an additional transect of shovel tests was excavated parallel to Fort Hembree Road (see Figure 22, yellow shaded area). These tests revealed extremely shallow soils (5-21cm plowzone) with decayed schist bedrock near the surface. Shovel tests in the small hayfield yielded a sherd of polychrome handpainted whiteware, an alkaline-glazed stoneware sherd, a fragment of an olive green handblown beverage bottle, and a machine cut nail, all materials consistent with a Removal-era site occupation. No concentrations of material or discrete contexts were identified. A 60m x 50m area of the hayfield was also surveyed with a proton magnetometer, a remote sensing device that can discriminate archaeological features (e.g. pits, foundations, ditches) as magnetic anomalies. No prominent anomalies were identified in this area.



Figure 23. Shovel testing of the smaller hayfield in the Fort Hembree locality.

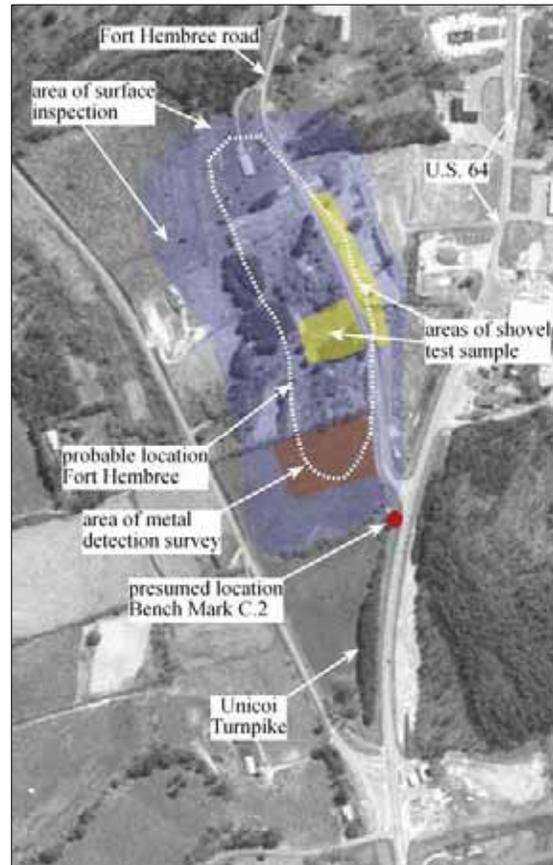


Figure 22. Aerial view of the Fort Hembree locality with extent and location of archaeological reconnaissance indicated by shading.

Investigators also scanned the small hayfield near the center of the fort locality and a portion of the larger hayfield at the eastern end of the fort area (see Figure 22, red shaded area; Figure 24) with metal detectors in an attempt to identify concentrations of nails or other construction hardware and other metal artifacts that might be referable to the fort occupation. These efforts proved fruitless, and the apparent absence of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century archaeological materials in the larger hayfield led investigators to conclude that the bulk of the fort occupation was centered to the east on the hilltop.



Figure 24. Larger hayfield at the eastern end of the Fort Hembree locality.

### Evaluation and Recommendations

Reconnaissance of Fort Hill revealed close topographic correspondence to Army cartographic renderings of the Fort Hembree site, and promote placement of the fort along the western half of Fort Hembree Road. Archaeological survey of the Fort Hembree locality identified evidence of Removal-era occupation on Fort Hill, but did not conclusively establish the nature of that occupation, nor did investigations identify materials or contexts directly attributable to Fort Hembree. Although this area has been somewhat affected by residential construction, home density is low, and substantial portions of the probable fort site remain undeveloped, and the Fort Hembree

site may be the best preserved of the six military installations in southwestern North Carolina. It appears likely that discrete archaeological contexts associated with Fort Hembree have survived in these intervening areas, and more intensive and sustained archaeological investigations of the Fort Hembree locality are recommended. If such contexts can be identified through further fieldwork, the case for site integrity (and, by extension, National Register eligibility) can be readily supported. Like Forts Butler and Delaney, the Fort Hembree site is demonstrably “associated with events that have made significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history,” but lacks standing architecture and other readily visible evidence of the primary period of significance, and arguments for qualities of site integrity and significance must hinge upon archaeological evidence. The Fort Delaney locality retains appreciable integrity of setting; the site is still “a commanding one, and takes in some of the grandest mountain outlines” as Lanman noted. Like the other Removal era military sites in southwestern North Carolina, the Fort Hembree site should be marked with appropriate interpretation and designated as a site for public education as part of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

## Fort Montgomery

Fort Montgomery (May-July, 1838), situated in present-day Robbinsville, North Carolina, was the principal military post for the removal of Cherokee citizens from the Cheoah River Valley and the headquarters for North Carolina militia involved in the removal. The fort was among the last established in the Cherokee Nation prior to removal; on March 8, 1838 Quartermaster A.R. Hetzel, received orders to “give Capt. Helsey a plan for a picket work to be erected in the Cheowa Valley.” On May 23, 1838 Captain Enoch Cunningham (Company A, Buncombe County volunteers) noted that North Carolina troops had lately completed a road over the Snowbird Mountains and begun construction of Fort Montgomery:

...we have at length arrived at our station in the Cheohee Valley and have designated it Fort Montgomery .... We were detained on Valley River for the space of 10 days during which time we were engaged in making a road across the mountains to our present station. We have commenced hauling timber and ditching for the picket work, and all the men are in high spirits and show great anxiety to forward the business. Some of the men have been seriously indisposed but are at present convalescent, and I think that we will enjoy good health if an elevated situation and good water will conduce to that effect (Cunningham 1838).

When Colonel John Gray Bynum and three companies of North Carolina troops (approximately 230 men) took their post at Fort Montgomery on June 1, 1838, they found the facility unfinished and the recently constructed military road so rough that it hampered procurement of rations and equipment:

I reached my station last night and assumed command this morning and find the post in quite a precarious situation provided the Indians are disposed to be hostile. In consequence of the extreme badness of the roads, and the difficulty of procuring wagons, the Quartermaster has been unable to accumulate a supply of provisions. There are provisions in the camp now only for three days. A wagon can haul only about 1200 pounds and make a trip in two days. The road through a great part of the distance passes up a branch between two mountains with a laurel thicket on each side, which would enable a very small force to prevent the passage of wagons without a large escort... (Bynum 1838b)

On June 3, the North Carolina troops were on standby to commence the collection of Cherokee prisoners in the Cheoah Valley on the fourth in keeping with Gen. Scott’s Order No. 34 and Eustis’

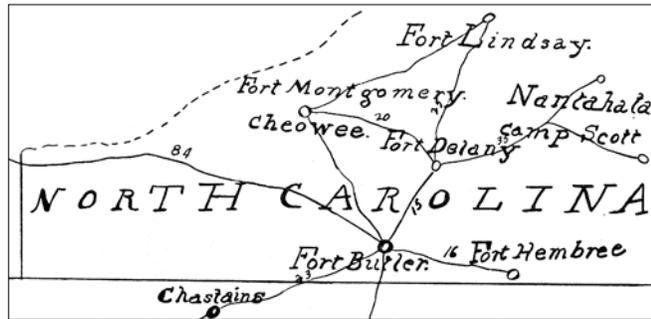


Figure 25. Detail of Lt. E.D. Keyes’ 1838 map “View of Posts and Distances in the Cherokee Nation” illustrating the relative position of Fort Montgomery.

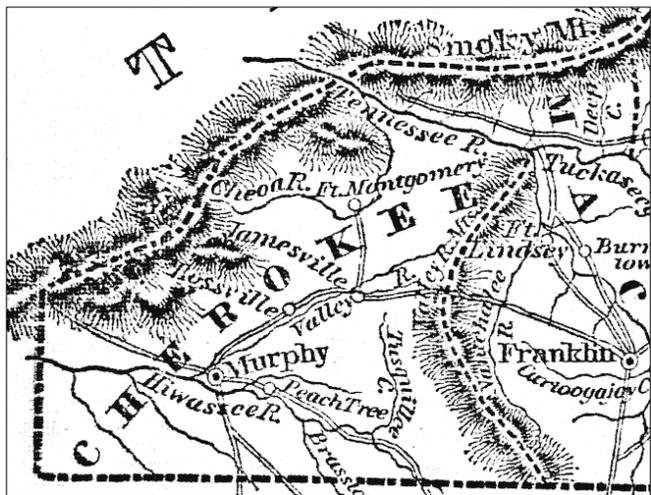


Figure 26. Detail of 1843 Morse and Breese map of North Carolina. Note Fort Montgomery located at the northern terminus of the Pile Ridge road, but indicated on the north side of Sweetwater Creek.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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Order No. 3 (Bynum 1838c). Bynum planned to detail Capt. Cunningham with a company to Buffalo Town; Capt. Killian was to operate with his company in Cheoah Town; Capt. Jones with 20 men were to work “over the mountains”[Stecoah?]; Captain Bryan and 40 men were ordered to operate in Tallula, and Lieut. Miller was to direct 32 men in operations on Sweetwater Creek. Each detachment was directed to “take as many prisoners as they can secure” then “return to the Fort” before nightfall. Later that day, Bynum received orders for a postponement of operations until June 12. By June 4, Bynum’s troops had resumed fort construction; Bynum noted “I have this morning [June 4, 1838] set a large number of hands at work upon the picketing, and think I can have it completed by the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. I have also commenced a hospital for the accommodation of the sick and they are numerous and increasing (Bynum 1838d).” Bynum’s orders for fatigue details to work on the hospital and picketing on the north and south sides of the fort indicate that Fort Montgomery included permanent fixed structures and a ditch-laid palisade. It is likely that the construction of the fort proceeded according to the formal, standardized plan provided by Hetzel, and that Fort Montgomery substantially resembled forts Hembree, Lindsay, and Delaney.

Bynum’s initial fears that “the Indians are disposed to be hostile” were quickly dispelled. He wrote Lt. J.H. Simpson (June 5, 1838):

... A more religious people than inhabits this [Cheoah] valley cannot be found anywhere. No civilized community with which I am acquainted is as observant of religious service and ceremonies. Their religious meetings are characterized by the greatest decorum and propriety of conduct and apparently from religious feelings. Their preachers speak of the prospect of their speedy removal and the subject never fails to throw the congregation into tears...(Bynum 1838e).

After of week of fatigue duty working at road repair and fort construction, relieved by Cherokee Baptist church meetings, the North Carolina troops stationed at Fort Montgomery proceeded with the arrest and removal of Cherokees in Cheoah, Tallula, Connichiloe, and Buffalo Town on June 12, 1838. Bynum’s accounts of the operations are the most detailed surviving record of the military roundup of Cherokee prisoners. On June 13, Bynum wrote his superior, Gen. Abraham Eustis:

I collected yesterday about 80 Indians they had all received orders from Welch on Valley River to leave home & take to the mountains. These we caught were from home. I have sent a large number as runners & if in their first alarm they have not run too far I think most of them will come in tomorrow. Big George the chief of this valley has informed me that they shall. I shall remain quiet until I see the effect of my negotiations with them. Those whom I have enrolled seem well contented & those whom I have let out as runners, I have seen since they come & reported themselves according to promise. A great deal of sickness is prevailing among the children of the Indians. I permit the females to remain at home with their sick children & the Indians physicians to attend them (Bynum 1838a).

A couple of days later, Bynum requested permission to delay the movement of his prisoners:

A large number have gone for considerable distance in the mountains & cannot be found by those whom I have sent out as runners. I am very desirous that you would allow me until Wednesday or Thursday next to start my prisoners from this post. I think if allowed until that time I can have almost everyone in this valley collected & their property sold & every other preparation for their departure completed. Some two hundred are now at or near the post & their number is constantly increasing. (Bynum 1838f).

My object in desiring a delay is to secure the women & children & permit the men to go & gather in their property & have it sold on Monday or Tuesday & the money paid over to them & start them next day. They are very desirous of settling their own property & I have promised them that liberty provided some officer of this post witness the contract. I have to inform you also that almost every child & many grown persons in this valley are sick with the whooping cough & that a large number of deaths having taken place since they run to the mountains amongst those

families who have returned. There are many now taken who cannot be removed without very great danger- without almost certain death (Bynum 1838f).

On June 18, Bynum, who was impressed by the Cheoah Cherokees' Christianity, orderliness and pacific attitude, petitioned Preston Starrett (federal enrolling agent in the Valley Towns) to issue permits to exempt a number of the Cheoah residents from removal. Bynum wrote on their behalf:

If they are permitted to remain until further orders I promise to use my efforts to induce our state to make them citizens. I have no doubt they will grant them the right of citizen-ship.... I do earnestly hope you will permit Board Splitter & the following persons his near relations to remain.

1. Board Splitter, wife & 2 children
2. Kulquataka, wife & 2 Do.
3. Tusuiskee , wife & 6 children (Board Splitter's brother)
4. Jesse wife & 1 child (do.)
5. Choo wah chuckah & wife Kalonuaskee (do. [ditto] sister) and 5 children
6. Nancy Board Splitter's mother old and infirm
7. Conust sister to Board Splitter's mother very old and infirm.

Kahyawhula the wife of Kulquitaka No. 5 is the sister of Board Splitter. All those persons are members of the Church and preachers & exhorters with the exception of Tusuiskee. For his character I am willing to vouch. I am very much interested in favor of this family. The old members of the family are too old to remove.... (Bynum 1838g).

On June 22, Bynum ordered the transfer of Cherokee prisoners from Fort Montgomery to Fort Butler:

Capt. Cunningham will set out with his company as an escort to Inidan prisoners today at 9 o'clock AM. He will escort them to Fort Butler as soon as practicable & report himself to Gen. Eustis and await his further orders (Bynum 1838h).

The 300 prisoners from Cheoah most likely traveled from Fort Montgomery to Fort Delaney along the Pile Ridge-Long Creek military road (the sole wagon route to Cheoah), then followed the state road south to Fort Butler. The 24-mile journey took two days; on June 24, 1838, General Eustis observed:

Capt. Washington, with Companies B & G 4th Regt. Artillery under his command left here [Fort Butler] yesterday afternoon for the Cherokee Agency, having under his charge about 1100 Indians-- 300 Indians will arrive here today from Cheowah [emphasis added] & in two or three days about the same number from Fort Lindsay & Camp Scott. The whole number of Indians, which have been collected at the several posts in North Carolina is something more than 3000. A few are still hiding in the recesses of the mountains, & a number of families have obtained permission from the Superintendent of Emigration or his agent to remain and become citizens of N.C (Eustis 1838b).

After a short stay at Fort Butler, the Cheoah prisoners, like thousands of other North Carolina Cherokees, were marched 80 miles over the Unicoi Turnpike to Fort Cass (Charleston, Tennessee) to await their deportation to Oklahoma. Once there, they took up temporary residence in the internment camps on the military reservation, most likely joining 1500 North Carolina Cherokees already camped along the eastern prong of South Mouse Creek. Most of the Cheoah prisoners traveled to the west with fellow Baptist converts in Bushyhead's detachment.

North Carolina troops abandoned Fort Montgomery soon after the transfer of the Cheoah prisoners to Fort Butler. On June 24, Bynum wrote Eustis:

I shall have all the companies at Franklin within the week. My own preference would be to march them to Asheville before they are discharged.... I have taken about 20 more Indian prisoners and hope to get a few more before I leave. Those I took had returned and were working out their fields. I will endeavor to ascertain the probable number in this valley not yet taken and inform you of it

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

before I set out....The sick list in camp is increasing very rapidly. I think Dr. Calloway will have to be left behind with them (Bynum 1838i).

In the aftermath of removal, the Cheoah Valley was largely given over to Cherokee families who had managed to elude Bynum's troops. Relatively few white settlers took up residence in this remote area until 1850, and the remnant Cherokee enclave of Cheoah/Buffalo Town flourished. William Holland Thomas established a store on Rhea Hill (present site of downtown Robbinsville) and designated it the "Fort Montgomery" store. A nearby post office was addressed "Cheoah Valley" until 1849, when it was redesignated "Fort Montgomery." At the outset of the Civil War, Confederate troops mustered at Fort Montgomery (presumably the site of the old Removal-era fort), and troops regularly encamped at Fort Montgomery throughout the war. With the founding of Robbinsville in 1872, use of the Fort Montgomery place name lapsed.

### Fort Montgomery Site Location and Archaeological Reconnaissance

Because Fort Montgomery was built after the 1837-1838 Army Corps surveys of the region, the fort site is not depicted by the detailed survey notebooks or the on the composite 1838 "Map of Part of the Cherokee Territory Situated Among the Mountains of N. Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee." Extant cartographic depictions of the fort, such as Keyes 1838 schematic of "View of Posts and Distances" (Figure 25) and the 1843 Morse and Breese map (Figure 26) are highly generalized and do not provide sufficient detail to relocate the Fort Montgomery site. Other lines of evidence, however, indicate that Fort Montgomery was situated atop present-day Fort Hill, Robbinsville, North Carolina. Local tradition contends that Fort Hill (Figure 28) is the site of Fort Montgomery; Mr. Dewey Sharp, a lifetime resident of Robbinsville informed the author in 1995 that his grandfather (James Hamilton Sharp, b. 1835) related that he had enlisted in Confederate forces at Fort Montgomery on Fort Hill. Other informants indicate that a small cemetery on Fort

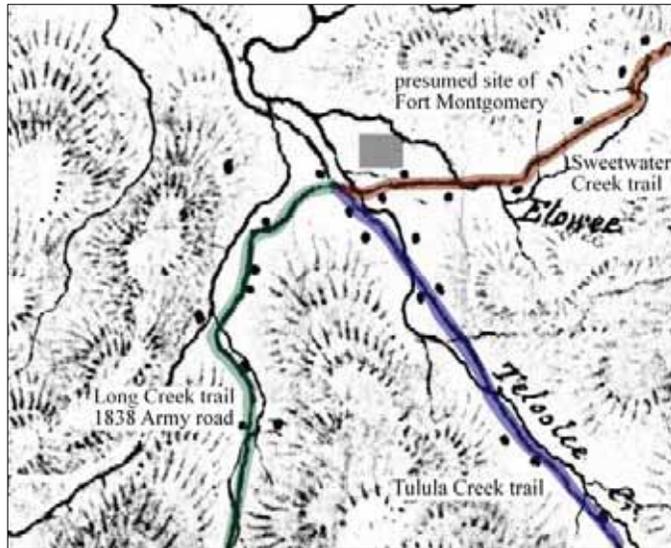


Figure 27. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps illustrating the convergence of trails near the probable site of Fort Montgomery (present-day Robbinsville, NC).

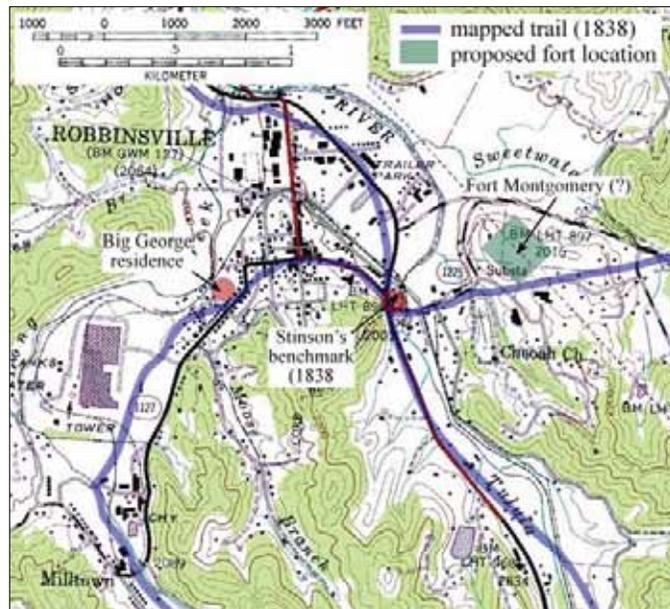


Figure 28. Detail of the 1990 U.S.G.S. Robbinsville quad indicating route of 1838 trails and the presumed site of Fort Montgomery on Fort Hill.



Figure 29. Cemetery on Fort Hill, reputed to have begun as the Fort Montgomery cemetery.

Hill (UTM 245970e, 3911875n) began with the interment of the dead from Fort Montgomery (Figure 29). Placement of Fort Montgomery is supported by a synthetic view of existing map data. Both the Keyes and the Morse and Breese maps indicate Fort Montgomery as the northern terminus of the road from Fort Delaney (Jamesville). This road, constructed by North Carolina troops in May 1838, followed the route mapped by Army Corps surveyors earlier that year (see Figures 27, 28). This route traced an extant trail from Fort Delaney up Pile Ridge, across Snowbird Mountain, and down Long Creek to its juncture with Moose Branch. Then

the trail crossed Rhea Hill and forded Tulula Creek near present Sweetwater Road, then skirts the Old Mother Church cemetery (est. 1848) hill, and climbs a spring hollow onto Fort Hill, the presumed site of Fort Montgomery. Somewhat problematic is the 1843 Morse and Breese map, which appears to represent Fort Montgomery on the north side of Sweetwater Creek. To complicate this discrepancy, other published maps from the 1850s place Fort Montgomery in the Long Creek drainage.

Archaeological reconnaissance focused upon Fort Hill as the most likely setting for Fort Montgomery. Fort Hill (Figures 28 and 30) is a broad, elevated ancient terrace situated in the confluence of Sweetwater and Tulula creeks. The surface of Fort Hill is 2080 ft AMSL, 50 feet above the valley floor, and the terrace offers a commanding view of the Cheoah Valley. The northern, eastern and western edges of Fort Hill are relatively steep scarps; the southwestern edge of the terrace is defined by a spring hollow with a strong perennial spring branch. The northern half of Fort Hill (north of the route of the Sweetwater Creek trail- see Figure 27) is the best situated for the fort, with a broad level expanse reputed to have been a Cherokee stickball field. This area is

largely undeveloped, although the front edge of the terrace is occupied by residences, and the southeastern edge of the probable fort locality includes a Nantahala Power & Light power substation and a textile manufacturing plant (see Figure 30). Much of the center of Fort Hill (Figures 30, 31) is open agricultural land owned by a private individual who initially granted investigators access to the property for inventory, but who later determined that he did not want to involve his property in the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail site certification process. During initial pedestrian reconnaissance of the property investigators examined all exposed



Figure 30. Aerial view of Fort Hill indicating the probable site of Fort Montgomery. Blue shaded area denotes extent of reconnaissance.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina



Figure 31. Views to north (at left) and south (at right) of the probable site of Fort Montgomery.

ground surfaces in the fort locality (see Figure 30), but identified no materials attributable to a Removal-era occupation. Investigators observed large piles of fieldstones at the terrace brow (Figure 32); the property owner indicated that he had removed these stones from a small area of the level terrace surface in preparing a tobacco field more than 50 years previous. Such tabular fieldstone does not appear to be native to the terrace surface, and the concentration of these materials in the suspected fort location may denote the presence of a former building or other construction. Unfortunately, the landowner declined further, more intensive site survey, and evaluation of the probable site of Fort Montgomery was suspended.

### Evaluation and Recommendations

Removal-era documentary evidence places Fort Montgomery in the Cheoah Valley at the terminus of the U.S. Army road from Fort Delaney, but provides no further detail concerning the fort location. Post Removal documentation is contradictory and inconclusive, but local oral tradition is unified in situating Fort Montgomery atop Fort Hill. Limited reconnaissance of Fort Hill determined that the setting closely resembles the documented locations of forts Butler, Delaney, Hembree and Lindsay, with large, level surfaces on elevated terraces or hills with commanding views positioned at major trail intersections. Because much of Fort Hill remains as undeveloped agricultural space, it appears likely that some archaeological evidence of the fort occupation remains intact, and the site possibly constitutes the best-preserved Removal era fort location in southwestern North Carolina. If access to the site becomes possible for future investigation, it is strongly recommended that the open surfaces north and northwest of the power substation should be sample with close interval shovel tests to recover artifacts or identify contexts associated with the fort occupation. If such investigations confirm a Removal era archaeological component, remote sensing (e.g., ground penetrating radar, magnetometry) might afford expedient and effective approaches to locating extensive features such as palisade ditches. Even in lieu of archaeological confirmation, the Fort Montgomery locality should be marked with appropriate interpretation for public education concerning Fort Montgomery and its role in the removal of Cherokee communities from the Cheoah Valley.



Figure 32. View to southwestern edge of the probable site of Fort Montgomery. Fieldstone piles are situated around the bases of the large oak trees at left.

## Fort Lindsay

Fort Lindsay (Oct. 1837-July 1838), situated near the mouth of the Nantahala River on the northeastern border of the Cherokee Nation, was the Army's northernmost post established for the Cherokee removal of 1838 (Figure 33). Fort Lindsay served primarily as a collection point for Cherokee prisoners from the Alarka, Yellow Town, Chinleanatlee, and Nantahala communities, but the garrison of North Carolina militia was also charged with securing the Cherokee border to prevent citizens from escaping to the haven of the Quallatown community.

Quartermaster A.R. Hetzel's communication (August 11, 1837) with Lt. Montgomery indicates that the Army anticipated establishing a post at the mouth of the Nantahala in the summer of 1837:

I have just had a conversation with Colonel Lindsay relation to the contemplated movement of Capt. Truits Company to Nuntahala and he informs me that it will remain in position at Valley River until it is ascertained whether the company can be foraged and subsisted at some point between Nuntahala and Tucksegee without drawing supplies from Tenn[essee] (Hetzel 1837b).

Truitt's (Macon County) company of North Carolina Mounted Infantry was newly mustered at Fort Butler. They remained at Fort Butler until the company moved to the mouth of the Nantahala River to build Fort Lindsay in early October, 1837:

Sir, I have the honor to transmit herewith a rough map exhibiting the positions of the different stations in the Cherokee Country. Within the last four days five new posts have been established intended to be permanent for the winter, consisting at present of but one company each...Camp Lindsay N.C. near the mouth of the Nantahala River one company Capt. Truit commanding (Hetzel 1837a).

Although no specific records of the fort construction have been located, it is probable that Fort Lindsay, like Fort Delaney (which was established the same week) was built according to a standardized plan provided by the regular army and included "huts and stables for the company and other buildings necessary for the Post."

Truitt and his company of NC Mounted Infantry remained at their station through the buildup to removal. At the beginning of June 1838, they were joined by a contingent of Company H of



Figure 33. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps map of southwestern North Carolina indicating the location of Fort Lindsay near the mouth of the Nantahala River.

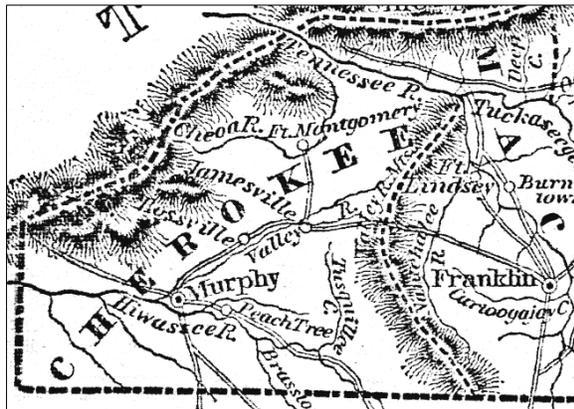


Figure 34. Detail of the 1843 Morse and Breese map indicating Fort Lindsay.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

Rutherford County Volunteers, bringing the total troop strength at Fort Lindsay to 100-125 men. As noted by Col. James Gray Bynum, commander of the North Carolina troops, Truitt and his men proceeded with the arrest and detention of Cherokee prisoners in the Fort Lindsay area on June 3, 1838 before receiving orders for a delay of operations until June 12:

Capt. Truitt commanding post at Fort Lindsay will retain in his custody the Indians he had collected prior to the receipt of Gen. Eustis' order 6 page II until further orders are received from headquarters.

Capt. Truitt will also endeavor to induce as many Indians as possible to come in and surrender themselves.

He will also endeavor to prevent all Indians from emigrating from the nation towards the counties of Macon & Haywood and per that purpose he is authorized to arrest all Indians who from their preparations may seem to have that object in view (Bynum 1838j)



Figure 35. Location of Fort Lindsay on 1837 army survey sketchmap.

Bynum's instructions to Truitt to prevent the flight of Cherokee citizens from the nation apparently referred to a specific escape attempt:

...while I was at Fort Butler Genl Eustis informed me that the Indians were emigrating by the vicinity of Fort Lindsay to a small portion of the tribe settled in Haywood. I was informed today by the expressmen from Fort Lindsay that they had met a family with their bedding and on their way to Haywood for that reason directed Capt. Truitt to prevent such emigration if possible (Bynum 1838k).

When military operations commenced June 12, 1838, Truitt's men patrolled the widely dispersed settlements of the lower Nantahala and Little Tennessee rivers (i.e. Alarka, Chinleanatlee, Yellow Town, Nantahala, Tuskegee) in an effort to round up 100-150 Cherokee residents in the Fort Lindsay area. The people of the lower Nantahala communities were probably the most resistant to emigration, and most hid from the troops. Many took refuge in the notorious rhododendron patches (laurel "hells") of the Nantahala Gorge. Among those who eluded Truitt's men were *Oochella's* band and *Tsali's* family.

The first prisoners transferred from Fort Lindsay to Fort Butler arrived in late June after a probable three day journey. Eustis noted, "... 300 Indians will arrive here today from Cheowah & in two or three days about the same number from Fort Lindsay & Camp Scott. (Eustis 1838b). Their route to Fort Butler is not documented, but they may have traveled the bridle path through the Nantahala Gorge through Red Marble Gap and down to Konahete, where their route intersected the state road. Alternatively, a major trail ascended the Nantahala River to Wesser Creek, then climbed Paint Mountain to Briertown and Aquone, where it intersected the state road at Camp Scott. The third possible route was the North Carolina-Tennessee Turnpike, which lay immediately north of Fort Lindsay and afforded direct wagon access to Franklin, where it intersected the state road to the Valley River region.

The final contingent of Cherokee prisoners from Fort Lindsay arrived at Fort Butler in early July, and were among the last dispatched from the Eastern District during the primary army operations:

The Indians from Fort Lindsay will not arrive here until tomorrow evening. I expect to be able to send off the last detachment of Cherokees from this district on Wednesday the 4<sup>th</sup>... (Eustis 1838e).

Truitt's men, along with the rest of the North Carolina militia, were dismissed from duty at the beginning of July 1838, and Fort Lindsay was summarily abandoned. As evident from the 1843 Morse and Breese map (Figure 34), the locality continued to be known as Fort Lindsay, and the first post office in the area bore the Fort Lindsay address. By the late nineteenth century, the community that grew near the confluence of the Nantahala and Little Tennessee rivers was called Almond. With the arrival of the Southern Railway line in 1890, Almond expanded as a formal town and depot that occupied much of the former site of Fort Lindsay. A 1932 plat of the town (Figure 36) indicates a system of streets (including Lindsay Street) and lots, along with residences, stores, churches, and a high school. The town was condemned and demolished for TVA's Fontana Dam project in the mid-to-late 1940s, and half of the former town site was inundated by Fontana Reservoir. The uninundated portion of the site is now occupied by the Almond Boat Ramp and a fishing resort of small cabins, a private enterprise operating on U.S. Forest Service lands. The remainder of the old town site seasonally covered by Fontana Reservoir, but is annually exposed by lower wintertime lake levels.

**Documentary Evidence and Archaeological Reconnaissance of the Fort Lindsay Site Locality**

As indicated by the 1838 Army Corps survey notes (Figure 35), Fort Lindsay was "situated on a very handsome site- ground sloping towards the river" approximately 26.5 chains (1750 ft) south of the Little Tennessee River at the ford to the Tennessee-North Carolina Turnpike. The fort is depicted (Figure 35) on a relatively level upland spur or bench; immediately to the west of the fort, hachures indicate a steep slope down to the river bottom. Although the

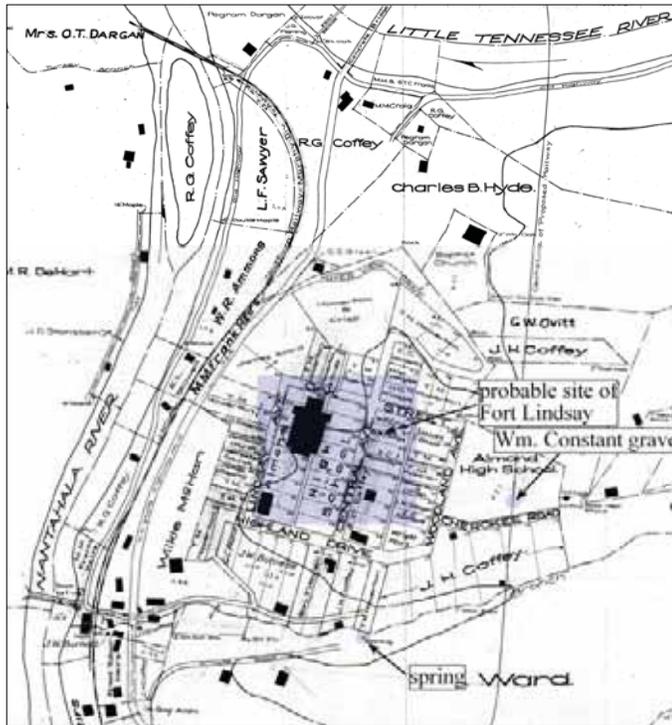


Figure 36. 1932 plat of Almond, NC, with annotations indicating the probable site of Fort Lindsay, the William Constant gravestie (1838) and the spring that probably served the fort..

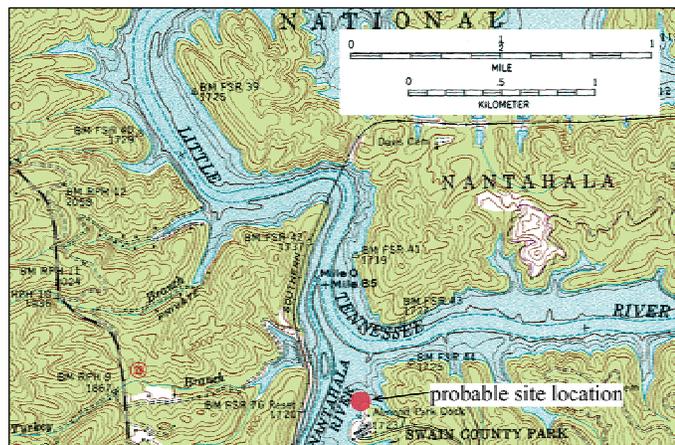


Figure 37. Detail of USGS Noland Creek 7.5' quadrangle indicating the probable site of Fort Lindsay.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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Figure 38. Undated view of the Almond High School. Hunter Library Photographic Collections, Western Carolina University.

surrounding communities (Figure 38).

Repeated reconnaissance of the Fort Lindsay locality determined that much of the former fort site is highly deflated and moderately eroded as a result of the annual fluctuation of Fontana Reservoir (Figures 34, 35). Over 75% of the probable fort site is denuded as a result of inundation or above pool boat ramp activities; early 20<sup>th</sup> century debris and substantial building foundations associated with the former school buildings are clearly evident across much of the area, but no materials or contexts attributable to the Fort Lindsay occupation were present in the reservoir inundated portion of the site. The proprietors of the Almond Boat Ramp indicated that they had

sketchmap is rather schematic, it depicts the various lobes of the dissected margin of the uplands between the Little Tennessee and Nantahala rivers reasonably well, and places Fort Lindsay on the first major lobe that projects into the Nantahala River floodplain, approximately 1750 ft south of the southern bank of the Little Tennessee River (Figures 37, 40). The site a broad, level upland spur that commands the riverbottom, the river confluence, and the former crossing to the Tennessee-North Carolina Turnpike. Site elevation is approximately 1700ft-1715ft AMSL, more than 50 ft higher than the nearby floodplain. A perennial spring branch that borders the southern edge of the site area may have supplied the fort during the Removal-era occupation. The fort location corresponds closely with the former town site of Almond (Figure 36), particularly the grounds of the old Almond High School, a substantial brick complex that served Almond and the



Figure 39. Views of the probable site of Fort Lindsay.



Figure 40. Aerial view of the Fort Lindsay locality.

### Evaluation and Recommendations

Explicit cartographic evidence (and local oral tradition) identifies the former town site of Almond as the location of the Removal-era Fort Lindsay, the northernmost of the army posts involved in the Cherokee removal operations of 1838. Reconnaissance of the site determined that the former fort seat has suffered various destructive impacts from town construction and demolition, inundation and erosion. It appears unlikely that a coherent archaeological manifestation of Fort Lindsay survives, although individual contexts may exist around or under the resort cabins at the eastern edge of the presumed site area. The single grave marker for Pvt. William Constant survives as the only standing, contemporaneous above ground evidence of the fort occupation.

Because the probable core of the Fort Lindsay site appears to lack essential archaeological integrity, and its qualities of setting and feeling are greatly compromised by Fontana Reservoir, it is unlikely that the site of Fort Lindsay could be successfully nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (although the Wm. Constant grave might be eligible as a surviving element). Nevertheless, the Fort Lindsay site retains a high degree of historical significance by virtue of its documented role in the forced Cherokee removal of 1838. Because the Fort Lindsay site is under federal agency (USDA Forest Service and TVA) control and protection and is publicly accessible, it is an excellent site for interpretive development, and, like the other fort sites in southwestern North Carolina, should be designated as a locus for public education as part of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.



Figure 41. Gravestones of William Constant.

collected lead “musket balls” from the ramp area, but older informants who had resided in Almond before Fontana Dam could not recall observing any materials that might have been associated with the fort. It appears likely that early 20<sup>th</sup> century construction in Almond obscured much of the evidence of Fort Lindsay and that reservoir induced erosion of the surface has obliterated much of the fort location.

One element of the Removal era fort occupation remains intact. In the woods approximately 200m east-southeast of the probable fort site are markers denoting the grave of William Constant, a private in the Rutherford County Volunteers stationed at Fort Lindsay during June 1838. A crude fieldstone, the original marker, is inscribed “WC 1838”; sometime in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century a headstone marked “Wm. Constant U.S. soldier Indian War” was added to the grave (Figures 40, 41). No other marked graves are in the immediate vicinity, although Mr. R.C. Freeman, who grew up in Almond, indicated that a Cherokee cemetery associated with Fort Lindsay is located on a nearby ridge.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

### Camp Scott

Camp Scott, situated in the Aquone community where the State (or Franklin) Road crossed the Nantahala River, was the easternmost (and highest elevation, approximately 2900 ft AMSL) army post established for the Cherokee removal. Col. William Lindsay's Order 19 (May 14, 1838) deployed one company of North Carolina volunteers to this still unnamed position, noting "Of the North Carolina Regiment...1 compy to the Post near the Nantahalee River and Franklin Road (Lindsay 1838). A May 17, 1838 list of "Volunteer Posts and stations of the Army of the Cherokee Nation" indicates "[fort] on Nantahalee" being 122 miles from the agency and Fort Cass and garrisoned by one infantry company (Lindsay 1838). Col. John Gray Bynum's May 26, 1838 orders directed Captain James Horton's company (Ashe County volunteers) to "proceed to Camp Scott on the Nantahala River, where Capt. [Thomas] Angel [Macon County volunteers] now commands." Camp Scott, a temporary station without permanent buildings or fortifications, was apparently established after May 1, 1838, and was garrisoned by Angels' 75-man company of Macon County (NC) volunteers by the middle of the month. At the end of May, Capt. Horton's 76-man company of Ashe County volunteers joined Angel's men in camp. A force of 151 troops was charged with the arrest and deportation of approximately 105 Cherokee citizens from the upper Nantahala River Valley communities of Aquone and Briartown, the most remote and isolated settlements in the Cherokee Nation. Like the troops at Fort Lindsay, the Camp Scott garrison also guarded an important access (and egress) point for the Cherokee Nation, and their duties likely included preventing the escape of Cherokee citizens into nearby Macon County. It is also likely the troops at Camp Scott helped to facilitate communications and transport of supplies along the state road between Franklin, NC and North Carolina militia posts in the Cherokee Nation.

Camp Scott's role in the removal operations is barely documented. General Eustis' communication of June 24, 1838, that "300 Indians will arrive here [Ft. Butler] to day from Cheowah, and in two or three days about the same number from Fort Lindsay and Camp Scott" indicates that the troops stationed at Camp Scott were active, and probably detained many of the Briartown and Aquone residents. However, William H. Thomas' 1840 census of the Cherokees remaining in the East documents dozens of former Briartown and Aquone Cherokees who either eluded the troops or who were knowingly left behind when the militia was abruptly discharged at the end of June. In September 1838, Lt. H. L. Scott, who led an expedition to the mountains of North Carolina to round up Cherokee fugitives, observed:

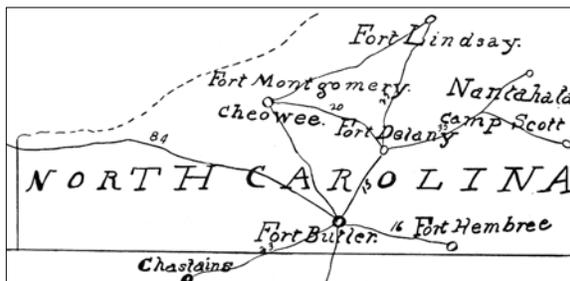


Figure 42. Detail of Lt. E.D. Keyes 1838 "View of Posts and Distances", the only contemporary representation of the location of Camp Scott.

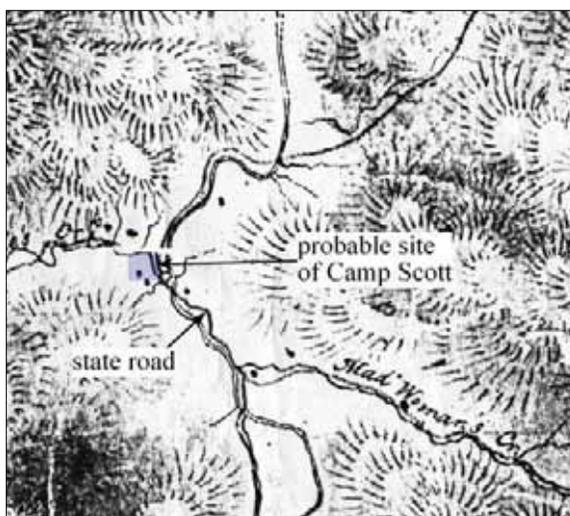


Figure 43. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps map of southwestern North Carolina indicating the state road and the possible location of Camp Scott.

Between 30 and 40 others [Cherokees], I have been informed, are now near Fort [sic] Scott, they having been left there by the Volunteers, when they were discharged ( H.L. Scott 1838).

Apparently the North Carolina troops were somewhat disgruntled by their sudden loss of employment and left the Cherokee prisoners at Camp Scott to their own devices. When Lt. C.H. Larned led a second expedition into the mountains, he found white occupants at Camp Scott, and heard rumors of Cherokee fugitives in the surrounding mountains.

I proceeded on the 17<sup>th</sup> [of October] up Valley River and down the Nantayeelee to Fort [sic] Scott, twenty eight miles from Fort Butler...I found at Fort Scott a man who declared , "that the mountains were full of Indians", that he saw them every day, that there could not be less than two hundred in that immediate neighborhood, but they were determined not to be caught, and were so "wild" and kept so good a lookout that the troops could not get near them...After a most fatiguing march however of about twenty five miles we returned at night, not only without having seen an Indian, but without finding the slightest traces of there having been any, and I became afterwards well convinced , that the man's object in making his absurdly exaggerated [sic] statements was to get a company of volunteers of which his captain called into service for the purpose of bringing in the two hundred Indians with which he had thought proper to people the mountains (Larned 1838).

In the aftermath of the 1838 removal, a small Anglo-American farming community called Aquone grew in the location of its Cherokee namesake. Nimrod Jarrett, a mountain entrepreneur and one of the federal appraisers of Cherokee properties in 1836-1837, owned much of the land in the upper Nantahala River Valley, and guided the development of the area. The great Western Turnpike passed through Aquone in 1854, and the railroad came to the high valley in 1884, opening the area to the timber and mining industries (Benyshek and Webb 2003). By 1900, Aquone was a small village, with a church, school, post office, store, and a cluster of homes. Plans for hydroelectric development of the valley began as early as 1914, and in 1942, Nantahala Power and Light Company completed a 251-ft high dam that inundated the former village of Aquone and approximately 1600 acres of the upper Nantahala River Valley, including the probable site of Camp Scott. This hydroelectric/pump storage reservoir remains in place, and the probable site of Camp Scott is typically covered with approximately 120 ft of water.

#### Documentary Evidence and Proposed Camp Scott Location

Camp Scott's location is poorly documented. Because the "open station" was established very late in the military preparation, the Army Corps surveys did not record its location, and Keye's schematic "View of Posts..." (Figure 42) is the only contemporary representation of Camp Scott. As indicated by Lindsay's Order 19, the station was "near the Nantahalee River and Franklin Road", presumably within the 4500 ft segment of the valley between Jarrett's (Mad Woman's) Creek and Choga Creek where the road paralleled and crossed the river (Figure 44). Because the valley is relatively narrow and the surrounding mountains are quite steep, there are few settings in this area that would have been suitable for the militia encampment. A single location, the core of

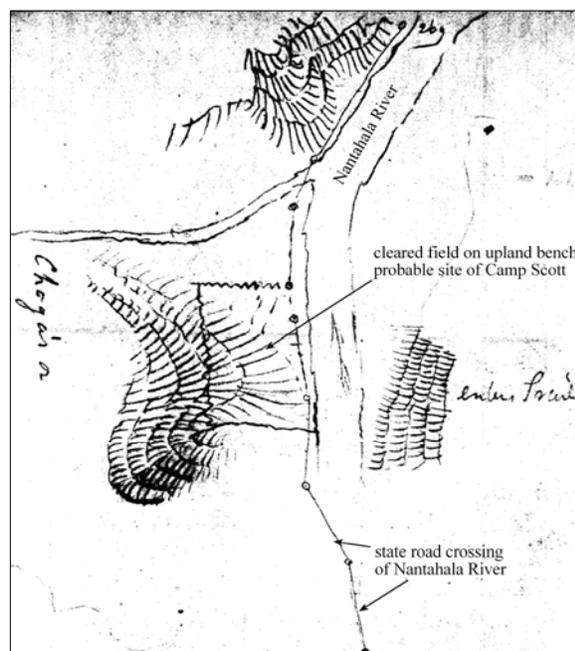


Figure 44. Probable location of Camp Scott near the "near the Nantahalee River and Franklin Road" on 1837 Army Corps sketchmap of the Nantahala River.

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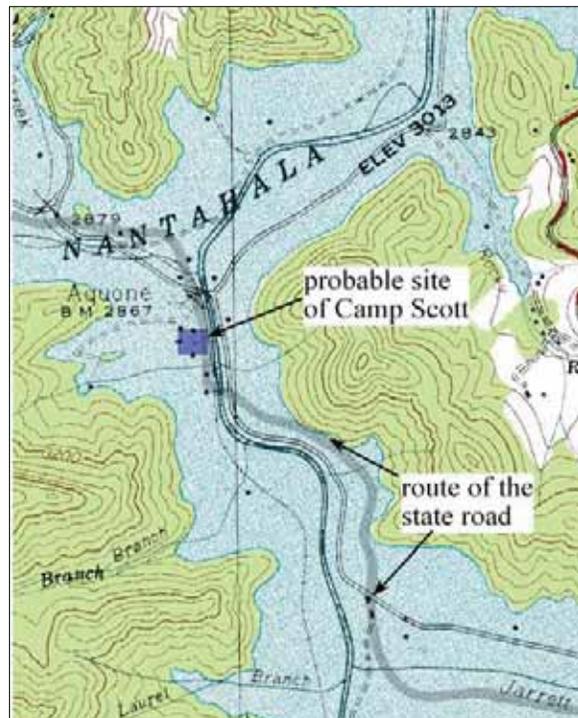
the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century village of Aquone (on the west side of Nantahala River, immediately upstream from Choga Creek), corresponds to the topographic settings of the other, better documented military facilities in southwestern North Carolina. This placement accords with Mooney's (1900) assertion, based on oral tradition, that Camp Scott stood near the Aquone post office. Like the forts that were positioned on level elevated surfaces with commanding views of trails junctures and ready access to roadways, much of Aquone was situated on an elevated colluvial fan (see Figures 44-46) that overlooked a major ford across Nantahala River. The state [or Franklin] road, and later the Western Turnpike skirted this fan before crossing Choga Creek and turning up the Choga Creek Valley. Prior to the inundation of the valley in 1942, the Aquone Baptist Church (Figure 45) and the Aquone schoolhouse occupied the southern tip of this landform. Figure 45, a view of the Aquone Baptist Church in the early 1940s, illustrates a remnant portion of the original state road route and a portion of the colluvial fan surface that may have been the setting for Camp Scott.

The normal pool elevation of Nantahala Lake is 3013 ft AMSL, and the proposed location of Camp Scott, at approximately 2890 ft elevation, remains inundated throughout the year. An exceptional drought in 2002, coupled with a Duke Energy drawdown of the lake, lowered the reservoir to its record low of 2950 ft, but did not expose presumptive site of Camp Scott. An archaeological survey of surfaces exposed by this reservoir drawdown (Benyshek and Webb 2003) specifically targeted the Camp Scott locality, but could not access the appropriate landform. It appears unlikely that the pro-

Figure 46. (right) Detail of the 1957 U.S.G.S. Topton, NC 7.5' quadrangle with superimposed detail from pre-reservoir planimetric, indicating possible location of Camp Scott



Figure 45. View of the Aquone Baptist church and a remnant segment of the old state road at the possible site of Camp Scott.



posed site of Camp Scott will become accessible for investigation in the immediate future, but if lowered lake level expose the surfaces around the former Aquone church and school, this area should be examined for evidence of the ephemeral militia station.

The site of Camp Scott cannot be conclusively identified due to current access issues, and therefore cannot be evaluated for National Register eligibility. Nevertheless, the general camp locality can be asserted with relative confidence, and Camp Scott locality should be interpreted for public education at a publicly accessible location within the viewshed of the submerged town site of Aquone near the mouth of Choga Creek.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

### The Unicoi Turnpike

The Unicoi Turnpike, a commercial wagon road that crossed the southern Appalachians, was the primary deportation route for Cherokee prisoners from North Carolina who were transferred to the Fort Cass internment camps at the Cherokee Agency (now Charleston) in Tennessee. The turnpike road was established in 1813, when a consortium of American businessmen from Tennessee and Georgia, along with nominal Cherokee partners, formed the Unicoi Turnpike Company to open a commercial route across the Cherokee Nation from the head of navigation on the Savannah River in Georgia to the Little Tennessee River near Maryville, Tennessee. Workmen completed the road in 1816 and opened a flourishing trade corridor across the Cherokee Nation. Trains of freight wagons hauled mass produced commercial goods from Tugaloo, Georgia across the mountains to markets in Knoxville and Maryville, Tennessee, then returned with commodities such as hides and leather, beeswax, goose feathers, cured meats, lumber, and iron. The turnpike quickly developed as a principal stock road for the huge droves of hogs, cattle, horse, and poultry produced in Tennessee and Kentucky

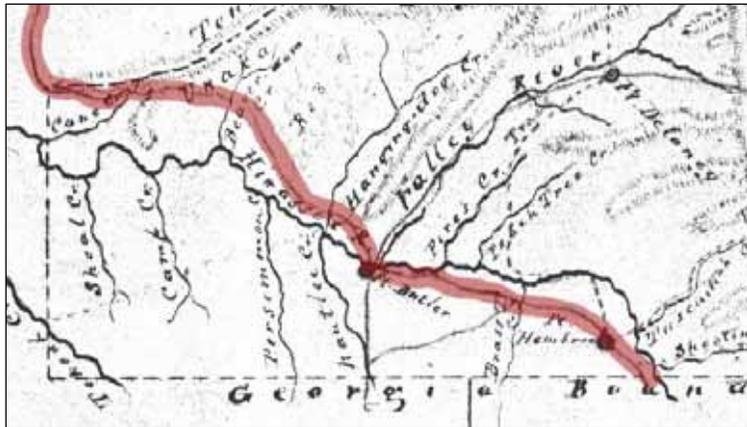


Figure 47. Detail of 1838 Williams map indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike (red shaded) across southwestern North Carolina.

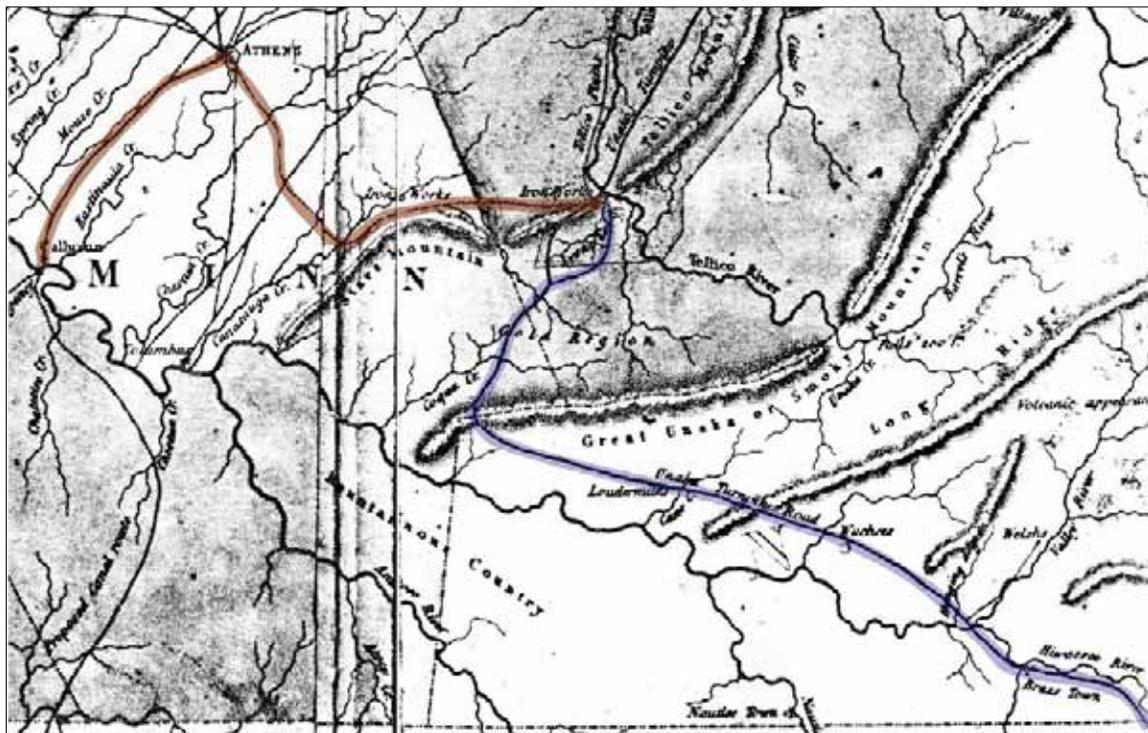


Figure 48. Detail of 1832 Matthew Rhea map indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike (blue shaded) across southwestern North Carolina and the road linkages to Athens and the Cherokee Agency (brown shaded).

that were sold to markets in South Carolina and Georgia. Charley Buffington, a Cherokee *métis* who lived near Nacoochee, Georgia in 1816, testified “on the Unicoy Road... there was very much travelling... by the whites with carriages & waggons & droves...”(Buffington 1843).Entrepreneurs established stock stands (with inns, taverns, and stores) at ten mile intervals along the turnpike to serve this burgeoning traffic.

During the 1820s, other trans-Appalachian turnpikes opened (e.g. the North Carolina-Tennessee Turnpike along the Little Tennessee River), and the brisk traffic on the Unicoi abated. The Unicoi Turnpike Company apparently lost interest in the enterprise, and the road lapsed into disrepair. In 1832, Federal Cherokee agent Hugh Montgomery accompanied a military expedition along the Unicoi Turnpike to the Valley River region to dislodge white intruders. Montgomery was appalled at the condition of the road, and wrote Secretary of War Lewis Cass to propose a military takeover of the main road into the Valley River region (see Figure 48):

...I would ask your attention to the treaty between the Cherokees and the Unicoy Company, it will be found annexed to the Treaty of 1819. You will see that the company were to pay the Cherokees \$160 per year from the time the road was opened. They have not as yet paid the first dollar, and the road is so badly kept as to be almost impassable for carriage of any description and with considerable difficulty and danger on horseback, besides under a clause in the treaty which gives the company the exclusive right to trade on the road, they have settled a considerable number of families along it as traders, none of whom have any goods to trade on, but are cultivating the Indian land, those I have ordered off.

Would it not be right to deprive them of the benefit of the road until they put it in good order and pay the rent due the Nation? (Montgomery 1832).

Just three years later, Lt. Charles Noland echoed Montgomery’s impression of the road in diary entries that detail a trip from the Cherokee agency to the Aquohee District courthouse.

17th Sept.-Left Agency in company with Mr. Schemerhorn and Major Curry, on a tour of North Carolina, arrive at Athens one hour after night, 15 miles.

18th Sept. - Leave Athens, pass by Erly Boyd’s, reach Mick Gormly’s [Conasauga Creek Valley, TN] by sundown, here I met Schemerhorn and Curry, who went from Athens by way of Col. Starr’s. The road is very rough, 12 miles to Boyd’s. 12 miles to Gormly’s

19th Sept. 1835- Left Gormly's and continued ascending the Chil-how-i Mountain road rough,

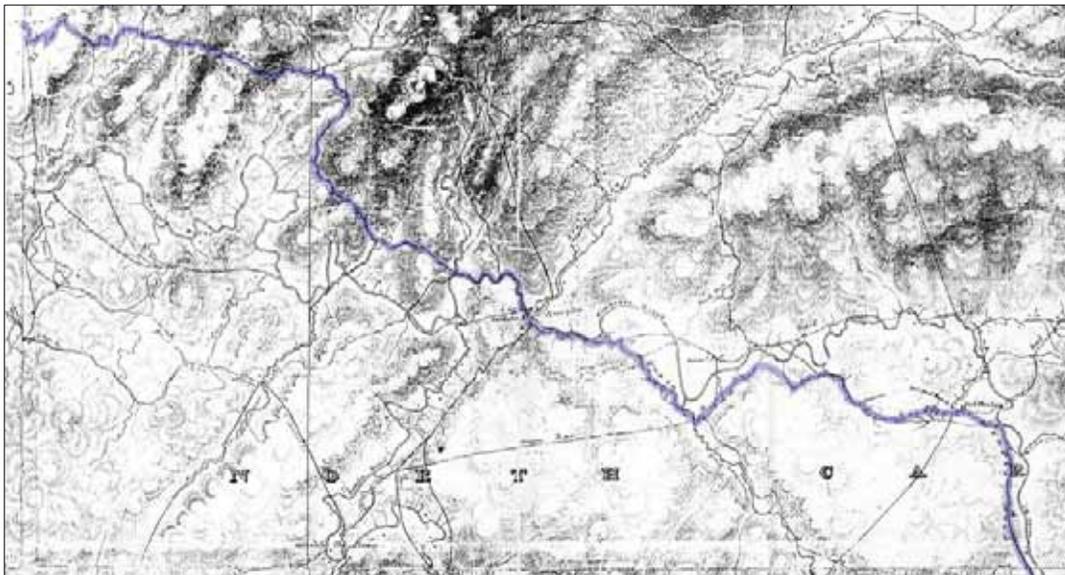


Figure 49. Detail of 1838 Army Corps map indicating Unicoi Turnpike in North Carolina.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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country very broken reach Camp Armistead (10 miles) [Coker Creek, TN] which is entirely in the occupancy of Gold Diggers, who have over run the country. Continue on our way across the Unakoy Mountains. The country is a continual series of mountains, romantic in the extreme. Roads scarcely passable. Reach Reddicks [i.e. Burnt Stand at Shuler Creek, NC], 8 miles, a miserable house or stand on the Unakoy Turnpike. Eat a bad dinner and continue on our way, pass into the Hiwassee valley where the valley breaks into view. We have the finest landscape perhaps in the world, all others I have seen are perfectly tame compared to it, Arrive at Wa-chi-sas [Unaka, NC] an old Indian (7 miles) continue up the little valleys to Mr Rays (7 miles) halt for the night, a miserable house [Grape Creek, NC]. Leave Rays at dawn of day of the 20th, pass up Hiwassee. Cross the river at the below the [sic] junction of Valley River reach Col. Hunters [Murphy, NC] (6 miles) where we halt for the day. The country passed over between Gormlys and Col. Hunters is perhaps taken as a whole the most picturesque on the continent of North America, not an acre of good ground but few white people, Cherokees plenty, but perfectly wild, all opposed to emigration.... The roads intolerable (Noland 1990:17-18).

Noland's trip to North Carolina with Schemerhorn and Curry was a failed attempt to convene a removal treaty conference. Later that year, Schemerhorn and other U.S. commissioners concluded a removal treaty with a minority faction of Cherokees at New Echota, Georgia. As Cherokee opposition to the New Echota treaty swelled through 1836, whites on the North Carolina frontier feared rumored Indian conspiracies and uprisings, and the U.S. government dispatched General John Ellis Wool with Tennessee militia to the Valley River region in June 1836 to maintain order. These troops came via the Unicoi Turnpike and established Camp Huntington, which in 1837 became known as Fort Butler (later Murphy, N.C.). Later that year, Lt. Abner Hetzel, the Army's quartermaster at Fort Cass, requested a work detail to repair the Unicoi Turnpike between Coker Creek and Camp Huntington:

I have the honor to request that a detail of thirty men be made from the command at Valley River to repair the road leading from Fort Armistead to the cantonment near the former place. Lt. Montgomery informs me that the road is nearly impassible and as he is compelled to procure his forage from Tennessee he is afraid that unless the road be repaired he will not be able to keep the command supplied... (Hetzel 1837c).

At the end of 1837, Army Corps survey crews took to the field to map the roads and trails of the region in preparation for the anticipated military removal of the Cherokees (Figures 47 and 49). Because of its strategic importance, the surveyors paid particular attention to the Unicoi Turnpike, and mapped the road in great detail. Capt. W.G. Williams, the officer in charge of the mapping project, describes the road segment from Fort Butler to Tennessee:

The great state road from Franklin (Macon Co. N.C.) to Athens, Tennessee ... follows the north bank of the Hiwassee for about 3 miles along a good level, but leaving it to the left, more and more, becoming hilly and at length ascends the Unaka mountains, the Tennessee line, crossing successively Hanging dog, Beaverdam, and Cutcane creeks... Hence it proceeds to Athens in Tennessee (Williams 1838a).

Although the field surveyors labeled the route as part of the Unaka [Unicoi] Road, army correspondence typically refers to the route as part of the "great state road" or simply as the road between Tellico River and Valley River. Because the Unicoi Turnpike was the wagon road across the Chilhowee and Unaka mountains between the Cherokee Agency to the Valley River region, army officers assumed the route was well known and usually neglected to specifically name the road. Army communications suggest that most or all of the traffic between Fort Butler and Fort Cass passed over the turnpike as the military stepped up its preparations for removal. In March, 1838, Lt. A. Montgomery, quartermaster at Fort Butler, requested another work party to bring the road up to standards for the heavy traffic it would bear in the months to come:

I will require a party of twenty men under the command of a commissioned officer to repair the road from the Tellico River [at Tellico Plains, Tennessee] to Fort Hembree, N.C [Hayesville].

Also a party of fifteen men under the command of a comd officer to repair the road from Fort Butler [Murphy] to Fort Delaney, N.C [Andrews] (Montgomery 1838).

In late May 1838 When the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> U.S. Artillery regiments moved to take post at Fort Butler, their line of march followed the Unicoi Turnpike “thro’ Clarksville [Georgia]... followed the valley of the Chattehoochie...near the courthouse of Habersham County [Georgia] ... passed Fort Hembree [at Hayesville, NC] and encamped ... on Hiawasse River near fort Butler (Phelps 2000:11-15). At the beginning of June, 1838, the army posted express riders along the turnpike at Fort Armistead [Coker Creek, TN], Emmanuel Shuler’s [Shuler’s Creek, NC], and Singleton Rhea’s [Grape Creek, NC] to carry dispatches between Fort Cass and Fort Butler. Their orders indicate that all military dispatches between these posts were to travel over the Unicoi Turnpike. On June 12, 1838, the day appointed for the removal operations to commence in North Carolina, Major General Winfield Scott, the commander of the U.S. Army of the Cherokee Nation, was at Fort Butler to witness the proceedings. His aide-de-camp wrote Lt. Abner Hetzel: “The Major General directs me to say to you that he will probably leave here on Thursday, at the latest on Friday morning, & return to the Agency by way of Athens.” On June 14th, Scott was at Fort Armistead in Coker Creek, Tennessee and expected to be in Athens the evening of the 15th, an indication that Scott traveled the same route that Noland described three years earlier. Immediately behind Scott and his retinue was Lt. John Phelps, who wrote in his diary:

On the 13<sup>th</sup> some of the troops returned and by the morning of the 14th we were all in with nearly a thousand Indians [at Fort Butler], when I received an order to repair to the Agency at Calhoun Tenn. and report for duty in the Indian Department. I bought a pony and on the 15th set out for my destination which was 80 miles distant. When about fifteen miles on my way, I passed hamlet of old Wachissa...(Phelps 2000:25).

Phelps’ route from Fort Butler to the agency clearly followed the Unicoi Turnpike; Wachissa’s (Wacheesee) home was situated at Unaka, NC where the turnpike crossed Beaverdam Creek (see Figure 48).

Just five days after Scott’s departure, the first contingents of Cherokee prisoners began their journey from Fort Butler to the emigration depot at the Cherokee Agency (now Charleston, TN). Brigadier General Abraham Eustis (the commander of military removal forces in North Carolina) noted:

The first detachment of Cherokees, about 380, left here this morning [June 18, 1838] under escort of Capt. Munroe’s company, 4th artillery..Another party of about 690 will move tomorrow under escort of Capt. Webster’s Comp. 1st Artill. The roads are represented to be in such bad condition that it is estimated to be at least 7 days march from here to Calhoun... (Eustis 1838a)

Munroe and Webster moved their detachments northwestward from Fort Butler into Tennessee along the turnpike, where Lt. Phelps encountered them on his return from the agency:

I left Athens on the 20<sup>th</sup>, and rode till I reached Tellico River... After leaving the river, I passed over some mountains, on a Federal road winding over their summits, and soon after meeting Capt. Munroe with several hundred Indians on his way to Calhoun ... The next morning,... We met Capt. Webster with another large party of Cherokees; passed Wachissa hamlet where we saw the old man going from his field to his house, and finally reached Camp Hiwassee about 5 o’clock P.M. (Phelps 2000:32).

Like Lt. John Noland in 1835, Phelps had traveled from the Cherokee Agency to Athens, Tennessee, took the Connection Road to the Connasauga Creek Valley, then followed the route of the Mecca Pike to Tellico Plains, where he intersected the Unicoi Turnpike and crossed the mountains to Fort Butler (Figure 49). Captain L.B. Webster, described the reverse trip to the agency via the Unicoi Turnpike in a June 28 letter to his wife, Frances:

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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I left Fort Butler on the 19th in charge of 800 Cherokees. I had not an officer along to assist me, and only my own company as a guard. Of course I had as much to do as I could attend to, but I experienced no difficulty in getting them along other than what arose from fatigue, and the *roughness of the roads over the mountains, which are the worst I ever saw* [emphasis added]. I arrived with about one hundred more than what I started with- many having joined me on the march, We were eight days in making the journey (80 miles) and it was pitiful to behold the women and children, who suffered exceedingly, as they were all obliged to walk, with the exception of the sick... (Webster 1838b).

Webster's eighty-mile journey is consistent with Phelp's and Noland's accounts and mirrors mileage between Fort Butler and Fort Cass as depicted on the 1838 Keyes' map (Figure 49). An 1839 Burr's Atlas of postal routes indicates a distance of 82 miles between these points via the Unicoi Turnpike-Conasauga Creek-Athens route. Webster's account only intimates the use of wagons for the transportation of the sick during the removal, but one of the Cherokee leaders in Webster's group, Peter Oganaya, later filed a claim for the use of his wagon in nine days travel between Aquohee (Brasstown, N.C.) and the Cherokee Agency (Oganaya 1845). Use of wagons in the removal from southwestern North Carolina is further indicated by General Abraham Eustis' letter of June 29, 1838:

The movements of the Indians & of the volunteers have withdrawn nearly all the wagons from this part of the country & the regular troops cannot move other wagons arrive here, or those sent away come back. There is also a large surplusage of bacon and flour, which must be removed from this place to Calhoun. I therefore request that all the publick wagons now at the Agency may be ordered here...(Eustis 1838g).

By the end of July, the last large groups of Cherokee prisoners had left Fort Butler and made their way through Athens, Tennessee to the internment camps at Charleston, Tennessee. *The Athens Journal* (July 4, 1838) reported:

Several detachments of Cherokees have passed through this place within the last two or three weeks, on their way from North Carolina to the Agency, and on last Friday 1,200 passed, conducted by two companies of artillery, under the command of Capt. Washington (in Foreman 1953:298f)

The army continued to seek fugitives from the military roundup in the mountains of North Carolina, and the Unicoi Turnpike was used for removal related operations well into the fall of 1838 (H.L. Scott 1838). Post-Removal maps indicate that the turnpike served as a major interstate road for two more decades, and fell into disuse only with the construction of better roads after the Civil War. Shorter segments of the turnpike were used for vehicular traffic through the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Documentation of the Unicoi Turnpike Route**

The route of the Unicoi Turnpike across southwestern North Carolina is generally documented by contemporary large scale maps such as Rhea (1832)(Figure 48), Deaver (1837), Williams (1838) (Figure 47) and the 1838 Army Corp map (Figure 49), and more specifically documented by the survey notes and sketch maps generated by Army Corps survey teams in 1837. Two December 1837 Army Corps surveys of segments of the Unicoi Turnpike detail the route. J.K. Stinson's "Survey from Fort Butler to the boundary line between Tenn & N. Car. Along the Unaka Road" begins at the quartermaster's office at Fort Butler and traces the road 24.7 miles (39.7km) northwestward to Unicoi Gap at the Tennessee state line. The December 16, 1837 survey of a "Line to connect Forts Butler & Hembrie [sic] by the Unaka road" details 15.4 miles (24.8km) of turnpike east of Fort Butler. Records for both survey lines provide relatively precise calls (degrees-minutes for bearings and distances in feet) and references to identifiable landscape features, and can be accurately projected onto modern topographic quadrangles and readily reconstructed across the modern landscape.

Map reconstructions of both survey lines were accomplished using digital (DRG) versions of U.S.G.S. 7.5' quadrangles manipulated with ArcView™ and Macromedia Freehand™ software. Both surveys originated at Bench Mark A. J., an identifiable point on the Unicoi Turnpike immediately northwest of Fort Butler (in present-day Murphy, NC). Beginning at this point, linked survey calls from each station were projected at the specified bearings and scaled distances on the quadrangles, with calibration to physical landmarks such as streams, bluffs, slopes and eminences.

The resultant map reconstructions were then field checked for corresponding landscape features, such as roadbed segments and stream fords attributable to the Unicoi Turnpike. Field reconnaissance of the Unicoi Turnpike route commenced at Unicoi Gap at the border of Cherokee County, North Carolina and Monroe County, Tennessee and documented discontinuous portions of the turnpike southeastward over 40 miles to the site of Fort Hembree (at present-day Hayesville, Clay County, North Carolina). Wherever extant segments of the turnpike roadbed or other associated landscape elements were identified, these resources were documented with still photography and narrative notation to record physical attributes such as roadbed width and depth, extent of erosion or other modifications, general physical condition, and overall integrity. Locations of turnpike segments were also determined with a handheld geographic positioning system (GPS) unit and plotted on USGS quadrangles at the time of reconnaissance,

Reconnaissance of the Unicoi Turnpike identified recognizable segments of the roadway (in varying states of preservation) along much of its span across southwestern North Carolina (Figure 50). The longest and most intact sections of the turnpike are located in the western part of Cherokee County, where the turnpike traverses large blocks of the Nantahala National Forest. East of Unaka, NC, the turnpike is more fragmented as it crosses private properties until it enters Hiwassee Reservoir at Chambers Creek. Southeast of Murphy, the turnpike traverses private lands and is highly dissected, with relatively few segments that exhibit substantial integrity of construction and setting. The surviving portions of the turnpike between Murphy and the Georgia state line are particularly threatened by rapid commercial and residential development and by the realignment of U.S. Highway 64 between Murphy and Peachtree, North Carolina.

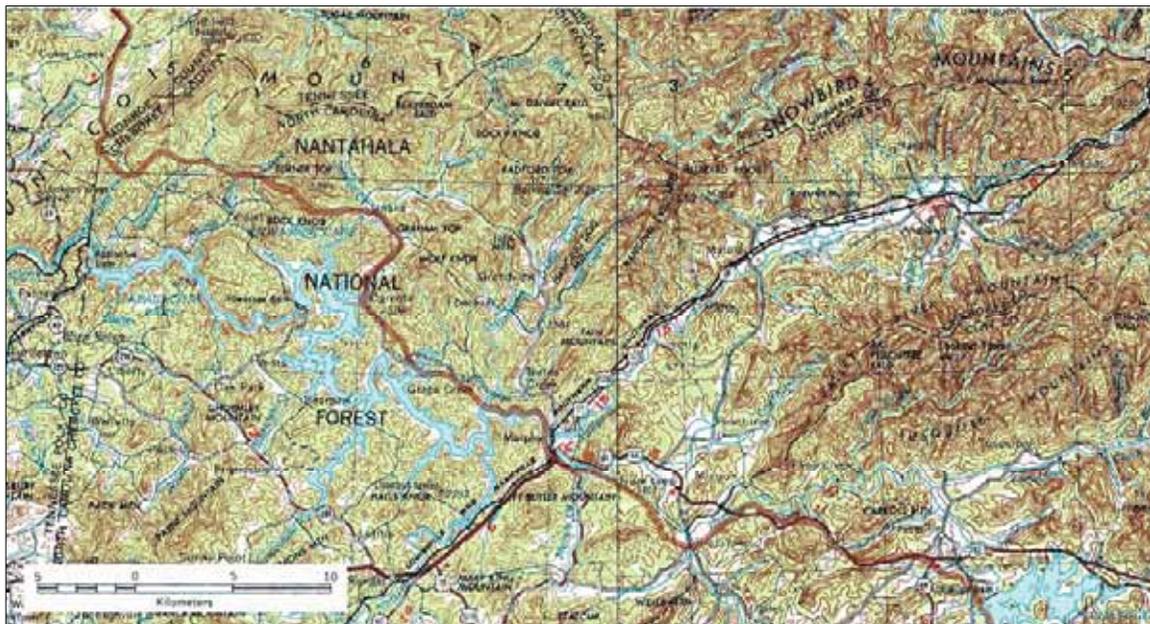


Figure 50. Documented route of the Unicoi Turnpike in southwestern North Carolina (indicated by red line).

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### Unicoi Turnpike Segment A: Unicoi Gap to Burnt Stand (Figures 51-60)

The Unicoi Turnpike originates at Chota, Tennessee along the Little Tennessee River, then traces a portion of the ancient Great Warrior's Path southward to Tellico Plains, Tennessee, where it ran up the Tellico River to the Tellico Iron Works (see Figure 48). From there, the turnpike ascended the river to Lyons Creek, then climbed the Chilhowee Mountains via present Old Furnace Road to Coker Creek, Tennessee. Southward from Coker Creek, the turnpike ascended the Unaka Mountains via Dalton Branch and entered North Carolina through the Unicoi Gap (Figures 51, 52). At Unicoi Gap, the turnpike roadbed is intact (Figure 53), but immediately east of the gap the old road is truncated by Joe Brown highway (a modern gravel surfaced road). Vestiges of the southwest bank of the turnpike entrenchment are evident along Joe Brown Highway for approximately 130m southeast of the gap. The turnpike route then diverges southeast from the modern road and descends a long, steep ridge toe. Along the first 750m of the ridge toe, the deeply entrenched turnpike bed is well defined and well-preserved, although heavily braided (Figure 54).

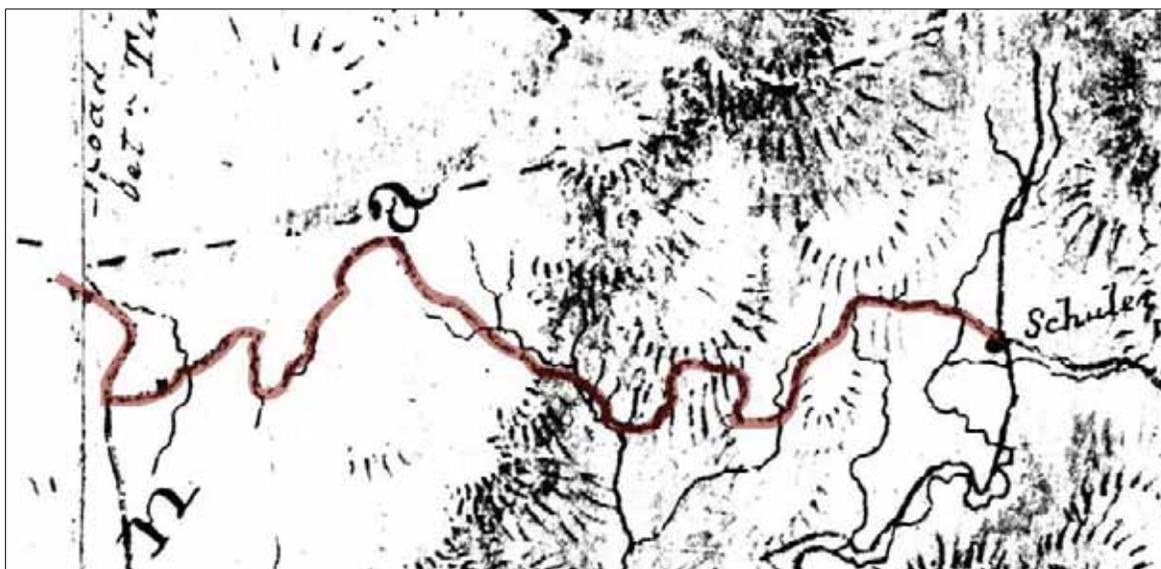


Figure 51. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps "Map of the Cherokee Nation" indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike (shown in red) between Unicoi Gap and the Burnt Stand (Shuler).

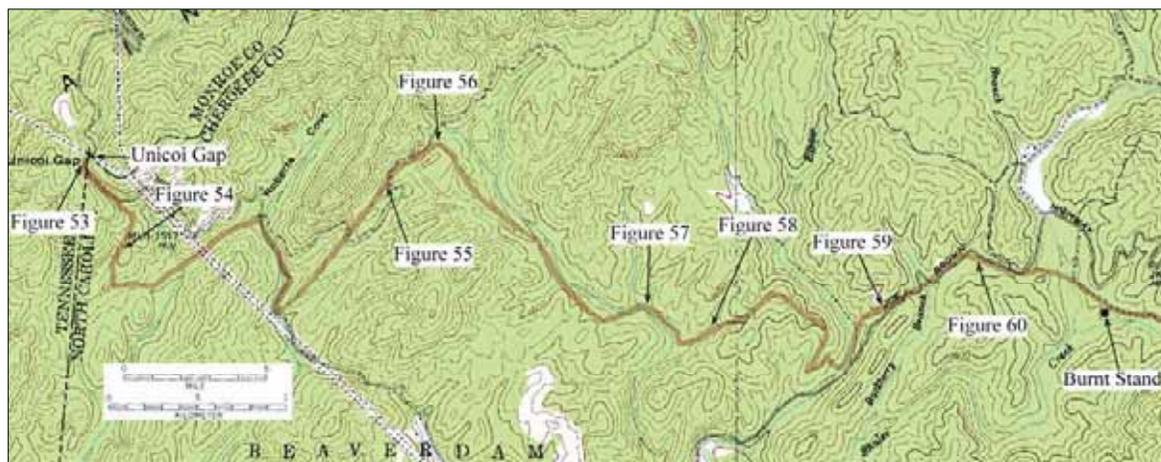


Figure 52. Composite of the Farner (TN/NC) and Unaka (NC) 7.5' quadrangles indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike (shown in red) between Unicoi Gap and the Burnt Stand.



Figure 53. Unicoi Turnpike at Unicoi Gap (UTM [17] 746,620e, 3,901,208n).



Figure 54. Deeply entrenched roadbed along ridge toe southeast of Unicoi Gap (UTM [17] 746,817e, 3,900,690n).



Figure 55. Entrenched turnpike roadbed near USFS Road 82 (UTM [17] 748,299e, 3,901,063n).

location of the Burnt Stand (UTM 752,413e/3,900,467n) along U.S.F.S Road 6263. The approximately five kilometer (three mile) long segment of the turnpike between the Joe Brown Highway and Burrell Mountain Road (at Buckberry Branch) is relatively undisturbed (except by

At the base of the slope the turnpike turns northeastward and coincides with a U.S.Forest Service access road (#82) for 600m as it rises to a low saddle. Here the turnpike crosses a headwater of Brushy Creek, and recrosses Joe Brown Highway. Immediately southeast of Joe Brown Highway, the Forest Service road diverges from the deeply entrenched turnpike bed, and an 80m segment of the original roadbed is preserved between the saddle and the Joe Brown Highway. At the intersection of USFS. Road 82 and Joe Brown Highway (Cherokee County Road 1326), the turnpike route makes an abrupt turn to the southeast, and is superimposed by the modern road for approximately 525m. The turnpike route then diverges from Joe Brown Highway, turning northeastward to climb a long, broad, gently-sloping ridge spine for 550m, where it crosses USFS Road 82. The route, deeply entrenched, then continues 390m northeastward (Figure 55), recrosses USFS Road 82, and extends another 400m northeast before turning southeastward. From there, the route descends southeastwardly for 500m along a ridge spine that parallels an unnamed branch of Shuler Creek (Figure 56). Much of this segment is densely overgrown from regeneration of a USFS timber sale clear-cut. Although an abandoned logging road crosses the route in this segment, the entrenched turnpike roadbed is distinct and appears relatively undisturbed. The turnpike route then crosses the unnamed branch (at (UTM [17] 752,413e /3,900,467n), and parallels it for 300m (Figure 57). It then turns northeastward and ascends along the base of a long hollow for 400m (Figure 58). This segment is unusual in that roadbeds were generally constructed on more elevated landforms. The turnpike then crosses a knoll and descends to cross Elbow Creek within view of Burrell Mountain Road (Cherokee County Road 1325), a length of 600m. From Elbow Creek, the turnpike route parallels Burrell Mountain Road northeastward for 675m (Figures 59, 60) then diverges to the east-southeast to cross Shuler Creek, continuing 490m southeast to the

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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two intersections with USFS Road 82), with extensive segments of well defined, deeply entrenched roadbed.



Figure 56. The turnpike roadbed skirts a knoll and begins descent into unnamed creek valley (UTM [17] 748,607e, 3,901,307n).



Figure 57. Roadbed after crossing unnamed stream. (UTM [17] 749,789e, 3,900,427n).



Figure 58. Turnpike paralleling base of slope along a narrow drainage (UTM [17] 750,131e, 3,900,258n).



Figure 59. Turnpike roadbed in floor of steep hollow beside Burrell Mountain Road (UTM [17] 751,138e, 3,900,463n).



Figure 60. Turnpike skirting Shuler Creek bottom near the Burnt Stand (UTM [17] 751,669e, 3,900,469n).

Unicoi Turnpike Segment B: Burnt Stand to Wacheesee's Town (Figures 61-68)

From the site of the Burnt Stand, the turnpike route continues southeastward, ascending the north side of an unnamed tributary of Shuler Creek (Figures 61-65). At the Burnt Stand, the turnpike roadbed is apparently filled with spoil from the construction of USFS road 6263, but the deeply entrenched turnpike bed diverges from the modern road approximately 125m to the east. Here the old roadway is apparent as a well defined, “U”-shaped trace (1m-3m deep) that parallels the USFS road for approximately 300m to the former site of Civilian Conservation Corps Camp N. F 11, now a USFS wildlife clearing. Across the clearing, the turnpike has been obliterated by CCC and USFS activities (e.g. camp construction; log landing), but is again clearly visible on the eastern edge of the clearing. It then ascends Long Ridge, following a steep hollow for 1,300m (2060 ft AMSL) where it recrosses Burrell Mountain Road (at UTM [17] 754164e, 3899942n) and leaves USFS land. Along much of this span the entrenched roadbed climbs steep gradients, ascending more than 400 ft in elevation over 4000 ft in distance. East of Burrell Mountain Road, the old turnpike trace closely parallels the modern, unpaved Cedar Cliff Lane for 420m and then descends eastward through pastures across the level valley floor of North Shoal Creek (Figure 66). Here, the turnpike roadbed is visible as a slightly entrenched trace that extends 500m before crossing to the east side of North Shoal Creek. The turnpike then begins ascending Bird Branch, and is evident as a recently overgrown, entrenched farm access road. About 800m east-southeast of North Shoal Creek, the turnpike enters as relatively flat creek valley floor, then continues along the south side of Bird Branch to its head, a distance of 1,160m. After a short climb to a saddle (at 2680ft AMSL), the turnpike route begins a steady descent along the ridge spines of Bear Hug Ridge (Figure 67). The turnpike roadbed is well preserved along the crestline of Bear Hug Ridge, and is discernable as an entrenched trace to its eastern terminus in the Bryson Creek Valley at Unaka, a distance of 2,680m. The turnpike is largely obscured or obliterated (by Joe Brown Highway) through the community of Unaka, although three short segments of the roadway are preserved as access driveways to private homes over this 1850m span. At UTM [17] 760,755e, 3,898,117n, near the presumed homesite of Wacheesee (indicated on 1838 Army survey sketchmaps), the turnpike diverges from the modern road and a 90m segment of the original road is evident as a current farm track that descends into the Beaverdam Creek bottoms (Figure 68). The turnpike route is obscured across the creek bottom, and the presumed ford across Beaverdam Creek (immediately north of the Joe Brown Highway bridge) has been obliterated by a stream meander.

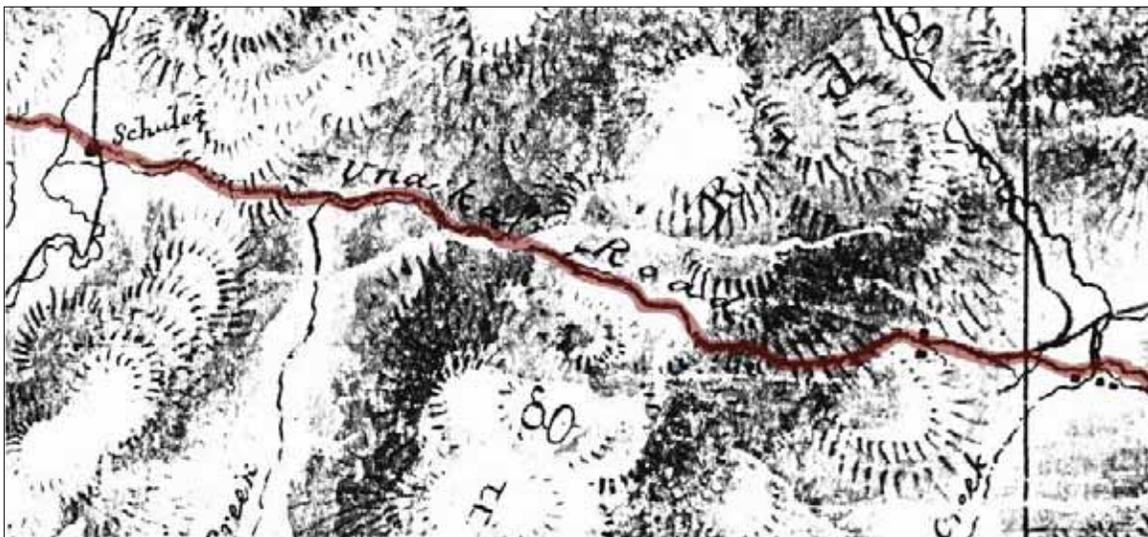


Figure 61. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps “Map of Part of the Cherokee Nation...” indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike (added highlight in red) between the Burnt Stand (Shuler) and Wacheesee’s Town (at Beaverdam Creek).

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

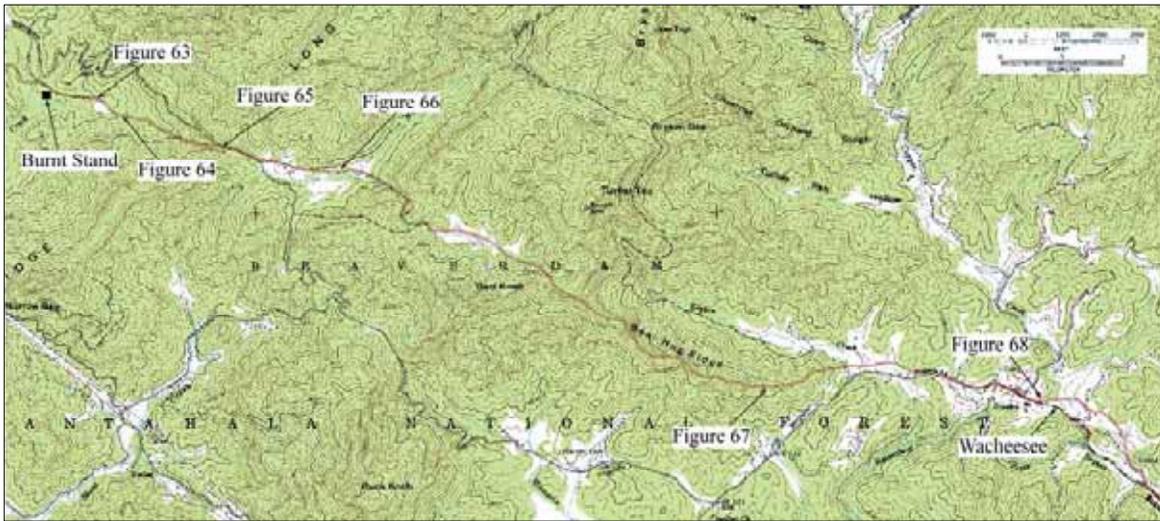


Figure 62. Detail of the Unaka (NC) 7.5' quadrangles indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike (shown in red) between the Burnt Stand and Wacheesee's Town.



Figure 63. The turnpike roadbed paralleling USFS road 6263 near the Burnt Stand at UTM[17] 752.779e, 3.900.420n .



Figure 64. The turnpike roadbed east of the Burnt Stand at UTM(17) 753,019e, 3,900,294n.



Figure 65. The turnpike roadbed along steep bank above creekbed at UTM[17] 753,832e, 3,900,057n.



Figure 66. Turnpike crossing North Shoal Creek valley at UTM [17] 754,825e, 3,899,872n.



Figure 67. The turnpike roadbed descending along Bear Hug Ridge at UTM[17] 758,395e, 3,898,190n.



Figure 68. The turnpike roadbed at Wacheesee's Town UTM[17] 760,755e, 3,898,117n.

#### Unicoi Turnpike Segment C: Wacheesee's Town to Singleton Rhea's Stand (Figures 69-72)

After crossing Beaverdam Creek, the turnpike extends east-southeast along the southern edge of a spring hollow and passes Unaka Cemetery (at UTM [17] 761,439e, 3,897,705n). This hollow was home to Wacheesee's children, Wallee and Connaluska and their families. The 1832 Rhea map indicates Wacheesee's residence here, on the south side of the turnpike, east of Beaverdam Creek. Deaver's 1837 notes also indicate Wacheesee's residence in this hollow. After passing through a low saddle by Unaka Cemetery, the turnpike drops into the Bryson Branch Valley and is evident as a 300m driveway access and farm road before crossing Bryson Branch and intersecting Joe Brown Highway (at UTM [17] 761,529e, 3,897,464n). Here, the modern road overlays and obscures the turnpike for approximately 1,600m to Bryson Gap.

After passing through Bryson Gap, the turnpike diverges to the west from Joe Brown Highway and descends into head of the Chambers Creek drainage, where it is evident as a terrace-like trace (Figure 71). After a short distance, the turnpike roadbed turns eastward, crosses Joe Brown Highway and descends approximately 600m along series of ridge toes parallel to the modern highway. The route then crosses Chambers Creek (at UTM [17] 761,001e, 3,895,298n), and continues along the western side of the creek, where a 600 m long segment of the turnpike is evident as a deeply entrenched and well defined roadbed (Figure 72). The roadbed disappears at the edge of Hiwassee Lake (at UTM [17] 760,479e, 3,894,780n), the TVA impoundment that flooded the



Figure 69. Detail of 1838 Army Corps map indicating the Unicoi Turnpike route between Wacheesee's Town and Singleton Rhea's stand.

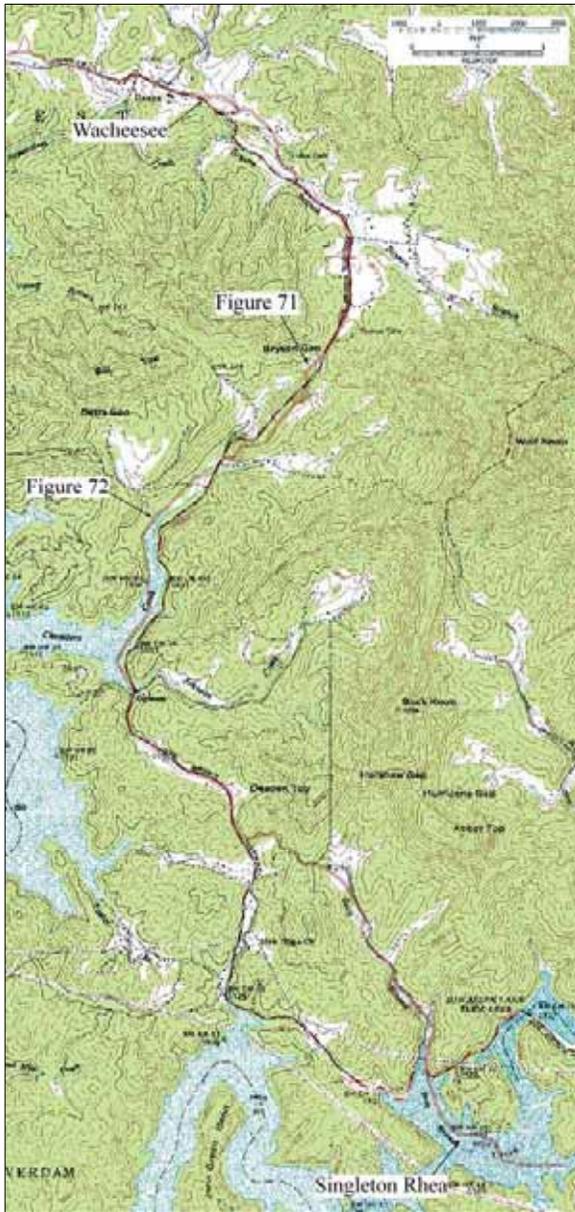


Figure 70. Detail of the Unaka 7.5' quadrangle indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike from Wacheesee's Town to Singleton Rhea's stand.



Figure 71. Unicoi Turnpike trace at Bryson Gap (UTM[17] 761,643e 3,896,072n).



Figure 72. Deeply entrenched section of Unicoi Turnpike along Chambers Creek at UTM[17] 760,469e 3,894,808n.

evidence of the original roadbed remains. At UTM[17]761,239e, 3,892,385n, the turnpike route diverges to the east, passing over an unnamed gap to attain the head of Song Branch, which the turnpike followed to its confluence with Grape Creek. Most of the Song Branch drainage is narrow and steep, and the turnpike roadbed in this segment appears to have been obscured or obliterated by Cherokee County Road 1357. At UTM[17]762,674e, 3,890,612n, Song Branch (and the turnpike route) pass beneath Joe Brown Highway and reenters Hiwassee Lake. The turnpike route continues along the east side of Song Branch another 580 m to the Removal period site of Singleton Rhea's stand at UTM [17] 763,003e, 3,890,166n, now inundated by Hiwassee Lake.

### Unicoi Turnpike Segment D: Singleton Rhea's Stand to Fort Butler (Figures 73-79)

At the site of Singleton Rhea's Stand (UTM [17] 762,998e, 3,890,125n) near the confluence of Grape Creek and Song Branch, the Unicoi Turnpike route lies beneath the Tennessee Valley Authority's Hiwassee Lake. The turnpike route here continues eastward across the channel of Grape Creek, then ascends an unnamed drainage through Duke's boat marina and exits the reservoir at UTM [17] 764,340e, 3,889,880n. Upon leaving the lake waters, the turnpike underlies Duke Lodge Road and Joe Brown Highway for 1,050 m. The turnpike route then diverges from the highway at (UTM [17] 765,426e, 3,889,517n), and continues southeastward across private land, ascending a narrow, unnamed drainage, where it is evident as a small, unimproved farm road. At a low saddle (UTM [17] 765,565e, 3,889,211n), the turnpike route enters the USFS Hanging Dog Recreation Area, and descends along a series of ridge toes for 1,300 m, where several deeply entrenched segments of the road are preserved (Figure 74). The turnpike then reenters Hiwassee Lake near the mouth of Hanging Dog Creek (at UTM [17] 762,998e, 3,890,125n) (Figure 75). Just south of the turnpike at this point was the Removal-era farmstead of Hogshooter Christie (now inundated by Hiwassee Lake). The turnpike extends along the north bank of the Hiwassee River from approximately River Mile 92.9 to 95.5, and is inundated by Hiwassee Lake except during low winter pools and maintenance drawdowns. The turnpike ford across Hanging Dog Creek is evident at winter pool levels, but the remainder of the roadbed in this segment is either filled by lake mud (up to two meters in depth) or obliterated by the pre-reservoir bed of the Joe Brown Highway. East of Hanging Dog Creek, the turnpike passes by the Removal era farmstead of John Christie (31Ce277) (at UTM [17] 767,170e, 3,888,350n). At UTM [17] 769,610e, 3,887,413n, the turnpike route crosses to the south side of the Hiwassee River at the former location of A.R.S. Hunter's ferry crossing and bridge, and exits the reservoir lakebed at Hiwassee River Mile 95.5 (UTM [17] 769,630e, 3,887,271n) (Figure 76). Here the turnpike roadbed is evident for a short distance as it ascends the face of a ridge toe that overlooks the confluence of the Hiwassee and Valley rivers (to the east). This was the location of the A.R.S.

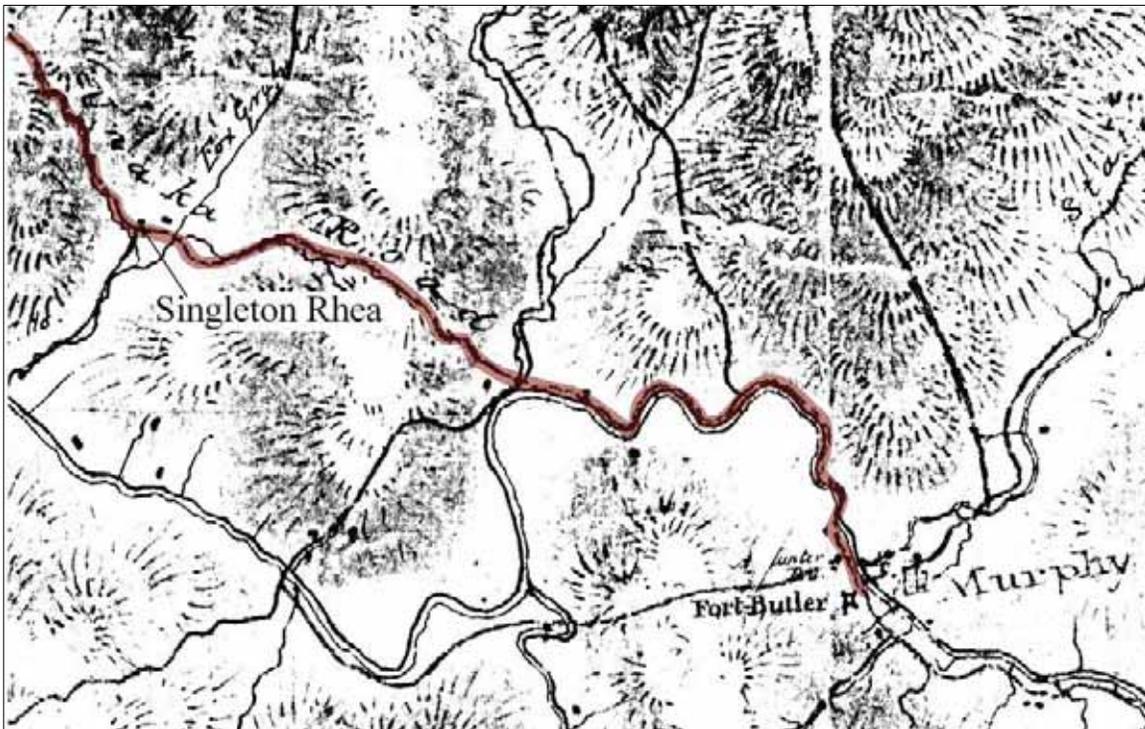


Figure 73. Section of the 1838 Army Corp map of southwestern North Carolina indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike (indicated in red) between Singleton Rhea's stand and Fort Butler (Murphy).

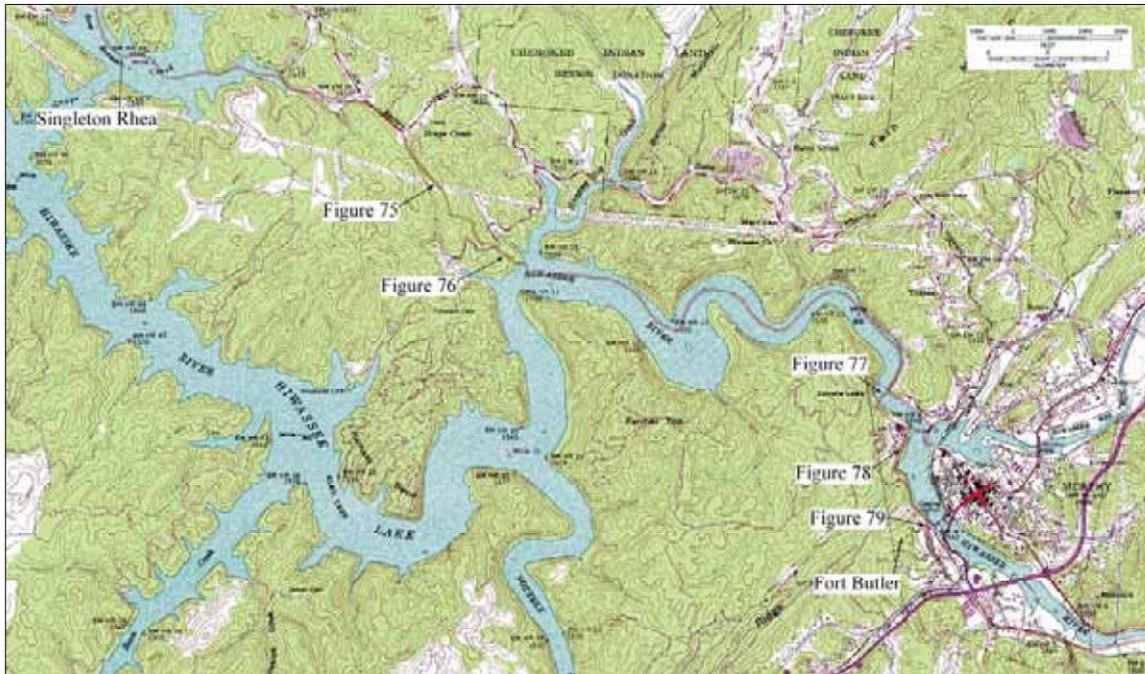


Figure 74. Section of the Murphy (NC) 7.5' quadrangle indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike (indicated in red) between Singleton Rhea's stand and Fort Butler (Murphy).

Hunter store at Huntington. Much of the store and stand site has been buried beneath fill dirt deposited during the construction of a manufacturing plant, and the turnpike trace is apparently filled at the crest of the ridge toe. As the turnpike descends the ridge to the south it is again visible as a distinct road trace (Figure 77), and the route skirts between the western bank of the Hiwassee River for and Lakeside Drive for 760m, and is definable as a few short entrenched segments of road (Figure 77). At UTM [17] 769,812e 3,886,600n, the turnpike diverges from the riverbank and is obscured by Lakeshore Drive, but is again evident at UTM [17] 769,954e 3,886,353n, where the route diverges from Lakeshore Drive and is coincident with Cherokee Street (Figure 78). Although the 500m portion of the route along Cherokee Street is improved as a paved residential street, it is still recognizable as an entrenched and embanked turnpike segment (Figure 78). Here the turnpike skirted the site of Fort Butler, which was situated just upslope, overlooking the juncture of the Old State Road and the Unicoi Turnpike. Immediately southwest of Cherokee Street the turnpike has been largely obliterated or obscured by Old Ranger Road, U.S. Highway 19, and Hiwassee Street, as well as residential development.



Figure 75. Turnpike roadbed segment crossing the Hanging Dog Recreation Area (UTM[1] 765,730e 3,889,067n).



Figure 76. Turnpike segment descending slope northwest of Hanging Dog Creek (UTM[17] 766,331e 3,888,493n).



Figure 77. Turnpike roadbed between Hunter's ferry and store locations (UTM[17] 769,509e 3,887,339n)



Figure 78. Turnpike roadbed southeast of Hunter's store (UTM[17] 769,714e 3,886,949n).



Figure 79. View of the Unicoi Turnpike roadbed coincident with an abandoned portion of Cherokee Street, Murphy, NC (UTM[17] 769,957e 3,886,346n).

#### Unicoi Turnpike Segment E: Fort Butler to Aquohee (Figures 80-83)

Southeast of Cherokee Street in Murphy, NC, the route of the Unicoi Turnpike continues southeastward for 520m across (or beneath) U.S. Hwy 64 (UTM[17] 770,302e; 3,885,740n) and through a residential neighborhood (Beal Circle) before it intersects the route of current Hiwassee Street (Cherokee County Road 1558) at UTM[17] 770,302e; 3,885,740n. The turnpike underlies (and is obscured by) Hiwassee Street for 850 m, then diverges from Hiwassee Street at UTM[17] 770,302e; 3,885,740n, to run due east along a terrace of the Hiwassee River to Racetrack Bend. No clear traces of this segment are discernable, and the roadbed here has probably been obliterated by flood scouring and agricultural activity. At UTM[17] 770,302e; 3,885,740n, the route of the turnpike leaves the riverbank, crosses Harshaw Road (at UTM[17] 773,254e;3,884,914n), and passes into the uplands. A short segment of the turnpike underlies the modern road, but then diverges to the northeast, and is coincident with a private drive/access road for 285m. The turnpike route then follows a horseshoe-shaped route around a large knoll and continues a southeast for 1,030m through the dissected uplands south of Harshaw Bottoms. The turnpike route recrosses Harshaw Road (UTM[17] 227,559e; 3,884,063n), passes Haigler Cemetery, and crosses headwaters of Hampton Creek. The roadway then ascends out of the creek basin, recrosses Harshaw Road (UTM[17] 227,997e; 3,883,427n), and climbs into wooded uplands parallel to the Hiwassee River (Figures 82, 83). Here it continues traversing the uplands in a southeasterly direction until exiting into the Brasstown Creek floodplain at Donaldson Branch. The turnpike route underlies a modern, unpaved road for 570 m, then diverges from the modern road, and continues parallel to Brasstown Creek. The former roadway crossed Brasstown Creek near the modern bridge at the community of Brasstown (UTM[17] 230,017e; 3,881,233n), an area that was formerly home to the Cherokee community of Aquohee.

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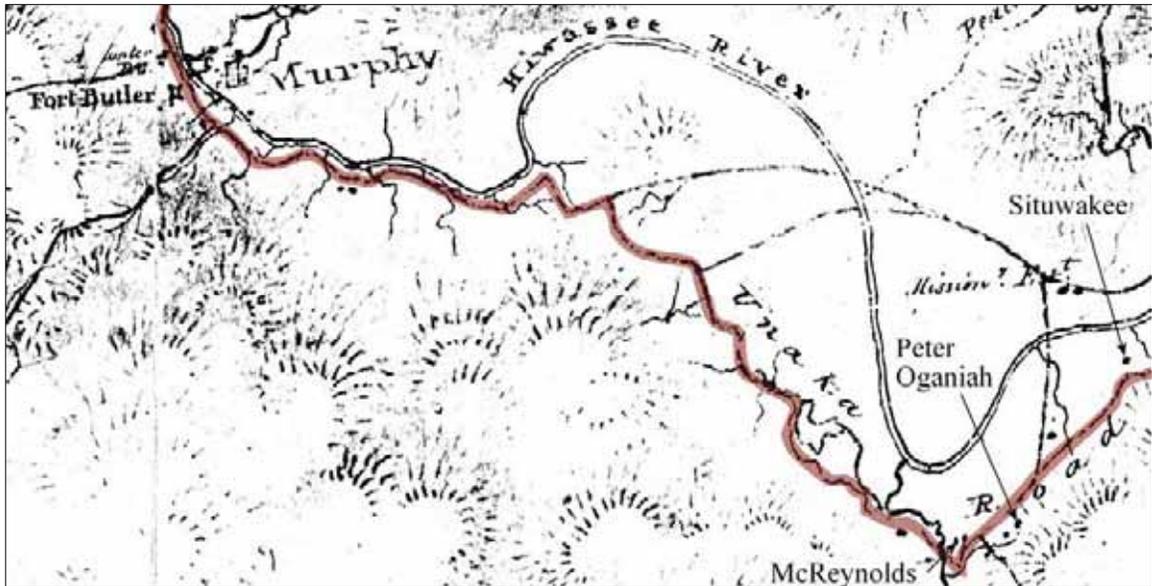


Figure 80. Section of 1838 military map showing (in red) Unicoi Turnpike from Fort Butler to Aquohee.



Figure 81. Section of Murphy/Peachtree 7.5 minute quad maps showing route of Unicoi Turnpike from Fort Butler to Aquohee.

Immediately after crossing the Brasstown Creek, the turnpike route winds around the southwestern end of an elevated ancient terrace, ascends to the crest of the terrace, then follows a relative straight northeasterly course parallel to the current Settawig Road along the edge of Suddawig Bottoms. At the southwest end of the old terrace near Brasstown Creek, the turnpike passed the home and large improvement of David McReynolds, an Anglo-American settler who occupied the former turnpike stand and store of David Thompson. This was likely the



Figure 82. Slightly entrenched section of Unicoi Turnpike roadbed ascending ridgeline. At UTM [17] 228,890e, 3,882,553n.



Figure 83. Entrenched roadbed widened and used as private drive (Jo's Trail). At UTM [17] 229,160e, 3,882,163n.

encampment location of a large part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Artillery regiment on June 12, 1838, when the troops:

...marched out among the mountains five or six miles to the east. Some of the Indians were already coming in, and being informed that many of them were collecting at a place of worship of theirs, seven companies of us marched thither and bivouacked [sic] (Phelps 2000:24).

This “place of worship” was the Baptist church that Peter Oganiah maintained near the turnpike in Aquohee, just a few hundred meters northeast of McReynolds’ place. From McReynolds’, the turnpike route bears northeastward parallel to Settawig Road for 1,100m, then merges with Settawig Road and underlies the modern road for 850m. At UTM [17] 231,720e, 3,882,660n, the turnpike diverges to the northwest, and parallels Settawig Road for 600m, until the turnpike route crosses Suddawig Branch at UTM [17] 232,212e; 3,882,908n, and begins its ascent into the uplands en route to Fort Hembree at the Cherokee settlement of Tusquittee. Most of the turnpike roadbed through Suddawig Bottom has been obliterated, either by Settawig Road or by agricultural practice. A short, entrenched segment of the original roadbed is evident alongside Settawig Road, immediately east of Suddawig Branch

Suddawig Branch, Suddawig Bottoms, and Settawig Road derive their names from *Situagi* (pronounced: see-too-WAY-kee), a Cherokee National councilman, the Aquohee District judge, and one of the primary leaders of the Valley Towns, who lived near the Unicoi Turnpike in Aquohee at the northeastern end of Suddawig Bottoms.

#### Unicoi Turnpike Segment F: Aquohee to Fort Hembree (Figures 84-91)

After the turnpike route crosses Suddawig Branch, it continues northeast across an open quarry pit, and ascends into wooded uplands. After an initial climb (over which the eroded roadbed is evident), the route attains the crest of a more level upland toe, and continues northeast through a residential neighborhood. The main access road for this neighborhood follows the turnpike, and largely obscures the original roadbed. At UTM [17] 232,835e; 3,883,036n, the turnpike route crosses US Hwy 64 and continues ascending a low ridge toe for 340m to a knoll top. This segment is still evident as an entrenched roadbed (Figure 87), and a portion functions as a property access road. From the hilltop, the turnpike route continues southeastward for 510m before again intersecting US Hwy 64 (UTM[17] 233,478e 3,883,032n). Most of this segment is obliterated by excavation and leveling for a large sawmill operation (Figure 88), but a 150m span of the turnpike roadbed is preserved across a pasture southeast of the mill (Figure 89). The turnpike route coincides with U.S. Highway 64 for 200m, then diverges to the southeast at UTM [17] 233.661e; 3,883,044 and loops along a farm road for 400m before crossing U.S. Highway 64 at UTM [17] 234,003e; 3,882,926n. The route loops to the northeast of the highway for a short

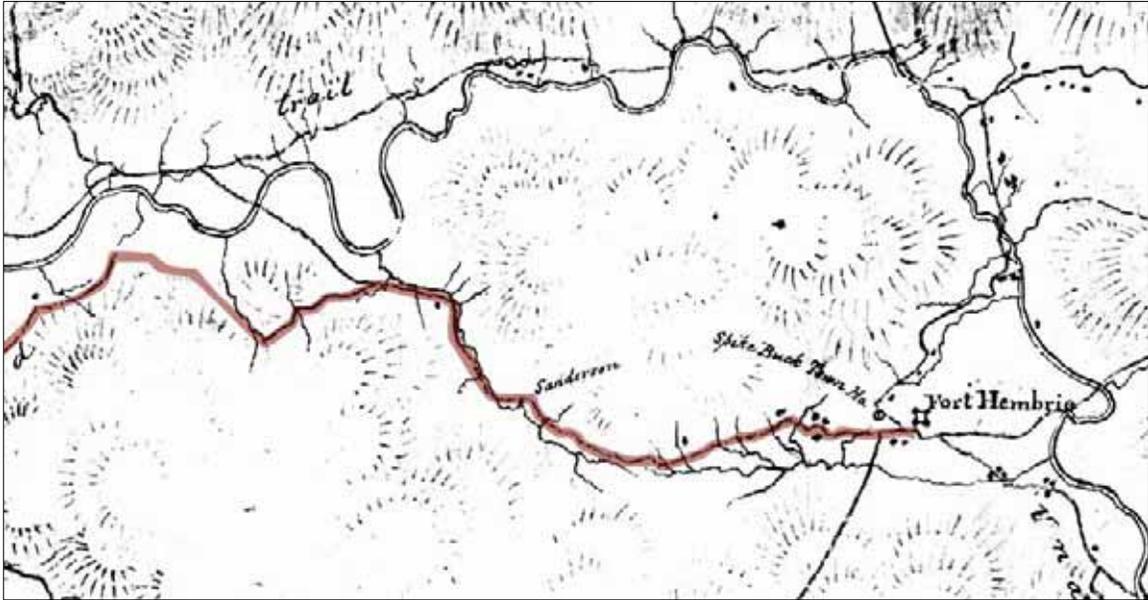


Figure 84. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps map indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike between Aquohee and Fort Hembree (red highlight).

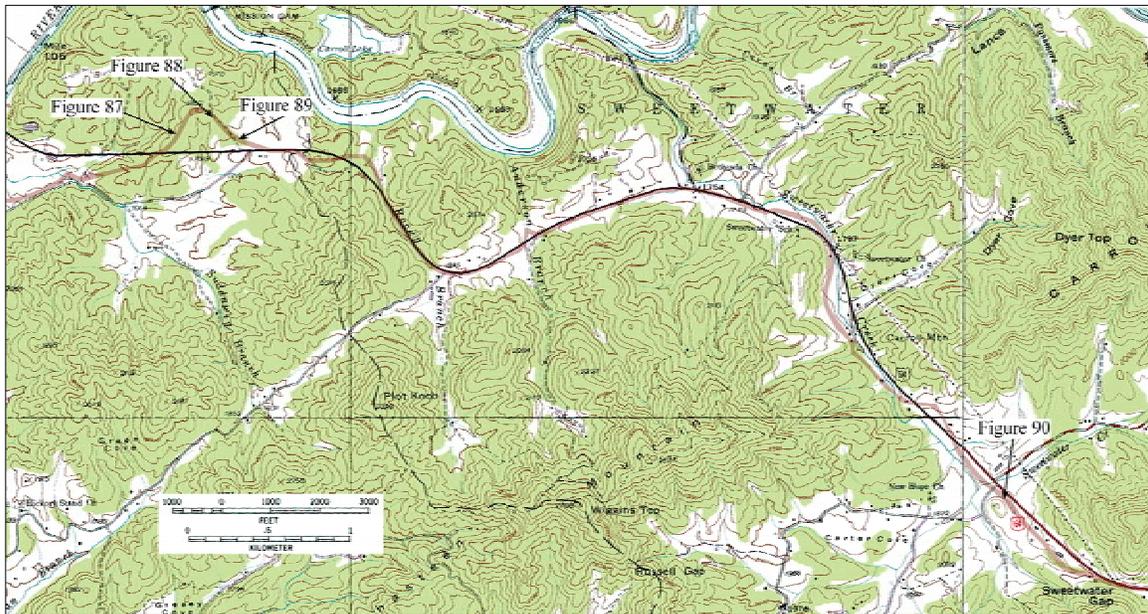


Figure 85. Detail of the Peachtree and Hayesville, NC 7.5' quadrangles indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike between Aquohee and Sweetwater Gap (red highlight).

distance, then rejoins U.S. 64, and is coincident with the modern road for 3.26km to UTM[17] 236,948e;3,882,334n, where the turnpike route diverges to the west of U.S. 64 and parallels the highway (on the opposite side of Sweetwater Creek) for 1150m. The turnpike route recrosses U.S. Highway 64 at UTM[17] 237,424e; 3,881,360n and again at UTM[17] 237,684e; 3,881,100n, then runs parallel to the modern highway southeast to Sweetwater Gap. A 100m segment of this portion of the old roadbed is evident as a linear depression between Sweetwater Creek and U.S. 64 (Figure 90). East of Sweetwater Gap, the turnpike route largely coincides with modern U.S. 64, although short parallel loops of the turnpike are preserved in yards and pastures immediately north of the highway. The greatest deviation of the turnpike from Highway 64



Figure 86. Detail of the Hayesville, NC 7.5' quadrangles indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike between Sweetwater Gap and Fort Hembree (red highlight).



Figure 87. Intact segment of the Unicoi Turnpike roadbed at UTM [17]232,900e, 3,883,115n.



Figure 88. Truncated segment of the Unicoi Turnpike roadbed and sawmill disturbance at UTM [17]233,080e, 3,883,290n.



Figure 89. Unicoi Turnpike roadbed crossing pasture (UTM [17]233,281e, 3,883,097n).



Figure 90. Segment of the Unicoi Turnpike roadbed immediately west of Sweetwater Gap at UTM [17]237,972e, 3,880,754n.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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Figure 91. Truett Camp Road, an improved segment of the original Unicoi Turnpike roadbed; photo at UTM [17] 240,393e, 3,880,430n.

follows Truett Camp Road, a 675m paved access loop that leaves U.S. 64 at UTM[17] 240,341e; 3,880,308n and rejoins the highway at UTM[17] 240,832e; 3,889,364 (Figure 91). At the intersection of U.S. 64 Business and U.S. 64 Bypass, the turnpike route deviates slightly north of the bypass, and is evident as a tree-filled linear depression for 340m to the intersection with Fort Hembree Road, which runs across Fort Hill and past the documented site of Fort Hembree. Immediately east of Fort Hembree Road, the former turnpike roadbed has been obliterated by a soil borrow pit, and is generally obscured by residential and commercial development until it crosses Blair Creek south of town.

Earlier studies (King 1992, 1999) assert that “the road between Fort Butler and Fort

Cass led through Turtletown near the NC-TN border,” and passed westward via Hiwassee Gap and present-day Benton, TN to reach the emigration depot at the Cherokee Agency. This interpretation led to congressional approval of a Trail of Tears National Historic route within a 10-mile wide corridor centered along U.S. Highway 64. Contrary to these findings, however, recently discovered documentary evidence (i.e. Phelps 2000) indicates that the Unicoi Turnpike was the primary route of deportation for more than 3000 Cherokee prisoners transferred from Fort Butler, NC to Fort Cass, TN in June and July, 1838. This route extends northwestward from Fort Butler (Murphy, NC) through Unaka, NC, crossing the Tennessee state line at Unicoi Gap and continuing northward through Coker Creek, TN to Tellico Plains (see Figure 48). At Tellico Plains, the route left the turnpike and followed public roads through the Connasauga and Chestua creek valleys to Athens, TN, then continued down the North Mouse Creek Valley and crossed the Hiwassee River to reach Fort Cass. Contemporary sources, such as the diary of Lt. John Phelps, indicate that Unicoi Turnpike was the principal road corridor that linked the “Eastern District” of the Cherokee Nation to the Cherokee Agency at Calhoun, and the turnpike should now be regarded as the core route for extension of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail into North Carolina from its current terminus at Charleston, TN. In addition, the Unicoi Turnpike was the primary linkage between Fort Hembree and Fort Butler; Phelps’ diary suggests that the turnpike funneled more than 1000 Cherokee prisoners from Fort Hembree, past the encampment of the 4<sup>th</sup> Artillery to Fort Butler:

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1838 Upwards of a thousand Indians passed by to day from Fort Hembree eighteen miles to the east of this, where they had been collected. ... The scene seemed to me more like a distempered dream or something worthy of the dark ages (Phelps 2000:32).

Precise reconstruction of the turnpike route was enabled by projection of detailed survey notes generated by U.S. Army Corps surveyors in December 1837. Field reconnaissance of the Unicoi Turnpike route (as indicated by the Army surveys) identified substantial sections of the original roadbed in the Nantahala National Forest between Unicoi Gap at the Tennessee state line and Unaka, NC. Although the turnpike is obscured by modern roads at a number of junctures, much of old roadbed along this 18km span exhibits substantial structural and aesthetic integrity. South of Unaka, well-preserved segments of the turnpike survive immediately south of Bryson Gap and along upper Chambers Creek. The turnpike route is also evident as a 1,300m roadbed segment that crosses the U.S. Forest Service Hanging Dog Recreation Area near Grape Creek, NC.

Short intact sections of the turnpike are again evident along Lakeside Drive in Murphy, NC, but the turnpike is largely obscured until the route enters the uplands between Racetrack Bend on the Hiwassee River and Brasstown Creek. Portions of the original roadbed are present in this span, but many are inaccessible because of the unwillingness of private landowners to grant access. This area is particularly threatened by planned rerouting and widening of U.S. Highway 64. A number of relatively short segments (<600m) of the turnpike roadbed survive between the Cherokee-Clay county line and Fort Hembree (Hayesville, NC), but recent development of highways and private lands has obliterated much of the turnpike along this 16 km span. Planned improvements to U.S. 64 (i.e. four-lane widening) may threaten these surviving portions of roadbed as well.

The portions of the turnpike between Fort Hembree (Hayesville, NC) and Tellico Plains, TN clearly possesses distinct and well documented “qualities of association” with the 1838 Cherokee removal, an event of local, regional, and national significance. In addition, the entire span of the Unicoi Turnpike from Toccoa, GA to Chota, TN is important to understanding the early history of transportation, commerce, and settlement in the Southern Appalachian region, and is a significant (and nearly solitary) physical vestige of the region’s earliest commercial and transportation history. Therefore, it is recommended that the Unicoi Turnpike, which is currently designated a National Millennium Flagship Trail (see [http://www.trailink.com/mt\\_active\\_pages/Nmt/b-right.asp?Action=Detail&ID=17](http://www.trailink.com/mt_active_pages/Nmt/b-right.asp?Action=Detail&ID=17)), should also be considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, and may also be eligible for National Landmark status (see Thomason 2002). Thomason (2002) identified such “original” roadways as an important property type associated with the Cherokee Trail of Tears, and outlined their identifying characteristics:

Original roadbeds are those which have not been significantly changed or altered since the 1830s. These are generally roads which were abandoned at the turn of the century or became local farm roads, or incorporated into county road systems. The characteristics of such roads include dirt or gravel surfaces, widths of ten to twenty feet, and sunken shapes with embankments of varying height. Roadbeds from this period will generally be defined by a “U” shape. ... Another identified pattern of these studies was the presence of “multiple tracks” on slopes where several parallel roadbeds exists (Thomason 2002:[F] 9).

Thomason also noted that these roads (specifically including the Unicoi Turnpike) should be considered eligible in conformance to National Register criteria A, C, or [and] D “for their historic associations with the Cherokee Trail of Tears, retention of design characteristics, and potential archaeological record” (Thomason 2002:[F] 10). Thomason notes specific registration requirements for such resources, primarily the demonstrable retention of qualities of integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting, and association. In terms of integrity of location, contemporary accounts (e.g. Hetzel 1836; Montgomery 1838; Noland 1990; Phelps 2002; Webster 1838b) provide composite evidence that the turnpike was the primary route used by the army to travel between forts Butler and Cass, and that the turnpike was directly involved in the removal as a principal route of transport for Cherokee prisoners. Accuracy of the placement of the roadbed is readily supported by detailed U.S. Army surveys conducted six to seven months before the removal operations of June 1838. Integrity of design of surviving segments of the turnpike is indicated by roadway widths of 12-15 feet, well-defined entrenchments and side berms (evidence of road maintenance). Integrity of materials is maintained in substantial sections of the turnpike roadbed that evince either unimproved dirt surfaces of lightly improved gravel surfaces. These conditions also indicate retention of qualities of workmanship and feeling. Integrity of feeling is also retained in surviving segments greater than 200m in length in which a sense of the continuity of the turnpike is evoked. Because most of the surviving sections of Unicoi Turnpike roadbed are preserved on U.S. Forest Service or Tennessee Valley Authority property, the road retains well-defined integrity of setting in wooded locations or open pasturelands. Post-removal buildings or other cultural constructions rarely encroach upon visible

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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portions of the turnpike. All of these characteristics combine to preserve integrity of association for the turnpike, especially in the area west of the modern community of Unaka, NC.

The authors further recommend that portions of the Unicoi Turnpike located on public lands (i.e. U.S.D.A. Forest Service Nantahala National Forest; Tennessee Valley Authority Hiwassee Reservoir easements) should be developed for public access and interpretation. Remote and isolated segments of the turnpike route strongly convey a sense of the ardor of the journey and the pervasive foreboding that Cherokee deportees must have experienced as they began their journey, “like a distempered dream,” toward the darkening land of the west. Access to the Unicoi Turnpike will provide visitors with tangible experience of actual vestiges of the physical “Trail of Tears” set within a landscape that possesses “qualities of feeling” than can evoke deeper, more intuitive, understandings of the Trail.

## Great State Road

The Great State Road, constructed 1837, connected the town of Franklin, North Carolina with present-day Murphy, where it joined the Unicoi Turnpike to complete a wagon route to Athens, TN (Figures 92, 93). In late May 1838, North Carolina militia troops marched the state road from Franklin to take their stations at Camp Scott and Fort Montgomery. Over the next month, state militia and federal troops moved more than 1,000 Cherokee prisoners collected at forts Lindsay, Montgomery, Delaney and Camp Scott along the state road to Fort Butler.



Figure 92. 1838 Williams map indicating route of State Road (in red) from Franklin to Murphy.

The North Carolina legislature approved development of “a State Road from the town of Franklin, in Macon County, across the Nantahala mountain, to Valley River” in a act ratified January 14, 1837 to facilitate the sale and settlement of Cherokee lands acquired under the New Echota Treaty (NC General Assembly 1837:261-263). The proposed route extended from Franklin, North Carolina up Cartoogechaye Creek, then westward across the Nantahala Mountains at Wayah Gap, across the Nantahala River, then over Junaluska Gap into present-day Andrews. From there the road roughly paralleled the Valley River and entered the town of Murphy to join the Unicoi Turnpike at the Hiwassee River. Survey and road construction followed an accelerated schedule. On August 26, 1837 George Featherstonhaugh traversed the state road from Franklin and noted construction in progress:

At length we reached the Nantayayhlay chain, the strike of which is about N.N.E. S.S.W. and the elevation eight hundred and fifty feet. This chain runs in the centre of the ancient Cherokee country, being about equidistant from the Oonaykay [Unaka] and the southern edge of the great belt of mountains, and has thus received its name of Nantayayhlay or "in the middle". The stream called the Warrior [Wayah] ran at its foot. The ascent was very steep, being for a considerable way at an elevation of 50°, and the summit was fourteen miles from Franklin...On the west side we found the descent less precipitous, being a sort of gradually descending table land, with occasional dense laurel thickets, almost impenetrable. and forming the appropriate abodes of panthers, and two or three species of wild cats...At the bottom of the descent we found our path full of



Figure 93. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps map indicating route of the state road (red highlight).

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

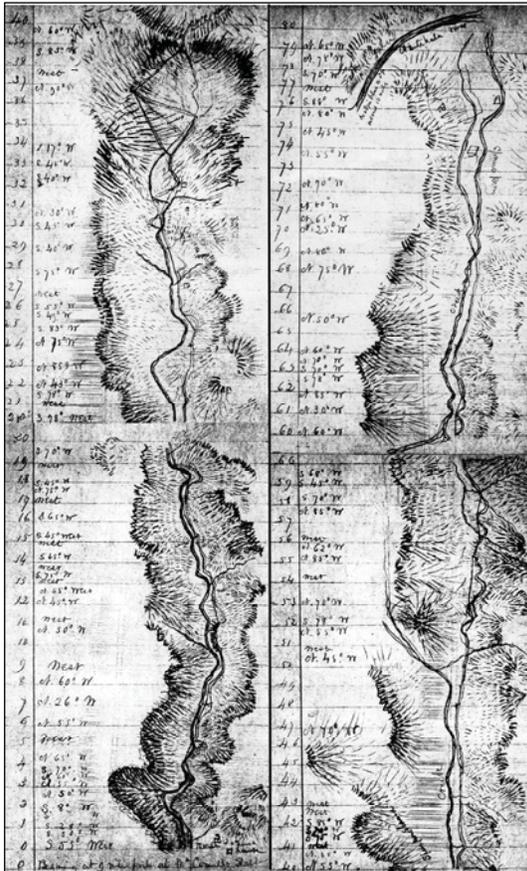


Figure 94. 1837-38 Army Corps survey notes and sketchmaps illustrating the Great State Road route from Wayah Creek to mouth of Jarrett's Creek at Acquone.

difficulties, and had continually to cross a rocky branch of the Nantayayhlay [Jarrett's Creek] from one side to the other, the old trail being occupied for a great distance by the new road now constructing, and impassable for the present. I learnt that the contracts for making the road were principally in the hands of white men, who engaged Cherokees to chop the trees down and afterwards to grub up the roots. As we advanced in the bed of the stream, we passed many groups of these Indians at work far above us on the hill side who cheered us repeatedly. It was a very picturesque and strange sight to see such swarthy Tartar countenances with turbans and striped calico hunting shirts, working in this wild district for the men who had robbed them of their country (Featherstonhaugh 1847:282).

The road was complete by the end of the year, and Army surveyors mapped the finished route from the head of Cartoogechaye Creek to Murphy (Figure 94). Captain W.G. Williams who directed the U.S. Army Corps surveys described the state road to Col. J.J. Abert:

The great state road from Franklin (Macon Co. N.C.) to Athens, Tennessee, winds up the steep eastern ridge of the Nantayeelee ridge to a great height. It descends then toward the Nanta-yelee, crossing Madwoman's creek [Jarrett's Creek], branch of Nantayeelee. Traversing the Nantayeelee, it crosses chogees [Choga] creek and gradually ascending to a pass in the Long ridge it then descends again along a very rugged and precipitous hillside to the beautiful valley of Konchete [Valley River], following for several miles and often

crossing a southern most fork of that river. The wide and open valley of Konchete offers a fine level, in many places more than a mile wide, undulated by low hills towards the mouth of the river; and over this fine tract there passes for about 18 or 19 miles; it then follows the north bank of the Hiwassee for about 3 miles along a good level, but leaving it to the left, more and more, becoming hilly and at length ascends the Unaika mountains, the Tennessee line, crossing successively Hanging dog, Beaverdam, and Cutcane creeks, the total distance from the Nantayeelee ridge to the Tennessee line becomes about 58 miles. Hence it proceeds to Athens in Tennessee (Williams 1838a).

In March 1838, Lt. Alexander Montgomery, quartermaster at Fort Butler, requested a work party to repair the state road in anticipation of the upcoming military operations: "I will require ... a party of fifteen men under the command of a comd [commissioned] officer to repair the road from Fort Butler to Fort Delaney, N.C." (Montgomery 1838). In May 1838, 13 companies of North Carolina state militia mustered at Franklin, then traveled the new state road to reach their posts at Camp Scott, Fort Delaney, Fort Montgomery, Fort Butler, and Fort Hembree. When removal operations commenced in mid-June, troops conducted all of the Cherokee prisoners from communities in the northern portion of the study area (i.e. Cheoah, Buffalo Town, Stecoah, Alarka, Nantahala, Aquone, Konahete) through Fort Delaney and down the state road nearly 16 miles to Fort Butler. Prisoners collected at Camp Scott (Aquone, NC) traversed 12 miles of the state road

through the Valley River Mountains to reach Fort Delaney. They may have been joined in this segment of the state road by contingents from Fort Lindsay. Eustis indicated on June 24, 1838, that “300 Indians will arrive here [Ft. Butler] to day from Cheowah, and in two or three days about the same number from Fort Lindsay and Camp Scott” (Eustis 1838b).

In the aftermath of the military removal, the state road funneled settlers, entrepreneurs, and speculators in the vacated Cherokee lands in southwestern North Carolina. As population in the region swelled, infrastructure demands increased, and in 1846 the state legislature passed a bill to construct a new road, called the Western Turnpike, from Salisbury to the Georgia state line (Waynick 1952). In 1850 the Western Turnpike Commission hired S. Moylan Fox to serve as director of construction and surveyor. Fox’s survey records indicate that the Western Turnpike route from Franklin, NC to Murphy, NC largely coincided with the state road. Fox’s precise survey notes and maps (Fox 1850) facilitate accurate and detailed reconstruction of the original state road.

Much of the Great State Road route has remained in use up to the present. Wayah Road, (Macon County 1310), Big Choga Road, Junaluska Road, Airport Road, Tomotla Road, Old Tomotla Road, and Regal Road all either superimpose or closely parallel the original Great State Road. Nevertheless, substantial segments of the original roadbed bypassed by later construction survive as modern farm roads or driveways.

### **Documentation of the Great State Road route**

Delineation of the route of the Great State Road derives from a number of documentary sources, including the Deaver (1837) and U.S. Army Corps (1838) maps and notes of the Army Corps (Adams 1838) and Western Turnpike (Fox 1850) surveys. The Fox survey is particularly detailed and precise, illustrating the original road and projected Western Turnpike with survey stakes at 100-foot intervals and including numerous references to natural and cultural landscape features. Comparison of the Fox survey with the earlier (and considerably less detailed) Deaver and Army surveys reveals broad and specific agreement, an indication that the 1850 survey constitutes a good proxy for the removal route of 1838.

Projection of Fox’s survey line onto modern maps was accomplished using digital (DRG) versions of U.S.G.S. 7.5’ quadrangles manipulated with ArcView™ and Macromedia Freehand™ software. The line of survey was referenced to identifiable fixed points on the natural landscape (e.g. gaps, stream confluences) and extended on the basis of survey calls for bearings (degrees and minutes) and distance (feet). Slight, yet cumulative distortions in the survey line were corrected as necessary by reference to depicted or annotated landscape features.

The modern map reconstructions of the Great State Road guided subsequent field efforts to identify and document surviving physical evidence of the removal route. Field reconnaissance of the route commenced near the mouth of Choga’s Creek on the west side of the Nantahala River (near the site of Camp Scott) and documented discontinuous portions of the route southwestward over 27 miles to the site of Fort Butler (at present-day Murphy, Cherokee County, North Carolina). Identifiable segments of Great State Road roadbed and associated landscape elements along the route were documented with still photography and narrative notation to record physical attributes such as roadbed width and depth, extent of erosion or other modifications, general physical condition, and overall integrity. Locations of turnpike segments were also determined with a handheld geographic positioning system (GPS) unit and plotted on USGS quadrangles at the time of reconnaissance.

For ease of presentation and discussion, the results of map reconstruction and field reconnaissance for the Great State Road are organized in five segments that detail coverage from Camp Scott (Nantahala Lake) to Junaluska Creek (at Old Road Gap), Junaluska Creek to Valley Towns (Andrews, NC), Valley Towns to Rhea Branch (Marble, NC), Rhea Branch to Tomotla, and Tomotla to the juncture with the Unicoi Turnpike at Murphy, NC (see Figure 95).



Figure 95. Overview of the route of the Great State Road from Franklin to Murphy, NC.

Old State Road Segment A: Camp Scott to Old Road Gap (Figures 96-103)

The Great State Road began at Franklin, NC, ascended Cartoogechaye and Wayah creeks, crossed Wayah Gap (at the milepost 14) and entered the Cherokee Nation (Adams 1838; Fox 1850). From Wayah Gap, the road descended the Jarrett Creek drainage, past the center of the Cherokee settlement of Aquone (at the Jarrett Creek-Nantahala River confluence). This portion of the route is now inundated by Duke Energy's Nantahala Lake; the old road enters the reservoir at UTM[17] 259,114e; 3,894,340n, and is submerged until it exits along Choga Creek at UTM[17] 254,359e; 389,878n. Along Jarrett's Creek (then known as Mad Woman's Creek or Aconee Creek), the Army surveyor noted "Both sides of creek are cultivated ... Road passes through cornfield" and illustrated a number of Cherokee homes and corn cribs along the road. From the mouth of Jarrett's Creek, the road descended the east bank of the Nantahala to a ford above the mouth of Choga Creek. Camp Scott (at milepost was presumably situated on an elevated colluvial fan on the west side of the river overlooking the ford (see pgs. 42-44). From Camp Scott, the State Road

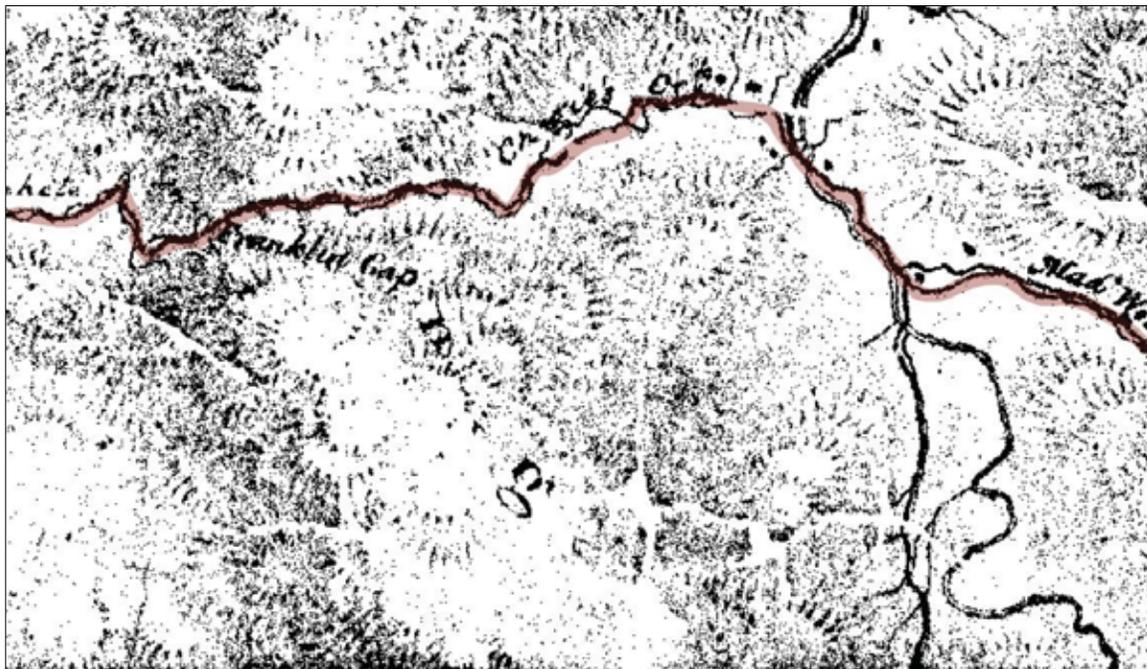


Figure 96. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps map depicting the route (red highlight) of the Great State Road between Camp Scott and Old Road Gap (labeled Franklin Gap).

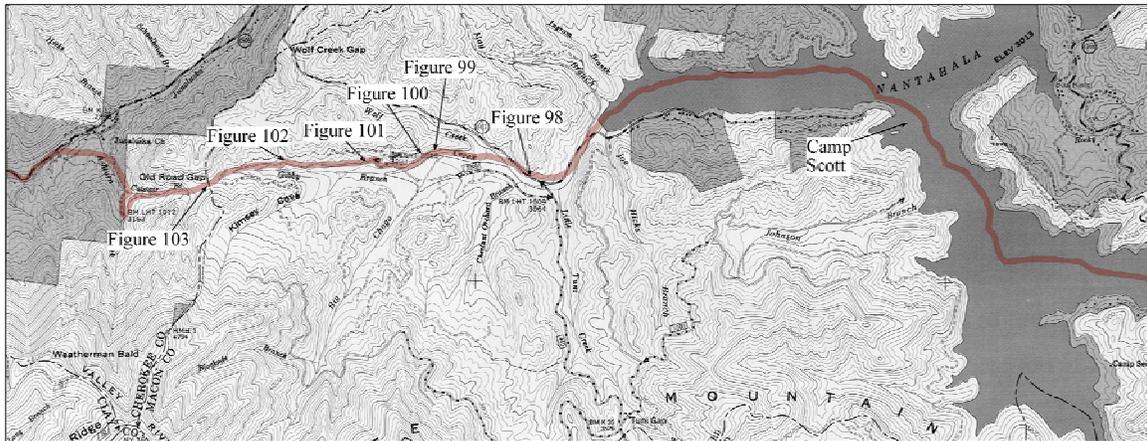


Figure 97. Detail of the Topton, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the route of the Unicoi Turnpike (red highlight) between Camp Scott and Old Road Gap.



Figure 98. Entrenched Great State Road roadbed paralleling Wolf Creek Road (UTM [17] 253,775e; 3,895,517n).

crossed Choga Creek near the home and improvements of *Choga*, then crossed to the south side of the creek for a short distance before recrossing to the north side near milepost 22. At UTM[17] 254,359e; 3,8878n, the roadbed emerges from the lakebed along the north side of Choga Creek, and is visible as a linear depression for 65m until it is occluded by the Wolf Creek Road (SR 1457). Immediately north of the modern road, an entrenched, 250m segment is again truncated on the west by Wolf Creek Road, and modern road fill buries the remainder of the original roadbed on the north side of Choga Creek. The old road forded Choga Creek at its confluence with Gibby Branch, then continued up the north side of Gibby Branch to its headwaters. The original roadbed is apparently washed out in the forks of Choga Creek and Gibby Branch, but is again evident as a deeply entrenched, “U”-shaped feature at UTM[17]253,328e, 3,895,757n. This segment of the original roadbed continues another 350m westward, and terminates at UTM[17] 252,985e, 3,895,736n, where it joins Big Choga Road (USFS 7099). This graded Forest Service road is largely coincident with the original state road



Figure 99. Intact State Road roadbed along north side of Choga Creek (UTM [17] 253,021e; 3,895,729n).



Figure 100. Entrenched Great State Road roadbed along north side of Choga Creek (UTM [17] 252,933e; 3,895,718n).



Figure 101. Great State Road modified as USFS Road 7099 (UTM [17] 252,467e; 3,895,668n).



Figure 102. Entrenched segment of the Great State Road adjacent to USFS Road 7099 (UTM [17] 251,801e; 3,895,688n).



Figure 103. Great State Road /USFS Road 7099 at Old Road Gap (UTM[17] 251,159e; 3,895,526n).

for the next three kilometers, and much of the northern bank of the current road is referable to the Great State Road embankment (Figure 101). In this portion of the route, army surveyor Adams (1838) noted that the “Road ascends pretty rapidly ....” Slightly higher up the valley, Adams observed that the “road becomes very winding.” Around milepost 23, the surveyors found “men at work along the road” close to the spot where Featherstonaugh (1847) had observed road construction the previous August. At UTM [17] 251,906e, 3,895,650n, a 90m segment of the old roadbed (Figure 102) diverges north of the USFS road, then rejoins the current roadbed. A 100m segment of old state road is evident along the north side of the current road at UTM[17]251,526e, 3,895,667n, and an 85m portion of original roadbed parallels the south side of the modern road at UTM[17]251,314e, 3,895,600n. At a marked 24.5 mile point (at UTM [17] 251,168e; 3,895,531n), the road crossed Old Road Gap (called Franklin Gap on

the 1838 Army Corps map) at 3490 ft elevation. Through the gap, USFS 7099 evinces distinct embankments along both sides for 150m (Figure 103), and the character of the original road is clearly retained, although the roadbed itself has been widened and graded. North of Old Road Gap, the roadbed of the Great State Road/Western Turnpike coincides with the later road, and is graded, widened and improved as a light duty road for vehicular traffic. The roadbed enters privately owned, gated property near the confluence of Catstair Branch and Ashturn Creek, and the original state road route diverges from the current road. At UTM[17] 250,457e; 3,895, 589n, the old state road route diverges from the modern road, and turns westward to cross a broad sideslope down to the floor of the Junaluska Creek Valley.

Great State Road Segment B: Old Road Gap to the Valley River Ford at Valletytown (Figures 104-106).

After passing through Old Road Gap, the state road route descends Catstair Branch and Ashturn Creek along the privately gated portion of the former Big Choga Road, and attains the floor of the Junaluska Creek Valley approximately 400m southwest of Junaluska Church. Here, the original road is superimposed by the modern Junaluska Creek road for nearly 6.5 km to the community of Valletytown. At milepost 28 the road passed a “small patch of corn belonging to an Indian, Naquissee [Star], about 1 acre” near the mouth of Weaver Branch (UTM[17] 246,983e; 3,896,567n). Near milepost 29, the Junaluska Creek Valley begins to widen, opening into level or rolling farmland at Valletytown or *Konehete*. Here, the road passed immediately west of *Junaluska’s* home (at UTM[17] 245,200e; 3,897,100n), which Adams described as “Ju-na-luski’s house – corn field about 6 acres, land worn.” At *Junaluska’s* house, the state road diverged to the west of present-day Junaluska Road for a short loop, but rejoined the modern alignment at Collett Creek Road. At UTM[17] 244,342e; 3,898,097n, the state road route again deviates from

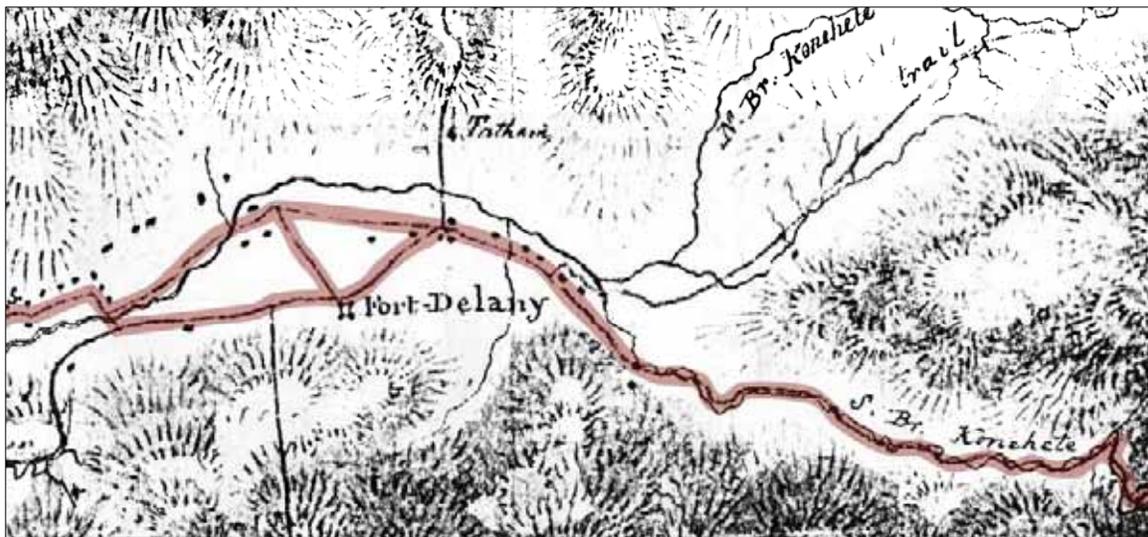


Figure 104. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps map indicating the route of the Great State Road. (red highlight) between the Junaluska Creek Valley and the ford at Valletytown.

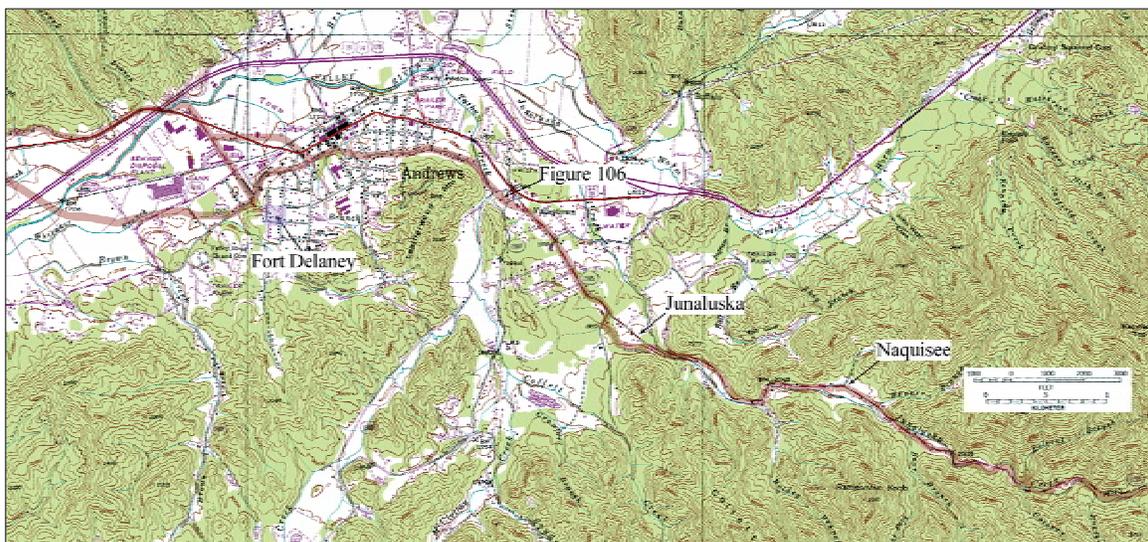


Figure 105. Detail of the Andrews, NC 7.5' quadrangle illustrating the route of the Great State Road (red highlight) between the Junaluska Creek Valley and the ford at Valletytown.



Figure 106. Great State Road at Thomas Tatham, Jr. House (ca. 1840), Valletown, NC (UTM [17] 244,125e; 3,898,190n).

Junaluska Road, and angles through a residential neighborhood before crossing Tatham Creek and joining Aquone Road at UTM[17] 244,030e; 3,898,308n. From here, the state road route coincides with Aquone Road for 1170m along the southern edge of the Andrews, NC business district. At the western end of Aquone Road, the old state road route angles west-northwest across the town grid, tracks a short segment of Third Street then closely parallels U.S. 19 Business before crossing a ford over Valley River below the mouth of Town Creek at UTM[17] 241,472e; 3,899,076n.

Army mapmakers indicated that the State Road bifurcated in present-day Andrews, with a southern branch that continued south-

eastward coincident with Third Street and Fairview Road to the base of the bench where Fort Delaney (milepost 32) was situated. This route then followed a westward course across the Valley River bottoms to a ford over Valley River above the mouth of Whitaker Branch. This segment of the road rejoined the main state road near the crossing of Morris Creek. Another connector road from Fort Delaney followed present-day Whitaker Lane and rejoined the primary state road route at the intersection with Main Street.

#### Great State Road Segment C: Valletown to Rhea's Branch (Figures 107-114).

West of the ford at Valletown, the Great State Road turned southwestward to parallel Valley River on its north side. Initially, the route is superimposed by Andrews Highway (Airport Road or old US Hwy 19). At UTM[17]240,675e, 3,898,807n, the original State Road diverges to the north of the modern road, and parallels Andrews Highway for southwestward for 1,500m. The roadbed, which tracks the foot of the uplands, is still evident as numerous segments of residential driveways and farm access roads east of Morris Creek (see Figures 109, 110). Between UTM [17] 239,448e, 3,898,718n, and UTM [17] 239,277e, 3,898,620n, the original roadbed is preserved around the base of a small hill, where it passes within 15 m of Gideon Morris' pre-Removal farmhouse. The ford across Morris Creek has been obscured, but another 200m segment of the roadbed is apparent immediately southwest of the Morris Creek crossing. At UTM [17] 240,675e, 3,898,807n, the state road route coincides with Andrews Highway, which superimposes the Great State Road/Western Turnpike for two kilometers. At UTM[17]236,187e, 3,897,437n, near the Removal-era home site of John and Elizabeth Welch, the route diverges from the current Andrews Highway, and arcs to the south along a knoll locally known as Betty Blythe [Welch] Hill. Along this span, the state road is evident as an entrenched farm road (Figure 111) that passes through one bay of a standing barn, then climbs the slope (Figure 112) to the yard of a 20<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse. At the woodline on the southwestern edge of the yard, the old roadbed is perceptible as a shallow linear depression lined with large old-growth white oak trees (Figure 113). The roadbed continues along the wooded hill until it emerges into a pasture at UTM [17] 235,315e, 3,897,222n. Fox's survey indicates that the old road rejoined the Western Turnpike around UTM[17] 235,270e, 3,897,240n, and coincides with Andrews Highway to east side of Hyatt's Creek.

The state road route swings northwest of Andrews Highway at UTM [17] 234,108e, 3,896,730n, and joins a private driveway at UTM [17] 233,958e, 3,896,739n. The old road traces this driveway, which crosses Hyatt Creek Road and becomes Gibby Road. The first 350m of Gibby Road appears to be a minimally modified (albeit, gravel), entrenched, single lane segment

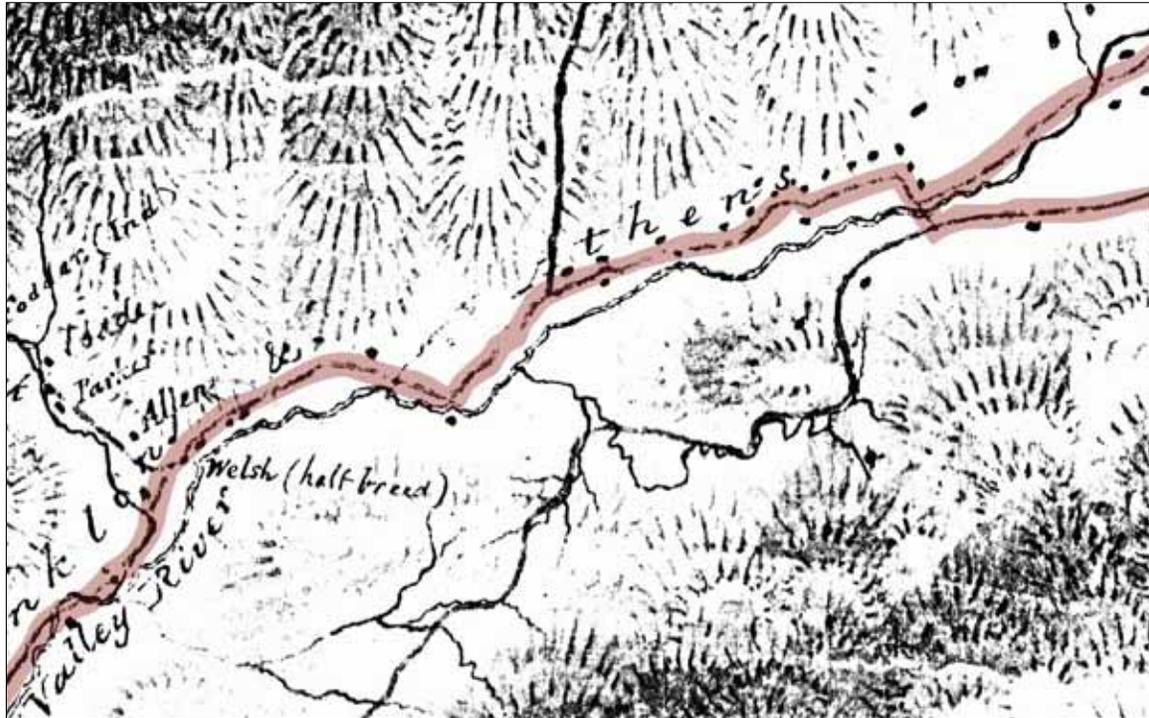


Figure 107. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps map indicating the route of the Great State Road (red highlight) between the Valleytown ford and the ford at Rhea Branch.

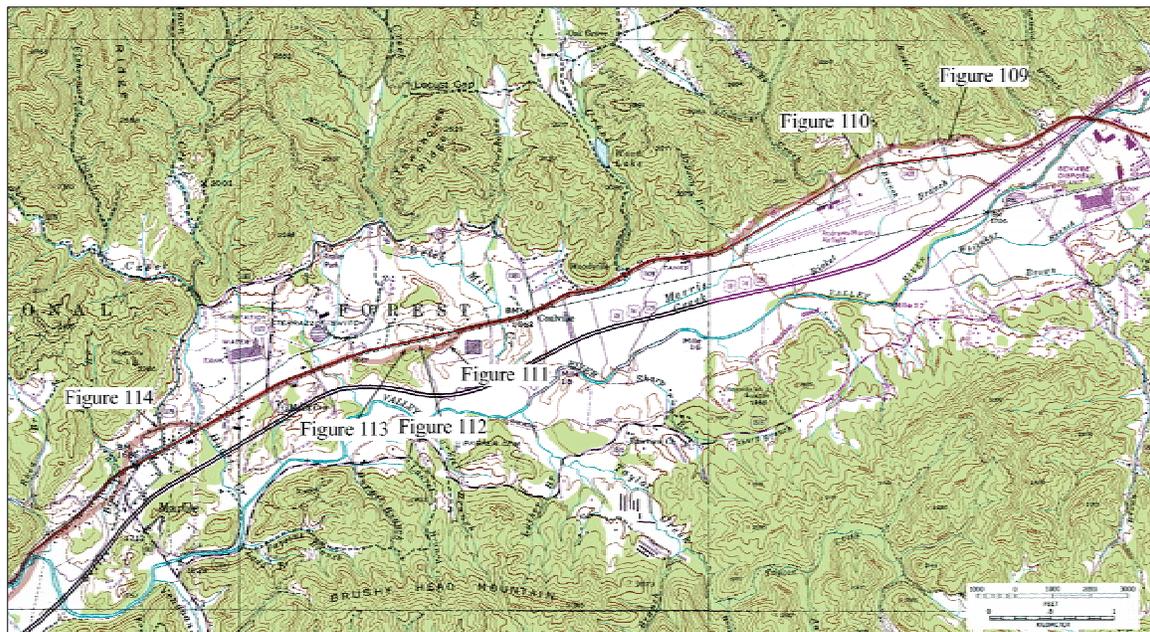


Figure 108. Detail of the Andrews and Marble, NC 7.5' quadrangles indicating the route of the Great State Road (red highlight) between the Valleytown ford and the ford at Rhea Branch.

of the original state road. At UTM[17] 233,582e, 3, 896,639n, Gibby Road turns abruptly south, and the route of the state road continues southwestward, intersecting Andrews Highway at UTM [17] 233,408e, 3,896,380n. The old road then closely parallels Andrews Highway for almost one kilometer to the mouth of Rhea Branch, where the state road forded a bend in the Valley River to avoid a steep slope on the northwest side of the river. The state road closely paralleled the southeast side of the river for 545m, then recrossed the river at UTM [17] 232,342e, 3,895,288n.

The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina



Figure 109. Modern driveway using roadbed of the Great State Road (UTM [17] 240,596e, 3,898,816n).



Figure 110. Farm road using roadbed of the Great State Road (UTM [17] 240,146e, 3,898,872n).



Figure 111. Embankment along the edge of the state road (UTM [17] 236,037e, 3,897,316n).



Figure 112. Entrenched roadbed on Betty Blythe Hill (UTM [17] 235,887e, 3,897,303n).



Figure 113. Great State Road bed on Betty Blythe Hill (UTM [17] 235,735e, 3,897,276n).



Figure 114. Gibby Road, a modern access road that uses the Great State Road bed (UTM [17] 233,743e, 3,896,714n).

## Great State Road Segment D: Ford at Rhea Branch to Tomotla (Figures 115-119).

The State Road/Western Turnpike route crosses to the northwest side of Valley River at the mouth of Magazine Branch, then continues southwestward along the north side of the river at the foot of the uplands to the ford at Murphy. Near Magazine Branch, the route initially coincides



Figure 115. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps map indicating the route of the Great State Road (red highlight) between Rhea Branch and Tomotla.

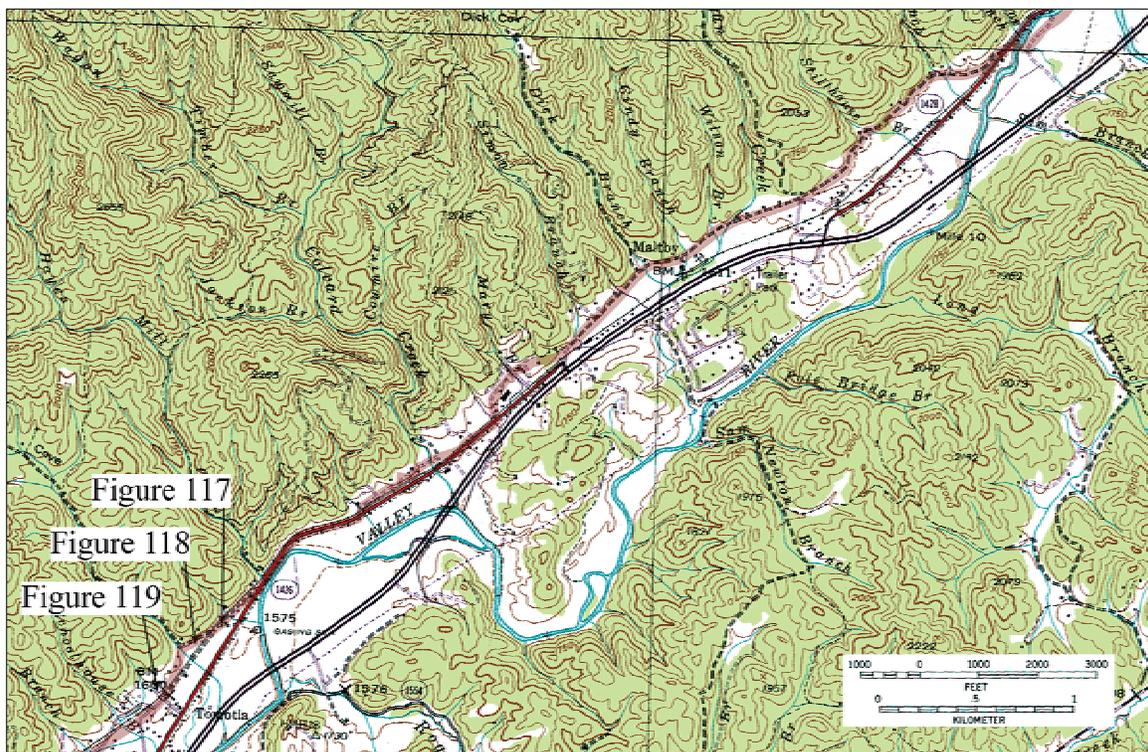


Figure 116. Detail of the Marble, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the route of the Great State Road (red highlight) between Rhea Branch and Tomotla.



Figure 117. Segment of the Great State Road/Western Turnpike incorporated into Hayes Road at the G. W. Hayes house (UTM [17] 228.195, 3,892,290n).



Figure 118. Segment of the Great State Road/Western Turnpike arcing north from Hayes Road as Moose Creek Road (UTM [17] 228,086e, 3,892,230n).



Figure 119. Segment of the Great State Road/Western Turnpike at UTM [17] 227,935e, 3,891,925n.

house, built in 1848 (Figure 118, 119). At UTM [17] 227,818e, 3,891,835n, the old State Road route diverges from Hayes Road, then coincides with Old Tomotla Road at UTM [17] 227,642e, 3,891,709n.

with Andrews Highway (old U.S. 19) a short distance, then deviates to north, where the Great State Road is evident as present-day Maltby Road. This 2.2 km span of the Great State Road appears heavily modified. At UTM [17] 229,6464e, 3,893,394n, the Great State Road route is largely subsumed by Tomotla Road, another segment of old U.S. 19, for 1.8 km, although some with short segments of the original roadbed are located adjacent to the later route and used as driveways or farm roads. At UTM [17] 228,425e, 3,892,507n, just north of Tomotla, the Great State Road diverges from Tomotla Road and is evident as Hayes Road (unpaved) for 925m. The route passes within a few feet of the George Washington Hayes

#### Great State Road Segment E: Tomotla to Murphy (Figures 120-125).

After joining Old Tomotla Road (County Road 1370) the old state road route tracks the current highway 1.7 km through a narrow, linear valley to Regal, NC, where it becomes Regal Road. The original road continues through this same valley along Regal Road for 1.5km, then turns abruptly southeast along Pleasant Valley Road at UTM [16] 772,111e, 3,887,361n to pass between two knobs and reenter the Valley River Valley proper. Here the Great State Road diverges from the modern road, and a short, unpaved segment is intact (Figure 121). The route then turns to the southwest and traces the flank of an upland knob for 1.5 km before joining Hill Street (old U.S. 19) at UTM [16] 771,619e, 3,888,051n. The route then follows the face of an elevated, ancient terrace until it turns southward to ford Valley River at UTM [16] 771,218e, 3,887,088n. On the south bank of Valley River the Great State Road is represented by Cloe Moore Drive, a small paved road (Figure 109), before it merges with portion of Valley River Avenue, which crosses downtown Murphy. At UTM [16] 770,195e, 3,886,468n, the mapped route of Great State Road

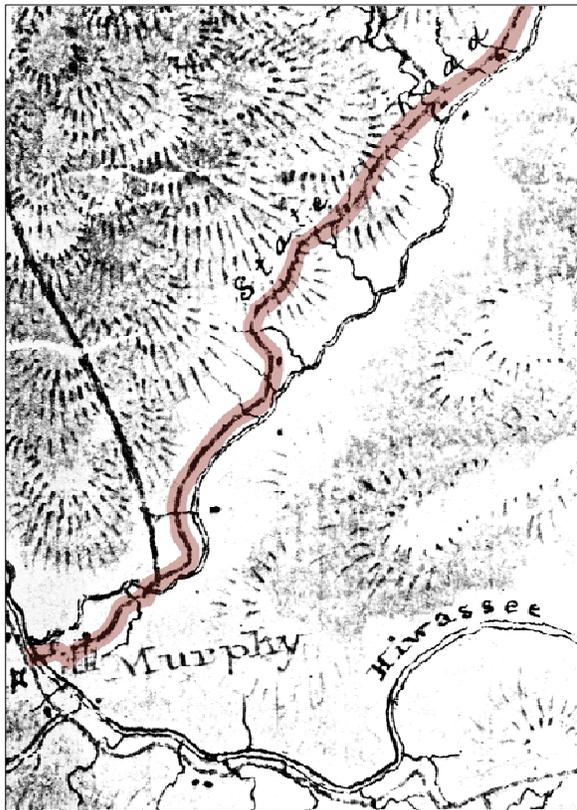


Figure 120. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps map indicating the route of the Great State Road (red highlight) between Tomotla and Murphy.



Figure 121. Detail of the Murphy, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the route of the Great State Road (red highlight) between Tomotla and Murphy.

then turns northwest and runs along present-day Railroad Street, parallel to the Hiwassee River for 300 m to reach Christie Ford at UTM (16) 769,994e. 3,886,6776n. On the southwest bank of the Hiwassee River, the Great State Road intersected the Unicoi Turnpike; Fort Butler, the first destination of the Cherokee detainees who traveled the Great State Road, was 340m south of this intersection.

### Summary and Recommendations

After ratification of the Treaty of New Echota, the state of North Carolina authorized and funded construction of a wagon road to connect Franklin, NC (and the roads which converged there) with Blairsville, Georgia. The road, built in 1837, was the central transport artery across the Nantahala Mountains and through the Valley River Valley. The so-called "Great State Road" connected a series of forts constructed for the anticipated military removal of Cherokee citizens from southwestern North Carolina. Camp Scott, Fort Delaney, and Fort Butler were directly (and exclusively) linked via the state road, and routes from forts Montgomery and Lindsay connected to the Great State Road

at Fort Delaney. Consequently, in June 1838, all Cherokee prisoners taken by the U.S. Army and North Carolina militia from the Valley River Valley and the northern communities of the Aquohee District (e.g., Cheoah, Buffalo Town, Stecoah, Alarka, Nantahala, Aquonee) were routed along the Great State Road in transit to Fort Butler before their transfer to the emigration depot at Fort Cass, Tennessee. Contemporary accounts are nonspecific concerning military use of the Great State Road during the 1838 removal, although communications indicate prisoners from



Figure 122. Unimproved segment of the Great State Road near Pleasant Valley Road (UTM [16] 772,228e, 3,888,982n).



Figure 123. Chloe Moore Drive, a paved and improved segment of the Great State Road in Murphy, NC (UTM [16] 771,112e, 3,886,937n).

Camp Scott and Fort Lindsay stopping at the home of John Welch, which was situated on the state road. Despite the absence of specific reference in military accounts, the direct role of the Great State Road in the removal operations is virtually certain, inasmuch as the state road was then the sole extant wagon route between Camp Scott, Fort Delaney, and Fort Butler.

Precise reconstruction of the route of the Great State Road was enabled by projection of detailed survey notes generated by the 1850 Moylan Fox resurvey of the route (coupled with the less precise 1837 U.S. Army Corps surveys). Field reconnaissance of the Great State Road route (as indicated by these contemporary survey records) identified substantial surviving sections of the original roadbed in the Nantahala National Forest in the Choga Creek valley between Nantahala Lake and Old Road Gap. After the route intersects present-day Junaluska Road, the original roadbed is largely obscured or obliterated by subsequent road/railroad, commercial and residential development through the Junaluska Creek Valley and through the town of Andrews, NC. After the route crosses Valley River, numerous segments of the original roadway, totaling more than eight kilometers, are still discernable on private properties along the northwest margin of the Valley River Valley between Andrews and Murphy, NC.

The 27-mile long portion of the Great State Road between Camp Scott (Aquone, NC) and Fort Butler (Murphy, NC) clearly possesses distinct and well documented “qualities of association” with the 1838 Cherokee removal, an event of local, regional, and national significance. In addition, the entire span of the Great State Road from Franklin, NC to Murphy, NC is important to understanding the early history of transportation, commerce, and settlement in the Southern Appalachian region, and is a significant physical vestige of the region’s commercial and transportation history. Therefore, it is recommended that discernable segments of the Great State Road that retain some integrity of design or construction should be considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and should be certified as resources of contributing elements of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Thomason (2002) identified such “original” roadways as an important property type associated with the Cherokee Trail of Tears, and outlined their identifying characteristics:

Original roadbeds are those which have not been significantly changed or altered since the 1830s. These are generally roads which were abandoned at the turn of the century or became local farm roads, or incorporated into county road systems. The characteristics of such roads include dirt or gravel surfaces, widths of ten to twenty feet, and sunken shapes with embankments of varying height. Roadbeds from this period will generally be defined by a “U” shape. ... Another identified pattern of these studies was the presence of “multiple tracks” on slopes where several parallel roadbeds exists (Thomason 2002:[F] 9).

Thomason also noted that these roads should be considered eligible in conformance to National Register criteria A, C, or [and] D “for their historic associations with the Cherokee Trail of Tears, retention of design characteristics, and potential archaeological record” (Thomason 2002:[F] 10). Thomason notes specific registration requirements for such resources, primarily the demonstrable retention of qualities of integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting, and association. Because a roadway is essentially stable in its position, integrity of location is a de facto condition contingent upon accurate identification of the resource. Contemporary accounts and detailed maps (i.e., Adams 1838; Fox 1850) definitively support the accurate association of extant roadbed segments with the Great State Road and its successor, the Western Turnpike. Integrity of design of surviving segments of the Great State Road is indicated by roadway widths of 12-15 feet, well-defined entrenchments and side berms (evidence of road maintenance). Integrity of materials is maintained in substantial sections of the roadbed that evince either unimproved dirt surfaces or lightly improved gravel surfaces. These conditions also indicate retention of qualities of workmanship and feeling. Integrity of feeling is also retained in surviving segments greater than 200m in length in which a sense of the continuity of the Removal-era road is evoked. Those portions of the Great State Road located on U.S. Forest Service property in the Choga Creek Valley retain particularly well-defined integrity of setting in wooded, undeveloped locations. Surviving segments of the Great State Road on the northwestern flank of the Valley River Valley also convey a sense of the historical condition of the open landscape of that area, and provides vistas that retain at least some of the scenic qualities witnessed by the Cherokee deportees in 1838.

The authors recommend that extant portions of the Great State Road located on public lands (i.e. U.S.D.A. Forest Service Nantahala National Forest) should be accorded focused protection and management, with select areas developed for public access and interpretation. Other, more readily accessible locations, such as Maltby Road and Old Tomotla Road, should be subject to interpretive development for public education. Much of the route of the Great State Road can be easily traced by automobile traffic, and could be marked and designated as a 20-mile auto tour route as part of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

### **The Old Army Road**

In May 1838, a fatigue detail of two companies commanded by Capt. E.H. Cunningham constructed a military road across the Snowbird Mountains to connect the Cheoah Valley (and the future Fort Montgomery) to the state road at Valley Towns. This road, which followed an ancient Cherokee trail up Pile Ridge (Cherokee County) and down Long Creek (Graham County), was the primary route used for the military deportation of more than 300 Cherokee citizens from the Cheoah Valley in the summer of 1838 (Figure 124). Evidence suggests that the “old army road” built along the Pile Ridge-Long Creek trail, was the only roadway specifically constructed by the U.S. army for use in the Cherokee Removal. Substantial segments of the original roadbed survive in the Nantahala National Forest along Pile Ridge and upper Long Creek.

### **Historical Context**

In the fall of 1837, Col. William Lindsay (commander, Army of the Cherokee Nation) directed Capt. W.G. Williams (the officer in charge of the Army mapping expedition in North Carolina) to accord particular attention to the principal trail from Alarka through Stecoah and Cheoah to Valley Town:

...you are... to examine a trail from the Little Tennessee River, about two miles below Fort Lindsay, to the heart of the Cheowah town & find the best route for a wagon road, to be made at small expense, as near the trail as convenient. Examine also with the same views, the country between Cheowah and the head of Valley River... Endeavor to find out the number of inhabitants without appearing to do so, particularly the number of fighting men, and their probable means of subsistence, if they take to the mountains next spring- Report also the capacity of the neighboring Country; for supplying troops at the Posts named, in case of actual hostilities (unattributed quotation in Cashion 1970:18).

Williams fielded survey crews headed by John C. Frémont, Phillip Harry, Arch Campbell, J.K. Stinson, I.H. Adams, and P.J. Pillans, who mapped the region between November 1837 and January 1838. Williams' preliminary report of these reconnaissances describes a trail:

... Leaving the Little Tennessee about 3 miles below Fort Lindsay, a trail passes over into the valley of the Teloneke creek, and following for sometime its valley, crosses a low gap, follows the Stecoah, and enters the Cheowah valley over a high ridge, descends a branch of the Cheowah, and ascends very steeply another to the summit of the Longridge, whence it descends finally to Fort Delaney on Konehete, being a total distance of about 31 miles from Fort Lindsay. The ground is altogether favorable to our object and the line has been surveyed and staked out in reference to a wagon road.

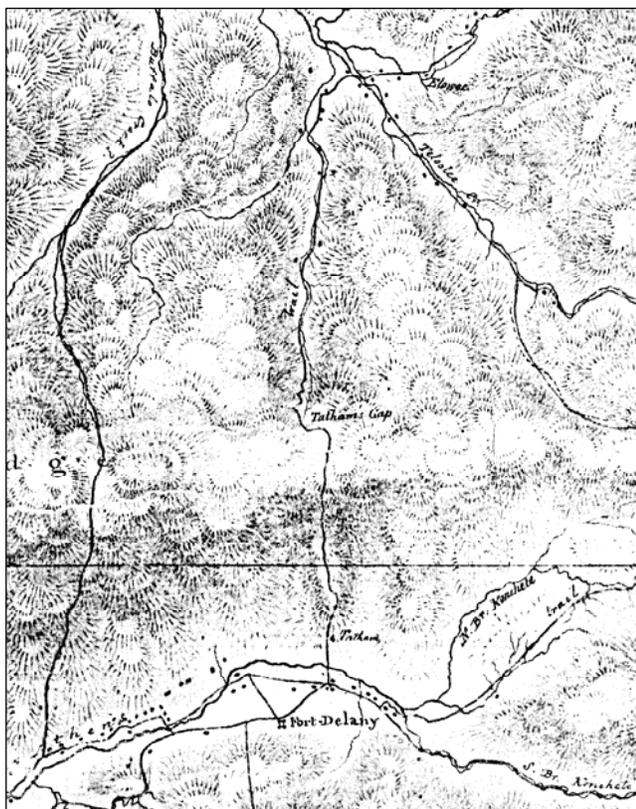


Figure 124. Route of Pile Ridge trail indicated on the 1838 Army map of southwestern North Carolina.

... The trail from Fort Lindsay to Fort Delaney through the Cheowah valley leaves the L. Tennessee river 3 miles below Fort Lindsay. At this point there are three fording places, the lowest of which is the best, about 1/2 mile below Shearer's house at the lower end of a cornfield on the south bank. After passing over a short low hill the trail meets with no material obstruction for 10 miles. A spur of the Long ridge which extends away to the mouth of the Cheowah has then to be surmounted in order to enter the Cheowah valley. The trail which ascends it is steep after the fashion of the Indians, who have little notion of grading and always take the shortest course up and down hill. But the graded line which has been marked out along the mountain side for the proposed road will not exceed a grade of 7 or 8 feet in a hundred for a distance of about 11/2 miles on either side of the mountain. Along the Cheowah valley the road will be almost a level and the trail which follows a branch of the Cheowah is good to where the Long ridge intercepts our further progresses to Valley river. The ascent by the trail is then very steep and protracted in length, owing to the great elevation of the mountain in this vicinity. Crossing the ridge the trail descends steeply to Konehete for a distance of three miles along a sharp fishbacked ridge or spur of the Long ridge and then crossed over the level valley to Fort Delaney (Williams 1838a:204-205).

Notes from the Army survey across the Snowbird Mountains (Long Ridge) between the "Cheowah valley" and "Valley river" indicate a route began at a benchmark along the state road at Matthew Russell's house (in present-day downtown Andrews) "near 31 mile post" on the state road and followed a single bearing (N4°E) to the crest of the Snowbird Mountains (Figure 125). The trail crossed an island in the Valley River (still evident on the 1943 U.S.G.S. Andrews, N.C. quadrangle), then attained a toe of Pile Ridge, passing immediately east of Colonel Tatham's residence. From there, surveyors noted, "The trail ascends the mountain on the top of a narrow ridge having hollows on each side- the course is very little changed." The Pile Ridge trail attained the summit of the Snowbird

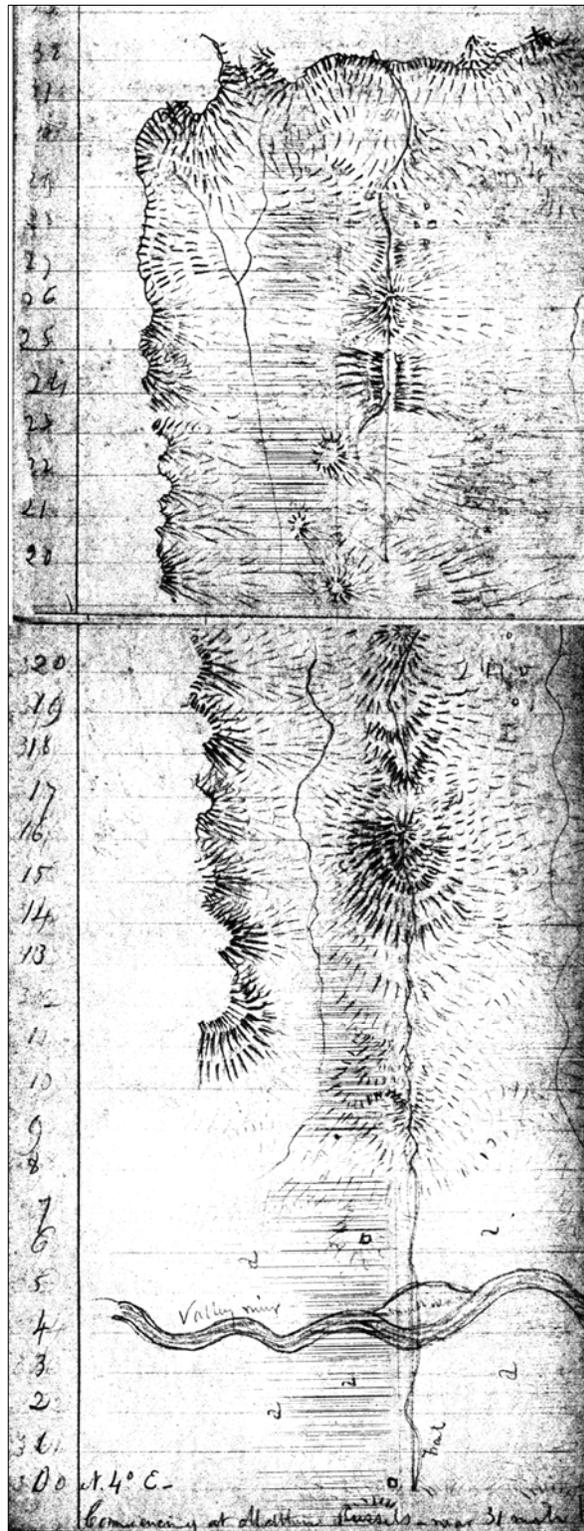


Figure 125. 1838 Army Corps sketchmap of the Pile Ridge trail between Valley River and the crest of the Snowbird Mountains.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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Mountains between the heads of Pile Creek and Britton creek, considerably west of Tatham Gap. Along the trail, the Army surveyors noted several groups of “Indian graves”, observing, “There are a great many piles of loose stones thrown together- supposed to be Indian graves- frequently there are 4 together in the form of a cross. The Indians say however that they are not graves.” These were, presumably, the same piles that Mooney described as the cairns erected for the massacre victims of the Seneca party, and demarcate the long traveled primary route between the Valley River and Cheoah River valleys. Mooney (1900) relates a Cherokee oral tradition about the trail:

On the southern slope of the ridge along the trail from Robbinsville to Valley river, in Cherokee County, North Carolina, are the remains of a number of stone cairns. The piles are leveled now, but thirty years ago the stones were still heaped up into pyramids, to which every Cherokee who passed added a stone. According to tradition, these piles marked the graves of a number of women and children of the tribe who were surprised and killed on the spot by a raiding party of the Iroquois shortly before the final peace between the two Nations [ca. 1767]. As soon as the news was brought to the settlements on Hiwassee and Cheowa a party was made under Tale'tanigi'ski, “Hemp-carrier,” to follow and take vengeance on the enemy. Among others of the party was the father of the noted chief Tsunu'lahun'ski, or Junaluska... (Mooney 1900:364).

Mooney further notes that “The trail along which the Seneca came ran from Valley river across the ridge to Cheowa... and thence northwest to connect with the “great war path” in Tennessee” (1900:491).

No survey notes for the segment of the trail between the crest of the Snowbird Mountains and the Cheoah Valley (at Robbinsville) have been located. The 1838 Army Corps “Map of a Part of the Cherokee Territory...” (Figure 124) indicates the route down the Long Creek Valley to present-day Robbinsville in detail, and it is apparent that the trail was intensively mapped along this segment.

In mid-May 1838, the U.S. Army constructed a wagon road across the Snowbirds from Fort Delaney to “a picket work to be erected in the Cheowa Valley.” On May 23, 1838 Captain Enoch Cunningham (Company A, Buncombe County volunteers) noted that North Carolina troops had lately completed the road and begun construction of Fort Montgomery:

...we have at length arrived at our station in the Cheowee Valley and have designated it Fort Montgomery .... We were detained on Valley River for the space of 10 days during which time we were engaged in making a road across the mountains to our present station. We have commenced hauling timber and ditching for the picket work, and all the men are in high spirits and show great anxiety to forward the business. Some of the men have been seriously indisposed but are at present convalescent, and I think that we will enjoy good health if an elevated situation and good water will conduce to that effect (Cunningham 1838).

Cunningham’s “road across the mountains” almost certainly corresponded with the trail line marked by army surveyors earlier that year, the Pile Ridge-Long Creek trail. When Col. Bynum and three companies of North Carolina troops took their post at Fort Montgomery (on Fort Hill in present-day Robbinsville) on June 1, 1838, they traveled the recently constructed military road and found it so rough that it hampered procurement of rations and equipment:

I reached my station last night and assumed command this morning and find the post in quite a precarious situation provided the Indians are disposed to be hostile. In consequence of the extreme badness of the roads, and the difficulty of procuring wagons, the Quartermaster has been unable to accumulate a supply of provisions. There are provisions in the camp now only for three days. A wagon can haul only about 1200 pounds and make a trip in two days. The road through a great part of the distance passes up a branch between two mountains with a laurel thicket on each side, which would enable a very small force to prevent the passage of wagons without a large escort... (Bynum 1838b).

...At present I think it impossible to benefit the road to Ft. Delaney. It is entirely too muddy to be improved by labor nor can it be materially improved without bestowing upon it more labor than can possibly be spared from my post for the next month....(Bynum 1838b).

Following the commencement of removal operations in North Carolina on June 12, 1838, Bynum's troops detained approximately 300 Cherokee prisoners from Cheoah, Tallula, Connichiloe, Buffalo Town and Stecoa at Fort Montgomery. These prisoners began their trek to Fort Butler (and eventually to the Fort Cass internment camps) during the fourth week of June 1838. On June 24, 1838, General Eustis (commander at Fort Butler) observed:

Capt. Washington, with Companies B & G 4th Regt. Artillery under his command left here [Fort Butler] yesterday afternoon for the Cherokee Agency, having under his charge about 1100 Indians-- 300 Indians will arrive here today from Cheowah & in two or three days about the same number from Fort Lindsay & Camp Scott. The whole number of Indians, which have been collected at the several posts in North Carolina is something more than 3000. A few are still hiding in the recesses of the mountains, & a number of families have obtained permission from the Superintendent of Emigration or his agent to remain and become citizens of N.C (Eustis 1838b) [emphasis added].

The prisoners from Cheoah most likely traveled from Fort Montgomery to Fort Delaney along the Pile Ridge-Long Creek military road, then followed the state road south to Fort Butler, crossing the Hiwassee River at Hunter's ferry or over the newly completed toll bridge at the mouth of Valley River. Lt. E.D. Keys' map (Figure 21) of posts and routes used during the military operations indicates two routes between Fort Butler and Fort Montgomery: the Long Creek-Pile Ridge-Valley River route, and a foot trail over the head of Snowbird Creek, through the Hanging Dog Mountains, and down Hanging Dog Creek to the Hiwassee River. Because Bynum's men used wagons to transport invalids and the elderly, as well as equipment, their selection of the Long Creek-Pile Ridge road is almost certain. After a short stay at Fort Butler, the Cheoah prisoners, like thousands of other North Carolina Cherokees, were marched 80 miles over the Unicoi Turnpike and connecting routes to Fort Cass

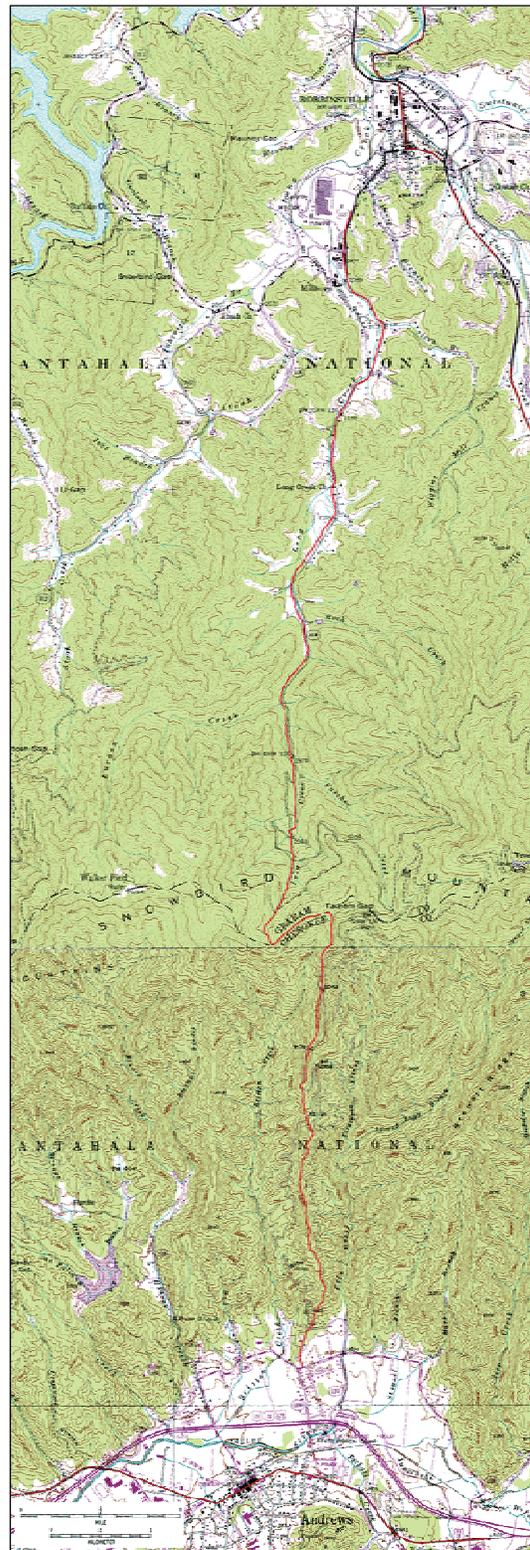


Figure 126. Route of the Old Army Road indicated (in red) on modern USGS Andrews and Robbinsville quadrangles.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

(Charleston, Tennessee) to await their deportation to Oklahoma. Once there, they took up temporary residence in the internment camps on the military reservation, most likely joining 1500 North Carolina Cherokees already camped along the eastern prong of South Mouse Creek.

In the aftermath of the Cherokee removal, Euro-American settlement proceeded slowly in the remote Cheoah River Valley, and remaining Cherokee families constituted a major component of the area's population as late as 1850 (Browder 1970). Because the Cheoah Valley was so sparsely settled throughout much of the nineteenth century, neither the state nor Cherokee County attempted to upgrade transportation routes into the area, and the old Pile Ridge-Long Creek military road remained the primary access route into the area through the Civil War era (Freel 1957; Dewey Sharp, personal communication 1997). Only after Graham County fissioned from Cherokee County in 1872 and Robbinsville as a county seat did the state authorize construction of the Tatham Gap Road to replace the old military track (Freel 1957). This road, as depicted on a 1904 U.S.G.S. topographic map, braided the military road for much of the ascent of Pile Ridge, then departed the earlier trace to cross Tatham Gap (a more gradual ascent), rejoining the older road more than a mile north of the summit of the Snowbird Mountains. Local residents of the Long Creek Valley continued to use the old military road as the more direct route to Andrews until the 1930s, when Civilian Conservation Corps workers rebuilt the Tatham Gap Road (Graham County Historical Society 1992:2; Dewey Sharp, personal communication 1997). By 1910, the new road from Topton through the Tallula Creek Valley to Robbinsville supplanted the Tatham Gap Road as the primary access to the Cheoah Valley, and the picturesque Tatham Gap Road gradually became synonymous with the 1838 military road in local traditions (Freel 1957, Graham County Historical Society 1992; Hargrove 1996).

### **Reconnaissance of the Old Army Road**

Recent field reconnaissance of the mapped route of the 1838 military road across the Snowbird Mountains (see Figure 126 for reconstruction of the road route on USGS topographic maps) reveals that modern land use has obscured or obliterated the northern and southern ends of the route, but substantial segments of the original roadbed are still discernable from the foot of Pile Ridge northward to the upper Long Creek Valley. At the southern end of the trail (Figure 127), the roadbed may be represented by a private driveway (Azalea Lane) that crosses Tatham Gap Road at UTM (17) 243,485e, 3900381n. North of Tatham Gap Road, the old military road enters the wooded toe of Pile Ridge, and is evident as sunken foot trail that continues northward along the ridgecrest on private

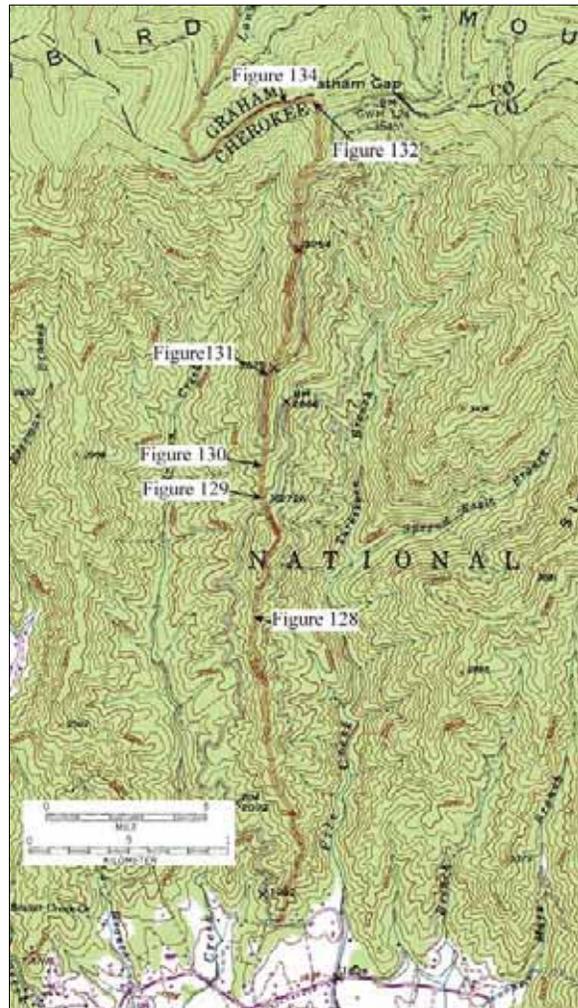


Figure 127. Southern portion of the Old Army Road indicated (in red) on modern USGS Andrews and Robbinsville quadrangles.

## Old Army Road



Figure 128. Segment of the old Army Road on Pile Ridge, south of the Halfway Ground (UTM [17] 243,410e, 3,901,929n).



Figure 129. Segment of the old Army Road along Pile Ridge, immediately north of the Halfway Ground (UTM [17] 243,467e, 3,902,535n).



Figure 130. Segment of the old Army Road along Pile Ridge north of the Halfway Ground (UTM [17] 243,510e, 3,902,535n).

property for 850m. At UTM (17) 243,474e, 3,901,156n, the trail crosses into the Nantahala National Forest, and is discernable as a footpath (Figure 128) that extends northward along the heavily wooded ridgeline for 880m to UTM (17) 243,416e, 3,902,017n, where it is obscured or obliterated for 540m by a logging road. Like the trail mapped in 1838, the logging road skirts to the east of a series of high knobs, then crosses a level saddle at UTM (17) 243,486e, 3,902,493n). This saddle, which is transected by the Tatham Gap Road, is known to older residents of the area as the “Halfway Ground,” the only place on the old army road that a wagon and team could be turned around between the crest of Snowbird Mountain and the foot of Pile Ridge (Dewey Sharp, personal communication 1997). North of the Halfway Ground, the route is discernable as an entrenched wagon road (Figure 129) that exhibits exceptional integrity of construction and setting for 2150m along the spine of Pile Ridge to the crestline of Snowbird Mountain at UTM (17) 243789e, 3904204n (Figure 130). The old Army Road is intersected by the modern Tatham Gap Road (USFS Road 423) at UTM (17) 243503e, 3902774n UTM (17) 243512e, 3903146n UTM (17) 243678e, 3903778n and UTM (17) 243678e, 3903984n. A fieldstone slab (Figure 131), most likely a grave marker, stands beside the road at UTM (17) 243,540e, 3903199n.



Figure 131. Fieldstone marker along the old Army Road on Pile Ridge (UTM [17] 243,510e, 3,903,161n).

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina



Figure 132. Mr. Dewey Sharp standing in the Old Army Road (UTM [17] 243,778e, 3,904,547n).

and from the accounts of his grandfather, James Hamilton Sharp (b. 1835), who moved to the Cheoah Valley shortly after removal. Mr. Sharp related that residents of the Long Creek Valley continued to use the old road well into the twentieth century, because the track presented the most direct route to Andrews, an early center of commerce. Mr. Sharp also recalled that, as a youth (ca. 1920s), he frequently hauled wagonloads of tanbark over the old road to Andrews, slowing the descent on Pile Ridge by dragging a tree behind the wagon.

In 1997, Mr. Sharp guided researchers along the route of the old Army Road from the crest of the Snowbird Mountains northward to Long Creek Church (Figure 44). Beginning at Tatham Gap, Mr. Sharp led the author west to the summit of Pile Ridge (Figure 132), where he positively identified the road trace at that juncture (UTM [17] 243,781e; 3,904,541n) as the old military road. From this point, Mr. Sharp proceeded westward along the current jeep trace (Figure 134), noting that this road is coincident with the old military road for approximately 730m (2395 ft) along the crestline of the Snowbird Mountains. Although this trace is, at present, closed to vehicular traffic by the U.S. Forest Service, it evinces only slight overgrowth of brambles, and appears to be regularly used by four wheel ATVs (Figure 135).

At a high gap (3760ft AMSL) between Tatham Gap and Walker Fields (UTM [17] 243,181e; 3904254n), the old military road turns north to descend a sideslope into a headwater hollow of Long Creek. Mr. Sharp identified the branch emanating from this hollow (the main prong of Long Creek) as “Old Road Branch,” also

No Army survey notes for the northern half of the old Army Road beyond Pile Ridge are currently known, but researchers referred to local informant Dewey Sharp to establish the route of the old roadway in Graham County. Mr. Sharp (born 1909), a lifelong resident of the Long Creek community, was widely acknowledged in the Robbinsville area as the vernacular authority on Graham County geography, local history, and historical land use. Mr. Sharp indicated that he was intimately familiar with the “old road that the Army built to take the Indians out of here,” both from personal use of the

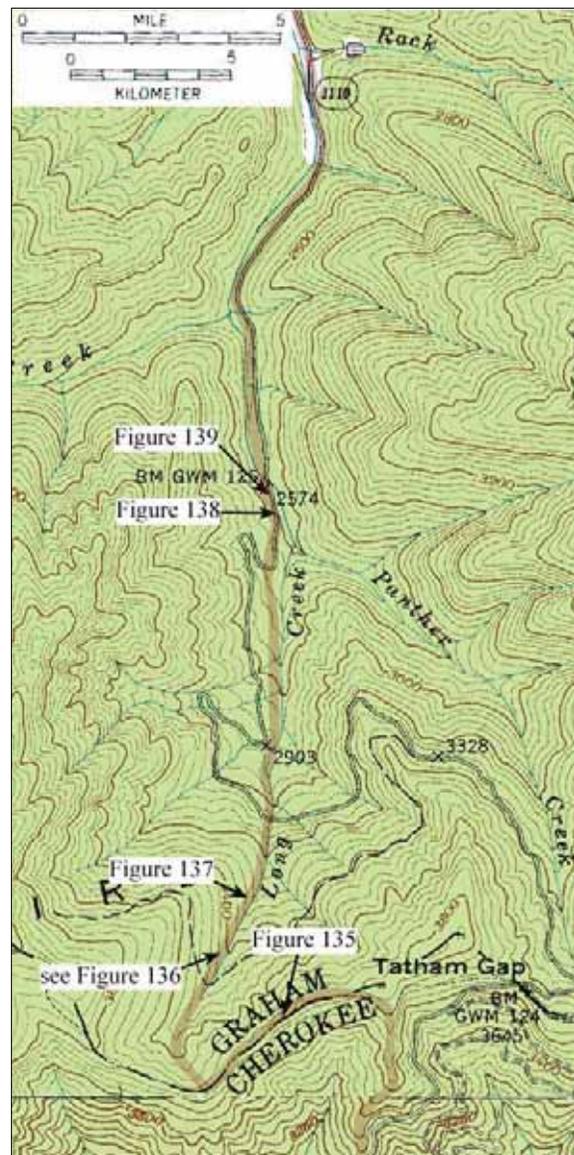


Figure 133. Northern portion of the Pile Ridge Trail indicated (in red) on modern USGS Andrews and Robbinsville quadrangles

## Old Army Road



Figure 134. The old Army Road and coincident USFS Road 2607 (UTM [17]243.623e, 3.904.529n. .

known as “Meadow Branch” for an elderly Mr. Meadow who lived along the stream around 1900. The old roadbed makes a single switchback to attain the floor of the hollow, then descends along the western side of Long Creek through birch and hemlock forest and rhododendron thickets (Figures 136, 137). The original road is superimposed by a later logging road to the floor of the hollow, then separates as a distinct trace. Approximately 460m (1509ft) north of the



Figure 135. The old Army Road on the crestline of Snowbird Mountain (UTM [17]243,454e, 3,904,479n).

ridgeline, a Forest Service road (USFS road 2607) intersects the old roadbed; 940m (3050 ft) north of the ridge, the old road is intersected by the Tatham Gap Road at UTM (17) 243,181e, 3904254n, approximately 1.5 miles northwest of Tatham Gap. Over much of this span, the original Army Road retains substantial structural integrity. Portions of the roadbed appear gullied by erosion, but Mr. Sharp indicated that the center of the trace had been gouged in the 1910s by logging operations (i.e. logs skidded by oxen). Large (36”-40”) chestnut stumps (that died due to the chestnut blight of the 1910s-1920s) that line the edges of the road along “Old Road” branch attest the age of the trace.

The old roadbed remains distinct and relatively intact as it descends another 800m along the western side of Long Creek before it recrosses the Tatham Gap Road at UTM [17] 243,455e, 3905889n. Here the road skirts the edge of a gently sloping hollow that is the site of the former Davis sawmill and mill camp (ca. 1915-1925); 273m north (at UTM [17] 243,459e, 3906161n) the old road crosses to the eastern side of Long Creek. From this point northward, the original roadbed is largely obscured by the present Tatham Gap Road (USFS Road 423), although short segments of



Figure 136. The old Army Road in the upper Long Creek Valley (UTM [17] 243,266e, 3,904,675n).



Figure 137. The old Army Road in the upper Long Creek Valley (UTM [17] 243,362e, 3,904,849n).

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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Figure 138 Entrenched segment of the old Army roadbed south of the Davis Sawmill site (UTM [17] 243,476e, 3,906,119n).



Figure 139 Old Army roadbed south of the Davis Sawmill site (UTM [17] 243,463e, 3,906,119n).

the Army Road are evident to the national forest boundary (at UTM [17] 243,626e, 3907498n). Mr. Sharp noted two Civil War era sites along the road between Panther Creek and Rock Creek. “Camp Nasty,” located in “the Beech Flat”(at UTM [17] 243,590e, 3907062n) was a favored bivouac of either Confederates or Home Guard troops whose picketed horses mired and fouled the area. Around a bend in the road Camp Nasty (at UTM [17] 243,457e, 3906756n) was a favored ambush spot; a gang of Unionist bushwhackers frequented this bend to attack travelers on the road between Valley Town and the Cheoah Valley.

North of Rock Creek, on privately held land outside the Nantahala National Forest, the old military road again ran along the western side of the creek, then crossed to the east to pass behind the present Long Creek Church building before converging with the current road. Mr. Sharp indicated that the old road is coincident with the current Long Creek road from Long Creek Church northward to Robbinsville. Within the Long Creek valley north of Rock Creek, most traces of the old road have been obliterated by subsequent use, although a vestige of the roadbed survives as a driveway immediately north of the church.

### Summary and Recommendations

In sum, the Old Army Road is readily identifiable as an extant landscape feature from the toe of Pile Ridge outside of Andrews north to the Rock Creek confluence with Long Creek. Although the old military road is braided by the Tatham Gap Road on both sides of the mountain, many intervening segments of the old trace retain an appreciable degree of structural and aesthetic integrity. Near the summit of Pile Ridge, several ancient white oak trees on the margin of the intact roadbed bespeak the age of the trace, as do ancient chestnut stumps that line the edges of the road along “Old Road” branch. In other areas, the road has obviously been upgraded and cleared with machinery to facilitate later logging efforts. North of the Panther Creek confluence, the old road has been reduced to short segments that deviate slightly from the current Tatham Gap road. Despite such modifications, significant sections of the roadbed are remarkably well preserved over the 4.5 mile course within the Nantahala National Forest, and almost 6000m (3.73 miles) of the old Army Road are distinctly visible and reasonably intact.

Because this trail possesses distinct and well documented “qualities of association” with the 1838 Cherokee removal, an event of local, regional, and national significance, it is recommended that this resource should be considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and measures should be implemented to assure the continued *in situ* preservation of this property. As a physical vestige of the 1838-’39 Trail of Tears” the Old Army Road constitutes a

## Old Army Road

unique heritage resource significant at local, regional, and national scales. This resource may be readily experienced and appreciated by the general public, with currently unrestricted access for pedestrian use across several miles of U.S.D.A. Forest Service lands (Nantahala National Forest). Portions of this route are quite scenic, especially along the ridgeline of the Snowbird Mountains, which provides panoramic views of the Valley River Valley, and in the headwaters of Long Creek, where the trail passes unimpeded through open, second-growth forest. By hiking the trail, modern users can experience the solitude and natural setting of the mountains that the Cherokees were forced to abandon in 1838; the trail's ascent over 1700 feet in elevation (at 3760 ft AMSL, the highest point on the entire Trail of Tears) impresses the hiker with the initial rigors of passage experienced by the Cherokee deportees, a foretaste of their long march to Oklahoma. These aspects of the trail's character reinforce the "integrity of ...feeling" (National Park Service 1997:2) which augment the trail's significance as a heritage resource.

The qualities which render the old Army Road eligible for National Register inclusion are vested in association with significant historical events, but depend upon the trail's survival as a distinct, scrutable landscape element within an undeveloped setting similar to that experienced by the Cherokee deportees in June 1838.

## Georgia Road

The Georgia Road (Figure 140) connected Chastain's Fort (Morganston, Georgia) with Fort Butler (Murphy, North Carolina), the headquarters for the Eastern Division of the Army of the Cherokee Nation. This linkage of the Great State Road with private roads constructed in Georgia, was the primary route for troop movement between these two posts during the removal operations of June 1838, and was almost certainly the thoroughfare over which Cherokees detained at Chastain's were transported to Fort Butler before traveling to the Fort Cass emigration depot.

The Georgia Road segment of the Great State Road extends roughly 9.3 miles (15 km) from Christie's Ford over the Hiwassee River in Murphy, North Carolina, to the Georgia state line, south over the ford over Nottely River at Raper's Bend. The road was constructed in 1837 as the southernmost span of the Great State Road (see previous treatment of the Great State Road) that extended from Franklin, North Carolina to the Georgia state line. The Georgia Road segment of the route may have traced an extant, privately wagon road from Nottely to the Unicoi Turnpike near Hunter's Store. In February 1838, Palmer Job Pillans (Pillans 1838) led a survey of the road from Fort Butler (Murphy) to the state line; Pillans later completed a line of survey from the North Carolina state line to Benjamin Chastain's home near the Toccoa River in Georgia (Figure 141).

The role of the Georgia Road in the Cherokee removal is not directly documented, although military correspondence indicates troop movements between the fort at Chastain's and Fort Butler, and the Georgia Road was the most direct route (and only improved road) between these two points. A prisoner roster compiled by Capt. L. B. Webster (Webster 1838c) at Fort Butler indicates that Webster's contingent included Cherokee detainees from the vicinity of Chastain's (as determined by

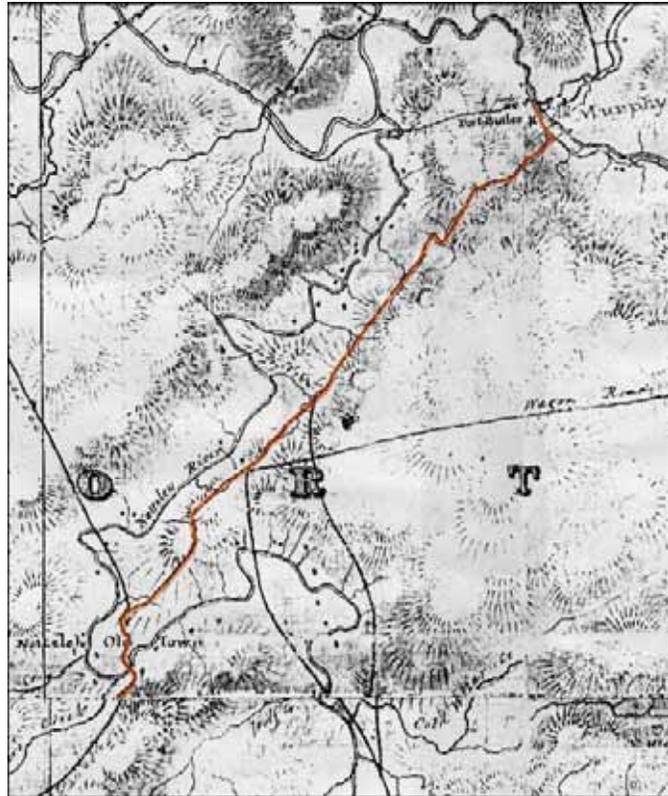


Figure 140. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps map depicting the route (red highlight) of the Georgia Road between Fort Butler and Georgia.

The Georgia Road segment of the route may have traced an extant, privately wagon road from Nottely to the Unicoi

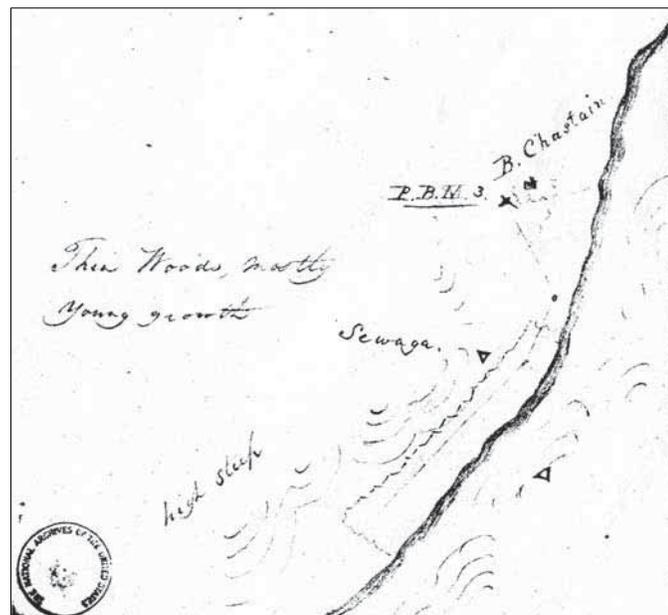


Figure 141. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps survey map (Pillans 1838) depicting the house sites of Benjamin Chastain and Sewaga.

reference to the 1835 War Department census and 1836 property valuation records). Particularly noteworthy on Webster's roster are Betsy Suwaga and Thomas Suwaga and their families (Shadburn 1989:191), Cherokees who resided along the Toccoa River as Chastain's immediate neighbors (Figure 141; Pillans 1838). It is likely that the Suwaga families and other Toccoa detainees were transferred from Chastain's to Fort Butler via the Georgia Road.

The Georgia Road probably also functioned as the conduit for more local Cherokee detainees from the Nottely River communities. Local traditions from 19<sup>th</sup> century sources contend that the army held Cherokee prisoners in Wet Hollow, where the Georgia Road crosses Cane Creek, and that army sentries were posted atop Rocky Fence Ridge, which overlooks the Georgia Road (Fred Dalrymple, personal communication 1990).

After the 1838 removal, the Georgia Road remained the primary connector between the fledgling town of Murphy, and the north Georgia settlements. The Great Western Turnpike followed the route of the Georgia Road; portions of the route were later subsumed by the Louisville and Nashville Railway, U.S. Highway 19, U.S. Highway 64, and N.C. Route 60, and the route today remains a major transportation corridor for southwestern North Carolina.

### Documentary Evidence and Reconnaissance of the Georgia Road Route

Pillans' 1838 surveys of the Georgia Road indicate that the route intersected the Unicoi Turnpike on the south side of present-day Murphy near UTM[16] 770,159e, 3,885,875n, then followed the approximate route of the Louisville and Nashville rail line (now abandoned) southwest for 3,200m (Figure 142). At UTM[16] 767,870e, 3,883,959, the Georgia Road made abrupt turn west to skirt a large knob. In a low gap at UTM[16]767,648e, 3,884,010n, the road again turned abruptly southwest to descend the northwest side of Wet Hollow before fording Cane Creek. Pillans notes that the road passed the home of Isaac Raper in Wet Hollow, near UTM[16]767,177e, 3,883,464n. After crossing Cane Creek, the Georgia Road rejoined the later route of the Louisville and Nashville railroad at UTM[16] 766,950e, 3,883,200n, and ran coincident with the rail route for 1270m. At UTM[16] 765,902e, 3,882,200n, the Georgia Road split from the railroad corridor, passed immediately northwest of the Mt. Liberty Church, then joined the route of the Old Murphy Highway (old U.S. 19). At UTM[16] 764,782e, 3,880,650, the route of the Georgia Road coincides with U.S. Highway 64, and continues southwest with the four-lane highway for 1560m. At UTM[16] 763,534e, 3,879,685n, U.S. 64 turns westward, and the Georgia Road route continues southwest toward Raper Bend of the Nottely River. The Georgia Road is largely coincident with the route of modern N.C. Highway 60 for the next four kilometers, then follows Raper Road to ford the Nottely near UTM[16] 761,075e, 3,875,942n. The surveyed route then continues southeast across

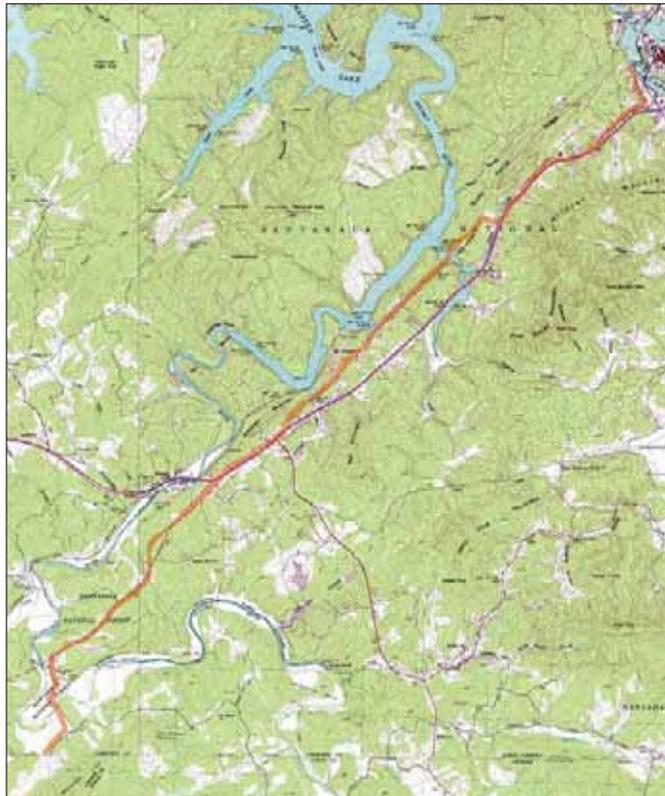


Figure 142. Detail of the Murphy 7.5' quadrangle depicting the route (red highlight) of the Georgia Road between Murphy (Fort Butler) and Georgia.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

the Nottely River bottoms, then southwest to skirt the base of the uplands for 940m along Old Culberson Road to the Georgia state line at UTM[16] 760,900e, 3,875,203n.

Field reconnaissance of the Georgia Road route revealed that much of the former thoroughfare has been obliterated by subsequent use of the corridor, with superposition of modern roadways or railroad beds. A notable exception is a well preserved 750m segment of the road that runs through Wet Hollow northwest of Cane Creek (Figures 143, 144). This segment of intact roadbed begins in a wooded area behind the Murphy Church of Christ at UTM[16] 767,662e, 3,883,984n, and extends southwest parallel to Rocky Fence Ridge. The route is clearly evident as a well entrenched roadbed as it descends the slope to the hollow floor, where it is discernable as a linear depression. The road crosses onto US Forest Service land at UTM[16] 767,567e, 3,883,950n and is evident as a road embankment or entrenched roadbed that flanks the northwestern side of the hollow (Figures 145, 146). The roadbed extends approximately 685m on Forest Service property, then is truncated at the high pool level of Hiwassee Lake in Cane Creek at UTM[16] 767,139e, 3,883,437n. This road segment appears to have been maintained as an access road for Anglo-American farmsteads in Wet Hollow; the former seat of one such farmstead is clearly evident at UTM[16] 767,567e, 3,883,950n. Nineteenth and 20<sup>th</sup> century maintenance and improvement of the road is evinced by numerous rockpiles and spoil pile embankments along the roadbed. Despite such modifications, the road retains its original character as a single lane wagon route that passes through an undeveloped, wooded valley.

### Summary and Recommendations

Although the role of the Georgia Road segment of the Great State Road in the 1838 Cherokee removal is not well documented, it can be reasonably inferred that the road was the primary route between Fort Butler and Chastain's Fort, and thereby functioned in the troop movements and detainee transfers between these posts. As a linkage over which Cherokee prisoners likely traveled between established posts, the Georgia Road qualifies for inclusion in the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, and should be considered for certification as a trail component.

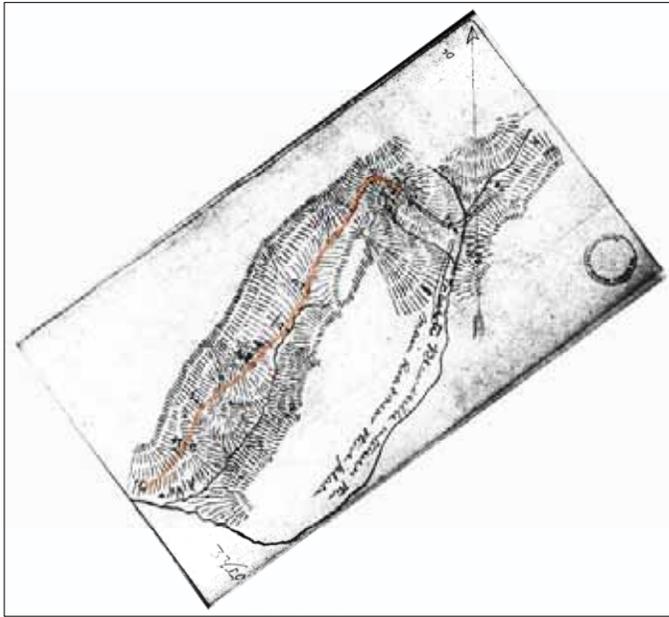


Figure 143. Detail of the 1838 Army Corps survey map (Pillans 1838) depicting the route of the Georgia Road near Cane Creek and the intact segment on USFS lands (red highlight).



Figure 144. Detail of the Murphy 7.5' quadrangle depicting the intact segment of the Georgia Road on USFS lands.



Figure 145. Segment of the Georgia Road on the Wet Hollow valley floor.



Figure 146. Embankment defining the edge of the Georgia Road bed in Wet Hollow.

Thomason (2002) identified such “original” roadways as an important property type associated with the Cherokee Trail of Tears, noting that such properties should be considered eligible for National Register listing conformable to National Register criteria A, C, or [and] D “for their historic associations with the Cherokee Trail of Tears, retention of design characteristics, and potential archaeological record” (Thomason 2002:[F] 10). Thomason further notes specific registration requirements for such resources, primarily the demonstrable retention of qualities of integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting, and association. Because a roadway is essential stable in its position, integrity of location is a *de facto* condition contingent upon accurate identification of the resource. Detailed contemporary maps (Pillans 1838) support the accurate association of extant roadbed segments with the Georgia Road. Integrity of design of the surviving segment of the Georgia Road in Wet Hollow is indicated by roadway widths of 12-15 feet, well-defined entrenchments and side berms (evidence of road maintenance). These conditions also indicate retention of qualities of workmanship and feeling. Integrity of feeling in the Wet Hollow segment is also conveyed by the undeveloped wooded setting evocative of landscape conditions at the time of the Cherokee Removal.

Because the Wet Hollow segment of the Georgia Road retains distinct and well documented “qualities of association” with respect to the 1838 Cherokee Removal, (an event of local, regional, and national significance) and retains substantial integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting, and association, the authors recommended that this segment of the Georgia Road be considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and should be certified as a resource of contributing elements of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. The authors further recommend that this extant segment of the Georgia Road located on public lands (i.e. U.S.D.A. Forest Service Nantahala National Forest) should be accorded focused protection and management, with select areas developed for public access and interpretation.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

### **Aquohee District Courthouse (31Ce338)**

The Aquohee District Courthouse, located in Peachtree, North Carolina (Figure 147), was the judicial and administrative center for most of the Cherokee communities in southwestern North Carolina from 1820 until June 1838. This building also served as the townhouse or council house for Hiwassee Town, and was most often referred to as the Hiwassee Townhouse. George W. Featherstonaugh, who saw the Aquohee District Courthouse in 1837, described the building as a traditional octagonal *gatiyi*:

Near his [Preston Starrett's] house stood the Cherokee Council-house of the district, a regular open octagon, built of logs, with a small portal; over this, a temporary roof was thrown upon particular occasions. In this building the Indians of the district held their courts, performed their dances, and other ceremonies (Featherstonhaugh 1847:288).

The Aquohee District Courthouse was a primary venue for the organization of Cherokee political efforts to oppose the federal removal policy. Beginning in 1828, councils of Aquohee District citizens issued a series of memorials, petitions and open letters that eloquently presented the Cherokee case against removal; a number of these were published in the *Cherokee Phoenix* newspaper to illustrate the dominant sentiment in the nation:

Aquohee District, Sept. 11, 1828  
To William Hicks, esq.  
Principal Chief,  
Sir:

We the citizens of the above named District, assembled at *Hiwassee Town House* [emphasis added], in consequence of information communicated to us, concerning the intended visit of our friend, the United States Agent, and two Arkansas Cherokee Chiefs.

We are all glad to find; that, our Elder Brother, the Principal Chief, holds fast his love to our country, and hereby with unanimous consent, thank him for his visit. Our judgement is that it behooves us to stand fast; and to hold our lands for the benefit of our rising families. We consider it exceedingly vexatious, to be perpetually teased, to part with our inheritance, just as we are beginning to occupy a respectable standing in the estimation of Christians who know us, and who now possess the country, on which our fathers once reared and raised their children. Must our prospects be always blasted? We think our white brethren will answer, no. We are determined to hold fast the land of our nativity. We do not wish to turn our feet from our original habitation, nor to move a step further towards the setting sun; our native soil being well watered and healthful.- We are happy when we rise in the morning, to behold all things look fresh and cheerful, and especially to see our children running to and fro, partly raised in our former old towns. Parts of our lands, have, from time to time, been sold from under our feet: our wives and our children have been ousted, and our property scattered, till, in many instances, it has been all lost, and families reduced to want.- Our old men say they are fully determined to have their bones laid in these mountains. One of the old men from Damatlee says he never will agree to let go one inch more of land, although one of his old neighbors has undertaken the disgraceful task of endeavoring to deprive his people of house and home. He thinks the gentleman would have been better employed and perhaps as much respected, if he had stayed at home and attended to his own business. We do not wish to have such a character ranging through our country. We are persuaded the object of these gentlemen is nothing that will, in any way, benefit us. Therefore we do not wish their advice, nor thank them for their visit. And we assure the Arkansas Chiefs that they need not expect to find, in this District, a single Arkansas emigrant.

We join in assuring you of our attachment to yourself and to our country (Cherokee Phoenix 1828).

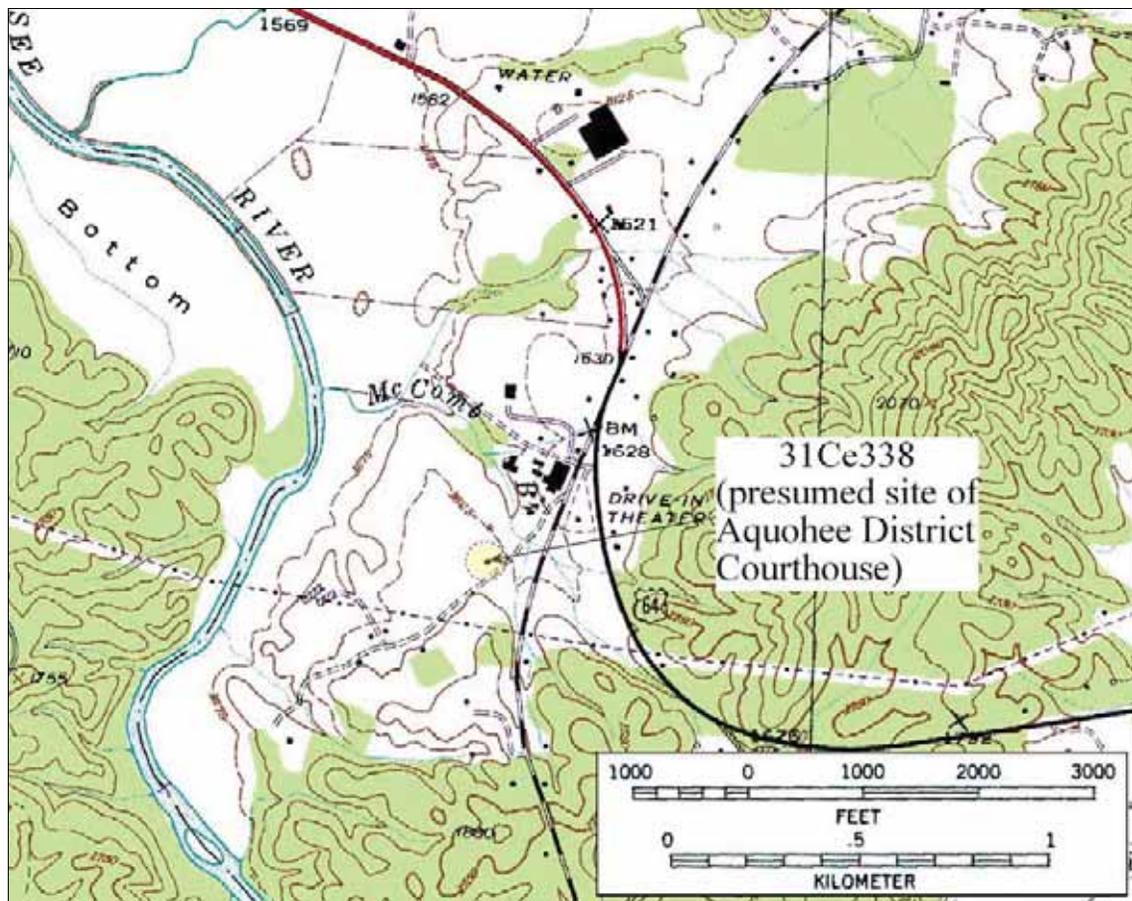


Figure 147. Detail of the Peachtree, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the presumed location of the Aquohee District Courthouse.

To Mr. Elias Boudinott.

Beloved Brother.- we (who are this day assembled at the *Town House Hiwassee, Aquohee District*, [emphasis added] being neither chiefs nor white men; but common citizens of the country,) wish to speak that our brethren may hear. We have listened, with attention to the proposals of our white brethren, on the subject of emigration, towards the setting sun, to a good land, free from the troubles which perplex us here. We have considered the plan; and we do not approve of it.

Our creator gave us the lands we possess, long before the memory of man. He kindled our fires and fixed our homes, and among these healthful mountains and clear waters, our minds are at peace. If we leave the inheritance, which we have received from our Creator, we shall never find a home again.

Some of our brethren have gone towards the setting sun. What is their situation? Their fires are put out; their homes are unsettled; they are not at peace.

Here, the land is good, the water is healthy, and the timber abundant. We can fence our fields, raise our own corn and meat; and support our wives and children; by the labour [sic] of our hands. We do not wish to become hunters; nor to have our children become such. We are attached to our country; our houses are become comfortable; our farms are flourishing; our young men are acquiring habits of industry; our women are becoming skilled at spinning, weaving and needlework; a great portion of our population can read; and the Phoenix furnishes them with some useful information every week. We have Hymns printed in our own language, in praise of our Redeemer; and the laws of our Creator are made known to us; and many are following them. Our old men, behold our growing prosperity with delight; and their minds are calmed with peace. In this, their own land, they wish to lay their bones; and desire, that their latest posterity, may venerate and guard their dust.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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It is said by those who wish to drive us away, and to possess our lands; that the country towards the setting sun is very good; and that it would be very advantageous to us to remove to it. There is something in this saying which we do not understand. Our white brethren have more knowledge than we have; and they are better skilled in travelling and commencing new settlements; why, then do they not go and possess that good land themselves?- We hope it is not the design of our elder brethren to destroy us; driving us further and further till they push us into the sea.

But Brethren, Cherokees, hear us. That land is not good. It has no wholesome springs, nor mill streams, nor has it sufficient timber for fencing much less for buildings and fire. We cannot entertain the most distant thought of parting with our homes, to go towards the setting sun; where our children would become involved in the darkness of ignorant and uncivilized neighbors; where we should have to drink out of muddy pools, and most of us perish for want. We are grieved to hear the false reports which have been circulated about us, charging us with the want of love to our country, and a desire to be gone towards the setting sun; asserting that we are restrained from removing only by our Chiefs. We hereby contradict all such unfounded accusations; and we unanimously declare that we possess as strong an attachment to our lands as the Chiefs do. It is said also, that we are overawed and oppressed by the Chiefs. It is not so. We are not afraid of our Chiefs. We meet them as fathers and brothers, and as long as they act well, we will give them due honor. We rejoice to find that our Chiefs are true men; firmly attached to their country and to the interest of their brethren; and we are determined to the utmost of our power to support them in their patriotic course. And for the information of those who are anxious to save us from the tyranny and oppression of the Chiefs we affirm that we are governed just as we wish to be; that we hold the power in our own hands, and whenever it becomes necessary we will use it to redress our own grievances.

We conclude by declaring unanimously that we the common people of Aquohee District are firmly and unalterably attached to our country; and that we never will consent to part with it. And we earnestly appeal to our benevolent friends all over the United States to support us in these our just determinations. (Cherokee Phoenix and Indians' Advocate 1829a).

*Highwassee Town House, Aquohee District* [emphasis added] August 28, 1829

To Our Beloved Brother Elias Boudinott- We understand that rumors are in circulation, which are calculated to induce our friends to believe, that we are willing to leave our country. In order to counteract the injurious tendency of such reports, we wish to communicate to the public our own testimony on the subject.

The emigrating scheme has been proposed to us and we have considered it deliberately, and the result is, that not a single citizen of this District has agreed to the plan. The bones of our fathers lie here in security, and we cannot consent to abandon them to be crushed beneath the feet of strangers.

Most of our old men have lived here from infancy to old age, and our young men inherit the same disposition. The lands we possess are the gift of our Creator. They are moreover recognized by the United States, and guaranteed to us forever. Our limits on all sides are permanently fixed and well known. Within these limits we consider ourselves at home, and have no doubt of the goodness of our title. And the pure air of our country, the wholesome springs and fertile soil are well suited to supply our wants and to promote our happiness. In the enjoyment of these blessings, our rising families are making rapid advances in knowledge and industry and good order.

Our Creator has not given us the land beyond the Mississippi, but has given it to other people; and why should we wish to enter upon their possessions?

We have not been in the habit of moving from place to place as the white people have, and we think those of our white brethren who are so anxious to take possession of our lands might with a little trouble, keep on to the west and settle the lands which they recommend to us. We feel injured and aggrieved in being continually harassed with solicitations to part with our last refuge on earth.- When a person owns certain property and a brother wishes to purchase it, if the owner refuses to sell we think the other ought to cease his importunity and should never think of having a recourse to unfair and forcible means to obtain it.

Our peaceful homes, our cultivated fields and our friendly neighbors are daily acquiring stronger hold on our affections. Our laws encourage virtue and industry, and punish vice. Our

chiefs use their influence to diffuse light among the people and their efforts are crowned with success.- Veneration for the laws is felt to the remotest corner of the land, and a peaceable and orderly disposition pervades the whole population. Being placed in these favorable circumstances by the goodness of our Creator, we have no inclination to relinquish our inheritance for uncultivated wilds in the vicinity of lawless and hostile savages. In fact it would be ruinous to us to do so. We entertain friendly dispositions towards the citizens of the U. States, and our enemies themselves cannot charge us with the violation of good order in our intercourse with them. Though we are sorry to say that some of our white brethren forgetting the superiority which they claim over us, frequently cross the line to steal horses & other property & strange as it may appear, are screened from punishment by the laws of a Christian people, who call us savages. We have borne these injuries in silence, relying on the justice of the United States Government to make good her solemn engagements for our protection.

We take this opportunity to express our confidence in our Chiefs and Legislators and very respectfully to urge them to continue their faithful exertions for the interests of their country, and we assure them of our hearty co-operation. Whatever measures they may adopt agreeably to our Constitution we are willing to abide by, and ready to support to the utmost of our power.

Before we conclude, we wish to recommend to the consideration of the ensuing Council, the propriety of adopting some measures more effectually to prevent the distillation of ardent spirits, and the introduction of that pernicious article into the Nation.

We wish also to express our affection to yourself and our unqualified approbation of the able and decided manner in which our cause has been advocated in the Phoenix, and our interest maintained against misrepresentation, craft and tyranny, which are combined against our rights and liberties.

Signed, on behalf and by order of a meeting of the citizens of Aquohee District, assembled at Hiwassee Town House August 28, 1829 (Cherokee Phoenix and Indians' Advocate 1829b).

After the abortive Ross treaty of 1834, the Jackson administration redoubled its efforts to remove the Cherokees. U.S. commissioners Benjamin Currey and John Schemerhorn traveled to the Aquohee District Courthouse in September 1835 in an attempt to convene a treaty conference beyond the watchful eyes of the Ross government. Lt. Charles F. M. Noland, who accompanied the commissioners noted passive, but effective resistance at Aquohee:

September 26 ...Cherokees wanted to meet the Commission at their Council House 2 miles below the Missionary House, but did not attend....

October 2 ...Visited the Town House on the 27<sup>th</sup>, few or no Indians attend. Next day attend at the Town House but five Indians, next day we met at the Mission School House....(Noland 1990:18-19).

Rebuffed in the Valley Towns, the corrupt Superintendent for Cherokee Emigration (Currey) and the inept Dutch Reformed minister (Schemerhorn) assembled a small contingent of willing Cherokees at New Echota in December 1835 and concluded the infamous treaty that led to the expulsion of the Cherokees from their homelands. Curry and Schemerhorn returned to Aquohee in March 1836 after the meeting at New Echota, and attempted to secure additional signatures to their agreement. Schemerhorn observed:

After the treaty at New Echota had been signed, I visited the North Carolina Indians in order to explain the treaty to them and obtain some of their signatures; but through the influence of the Baptist Missionary, who was under the influence of Ross, I did not succeed in getting any of them to sign (McLoughlin 1990:136)

Currey noted that he arrived as a council convened at the Hiwassee Townhouse in an anti-treaty rally, at which a letter from Principal Chief John Ross was read and a collection made for disseminating the message (McLoughlin 1990:137).

The Aquohee District repudiation of Jackson's removal initiative was especially problematic for the administration, which contended that the primary opposition to the government plans was a cabal of Cherokee half-bloods and whites (led by Principal Chief John Ross). Jackson asserted that the full blood majority favored emigration, but was cowed and deceived by Ross' government. At Aquohee, Currey and Schemerhorn found that the fullblood conservatives of the mountain districts were unanimously opposed to removal and dismayed at the New Echota

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“treaty.” Under the leadership of Situagi, John Wickliff, Peter Oganiah, John Wickliff and James Wofford, the Cherokee nationalists based at the Aquohee District Courthouse mounted a concerted political campaign to prevent ratification and secure annulment of the New Echota treaty.

No documentation of the Aquohee District Courthouse’s role in the June 1838 military arrests and deportation of Cherokee citizens has been identified. Nevertheless, the courthouse site is arguably important to understanding the Trail of Tears in the context of Cherokee political resistance against the United States’ Indian Removal policy. At Aquohee, native rhetoricians crafted some of the most cogent and compelling arguments against removal. Their affecting appeals to American morality exposed the gross hypocrisy of the removal policy and fueled domestic and foreign outcry against the injustices of the federal government’s treatment of Indian nations.

### Location and Survey of the Aquohee District Courthouse Site



Figure 148. McCombs houselot with large white oak trees.

The precise location of the Aquohee District Courthouse is not explicitly documented by contemporary cartographic sources; none of the Army Corps surveys tracked the north side of the Hiwassee River through this area. Noland [Sept. 26, 1835] notes the “Council House 2 miles below the Missionary House,” presumably meaning two miles downstream from the Valletowns Baptist Mission (Noland 1990). Featherstonhaugh [August 28, 1837] observed that “the Cherokee Council-house of the district” stood near Preston Starrett’s home Featherstonhaugh 1847:288), which the 1837 Deaver survey places in District 1, Lot 26, a 397 acre tract situated two miles downstream from the mission (Deaver 1837).

After removal, this property came into the possession of John Sudderth (see Shumate et. al, 2001), and by 1848 was part of the R.D. McCombs (Sudderth’s son-in-law) plantation. In an 1881 letter to Mann Valentine, McCombs indicated: “Tradition says the Indians held their courts in my house lot, in fifty yards of my house (McCombs 1881).” The McCombs house (Figure 149), built around 1850 and heavily remodeled in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, stood until 2002, when



Figure 149. McCombs house prior to 2002 razing. The original ca. 1850 core is aligned with the chimneys.

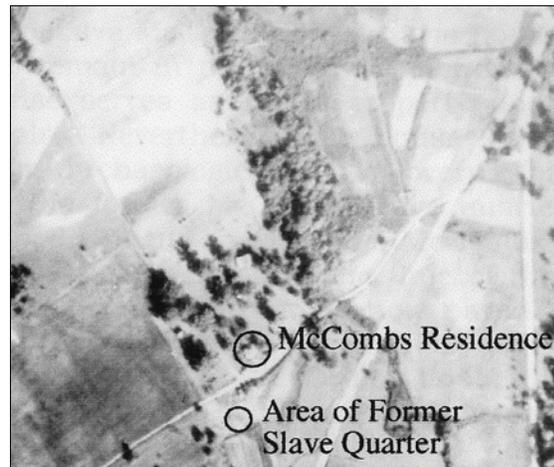


Figure 150. McCombs houselot evident in 1938 aerial view (from Shumate, et. al 2002).

the Peachtree Volunteer Fire Department burned the historic building as a practice exercise. The margins of the former houselot that McCombs mentioned are defined by remnant fence alignments and plow berms, and standing trees surrounded by cleared pastures (Figure 150). Three enormous white oak trees (Figure 148), 15'-18' in girth at breast height, survive within the houselot area. These trees, estimated at 250+ years in age, were fully grown witnesses to the events of 1835-1838.

The McCombs house and houselot area were subject to a 1993 archaeological survey by New South Associates (Abbott 1994) as part of the Section 106 compliance inventory for the planned rerouting of U.S. Highway 64. Abbott's survey of the McCombs houselot, which involved excavation of 30cm shovel tests at 30m intervals and excavation of a single one meter square unit near the house, recovered no materials indicative of 19<sup>th</sup> century Cherokee occupation. Because the 1881 McCombs letter was not identified until 2002, the 1993 survey did not specifically target identification of the Aquohee District Courthouse site, and the survey methods employed were not suited to detect an occupation of the scale and intensity of the former townhouse.

An August 2003 resurvey of the McCombs houselot focused on the areas northwest, west, and southwest of the former McCombs house, largely because the slope incline toward McCombs Branch leaves little room to accommodate a townhouse and adjacent (eastward facing) dance ground on the east side of the McCombs house (Figure 151). Close order inspection of extensive surface exposures around the large white oak trees revealed substantial quantities of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and later artifacts associated with the McCombs occupation, but identified no diagnostic materials indicative of 19<sup>th</sup> century Cherokee occupation. Likewise, a series of 24 shovel tests placed at 10m intervals spanning the area immediately northwest of the former house encountered abundant materials attributable to McCombs' tenure, but nothing clearly diagnostic of the preRemoval townhouse.

The failure of these surveys to locate definitive evidence of the Aquohee District Courthouse is likely attributable to the character of this occupation and the archaeological record that it generated. Archaeological contexts associated with the removal-era occupation are probably limited in extent. The townhouse, which was a cribbed log octagon approximately 30-40 ft (9-12m) in diameter, would likely be represented only by four to eight large postmolds (from interior roof supports) and some fired clay remnant of the central hearth itself. Outside the townhouse, the summer arbor is probably represented a rectangular pattern of less substantial postmolds; the swept dance ground would simply be an adjacent 30m<sup>2</sup> area devoid of artifacts. Because the townhouse/courthouse was a vacant (i.e. nonresidential) ritual and civic complex, it is unlikely that there are associated refuse dumps (other than ash dump piles from the townhouse hearth) and artifacts would derive almost exclusively from items lost or discarded during religious, civic, judicial, or political meetings. Such materials might include personal items such as traditional carved stone or commercial clay tobacco pipe fragments, glass beads, silver or brass jewelry components, buttons and other clothing fasteners, traditional earthenware ceramic sherds from medicine pots and perhaps pearlware or whiteware ceramic sherds from vessels broken during ritualized feasting. Despite the long use history of the townhouse/courthouse, it is likely that the periodic gatherings at Aquohee generated relatively little refuse, and such refuse is probably distributed as a diffuse scatter.

Excavations at the nearby McCombs' slave quarters (31Ce338) in 1999 recovered two carved chlorite schist tobacco pipes that are referable, on stylistic grounds, to 19<sup>th</sup> century Cherokee manufacture (Shumate, et. al 2001). These excavations also recovered six Qualla series (Cherokee) ceramic sherds, a pre-1833 Omega-eye U.S. Army button and a number of other Omega-eye brass buttons, as well as a number of pearlware plate sherds. While it is unlikely that the townhouse was located to the south of McCombs house (outside the presumed houselot area), these materials may ultimately derive from the townhouse occupation closer to the McCombs house.

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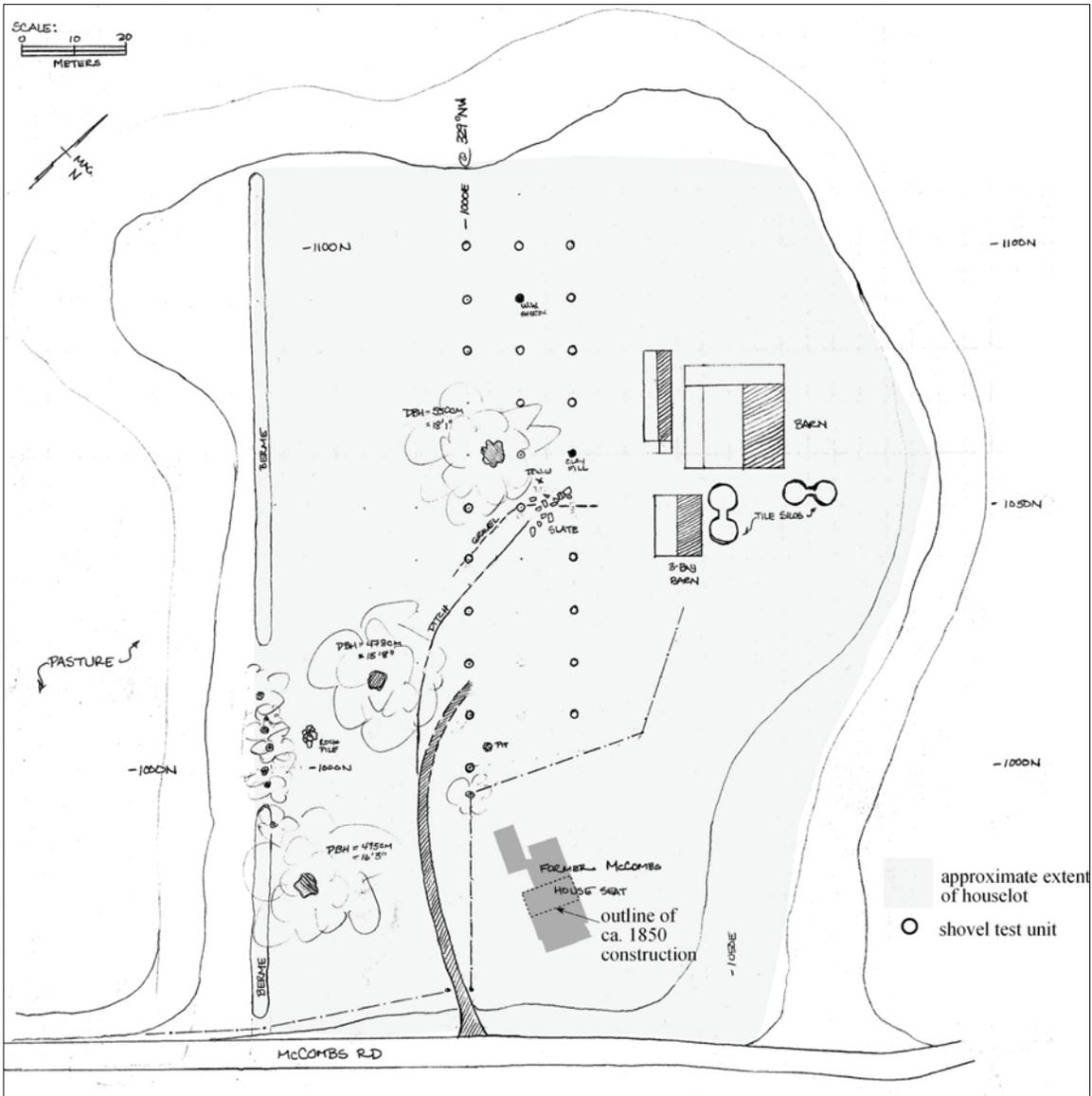


Figure 151. Sketchmap of the McCombs house lot indicating locations of 2003 shovel tests (adapted from field drawing by Scott Shumate, 2003).

It appears likely that positive identification of the Aquohee District Courthouse site will require excavation of large scale exposures to reveal diagnostic posthole patterns associated with the structural roof supports and summer arbor. Because the McCombs house lot area is immediately threatened by planned U.S. 64 bypass construction (see Shumate, et. al 2001), additional archaeological survey and testing at the courthouse site should be conducted in the near future to definitively locate this important resource and to ensure its future protection and enable its public interpretation.

## Townhouses

In addition to the Aquohee District Courthouse/Hiwassee Townhouse, Army survey records document a number of other active townhouses in the region in 1837-1838. While the specific roles of these community centers with respect to the 1838 removal are not explicitly documented, they undoubtedly functioned as venues for general councils in which Cherokee communities received information about the looming crisis, debated the best courses of action, and decided about community level responses to the plans of the United States government and the Cherokee National government.

Although southwestern North Carolina was filled with dozens of hamlets and small villages, only those communities that were formally constituted as town organizations maintained townhouses (*gatiyi*) where the sacred fire of the town resided. These town organizations were traditional social, economic and political structures with headmen, often priest-chiefs, and councils of elders or beloved men who represented the clans of the town. In addition to the townhouses, town organizations, or *gadugi*, maintained dance grounds, ballfields, and cornfields and corncribs for the support of the poor or disabled.

Unlike the more nucleated towns of the pre-Revolutionary War era, Cherokee towns in the Removal era were diffuse communities of farmsteads that looked to townhouses as their central places. Iverson Brooks, writing from southwestern North Carolina in 1827, noted:

An Indian town thus consists of a settlement of people whose nearest houses may not be less than the fourth of a mile apart and whose extreme habitations are separated by various distances of ten to fifteen miles, and most of the houses in such settlements are several miles apart (Brooks 1827).

J.P. Evans, a missionary who visited southwestern North Carolina around 1835, observed:

In the chartered limits of North Carolina ... the Cherokees are divided into towns and clans. By towns is not to be understood a cluster of dwellings contained within a small space, as amongst the whites, ... but a small colony, generally embracing some miles in extent. In the same sense, Cherokee village is to be understood. (Evans 1979:12).

Like their 18<sup>th</sup> century predecessors, 19<sup>th</sup> century Cherokee townhouses were built on a traditional octagonal plan, with the easternmost side as a doorway and the remaining seven sides designated to accommodate members of the seven clans. Earlier townhouses were vertical post, wattle and daub constructions, while the 19<sup>th</sup> century versions were cribbed log buildings with arcades of vertical central roof support posts. Evans describes these *gatiyi*:

Every town has a house, or particular spot of ground, appropriated to dancing, holding councils and (of late) courts. This public house, (generally called Town House), is built in a circular form, with perpendicular walls six or eight feet high; from thence it ends at a point, giving the roof a conical form, which is supported in the interior by posts. From the floor to the highest point of the roof is from fifteen to twenty feet. Puncheons are laid around the inside to serve as seats. The house is covered with the bark of forest trees, confined on with the bark of hickory shrubs, the hicores themselves, or white oak shreds. A doorway is left in building the house; – on the inside.- opposite this doorway,– an angular wall is constructed for the purpose of preventing the wind from sweeping through the centre of the house; and on the outside a small shed or portico is made; and in front of this is a level yard laid off in a square, and made smooth for dancing, on particular occasions (Evans 1979:12-13).

The townhouses stood as powerful symbols of the strength and depth of Cherokee tradition and conservatism. For many Cherokees, the national government based at New Echota was a provisional authority established to deal with the United States; real authority was vested in the traditional town organizations and their councils, seated in the townhouses.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

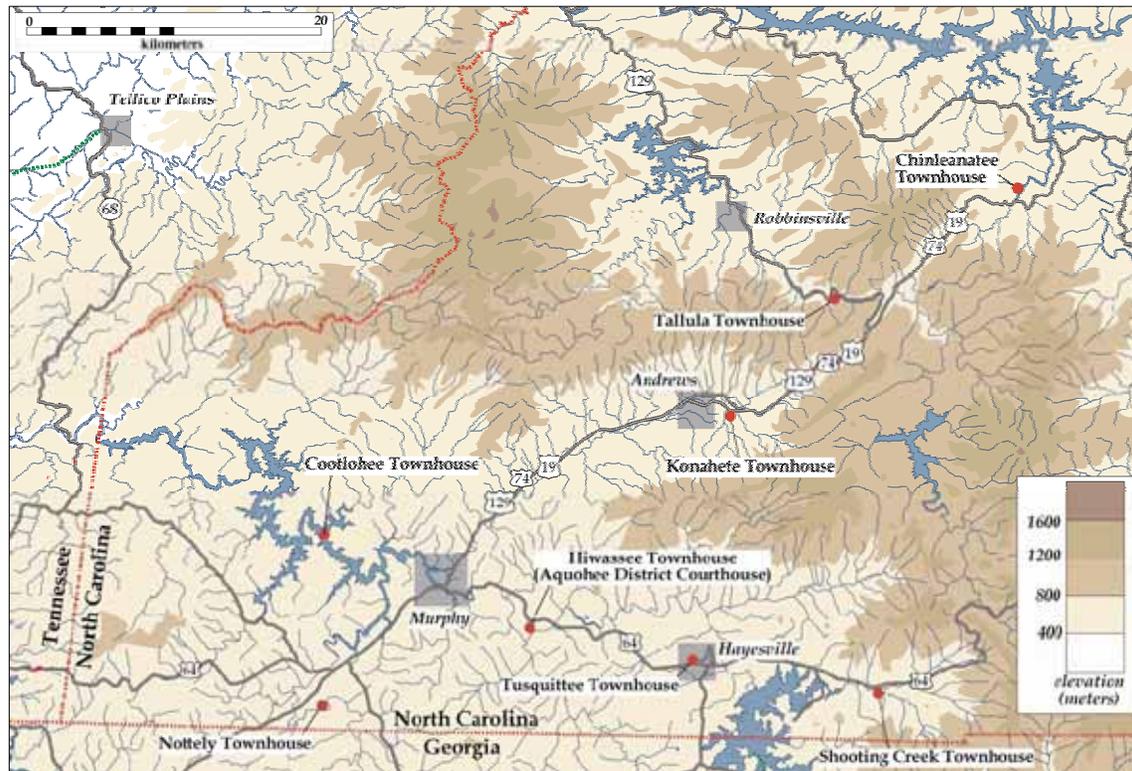


Figure 152. Removal era townhouses located in southwestern North Carolina.

In the Army surveys of 1837-1838, field surveyors documented active townhouses at Chinleanatee, Tallula, Konahete, Cootlohee, Tusquittee, Shooting Creek, and Nottely (Figure 152). Other records (e.g., Welch and Jarrett 1836 valuations) indicate another townhouse at Hiwassee (see ensuing discussion of the Aquohee District Courthouse) and an old townhouse immediately northwest of Fort Delaney. The 1838 surveyors' depictions of these townhouses are schematic, with no narrative elaboration. The most literal depiction is that of the Chinleanatee Townhouse, which the survey sketchmap indicates in plan view as a hexagonal building with rays emanating from a central point to the buildings corners. The Tallula "dance house" is depicted in profile perspective as essentially similar to residential dwellings, but on a larger scale.

The northernmost of these townhouses was situated at Chinleanatee in the lower Nantahala River Valley (Figure 153). As indicated by a December 1837 survey of the lower Nantahala, the townhouse was located on the northwest side of the river on a narrow riverbottom or upland flank, approximately 425m south-southeast of the mouth of Townhouse Branch near UTM[17] 265,000e; 3,913,578n. This area of the Nantahala River Gorge has been subject to heavy and disruptive land use during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it appears unlikely that archaeological evidence of the townhouse either survives or remains accessible. The riverbed and much of the riverbottom at this location are inundated by the headwaters of TVA's Fontana Lake. The base of the uplands is deeply incised by the Southern Railroad rail bed, and a thick (3m-5m), extensive deposit of spoil from rail construction is dumped over the probable townhouse site.

The Tallula Townhouse (Figure 154) was situated in the upper Tulula Creek Valley on the southeast side of Tulula Creek between the mouths of Jack's Creek and Juts Creek near UTM[17] 251,510e; 3,906,340n. This immediate area has been substantially disturbed by construction of U.S. Highway 129, an abandoned rail line, and a large excavated pond, and archaeological evidence of the former townhouse has probably been obliterated.

The townhouse at Konahete (Figure 155) was located at present-day Valleytown in a bend of Tatham Creek at the foot of Leatherwood Mountain, approximately at UTM[17] 244,008e; 3,898,315n. This restricted terrace formation has been heavily affected by the Tatham Gristmill (standing) and millrace (now filled) and Aquone Road.

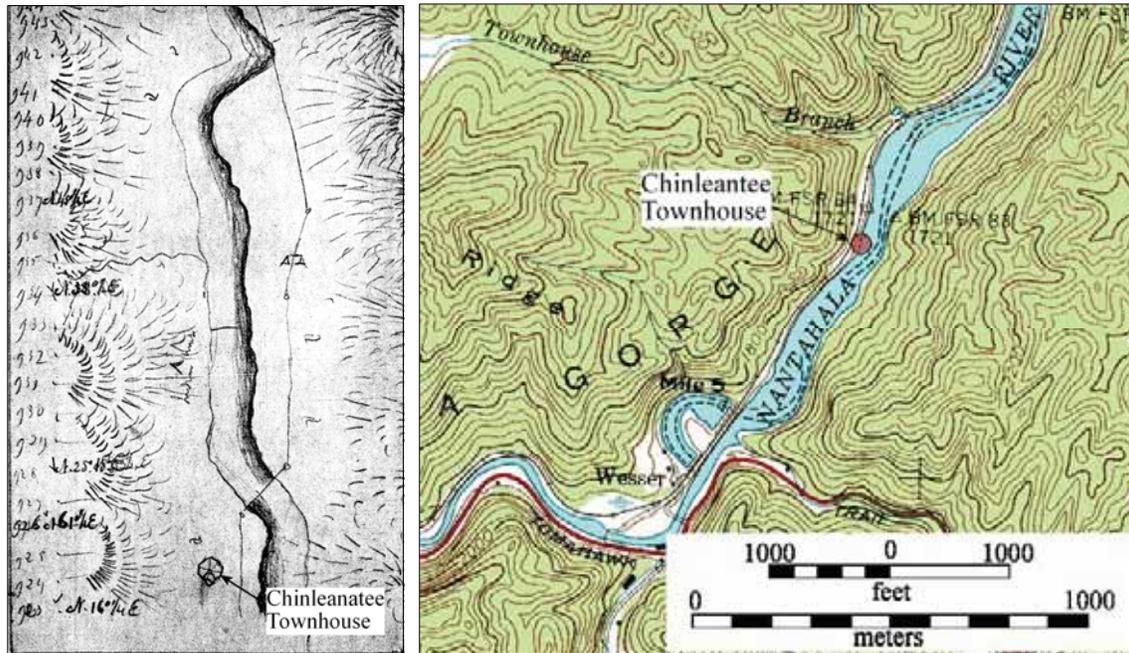


Figure 153. The Chinleantee Townhouse. left: 1837 Army sketchmap with plan view of the townhouse; right: detail of the Wesser, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the approximate townhouse location .

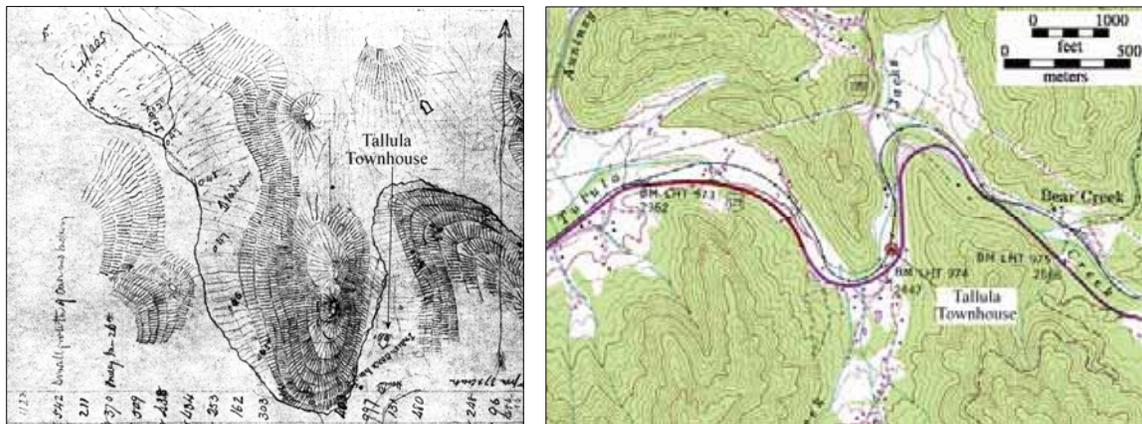


Figure 154. The Tallula Townhouse. left: 1838 Army survey sketchmap indicating “Indian dance house”; right: detail of Hewitt, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the approximate location of the townhouse.

The Cootlohee Townhouse (Figure 156) stood approximately 250m upstream (southeast) from the mouth of Grape Creek on an elevated terrace on the northeast side of the Hiwassee River bottoms (approximate UTM[17] 762,216e, 3,889,156n). The site, which is below 1470 ft AMSL elevation, is inundated by the Tennessee Valley Authority’s Hiwassee Lake, and is well below normal winter pool levels. As a consequence, the Cootlohee Townhouse site is inaccessible to archaeological survey. Because this location has not been subject to continuing land use and modification since the inundation of the reservoir in 1938, the Cootlohee Townhouse site is likely the best preserved of such Removal era townhouse sites in southwestern North Carolina.

Army surveys indicate the Nottely Townhouse (Figure 157) on a colluvial bench on the north side of Nottely River at River Mile 14.6 (UTM {17} 762,803e; 3,876,916n). This location is currently occupied by a residence, yard, and outbuildings, and is inaccessible to archaeological survey.

Two army surveys place the Tusquittee Townhouse (Figure 158) west of Fort Hembree, near UTM[17] 241,588e, 3,880,501n. This site is either superimposed by the intersection of Town

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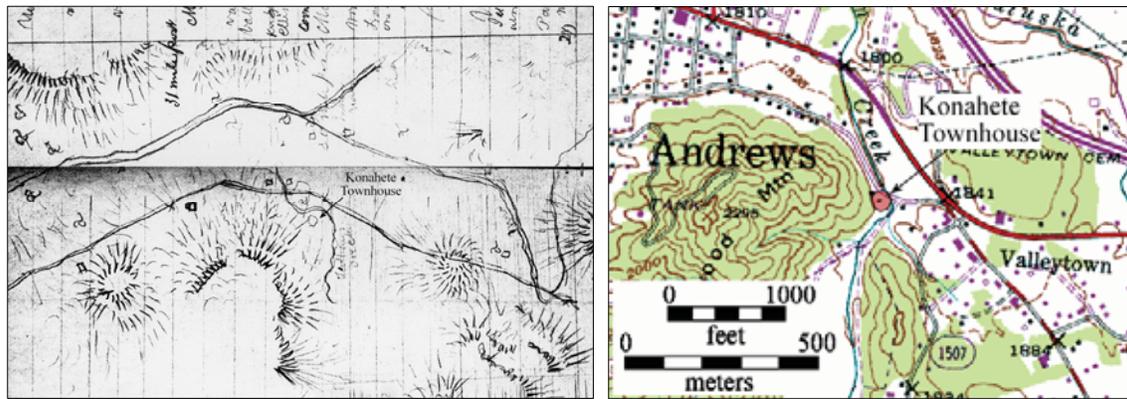


Figure 155. The Konahete Townhouse. left: 1838 Army survey sketchmap indicating townhouse location; right: detail of Hewitt, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the approximate location of the townhouse.

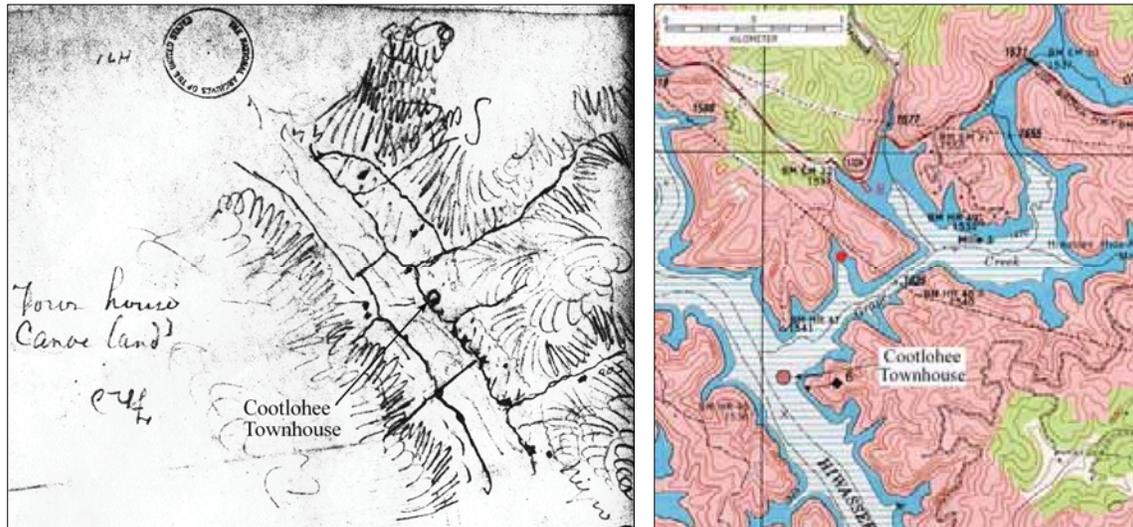


Figure 156. The Cootlohee Townhouse. left: 1838 Army survey sketchmap indicating townhouse location; right: detail of Murphy, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the approximate location of the townhouse.

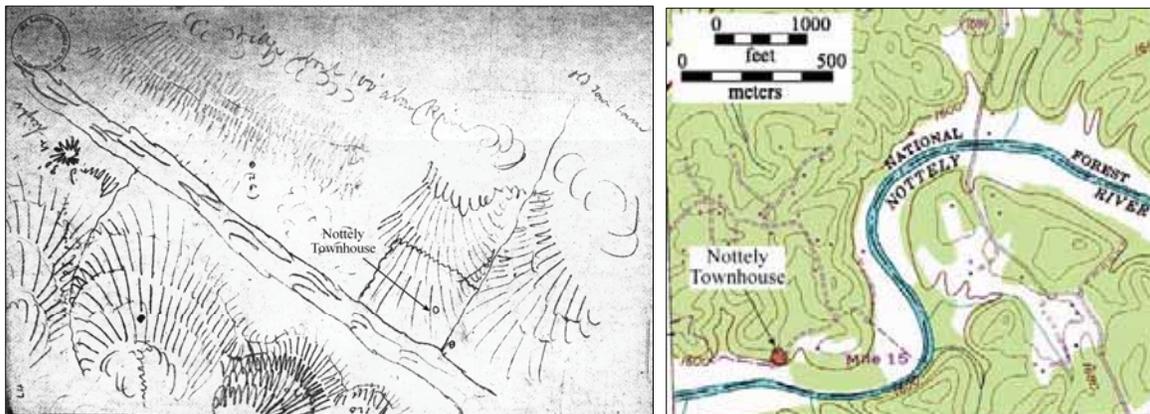


Figure 157. The Nottely Townhouse. left: 1838 Army survey sketchmap indicating townhouse location; right: detail of Murphy, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the approximate location of the townhouse.

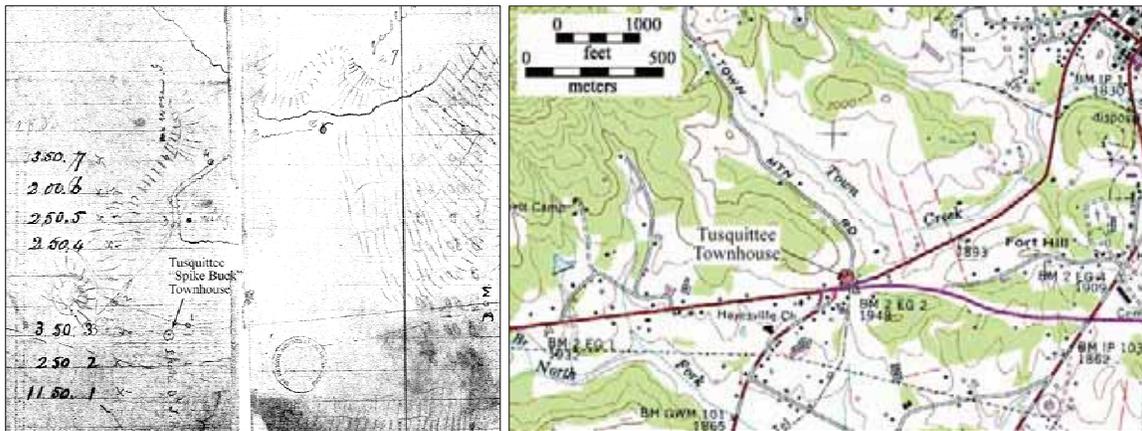


Figure 158. The Tusquittee Townhouse. left: 1837 Army sketchmap with plan view of the townhouse; right: detail of the Hayesville, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the approximate townhouse location .

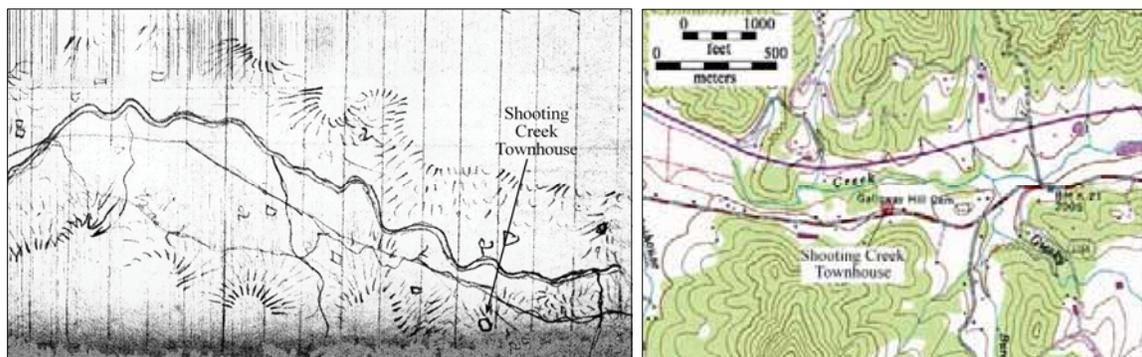


Figure 159. The Shooting Creek Townhouse. left: 1837 Army sketchmap with plan view of the townhouse; right: detail of the Shooting Creek, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the approximate townhouse location .

Mountain Road and U.S. Highway 64, or is located immediately northwest of the intersection in a small cluster of residences, an area inaccessible to more intensive archaeological survey. J.C. Fremont labeled the building “Spike B<sup>k</sup> T.H.” [Spike Buck Townhouse] because Old Spike Buck and Tom Spike Buck lived in the immediate vicinity. This has given rise to subsequent misunderstanding on the part of historians and archaeologists who assumed that this area was “Spike Buck Town.”

Army survey notes for the Shooting Creek Valley (Figure 159) indicate a townhouse situated on a colluvial bench on the south side of Shooting Creek, approximately 550m west-southwest of the mouth of Geisky Branch at approximately UTM[17] 254,516e; 7,878,446n. This may be the same townhouse burned by whites later that year, as detailed in a spoliation claim for damages filed by the men of Shooting Creek Town. The claimants estimated the value of the building at \$600.00, considerably more than any of the private residences in the region appraised by Welch and Jarrett in 1836–1837. The survey notes also indicate that Shooting Creek was termed Nacoochee from the mouth of Geisky Branch to the headwaters.

To date, archaeological surveys have located no definitive evidence of any of the Removal-era townhouses in southwestern North Carolina. This may be due, in part, to the probable character of these archaeological components. Townhouses were “vacant ceremonial precincts” without permanent residents, and the periodic group activities probably generated low densities of a select suite of artifacts, such as tobacco pipe fragments, clothing fasteners, and glass beads. Because the townhouses were cribbed log buildings constructed at the ground level without foundations, the only archaeologically visible elements of such buildings would be large postmolds (in either square, four-post patterns or octagonal, eight-post patterns) from the interior roof support posts and central prepared clay hearth.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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Summer arbors, typically located outside the more substantial winter townhouses, are probably represented rectangular patterns of less substantial postmolds; the swept dance grounds would simply be adjacent 30m<sup>2</sup> areas devoid of artifacts. Because the townhouses were vacant (i.e. nonresidential) ritual and civic complexes, it is unlikely that there would be associated refuse dumps (other than ash dump piles from the townhouse hearths) and artifacts would derive almost exclusively from items lost or discarded during religious, civic, judicial, or political meetings. Such materials might include personal items such as traditional carved stone or commercial clay tobacco pipe fragments, glass beads, silver or brass jewelry components, buttons and other clothing fasteners, traditional earthenware ceramic sherds from medicine pots and perhaps pearlware or whiteware ceramic sherds from vessels broken during ritualized feasting. Despite the long use histories of most townhouses, it is likely that the periodic gatherings at these centers generated relatively little refuse, and such refuse is probably distributed as diffuse scatters near or below the threshold of archaeological visibility.

## Valleytowns Baptist Mission

### Valleytowns Baptist Mission (31CE661)

Under the leadership of Rev. Evan Jones, the Valleytowns Baptist Mission (ca. 1820-1836) at Aquohee became a strategic center for the Ross party's political efforts against federal removal policy. Jones, ardent supporter of Cherokee nationalism and vocal opponent of federal removal policies, trained many of the future leaders of the anti-removal movement, including John Timson, James Wafford, Peter Oganiah and John Wickliff. As a result of Jones' assiduous support for the anti-removal Cherokee majority, the U.S. Army expelled the missionary from the Cherokee Nation in August 1836. Jones continued both evangelism and political activity from the border of the Cherokee Nation, and made frequent trips back to Valleytowns. The mission itself fell into the hands of Anglo-American squatters before the military removal operations of June 1838. When the actual western emigration of the mountain Cherokees commenced in the fall of 1838, Jones assisted *Situagi* (a close neighbor of the mission) in conducting one of the overland detachments. Jones' protégés, Peter Oganiah and John Wickliff, were manager and assistant manager for the Situagi detachment. Another former student of the Valleytowns mission, James Wafford, was assistant conductor of *Chuwaluka's* detachment.

The Valleytowns mission was the brainchild of Humphrey Posey, a Baptist preacher from Asheville, North Carolina who itinerated among the Middle Towns Cherokees in 1816-1818 (Gardner 1989; McLoughlin 1990). With the Calhoun Treaty cession of 1819, Posey proposed to the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society to establish a permanent mission and boarding school among the mountain Cherokees in the Valley towns region. After gaining approval for the venture from the Cherokee National Council in October 1819, Posey selected a tract at Aquohee, and purchased the rights to the property from William Henson, a Cherokee countryman (intermarried white) and reservee who sold (or leased) the property in order to:

...encourage education among the Indians and to have an opportunity of education his own children, the eldest of whom were then large enough to assure going to school (Henson 1844).

Posey began construction of the mission in June 1820 (Figure 161), and the Valleytowns Baptist Mission commenced operation by March 1821 (Gardner 1989). Thomas Dawson served as the first school teacher at Valleytowns; in late fall 1821, the Thomas Roberts, Evan Jones and Isaac Cleaver families joined the Poseys and Dawsons as mission staff. Once the staff was established, Posey left the mission in Roberts' care; by 1825, Evan Jones was the lead missionary at Valleytowns (McLoughlin 1990).

The mission school boarded as many as 50 Cherokee students, who worked at lessons in English and Cherokee, mathematics, and religion. Male students also received practical training on the mission farm or with the mission's blacksmith or miller. Female students learned "domestic arts" of spinning,



Figure 160 Detail of the 1838 Army Corps map indicating the Valleytowns Baptist Mission.



Figure 161. Humphrey Posey's proposed floor plan for the Valleytowns mission

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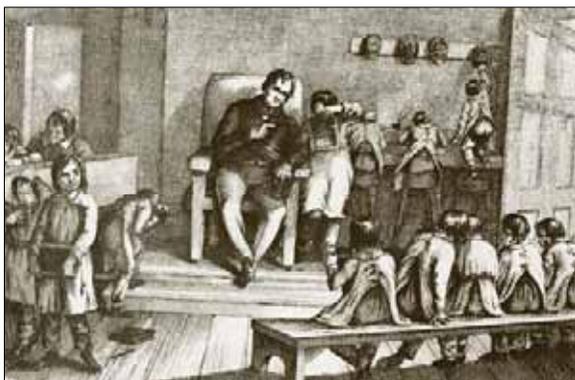


Figure 162. Protestant mission school scene, ca. 1835.

vegetables if possible. Supper – cornbread or mush and milk, thin hominy, called by the Indians ‘conohany,’ or soup, according to season (Jones 1826b).

The hardships and constraints of life at the mission, coupled with the difficulties of learning English, drove many students to abandon the school. Evan Jones observed: “Some of the boys who have been here for a long time trying to learn English without understanding what they read, became discouraged and went away and we see them no more. Others seem to hang on between hope and despair (Jones in BMM 3:413).” He further noted that

...as respects the full Indians, the time and expense required to teach them the English Language, and through that medium, to instruct them in useful knowledge, is out of all proportion to the good produced. Five years is as short a period as a full Indian ten years old, would take to acquire an English education that would of any benefit... But the misfortune is, not one in fifty of those who commence, have resolution to go through...many who come to school stay but a short time and go away before they can receive any considerable advantage (Jones 1827).

To counter this problem, the Valleytowns mission shifted to Cherokee as the primary language for school instruction, and hundreds of Cherokee students passed through the Baptist mission to become fully literate in Sequoyan. Despite the inherent logic of Cherokee schools for Cherokee speakers, other Protestant missions focused on English-only education, with the result that Valleytowns became the most popular and successful mission school in the Cherokee Nation.

Roberts’ 1821 report on Valleytowns indicated that the mission consisted of “1 Log school-house, 40 feet by 22,” a frame school house, a double cabin, nine single cabins, a smokehouse, a stable, two corn cribs, a blacksmith’s shop, a springhouse, a sawmill and a gristmill. Other mission property included “School and kitchen furniture, medicines, books, beds, papers” “Carpenter’s tools and bench,” two wagons, a “French wagon,” seven plows and other farming utensils, blacksmith’s tools, four horses, “17 Cows, 12 two years old, 3 yoke of oxen, 12 yearlings, and 3 large steers,” 100 hogs, six beehives, and 11,000 pounds of pork (Roberts 1823). More buildings were added in 1826, and the mission underwent a major reconstruction in 1830. An 1836 Federal appraisal of the mission property includes the earlier mission constructions as well as buildings added in an 1830 rebuilding episode:

The Mission Establishment of the Baptist board in the occupancy of Jones on the N.E. side of the Highwassee River...

one large hew’d log House part framed 18-60 ft. 2 stories the floors all of plank  
one Room [illegible] 2 shelves for library all the doors and shutters hung with  
hinges & butts & screws & several windows in the same 2 large stone  
chimneys with 2 fireplaces in each part. the Roof of shingles the ballance  
boards nailed on

\$750.00

## Valleytowns Baptist Mission

one hew'd log kitchen 17-17 plank floor stone chimney plank shutters board Roof nailed on	\$100.00
one hew'd log smoak house board roof nailed on	\$25.00
one small cabbin 12-12 plank floor stick and clay chimney stone back & jams	\$15.00
one hew'd log crib 8-16 floor and roof and sheded	\$20.00
one small springhouse	\$6.00
2 stables well covered	\$25.00
82 acres bottomland with improvements	\$820.00
for garden and all lots the lower or new establishment	\$55.00
50 apple trees at lower place a \$2	\$100.00
one shop house board roof	\$9.00
15 rails in the woods a 50	\$7.50
the timber and boards of a large barn or shutter and lumber for other houses	\$50.00
The old or first buildings made at the mission	
one hew'd log house 22-40 ft. 2 stories high all the rooms of plank two brick chimneys much decayed shingled roof all in same condition	\$350.00
one double house 16-40 ft. one & 1/2 stories stick and clay chimneys stone back and jams one apartment plank floor [illegible] and sleepers old board roof	\$150.00

(Welch and Jarrett 1836:47)

At its founding, the Valleytowns Baptist Mission became the first permanent church and school in far southwestern North Carolina. The mission grew as one of the primary vectors for Western education and Sequoyan literacy in the Cherokee Nation, and formed the foundation of the Baptist Church among the Cherokee people. In these respects, Valleytowns is highly significant to the histories of Cherokee education and religion, and assumes local, regional and national levels of historical significance as well. The importance of the Valleytowns Baptist Mission to understanding the Removal era and the Trail of Tears is more specifically linked to the political activities of Rev. Evan Jones (Figure 163), the superintendent of the Valleytowns mission.

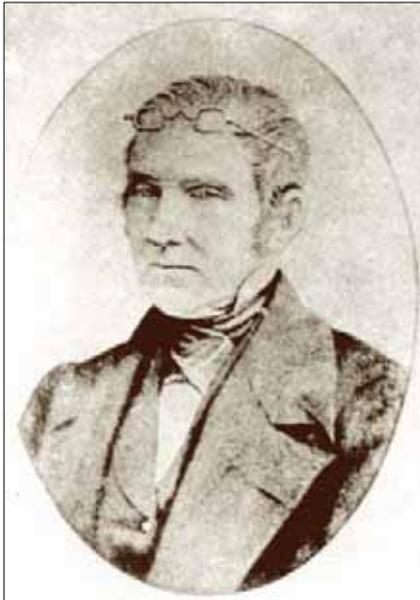


Figure 163. Evan B. Jones (1788–1873), Baptist missionary at Valleytowns, 1821-1836.

Although Jones professed in 1827 “to avoid all interference with politics and Government except where morality and religion were concerned”(Jones 1826–1842 [February 16, 1827]), he gradually became involved in the Aquohee council and, eventually the national council, as a de facto interpreter, clerk, and advisor. It appears likely that Jones either penned or translated the notable anti-removal memorials from the Aquohee District that appeared in the *Cherokee Phoenix*. He alluded to his advisory role in mission journal entries (Jones 1826–1842):

Several Indians here tonight on their way to Hiwassee Town House to attend a meeting of the District for the purpose of expressing their disapprobation of the Emigrating Scheme [March 31, 1829].

...a committee appointed by the citizens of the District came to request my assistance to arrange their papers and affix them to the Memorial to be forwarded to Congress [January 14, 1830].

Jones’ politics were galvanized by congressional passage of Jackson’s Indian Removal Act, the extension of Georgia laws over Cherokee territory (with attendant abuses) and the Baptist Triennial Convention’s embrace of the

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

removal policy (McLoughlin 1990: 125-127). For Jones and like-minded missionaries, the removal issue concerned “morality and religion” that warranted “interference with politics and Government.” He regularly communicated significant developments in the Valley Towns region to Principal Chief John Ross, and kept the National Party officials informed about various state and federal encroachments on Cherokee sovereignty.

Although Jones worked largely behind the scenes for the National Party, his activities drew the attentions of Jackson administration operatives and the pro-removal partisans. The notorious federal Superintendent of Emigration, B.F. Currey, asserted that Jones was an antiremoval ringleader and accused him of inciting violence against proponents of the removal scheme:

Your prospect for obtaining the consent of a very large portion of those residing within the limits of this state was flattering until the unwarrantable interference of a man by the name of Jones (by profession a Baptist missionary of infamous character) who has I am credibly informed excited the Indians to commit acts of violence upon the persons of ourselves as well as those who have dared to enroll their names for Arkansas (Currey 1834).

Noland intimated that Jones stymied Schemerhorn and Currey’s attempt to convene a treaty conference at Aquohee. Noland observed:

...we met at the Mission School House.... Visited the Mission under the direction of Mr. Jones. Many reports have gone aboard prejudiced to this gentleman but I do not believe over half of them... The Indians in this region very wild and much opposed to emigration. The Missionaries exercise much influence over them... (Noland 1990:19).

Currey claimed to have discovered proof of Jones’ “interference” during a trip to Aquohee after the New Echota Treaty:

I attended a Council of Cherokees on Hiwassee River in North Carolina....They endeavored to keep everything communicated to them from me. My interpreter, however, got to hear a part of what had been translated into the Cherokee language... by the Rev. Evan Jones which was full of abuse against the treaty.... On entering his room, found him engaged in writing a communication on Cherokee characters with a host of Indian men about him whom he immediately dispersed and ceased at the same time to write anymore (Currey 1836).

Currey’s associate, John Schemerhorn, conveniently ignored the unanimous anti-removal sentiment in the Valley Towns region, and attributed his failures to obtain treaty signatures to Jones:

After the treaty at New Echota had been signed, I visited the North Carolina Indians in order to explain the treaty to them and obtain some of their signatures; but through the influence of the Baptist Missionary, who was under the influence of Ross, I did not succeed in getting any of them to sign (Schermerhorn 1836 in McLoughlin 1990:136).

Currey, ever vengeful and paranoid, likely influenced General Ellis Wool to arrest Jones and eventually to expel him from the Cherokee Nation. Wool attempted to co-opt Jones in securing the North Carolina Cherokees’ enrollment for emigration. Jones’ refused to participate in the military effort, and Wool ordered him out of the Cherokee Nation, effectively closing the Valleytowns Baptist Mission. Jones wrote John Howard Payne:

...no individual, however obscure, can escape suspicion if he manifest the least degree of friendship for the poor Indians. And although the station I occupy is so humble and retired in the mountains, the eye of despotic jealousy has descryed our retreat, and our labors have been interrupted by the interference of Military power which has come to enforce the stipulations of the late fraudulent Treaty (Jones 1836).

Jones relocated his school and mission station to Columbus, Tennessee at the Cherokee boundary; from there he could enter and exit the Cherokee Nation at will. He stepped up his advocacy of the National Party cause, participating in national councils and secret meetings.

George Featherstonaugh, a British geologist, encountered Evan Jones at the Red Clay council in 1837:

After breakfast I made myself acquainted with Mr. Jones, the Missionary, whom I found to be a man of sense and experience, and who must have received a tolerable education, for he was not even ignorant of Hebrew. He was exceedingly devoted to this nation, having resided a long time amongst them in the mountainous region of North Carolina. The Georgians, and I found most of the other white settlers had a decided antipathy to him on account of the advice he gave to the Cherokees, which had frequently enabled them to baffle the machinations of the persons who were plotting to get their lands. Conscious that he was watched by his enemies, he had become so suspicious of all white men, that from habit he had got a peculiar sinister look. We had a great deal of conversation together, and when he found I was an Englishman, and deeply interested for the welfare of the Indians, and extremely anxious to acquire the Cherokee language, he became less reserved, and I obtained a great deal of information from him (Featherstonhaugh 1847:234-235).

Featherstonaugh's published description of Jones may have cleared a guilty conscience; the geologist was actually gathering secret intelligence for the U.S. War Department, and wrote a damning report on the missionary. Jones' indefatigable efforts for the Cherokees drew the overt ire of other Jackson administration appointees, such as treaty commissioner John Kennedy:

Preacher Jones is a violent and notorious enemy of the treaty and has gone to all lengths to defeat it. He uses the sacred desk to denounce the treaty and the government, and being proficient in the Cherokee language, he has... exerted an immense and dangerous influence. General Wool ... with a laudable zeal, hurried the mock-pious pest out of the nation (Kennedy 1838).

Despite official scrutiny and sanction, Jones cast his lot with the Cherokee Nation. He ministered to the Cherokee internees at Fort Cass, and traveled back and forth to the North Carolina mountains to encourage fugitives from the military roundup to join the main body of the Cherokee Nation in the forced emigration. Jones assisted the arduous passage of the Situagi detachment from Tennessee to Oklahoma, then re-established the Baptist mission at Breadtown. Jones continued his long ministry of service to the Cherokee Nation and Cherokee people until retirement in 1870 at age 82.

Despite the fact that the Baptist missionaries were forced to abandon Valleytowns in 1836, (two years before the forced military removal) Jones' prior activities at the mission on behalf of the Cherokee nationalists' struggle confers a particular importance to the site for understanding the historical context of the 1838-1839 Trail of Tears episode. At the Valleytowns Baptist Mission, Cherokee leaders (e.g. Situagi, John Wickliff, Peter Oganiah, James Wafford) developed strategies of political resistance and cemented bonds of personal and national allegiance that enabled the Cherokee National Party to make an orderly (albeit troubled) transition to the West

#### **Site Location and Archaeological Investigations**

Archaeological attempts to locate and identify the Valleytowns Baptist Mission site were guided by the 1838 Army Corps map (Figure 160), which depicts the "Mission<sup>y</sup> Est." as two buildings situated on the north side of the Hiwassee River in the Mission Bottoms near the crossroads of Mission, NC. Unfortunately, the 1838 map depiction is generalized, and no supporting plats from the 1837-1838 Army surveys have been located. A plat that accompanies William Henson's 1839 reservation claim (First Board of Commissioners for Cherokee Claims) depicts the "Mission House" between Sudderth Branch and Mission Branch, approximately 1750 ft (532m) north of the Hiwassee River, and presumably on a high terrace or an upland flank. Entries from Jones' mission journal indicate, however, that some of the mission buildings were subject to flooding, and that the mission cemetery was situated near the bank of the Hiwassee River. The Welch and Jarrett appraisal of the mission property specifies "the lower or new establishment" as one portion of the mission improvement, implying that the "old or first buildings made at the mission" were situated at a higher elevation.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

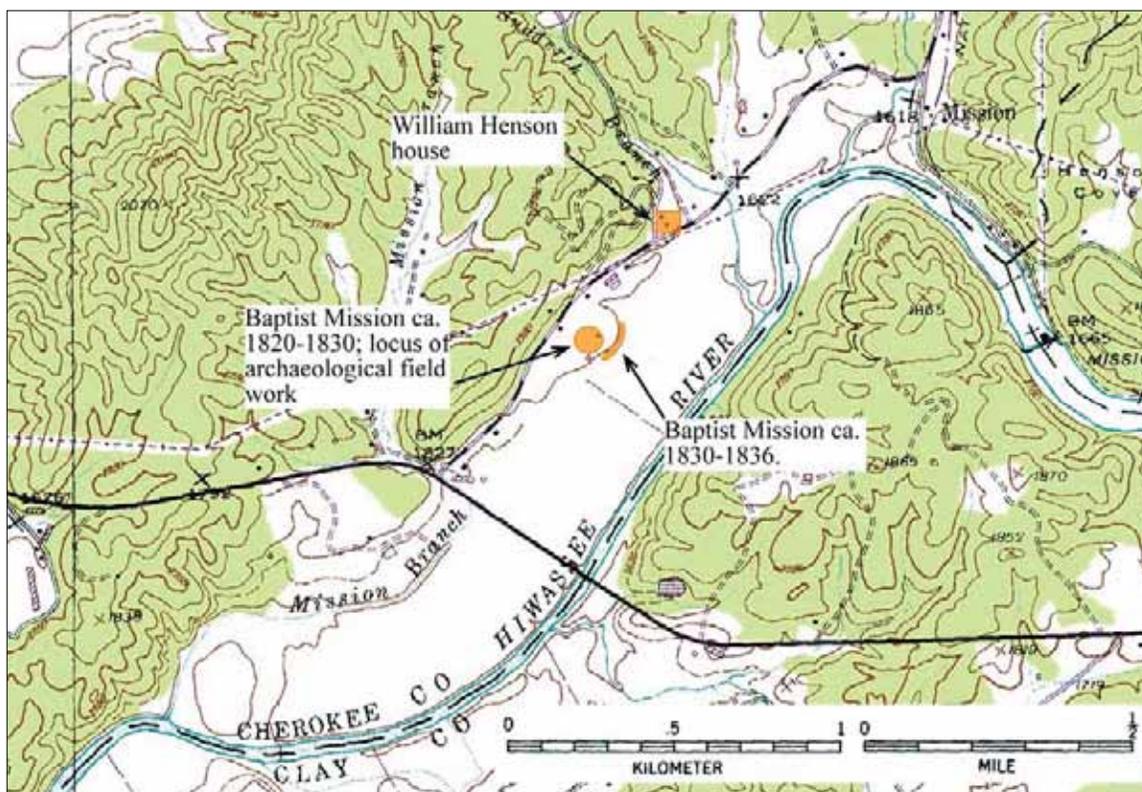


Figure 164. Detail of the Peachtree, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the locations of the Baptist Mission and the William Henson residence.

In early 2000, investigators began incremental reconnaissance of the elevated third terrace formation on the north side of the Hiwassee River between Mission Branch and Sudderth Branch, under the assumption that the 16-year long mission occupation would be manifest by relatively large and dense concentrations of kitchen and architectural debris from the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Intensive reconnaissance of the third terrace on the modern Mission Farm to the south of U.S. Highway 64 identified no evidence of the mission occupation, and investigators shifted focus to another extensive third terrace north of U.S. 64 along Mission Road. A local landowner then informed Trail of Tears Association members that he had observed “old blue china” in a garden plot on this high (1650 ft AMSL) terrace. Reconnaissance of the garden plot (UTM[17] 231,785e, 3,883,992n) identified a relatively dense, concentrated cluster ( $\approx 600\text{m}^2$ ) of pearlware and early whiteware sherds, handmade brick fragments, slate pencil fragments and fragments of lined writing slates — all materials consistent with a boarding school operative in the 1820s–1830s (Figures 164, 165, 166). Incidental occurrences of pearlware sherds and brick fragments extend another 60m to the eastern and northeastern brow edges of the terrace. Another discrete cluster of whiteware sherds and fragments of writing slates occurs at the base of the third terrace, approximately 85m southeast of the first cluster; this is interpreted as evidence of “the lower or new establishment,” while materials atop the third terrace are construed to represent the “old or first buildings made at the mission.”

The recently plowed garden plot also exhibited a four-square meter patch of particularly dark, distinctly organic soil that contained numerous handmade bricks and brick fragments, along with pearlware sherds, writing slate fragments and a brass thimble. Sampling of this anomaly with a split spoon auger revealed a 15–20 cm plowzone underlain by a 10–12 cm ash-laden deposit



Figure 165. View of the Valleytowns Baptist Mission site (31Ce661), upper establishment locus.

overlaying a continuous layer of bricks. Because this shallow deposit appeared imminently threatened by continued plowing, investigators determined to excavate this context as a demonstration of site content. Investigators mapped the site in March 2000, then excavated plowzone from an 11m<sup>2</sup> unit to expose deposits contained within the base of a square, brick-lined cellar (Figure 167). All of these plowzone soils were dry-screen processed through ¼" hardware cloth for recovery of artifacts. Excavators then removed the ashy cellar deposits, subdividing the interior of the cellar into quadrants. Excavation of the northwestern quadrant revealed that the deposit was homogeneous, with no internal stratigraphic divisions; the remaining quadrants were each removed as discrete proveniences. All of the cellar deposit soils were packaged and removed from the site for later processing; these sediments were either washed through window mesh or flotation processed for recovery of botanical materials.

The exposed cellar (designated Feature 1) measures roughly 1.9 m (nw-se) x 1.85 (ne-sw), with a 1.7m x 1.65m compartment inside the brick liner (Figure 168). Approximately two-thirds of the cellar floor pavement is intact, with flat-laid brick in a staggered pattern of two parallel bricks capped by a perpendicular header. Brick wall remnants of one or two courses cap the edge of the surviving pavement. The southern third of the brick liner was apparently robbed upon abandonment of the facility, and refuse-filled deposits directly contacted the subsoil wall and floor of the cellar pit in this area. The base of this pit was no more than 32 cm below current ground surface, rather shallow for a cellar facility intended for food storage. It appears likely that the brick-lined pit was situated beneath a structure with an elevated floor, and probably had a stacked brick or wooden skirt or sleeve that connected the cellar to the base of the structure floor.

The cellar deposits consisted largely of hearth cleanings and associated refuse, with a very ashy matrix filled with charcoal flecks, brick crumbs, calcined bone fragments, melted glass fragments and a variety of artifacts. This deposit clearly postdates the removal of a portion of the

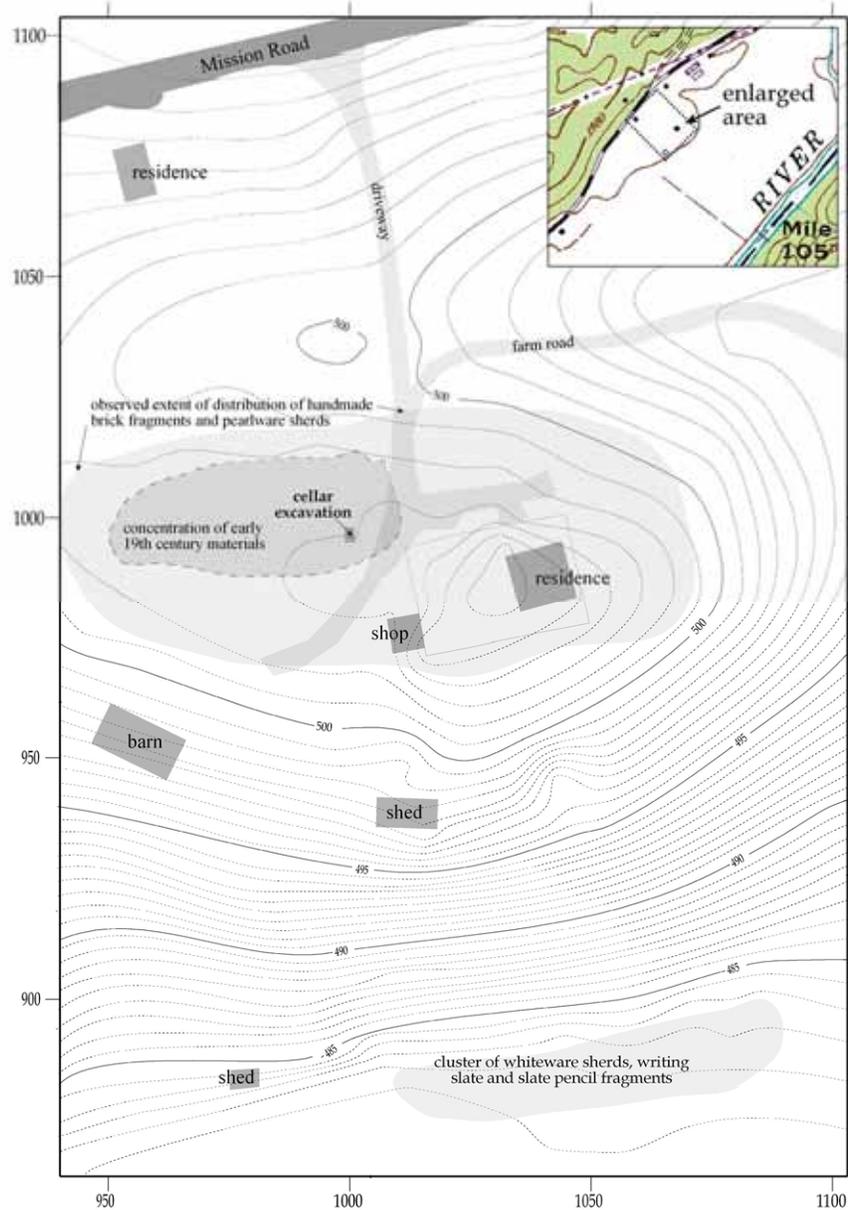


Figure 166. Contour map of the Valleytowns Baptist Mission site.

cellar lining, but may have accumulated while the superstructure building remained standing. Because the associated artifact assemblage indicates a wide array of personal and group domestic functions as well as educational functions it appears likely that the cellar deposit (and presumably the cellar itself) is associated with the first main mission hall, the “hew'd log house 22-40 ft. 2 stories high all the rooms of plank two brick chimneys” that served as schoolroom, dining hall, dormitories, assembly hall and general workspace. Materials recovered from the cellar (Table 2) include food service and food preparation wares, food remains clothing hardware and sewing equipment, personal ornmamentation items, educational equipment, and architectural hardware. Table service is represented by fragments of pearlware (n=3) and whiteware (n=15) plates, bowls, saucers, and teacups, including blue handpainted, blue transfer printed, and polychrome



Figure 167. Exposed mission cellar prior to excavation.

fragments (n=2) that clearly bespeak the educational functions of the mission (Figure 170). Also noteworthy is the conspicuous absence of a number of artifact classes common in regional domestic contexts. Cellar deposits yielded no tobacco pipes or smoking paraphernalia, no alcohol containers, and no ammunition or gun components; smoking, spirituous liquors, and guns were banned from the Baptist establishment, as were horses, dogs, blowguns and dirk knives for students. Students were forbidden to hunt to supplement the mission rations; the absence of wild fauna in the cellar assemblage suggests adherence to the rule. The dominance of pig bones in the cellar and overlying deposits is consistent with the large herds of hogs (100 head) and stores of pork (11,000 lbs) at the mission as reported by Roberts (1823).

Plowzone deposits overlying the cellar yielded an extensive collection that probably represents plow-disturbed cellar deposits mixed with later materials (Table 2). Period materials include 52 handmade bricks and brick fragments from the cellar wall, 14 pieces of window pane, 152 cut nails and a single wrought nail, three slate pencil fragments and 11 slate tablet fragments, a silvered mirror fragment, 21 glass vial fragments, a glass tumbler fragment, 51 other glass container fragments, 6 sherds of Catawba pottery, one Cherokee sherd, 28 pieces pearlware, 99 pieces of whiteware, two lead glazed redware sherds, two glass beads, one brass button, and 100 bones and bone fragments. The plowzone also yielded 368 lithic artifacts that represent Late Archaic period and Middle Woodland period site occupations, as well as 83 pieces of coal and a glass marble that reflect 20<sup>th</sup> century use of the site.

Of particular interest are the native ceramic sherds. Six plain, burnished sherds are identified

handpainted types (Figure 169). A single lead glazed earthenware vessel fragment probably represents a jar or crock for food storage or preparation. Thirty-one glass vial fragments probably represent commercial medicine containers. Food remains include pig bones and chicken eggshell. Clothing is reflected by a single brass eyelet; sewing functions are represented by seven brass straight pins with solder wrapped heads. Eleven glass beads, including tube drawn “seed” beads and faceted necklace beads, are attributable to personal ornamentation functions. A single bass tack may derive from a piece of furniture. Architectural functions are indicated by 46 cut nails and 20 fragments of glass window panes. All of these material classes are typical for a southern domestic context of the 1820s-1830s; the cellar deposits area particularly distinguished by the incidence of writing slate (n=3) and slate pencil



Figure 168. Fully excavated mission cellar.

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Table 2. Artifacts recovered from Valleytowns Baptist Mission site (31Ce661).

Artifact Group/Class	Feature 1	plowzone over Feature 1	surface collection	totals
<b>Kitchen</b>				
blue handpainted whiteware ceramic sherd	7	29	12	48
green handpainted whiteware ceramic sherd		2	2	4
polychrome handpainted whiteware ceramic sherd	2	2		4
transfer printed whiteware ceramic sherd	3	3	2	8
blue shell-edge decorated whiteware ceramic sherd		6	8	14
green shell-edge decorated whiteware ceramic sherd		1		1
mocha decorated whiteware ceramic sherd		2	1	3
blue sponge decorated whiteware sherd			1	1
polychrome sponge decorated whiteware sherd			1	1
blue feather-edge decorated whiteware ceramic sherd		1	1	2
undecorated whiteware ceramic sherd	3	50	25	78
blue handpainted pearlware ceramic sherd	1	10	2	13
polychrome handpainted pearlware ceramic sherd			1	1
blue shell-edge decorated pearlware ceramic sherd			2	2
blue transfer-printed pearlware ceramic sherd	1	3	2	6
undecorated pearlware ceramic sherd	1	16	3	20
undecorated yellowware ceramic sherd			1	1
lead glazed earthenware ceramic sherd	1	2		3
alkaline-glazed stoneware ceramic sherd		1	3	4
Catawba plain/burnished ceramic sherd		6	1	7
Qualla stamped (indeterminate) ceramic sherd		1		1
container glass fragment (aqua)		36	1	37
container glass fragment (olive green)		4		4
container glass fragment (light green)		3	1	4
container glass fragment (colorless)	3	8	1	12
container glass fragment (blue)			2	2
container glass fragment (amethyst)			1	1
tumbler fragment (colorless)		1	2	3
vial fragment (aqua)	5	6		11
vial fragment (colorless)	23	15		38
<b>Architectural</b>				
handmade brick fragments	1	52		53
cut nail/nail fragments	46	152	2	200
rose head nails		2		2
window pane fragments (aqua)	13	11	11	35
window pane fragments (colorless)	7	3		10

Table 2.(continued) Artifacts recovered from Valleytowns Baptist Mission site.

Artifact Group/Class	Feature 1	plowzone over Feature 1	surface collection	totals
<b>Clothing/Sewing</b>				
brass clothing hook	1			1
brass pin/fragments	7			7
brass button	1	1		2
brass thimble			1	1
<b>Personal</b>				
glass bead (green faceted)	2			2
glass bead (blue faceted)		1		1
glass bead (colorless faceted)		1		1
glass bead (black tube drawn)	1			1
glass bead (blue tube drawn)	1			1
glass bead (melted)	7			7
<b>Furniture</b>				
brass tack	1			1
mirror glass fragment		1		1
<b>Educational</b>				
slate writing tablet fragment	3	11	8	22
slate pencil fragment	2	3	2	7
<b>Recreational</b>				
marble (glass)		1		1
<b>Group indeterminate</b>				
unidentified iron fragments		9		9
unidentified brass fragment		2		2
lead sprue	2	1		3
lead sheet		1		1
colorless glass fragment	8	3		11
aqua glass fragment	2	3		5
<b>Faunal remains</b>				
bone fragments	48	86		134
pig tooth/tusk fragments		15		15
<b>Coal fragments</b>				
	3	93		96
<b>Prehistoric lithic artifacts</b>				
projectile point fragment		2		2
biface		5		5
core		1		1
scraper	1			1
flake	1	227		228
shatter fragment		16		16

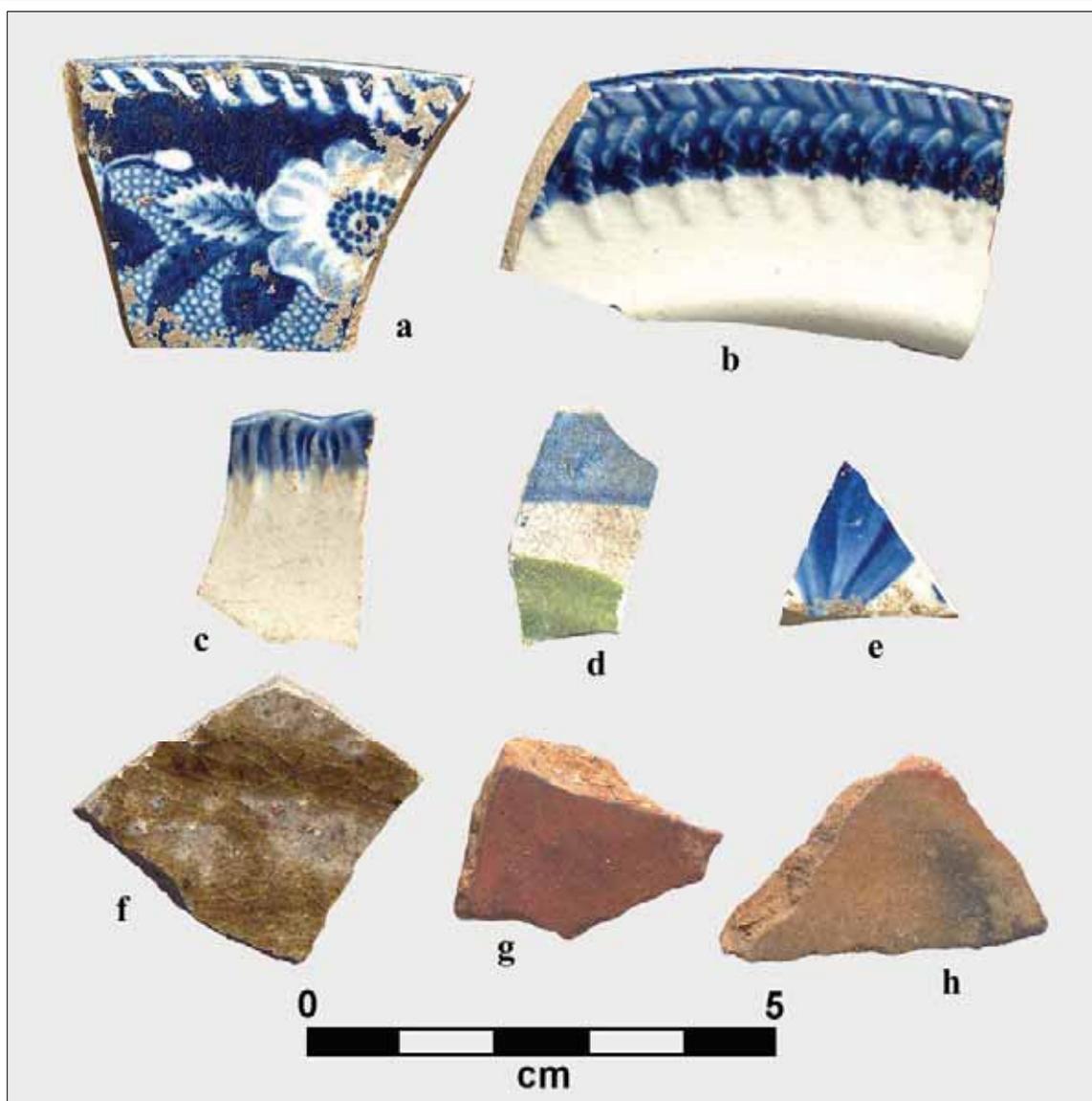


Figure 169. Ceramic artifacts from the Valleytowns Baptist Mission site. a: transfer printed whiteware; b.-c. edge decorated whiteware; d.: polychrome handpainted whiteware; f.: alkaline glazed stoneware; g.-h. Catawba coarse earthenware.

as Catawba ware (ref. River Burnished [Ferguson 1990]) on the basis of extremely hard and compact paste coupled with burnishing of interior and exterior surfaces. The incidence of Catawba ware (typically found in the Piedmont region of South Carolina) at the Baptist mission is surprising, but not completely incongruous. Evan Jones indicates that a number of Catawba families resided near the mission and some Catawba children were among the mission's first converts. A single grit tempered stamped sherd is attributable to the Qualla ceramic series, a widespread Cherokee ware that was locally produced during the mission occupation (see Riggs and Rodning 2002). These vessels may represent cookwares or food processing wares preferred by native cooks who worked at the mission. Jones (1826b) noted that *conohany*, a traditional staple,



Figure 170. Artifacts from the Valleytowns Baptist Mission site. a: fragment of lined writing slate; b. slate pencil fragment; c. brass thimble; d. cut nail

was regular fare at the mission. This dish of thin hominy soup was typically prepared in locally made earthenwares.

### Discussion and Recommendations

The Valleytowns Baptist Mission derives particular historical significance as the first permanent church and school in among the Cherokee people of far southwestern North Carolina. The mission became an especially important and influential venue for Western education and the spread of Sequoyan literacy, and the church at Valleytowns grew as the nucleus of the Baptist denomination among the Cherokees. The mission is also important as an early focus of anti-removal organization, and is

particularly significant through long association with Rev. Evan Jones, the Baptist minister who actively supported and promoted Cherokee political resistance against the federal removal policy.

The 2000 archaeological investigations at the Valleytowns Baptist Mission positively identified evidence of the early (upper) and late (lower) stages of the mission, estimated the site extent, and approximated the site boundaries. Limited testing at the mission identified intact, subsurface architectural remains and deposits that yielded appreciable material content. Even cursory tabulation of material assemblages recovered from Valleytowns reveals substantial potential for reconstructing patterns of daily life at the boarding school and investigating the material contexts of Protestant missions among the Cherokees. Comparison of Baptist mission assemblages with those of Cherokee households from the region will illuminate the material forms and effects of directed acculturation efforts by the missionaries. Comparison of material assemblages and contexts at Valleytowns with those of other Protestant missions, such as the Moravian mission at Springplace, Georgia should reveal the divergent approaches of different sects to the “civilization” program.

The Valleytowns Baptist Mission site clearly meets three of the evaluation criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, inasmuch as the mission was “associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history” and was “associated with the lives of persons significant in our past” and “has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.” The authors recommend that the mission site (31Ce661) should be considered eligible for listing in the National Register and should be considered for certification as a contributing element of the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail in North Carolina.

## A.R.S. Hunter's Store

Colonel Archibald R. S. Hunter's store, stock stand, and inn at the mouth of Valley River was the commercial and service hub of the Valley Towns region during the 1830s. Hunter's complex at Huntington, which included a post office, blacksmith's shop, gristmill, ferry and toll bridge, was the prime destination for travelers in the region. Hunter's guests included the treaty delegation of Benjamin Currey, Rev. John Schermerhorn and Lt. Charles F.M. Noland (Noland 1990), the British geologist and spy George Featherstonhaugh (Featherstonhaugh 1847), Brevet General John Wool, and Major General Winfield Scott. Noland, like other travelers, was impressed by Hunter's accommodations:

...Cross the river at the... junction of Valley River reach Col. Hunters (6 miles) where we halt for the day... Col. Hunters a pleasant home...

...We have now been at Col. Hunters several days. I have found this an exceedingly pleasant family. Col. Hunter is a gentleman of the old Virginia School (Noland 1990: 17-18).

Featherstonehaugh, who visited Hunter's in 1837, provides a lengthier description of the "house of entertainment":

About 2 P.M., we ascended a hill to Fort Butler, a temporary camp with a block-house built for the State troops upon this occasion: from hence we rode a mile to Hunter's, a tavern kept by a person of that name who had been long in the Cherokee country; it was most beautifully situated upon an eminence commanding a view of the Hiwassee, gracefully winding through the hills, and of the lovely country around. There was a clever little hut in a retired part of the garden belonging to this house, and beds being placed in it, it was assigned to us exclusively, so that we had some prospect of comfort. Perceiving some ladies in the house, one of whom was the wife of an officer of the United States army, we made our toilette rather more carefully. The dinner was excellent, good soup, and a fine large trout from the river. We seemed restored to civilization, an idea that lost nothing by the introduction of a capital bottle of champagne, of which Hunter had brought a basket from Augusta, thinking the officers of the State troops would not sneeze at it; but either the price or something about it did not please them, and there Monsieur Moet was likely to have remained for some time "unknowing and unknown" but for our appearance. As it is not every day that Moet's champagne, and in the finest order, can be drank on the banks of the Hiwassee, in the Cherokee country, we formed the virtuous resolution of appropriating the whole basket to ourselves, and lost no time in putting a taboo upon it.

Here I learnt that Colonel Lindsay and his staff had been here since I was at the Council at Red Clay, and that he had mentioned my intention of visiting this part of the country. Perhaps it is to this circumstance I owed the great civility I received from Mr. Hunter. In the evening I walked

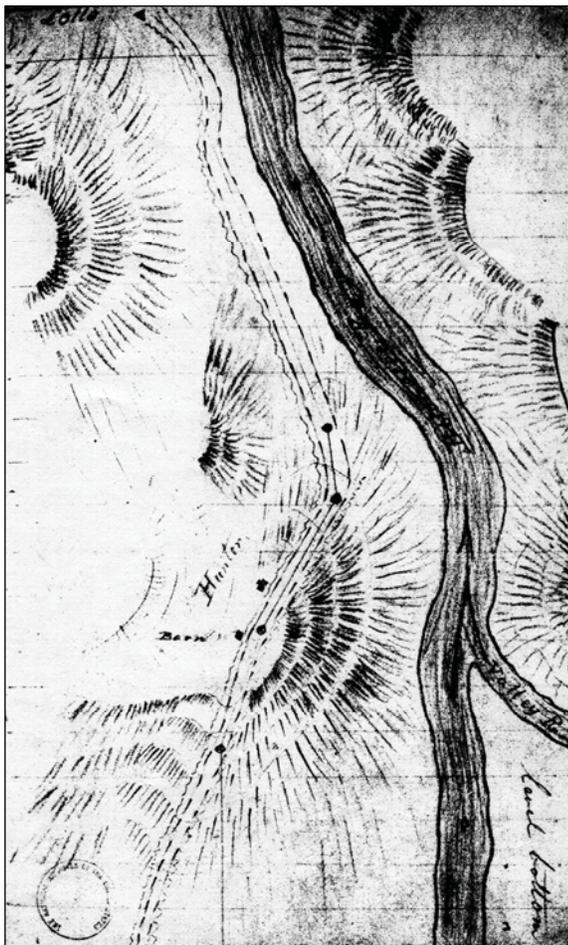


Figure 171. Hunter's home and stand complex depicted on an 1838 Army survey sketchmap.

out, and found the hill upon which this house was built consisted of mica slate, studded with transparent garnets. At the foot of the hill, the Hiwassee, about one hundred and fifty yards wide, glided between lofty escarpments about four hundred feet high (.Featherstonhaugh 1847:286-287).

In a secret memorandum to Gen. Winfield Scott, Featherstonhaugh noted:

Col. Hunter of Fort Butler, at the junction of Valley River with the Hiwassee ... He keeps a comfortable tavern, has been many years in the Cherokee Country, and is a good deal connected with the Indians, He is a great talker and I think not much to be relied on. The man is entirely devoted to the interests of John Ross and his friends, and has always been very intimate with Evan Jones the Missionary (Featherstonhaugh 1838).

Hunter's commercial complex was a center of activity during the preparation for and execution of the forced Cherokee removal. Officers and enlisted men stationed at Fort Butler regularly patronized Hunter's store (Hunter 1836–1838), and the quartermaster at Fort Butler occasionally procured materials and services at Hunters'. The medical staff at Fort Butler roomed and boarded at Hunter's, and visiting military dignitaries, such as Major General Winfield Scott, lodged at the "comfortable tavern." Contingents of Cherokee prisoners and their military escorts may have crossed Hunter's toll bridge or ferry over the Hiwassee River when they departed Fort Butler en route to Fort Cass via the Unicoi Turnpike.

As Featherstonehaugh alluded, A.R.S. Hunter maintained close connections with his Cherokee neighbors. A store ledger that spans the period from October 1836 through May 1838 indicates that Hunter extended generous lines of credit to Cherokee customers, and regularly provided small gifts to close acquaintances. Hunter transported store inventory to the Cherokee Agency in the summer of 1838 to continue his business with his old customers during their internment at the emigration depot. While at the agency, Hunter became involved with his old friend Lawlo (headman of Nottely Town) in an (abortive) alternative emigration scheme (Moulton 1985).

Michael Gormly founded the stand and ferry at the mouth of Valley River in the early 1820's; Hunter acquired the commercial complex in 1828, and expanded the establishment that became the village of Huntington. By 1836, Hunter controlled expansive holdings, as revealed by federal property appraisals credited to Johnson Rogers, a Cherokee métis who purchased Hunter's claim in a bid to circumvent property loss due to the New Echota treat cession. The 1836 property valuation by Shaw and McMillan indicates:

1 hew'd log double house piazza 20 by 40	350.00
1 D° [ditto] D° [ditto] in part 15 by 18	100.00
1 D° [ditto] cabin 12 by 16	25.00
1 store house shed 25 by 36 shelves and counter	300.00
1 stable 2 stories 14 by 20 sheds stalls	50.00
4 D° [ditto] 12 by 60	40.00
1 cabin 12 by 14	20.00
1 [black] smiths shop and lumber house 18 by 40	75.00
1 smoke house 10 by 10	25.00
1 hew'd log ferry house	40.00
75 acres upland a 8.00	600.00
4 lots 1/4 acre each a 5.00	20.00
1 yard paled and shrubbery	25.00
1 garden lot 2 1/2 acres	25.00
1 spring house 10 by 10	15.00
48 cherry trees a 50	24.00
150 peach trees a 25	37.50
2 small apple trees a 50	1.00
1 lot of 4 acres a 8.00	32.00
2 hew'd log cabin very good a 40	80.00

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1 double hew'd log house 2 stories well finished	400.00	
30 acres upland a 8.00	240.00	
20 D° [ditto] half cleared a 4.00		80.00
1 cabin 16 by 18 and shed	35.00	
3 acres upland No side river a 8.00	24.00	
1 cabin 14 by 14	20.00	
1 tub grist mill	<u>250.00</u>	
	2933.50	
The ferry across the Hiwassee at the mouth of Valley River nett income estimated at \$300~ann	<u>\$3000.00</u>	
	5933	

Hunter was able to purchase the Huntington properties at the state sales of the Cherokee cession in Franklin, North Carolina in October 1838, and continued to operate his businesses until his death in 1844.

### Documentary Evidence and Archaeological Reconnaissance of the Hunter's Store Locality

Notebooks of the 1838 Army survey of the Unaka Road (Unicoi Turnpike) indicate that Hunter's store was located on a hilltop on the west side of the Hiwassee River, directly across from the mouth of the Valley River (Figures 171, 172). The survey sketchmap depicts Hunter's house and barn adjacent to the Unicoi Turnpike, with the house near the northern edge of the level landform (approximately at UTM [16] 769,771e; 3,887,145n) and the barn near the center. Other buildings and improvements were probably arrayed around these structures.

TVA property acquisition maps for Hiwassee Reservoir (1936) illustrate the Hunter store site as a residential/farm complex owned by Hayes Dockery (Figure 173). The early 20<sup>th</sup> century property improvements probably involved little modification of the original landform, and the Hunter store site likely survived in good condition after construction of Hiwassee Reservoir. The portion of the property that remained above the reservoir level was used as an informal town park and picnic area until the 1970s, when the property was developed for industrial use. Grading and groundwork for the building now occupied by the MGM brake plant significantly modified the hilltop, with heavily cutting along the western edge and filling of the slope along the eastern and northern edges (Figure 174).

Field reconnaissance of the Hunter store location consisted of pedestrian inspection of the surfaces and slopes surrounding the MGM brake plant and its paved parking area. This inspection confirmed that the hilltop has been cut 15–20 ft. below original ground surface at the northern edge of the industrial site (Figure 175), but that the southern and eastern edges of the site have received fill overburden atop the original surface. Immediately east of the parking lot, a remnant of the



Figure 172. Detail of the Murphy, NC 7.5' USGS quadrangle indicating the location of Hunter's stand and bridge and ferry operations.

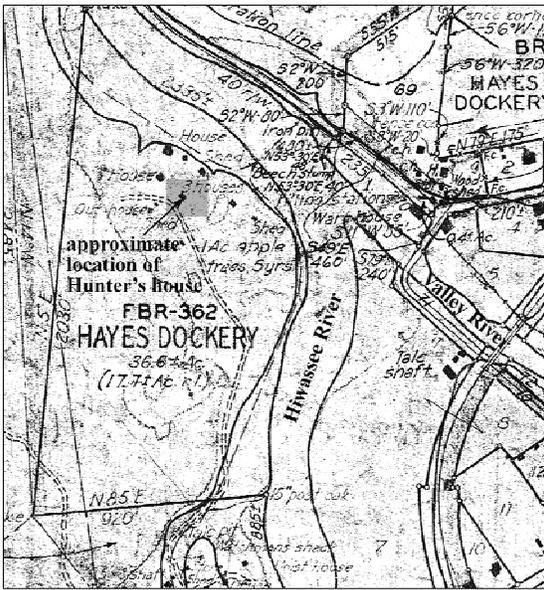


Figure 173. Detail of 1936 TVA property acquisition map indicating the approximate location of Hunter's house and stand.

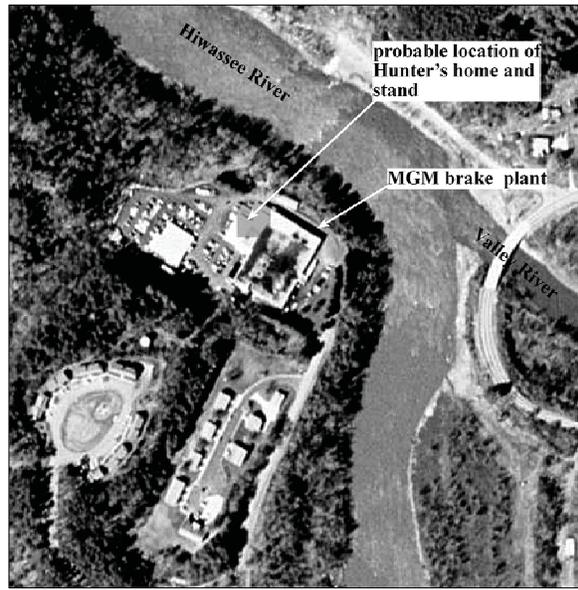


Figure 174. Detail of a 1999 USGS aerial view of the Huntington area indicating the approximate location of Hunter's house and stand relative to the MGM brake plant facility.

Unicoi Turnpike roadbed survives along the northern slope that leads down to the former ferry landing (Figure 176). The slope geometry adjacent to the roadbed indicates substantial fill deposits in the approximate location of Hunter's house as depicted on the 1838 field survey. While archaeological evidence of Hunter's house and stand may survive beneath these modern fill deposits, current industrial use of the parking lot atop these deposits precludes archaeological assay. Surface reconnaissance of exposed surfaces along the edge of the Hiwassee Reservoir lakebed adjacent to the Huntington hilltop recovered a hand-painted polychrome whiteware sherd and a blue shelledge decorated whiteware sherd, both referable to the Removal period occupation of the Hunter complex. Abundant early 20<sup>th</sup> century materials are probably referable to the pre-1938 Hayes Dockery farm complex.



Figure 175. View of the MGM brake plant parking area and adjacent hillside.



Figure 176. Remnant of the Unicoi Turnpike roadbed at the northeastern edge of the MGM brake plant facility.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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### **Recommendations**

Reconnaissance of the probable location of Hunter's home and commercial complex determined that original ground surfaces in this locale are either obliterated or obscured by substantial fill deposits. It appears likely that any archaeological contexts associated with Hunter's store and stand have been destroyed or rendered inaccessible by industrial development. In the absence of documented archaeological contexts associated with the Hunter store site, the site is not recommended for inclusion in National Register of Historic Places. However, the industrial site should be monitored for any changes in its current active status, and any future modifications to the parking lot and the underlying fill may present opportunities for more intensive investigation of the Hunter store site.

Despite the Hunter site's presumed ineligibility for National Register listing, the property retains historical significance as a central place of reference for the military removal of Cherokee citizens from southwestern North Carolina, and should be accorded a role in the development of public interpretation of Trail of Tears related resources in the immediate vicinity of Murphy, North Carolina.

## Singleton Rhea Stand

Singleton Rhea operated an unlicensed “house of entertainment” [i.e., stock stand and inn] on the Unicoi Turnpike near Grape Creek at the time of the 1838 removal. Rhea’s stand was designated as a station for army express riders who carried dispatches between Fort Butler and Fort Cass (Hetzl 1838b). Quartermaster Abner Hetzel’s records also indicate that Rhea sold fodder and oats to the army during the removal. Because the stand was seven miles northwest of Fort Butler along the turnpike, it was approximately one day’s march for the removal contingents, and may have served as an overnight bivouac for Cherokee prisoners and their military escorts, although such use is not documented. In August 1838, Polly Murphy and her family, along with *Walleah* and Rachael Riley, escaped from the internment camps at the Cherokee agency, and returned to North Carolina, where they took refuge with Singleton Rhea, their former neighbor (Rhea 1843). Rhea hid and fed the Cherokee fugitives for four months until the army withdrew from North Carolina.

Rhea’s stand is first documented by the journal of Lt. Charles F.M. Noland, who stayed at Rhea’s hostelry in 1835 during a trip from the Cherokee Agency to the Valley Towns settlements. Noland noted:

19<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1835. We have the finest landscape perhaps in the world, all others I have seen are perfectly tame compared to it. Arrive at Wa-chi-sas an old Indian (7 miles) continue up the little valleys to **Mr. Rays (7 miles) halt for the night, a miserable house**. Leave Rays at dawn of day on the 20<sup>th</sup>, pass up Hiwassee. Cross the river ... below the junction of Valley River reach Col. Hunters (6 miles) where we halt for the day [emphasis added] (Noland 1990:17).

The field books of Reuben Deaver’s 1837 survey indicate that Singleton Rhea maintained improvements in Tracts 48 and 49 of District 5. Notes from Stimson’s 1838 survey of the Unicoi Turnpike indicates two structures attributed to Singleton Rhea (Figures 177, 178). One of these appears to have been situated along the turnpike approximately 450m west of the confluence of Grape Creek and Song Branch; the second building was 350m farther northwest.

Both of these house sites are situated near the bases of upland overlooking Song Branch at approximately 1460 ft. (445m) elevation AMSL (Figure 179). This valley is normally inundated by TVA’s Hiwassee Lake, which sustains a full summer pool level at 1,525 ft. (464 m) AMSL and an average winter low-pool level of 1,470 ft. (448 m) AMSL. An archaeological survey of lake surfaces exposed by a 1455 ft AMSL winter pool did not inspect these locations. In 1998,

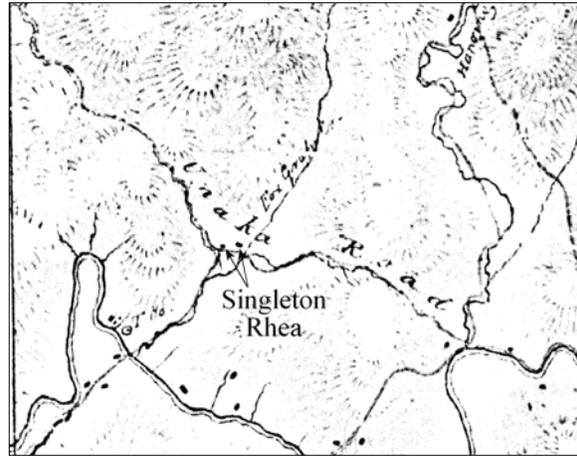


Figure 177. Detail of the 1838 “Map of a Portion of the Cherokee Nation...” indicating the locations of Singleton Rhea’s holdings at Grape Creek.

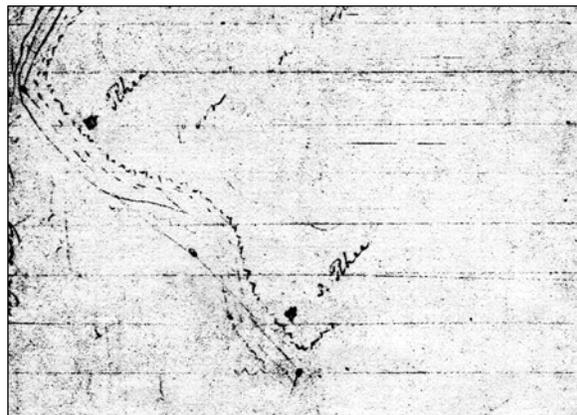


Figure 178. Detail of Stimson’s 1838 survey sketchbook indicating Singleton Rhea buildings on Song Branch.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

winter pool levels around 1465 ft. AMSL partially exposed a cluster of alkaline glazed and slip glazed stoneware sherds in a pile of fieldstones at UTM[17]762,975e, 3,890,120n, the approximate location of the northermost of the Rhea buildings. Reinspection of the site in February 2002, when the minimum winter pool level was approximately 1,475 ft. (449.5 m) AMSL, located no evidence of mid-nineteenth century occupation.

Because the Singleton Rhea stand site is generally inaccessible to archaeological inspection and evaluation, investigators were not able to definitively identify the site or determine archaeological site content or integrity. Detailed preinundation maps (1936) of the site locality indicate no substantial modification of the site prior to creation of Hiwassee Reservoir, and the lake has likely protected the site from subsequent impacts. Although steeper slopes above the probable site area are heavily deflated, the more gently sloping or flat surfaces at the base of the slopes have received sediments from upslope and lake deposited mud, which act to seal and protect archaeological contexts.

The authors recommend that the presumed Singleton Rhea stand site should be revisited and evaluated whenever the Hiwassee Lake pool level drops below 1460 ft AMSL to expose the probable occupation surfaces. When these surfaces become accessible, investigators should bear in mind that the majority of the Rhea occupation component is likely buried beneath post-1938 overburden, and the survey methodology should be designed accordingly.

Like Emanuel Shuler's Burnt Stand, the Singleton Rhea's stand derives historical significance from associations with the early commercial and transportation ventures in the region, but is particularly significant as a place where Cherokee fugitives sought refuge during the 1838 removal. If the stand site can be definitively identified, and archaeological evaluation determines that the site retains contextual integrity, Rhea's stand should be included in the National Register of Historic Places and certified as a contributing element to the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. In the interim, it would be suitable to interpret and present the story of Rhea's assistance to Cherokee fugitives at the public boat ramp at Song Branch, a location from which the (now submerged) location of Rhea's stand is clearly visible.

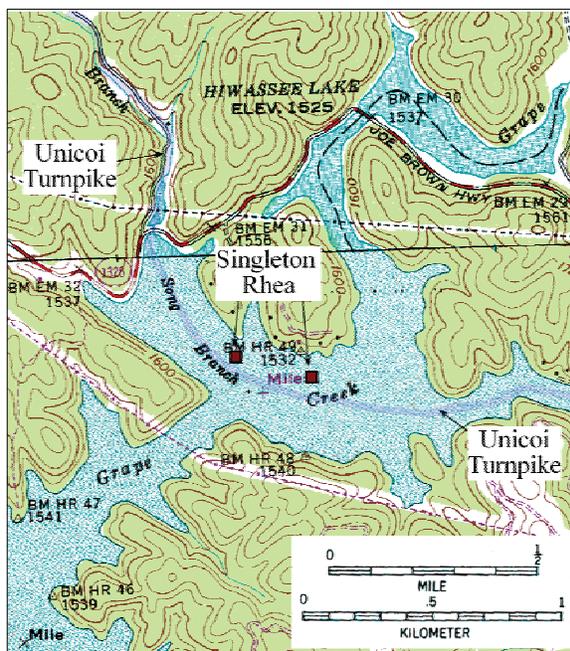


Figure 179. Detail of the Murphy, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the mapped locations of the Singleton Rhea buildings relative to Grape Creek, Song Branch and the Unicoi Turnpike.

### The Burnt Stand (31Ce672)

The Burnt Stand, also known as Shuler's, Lowdermilk's, or Reddick's, was a stock stand and inn that operated along the Unicoi Turnpike during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. This waystation was a landmark and place of respite for travelers and drovers crossing a remote, uninhabited area of the Unaka Mountains. During the 1838 Cherokee Removal, the stand served as a base for army express riders and may have been an overnight stopover destination for military escorts of contingents of Cherokee prisoners. A contingent of Cherokee prisoners who escaped from military confinement at Fort Cass, Tennessee, took refuge at the Burnt Stand, and remained under the patronage of Emmanuel Shuler from August 1838 through August 1839.

The charter for the Unicoi Turnpike Company provided for a series of stands or waystations along the route through the Cherokee Nation to provide lodging, food, and supplies for travelers. Gideon Morris (1841) indicated :

...that he was well acquainted with the Unicoy Road, so called, which traversed part of the Cherokee County, having frequently travelled the same; that on said road, as he understands and believes, there were three stations or stands provided for in the charter of said road; one at the termination in Georgia, one at the other end in Tennessee, and one at a place called "burnt stand", on a creek near the foot of what's called "the long ridge"...

It is not clear from Morris' account when the Burnt Stand was founded, although the Matthew Rhea map (1832) indicates the stand (labeled "Loudermilk's") in place by 1832. That year, Cherokee Agent Hugh Montgomery, who accompanied a military expedition over the Unicoi Turnpike, wrote the War Department that the stands were established:

...under a clause of the [Calhoun] treaty which gives the [Unicoi Turnpike] company the exclusive rights to trade on the road, they have settled a considerable number of families along it as traders, none of whom have any goods to trade on, but are cultivating the Indian land... (Montgomery 1832)

By the time that Lt. John Noland traveled the turnpike in September 1835, the stand was operated by John Reddick. Noland noted in his diary:

19th Sept. 1835- Left Gormly's and continued ascending the Chil-how-i Mountain road rough, country very broken reach Camp Armistead (10 miles) [at Coker Creek] which is entirely in the occupancy of Gold Diggers, who have over run the country. Continue on our way across the Unakoy Mountains. The country is a continual series of mountains, romantic in the extreme. Roads scarcely passable. Reach Reddicks [Burnt Stand], 8 miles, a miserable house or stand on the Unakoy Turnpike. Eat a bad dinner and continue on our way (Noland 1990: 17).

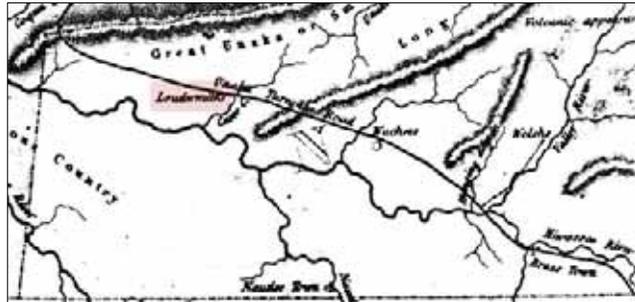


Figure 180. Section of 1832 Matthew Rhea map showing location of Loudermilk's (Burnt Stand).

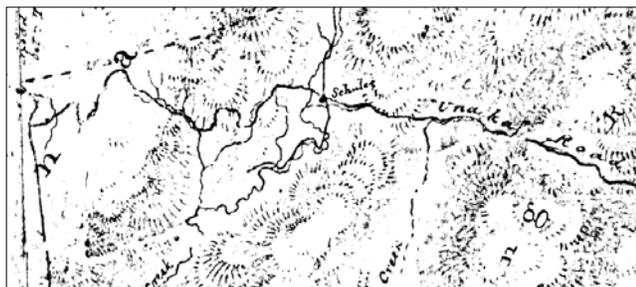


Figure 181. 1838 Army Corps map indicating "Schuler" (Burnt Stand) relative to the Unicoi Turnpike and Shuler Creek.

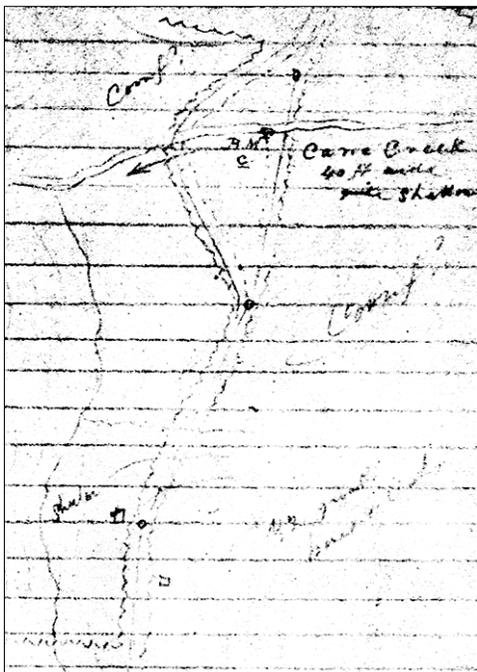


Figure 182. 1838 Army Corps sketchmap indicating Shuler (Burnt Stand) relative to the Unicoi Turnpike and Shuler Creek.

In 1836, Col. Hiram Turk stopped at Reddick's on his way back to Tennessee along the Unicoi Turnpike (Currey 1836). When he left the stand, he was followed by a group of would-be assassins, who ambushed Turk several miles west of Burnt Stand. One rifleman, later identified as *Connaluska* [Locust], shot Turk through the shoulder. Turk escaped to Camp Armistead, recuperated, then brought charges against John Reddick and Connaluska. Turk suspected Reddick, from whom he'd tried to collect debts, of hiring the attempted killing. It is equally likely that Turk, a close associate of the hated Emigration Agent B.F. Currey, was the target of a political assassination.

Reuben Deaver's 1837 map indicates Burnt Stand along the Unicoi Turnpike east of Shuler Creek in District 5, lot 153. Two army surveys conducted over the winter of 1837-1838 indicate "Shuler" situated on the south side of the Unicoi Turnpike approximately 1000ft east of Shuler Creek. As preparations for the anticipated military removal of the Cherokees accelerated in the spring of 1838, Quartermaster Abner Hetzel posted army express riders and supplies at Fort Armistead, "Shuler's" and "Rhea's" on the Unicoi

Turnpike to carry dispatches between army headquarters at Fort Cass and Fort Butler, headquarters of the eastern division (Hetzel 1838b).

Once the actual deportation of Cherokee prisoners from North Carolina began, their line of march from Fort Butler to the Agency Emigration Depot (Fort Cass) took them immediately past the Burnt Stand. Although not specifically documented, it appears likely that the Burnt Stand may have been an overnight stopover point for contingents of Cherokee prisoners and their military escorts. As estimated by Noland (1990:17), "Reddicks" was 20 miles from Hunter's (later Fort Butler) on the turnpike. Capt. L.B. Wester wrote his wife that the trip from Fort Butler to Fort Cass was 80 miles and took his contingent eight days to traverse, an average distance of 10 miles per day. Inasmuch as the Burnt Stand appears to have been two days out from Fort Butler, and was the only place for miles that offered any accommodations, food, animal feed, and supplies, it was a logical destination for the military escorts and their charges to encamp.

The Burnt Stand is specifically documented later in the summer of 1838, when Emanuel Shuler was confronted with a situation regarding the family of his old neighbor, Wacheesee. Wacheesee and his family had been taken to Fort Cass, where the old man died in August. The remaining family members, including Wacheesee's wife, their three children, and numerous grandchildren, applied to Superintendent of Emigration Nathaniel Smith for permission to return to Beaverdam Creek and recover their belongings. The agent issued a travel permit, which was approved by General Winfield Scott, and the family proceeded across the mountains to Wacheesee's Town, where they discovered their possessions and crops already plundered by whites. Fully intent on staying in the mountains, the Wacheesee kindred appealed to Emmanuel Shuler for sanctuary. Shuler testified that:

...in the month of August 1838, the three families of poor Indians as charged in his account came to his house entirely destitute of any thing to eat and applied to him for support and stated to him if he did not help them they must starve as they were alone and knew of no one to apply to But

him, as an act of humanity he took them in and furnished them with provisions from his House...(Shuler 1843).

Shuler apparently provided for these families for the next year, during which time the Wacheese Town people evaded several military expeditions that combed the North Carolina mountains for Cherokee fugitives. Because the 18<sup>th</sup> article of the Treaty of New Echota provided compensation for those providing subsistence to the Cherokees, Shuler later filed claims for compensation to the various Boards of Cherokee Commissioners, specifically:

...for subsisting and furnishing Sam Wahcheser and family six in number of poor Indians, with provisions from my house from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of August 1838 to the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 1839-making this three hundred and sixty five days for each Indian at 20cts per day making for one Indian \$73-in number 6 making for the 6 in family \$438...Cr[edit] By work and labor done by them for me-\$30-remaining due-\$408.00 (Shuler 1846).

Shuler also submitted claims for \$762.00 for housing the families of Conaluska and Wallee (both children of Wacheese) from August 1, 1838 through February 1, 1839. None of Shuler's claims were paid. When the ceded Cherokee lands sold at Franklin in September 1838, Shuler purchased Lots 153 and 154, District 5, including the Burnt Stand establishment and the improved fields surrounding the stand.

The Burnt Stand assumes historical significance as one of the licensed stands operating on the Unicoi Turnpike and is particularly referable to the early transportation and economic history of the region. During the 1838 Cherokee removal, the Burnt Stand functioned as a minor military post (for express riders) and, more importantly, provided long-term sanctuary to a group of Cherokee fugitives who escaped the internment camps at the Fort Cass emigration depot and returned to their home region.

### Site Location and Archaeological Investigations

Lt. J.K. Stinson's notes of a December 1837 "Survey from Fort Butler to the boundary line between Tenn & N. Car. Along the Unaka Road" indicates "Shuler" a house located on the south side of the Unicoi Turnpike approximately 1000 ft east of Shuler Creek. Stinson's sketchmap (Figure 182) places Shuler's house on the western side of a low upland lobe immediately north of a substantial branch of Shuler Creek, with smaller spring branches located east and west of the house. A presumed outbuilding is indicated on the north side of the turnpike, approximately 120 ft east of the main house. The landform indicated by Stinson corresponds to an upland toe that the extant turnpike bed traverses approximately 300m (974ft) east of the ford over Shuler Creek (Figure 183). Stinson's survey station 1005 was situated at approximately UTM [17] 752,415e, 3,900,474n; the Shuler house is indicated approximately 15-20m southeast of this point. This location is situated in the Nantahala National Forest adjacent to USFS Road 6263 at approximately

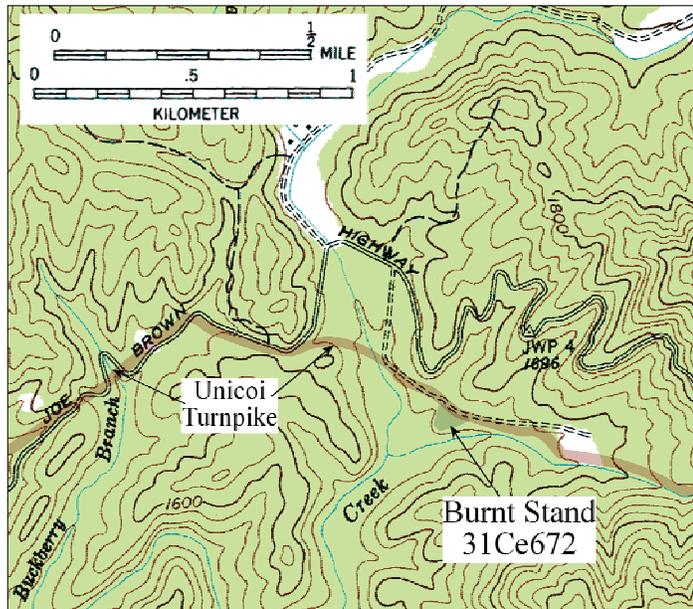


Figure 183. Location of the Burnt Stand site (31Ce672) indicated on detail of the Unaka, NC 7.5' quadrangle.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

1,530 ft AMSL elevation, “on a creek near the foot of what’s called ‘the long ridge.’” The site area is forested with mixed third-growth hardwoods and pines; pine bark beetle infestation has recently killed the majority of the pine component. The entrenchment of the Unicoi Turnpike is well defined on the western and eastern sides of the landform, but spoil from the construction of USFS 6263 fills approximately 60m of the original roadbed at the presumptive site of the Burnt Stand. A modern power transmission line crosses the most level part of the toe adjacent to the Forest Service road; a 10m wide strip beneath this line is cleared of timber and brush.

Archaeological survey and testing of the Burnt Stand site (31Ce672) conducted in 2000 aimed to recover sufficient material samples to determine if the site was occupied during the Removal period, to characterize the density and distribution of diagnostic Removal period materials, and using these data, to precisely locate direct, in situ evidence of the Shuler house (e.g. associated cellars, foundations or other features). The survey entailed excavation of 144 shovel test units arrayed a five-meter intervals across the entire landform (Figure 51). These 30cm tests were typically excavated to a average depth of 25cm to sterile subsoil; all soils from these units were sorted through ¼” wire mesh to recover artifact content. Most of these units yielded lithic artifacts attributable to prehistoric site occupation, but only 17 tests yielded a total of 23 Removal era artifacts referable to the Burnt Stand occupation. These positive tests were scattered across the landform, but were weakly clustered in the northwestern quadrant, 5-20 meters south of the Unicoi Turnpike. Nine one-meter square test units yielded an additional 115 Removal period artifacts (Table 3), but revealed no intact contexts or deposits indicative of the Shuler house. These units ranged in depth from 11cm to 33cm to sterile, clay loam subsoil. The excavated matrix typically consisted of a weakly developed clay loam A horizon with abundant small quartz clasts. In most areas, the Removal era material occurred in the first 10cm, stratigraphically superimposed above Middle and Early Archaic period lithic materials. Most of the Removal period materials are highly fragmented, perhaps as an effect of repeated trampling around high traffic areas of the site. The effects of such traffic may be reflected by a four-meter square block near the center of the site that revealed an initial zone of highly compacted gravelly silt loam with numerous, very small artifact inclusions. Larger sherds and glass fragments tended to occur on the side slopes in probable discard zones surrounding the primary occupation surface.

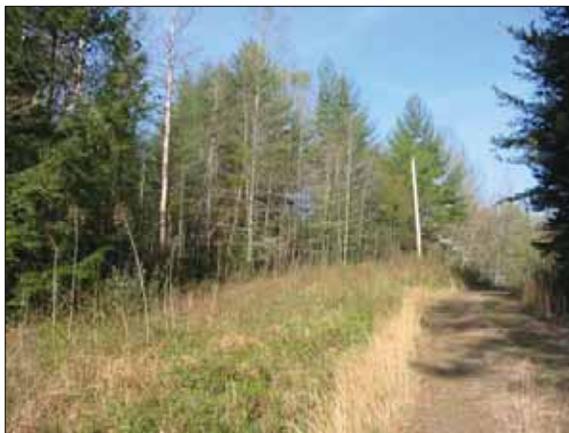


Figure 184. View of the Burnt Stand site (31CE672).

The power pole at center right is the approximate position of Stimson’s 1837 station 1005.



Figure 185. Typical test unit at the Burnt Stand site (31CE672). Note shallow topsoil above clay loam subsoil.

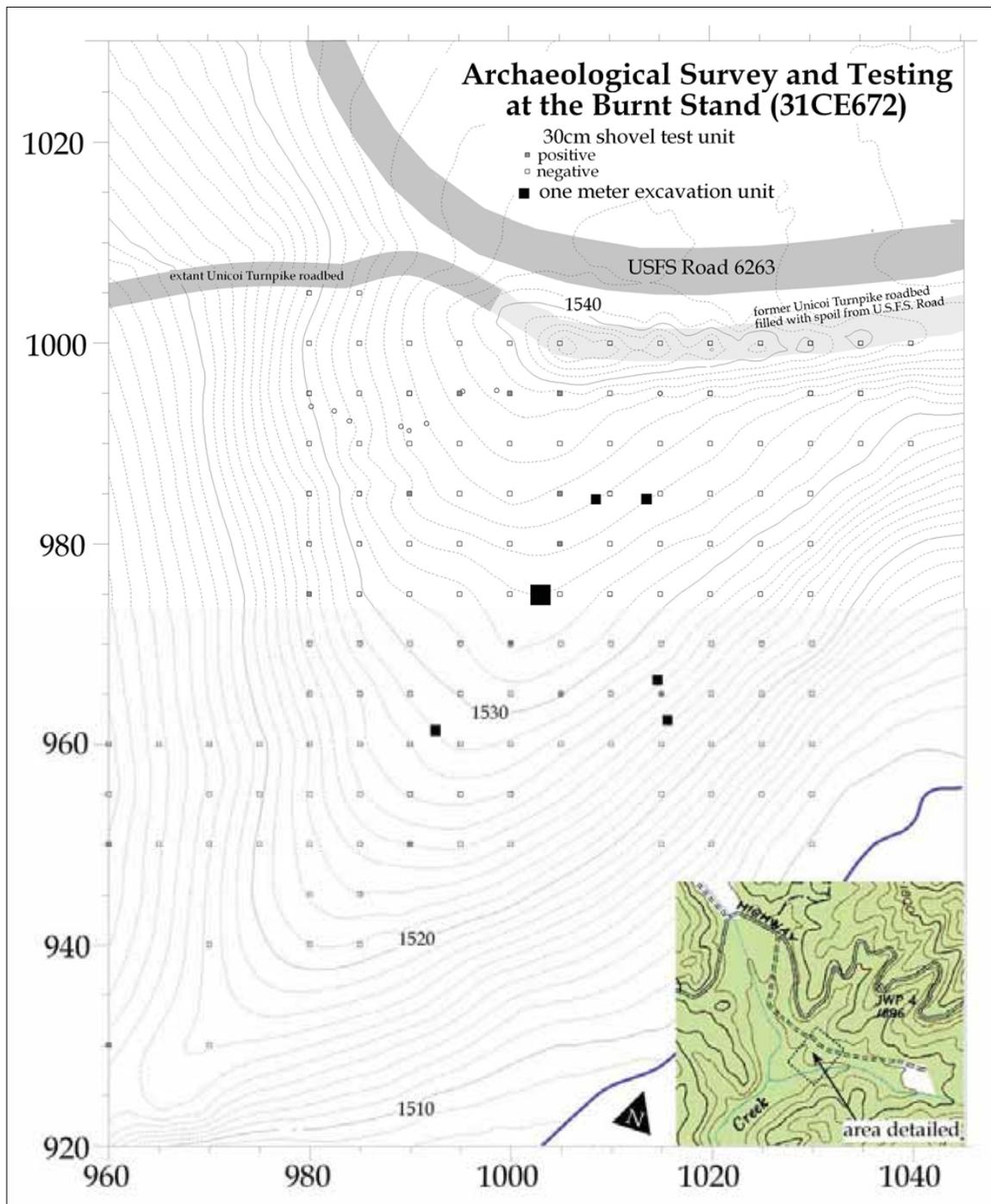


Figure 186. Contour map of the Burnt Stand site indicating locations of positive and negative shovel test pits and one-meter square test units.

Table 3. Removal period artifacts recovered from the Burnt Stand site.

<b>Artifact Group/Class</b>	<b>n=</b>
<b>Kitchen</b>	
whiteware ceramic sherds	
hand-painted	17
transfer-printed	7
shell-edge	3
mocha	4
solid blue	3
sponge decorated	1
undecorated	33
pearlware ceramic sherds	
hand-painted	2
transfer-printed	1
undecorated	7
lead glazed coarse earthenware ceramic sherds	7
alkaline glazed stoneware ceramic sherds	6
container glass fragments	
colorless	9
olive green	7
green	6
<b>Architectural</b>	
flat glass (window pane)	6
cut nail/nail fragments	7
<b>Clothing</b>	
brass disk button (Omega-eye; South Type 9)	1
<b>Arms &amp; Ammunition</b>	
lead rifle ball (.40 cal)	1
<b>Indeterminate</b>	
unidentified iron fragments	7
total	<b>135</b>

Removal era artifacts recovered from the Burnt Stand site include ceramic sherds (n=91), glass bottle, vial, and tumbler fragments (n=30), nails, a button, a lead bullet, and a number of unidentified iron objects (n=16) (Table 3). Most of the collection consists of kitchen and food consumption related artifacts, primarily refined earthenware, coarse earthenware, and stoneware ceramic sherds. The co-occurrence of transitional whiteware (n=70) and pearlware (n=10) ceramic sherds is characteristic of area sites dating to the 1830s (see Valleytowns Baptist Mission discussion), and decorative motifs in both refined earthenware groups are typical of the Removal era. These dining wares include blue shell-edge decorated plate fragments, handpainted teacup and saucer fragments, transfer printed plate and bowl fragments, a sponge decorated bowl fragment, and mocha/annular decorated hollowares. Seven lead glazed redware (coarse earthenware) sherds and six alkaline-glazed stoneware sherds represent food storage and food preparation containers, such as jars and large bowls.

The 22 container glass fragments recovered from the Burnt Stand include olive green, light green, aqua, and colorless fragments attributable to wine bottles, medicine vials, and leaded tumblers. Consistent with the “public house of entertainment” function of the Burnt Stand, glass

container fragments are proportionately well represented as compared to food service wares (22/80 or .275).

Architectural evidence consists of seven cut nails and nail fragments and six small flat glass shards that presumably represent fragments of window lights. The general paucity of architectural materials in the sample may indicate that testing did not closely approach the actual seat of the Shuler house or any of the associated outbuildings.

A single plain faced, Omega-eye brass disk button (commonly termed “Scovill button”) probably derives from a man’s vestcoat. Such buttons are ubiquitous in American archaeological contexts dating ca. 1810-1860. A single deformed lead rifle ball ( $\approx .38$  cal) is the only Arms/Ammunition group artifact recovered.

Although the material samples recovered from the Burnt Stand site appear entirely consistent in character with a Removal era occupation by a “public house of entertainment,” the relatively low densities of such materials is somewhat problematic in view of the likely intensity and duration of site occupation. This evidence, coupled with the field investigations’ failure to locate intact, subsurface contexts associated with the Burnt Stand, suggests that testing at 31Ce672, which focused on the central and eastern side of the landform, would have been more appropriately applied along the western flank of the upland toe. This is supported by a recent metal detector survey of the site, which located a cluster of nine Removal era artifacts (cast iron vessel fragments, iron spikes, strap iron) along the western edge of the site area around grid co-ordinate 990N/990E.

### Recommendations

Because the Burnt Stand site (31Ce672) is important to understanding the early transportation and economic history of the southern mountain region and is demonstrably associated with the forced Cherokee removal of 1838, it is clearly conformable to National Register Criterion A as a site “associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.” In addition, archaeological testing at the Burnt Stand indicates that the site may “yield information important in history or prehistory” (Criterion D), but additional testing will be necessary to establish both contextual integrity and substantive material content. Therefore, further archaeological investigations of the Burnt Stand site are recommended to establish National Register eligibility. Until such exhaustive investigations are undertaken, the site, which is controlled by the United States Forest Service, should be regarded as potentially eligible for National Register listing and should be managed accordingly.

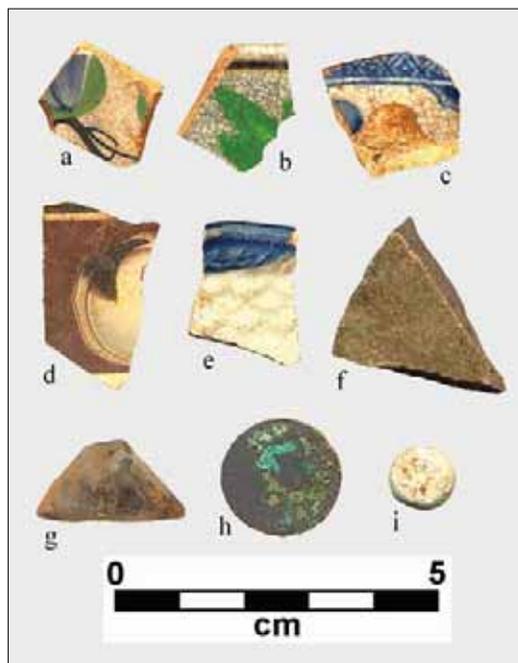


Figure 187. Artifacts recovered from the Burnt Stand site. a-b: polychrome handpainted whiteware sherds; c: transfer-printed whiteware sherd; d: mocha decorated whiteware sherd; e: embossed edged whiteware sherd; f: alkaline glazed stoneware sherd; g: lead glaze tumbler fragment; h: brass Omega-eye button; i: lead rifle ball.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

### Wacheesee House Site

For thousands of Cherokee prisoners who passed along the Unicoi Turnpike in the summer of 1838, the last Cherokee house they passed before crossing the Unaka Mountains was the home of Wacheesee, once leader of a nativistic movement and a living symbol of Cherokee independence. As the leader of a community known as Wacheesee's Town, the elder Wacheesee was a person of note, renowned even among the troops who came to evict the Cherokees. Lt. John Phelps related stories about Wacheesee that were current at the time of removal:

On the 13th some of the troops returned and by the morning of the 14th we were all in with nearly a thousand Indians, when I received an order to repair to the Agency at Calhoun Tenn. And report for duty in the Indian Department. I bought a pony and on the 15th set out for my destination which was 80 miles distant. When about fifteen miles on my way, I passed the hamlet of old Wachissa, an Indian about a hundred years old, and of a very singular character. Nature had not only endowed him with an iron constitution, but she had implanted in him an instinct that he should be the head of a powerful clan, which should at some future day establish the ancient customs of their forefathers. Proud and unyielding to the degenerate habits of his tribe, he withdrew to the mountains, where in course of time his wives presented him with forty five sons and many daughters. As they grew up, at every lunation he brought forth his scalp pole, and danced around them, and exulted over them in the most frantic fury...forty five men of his own mettle, schooled in his own doctrines, promised at least to head so many families which should ultimately bring back his people to their pristine estate. But it is a decree of Nature, repeated in Revelation, and which tho' Wachissa might have known he was too proud to heed. the proud shall be brought low. The small pox came among his stalwart sons, it was a strange disease which he knew not of, and in an evil hour he listened to the insidious whites who told him to bathe them in cold water. In consequence they all died, leaving his hope blasted and more inveterate to the pale faces than ever (Phelps 2000:25-26).

Although Phelps' tale of Wacheesee was almost certainly embellished, other accounts affirm his role as community leader and the progenitor of a large lineage. Major John Norton, who traveled along the old Tellico Trading Path in 1809, spent the night at Wacheesee's, the only community between Cootlohee and the Unicoi Gap, and noted:

I found that he was the father of the young man at whose house I slept in the valley. This man has thirty children, (by three wives), all grown to the years of maturity; yet he does not appear at all enfeebled by age (Klinck and Talman 1970:146).

Mooney (1890) indicates that the Unicoi Turnpike (constructed 1813–1816) followed the route of the "Wachesa trail" over Long Ridge

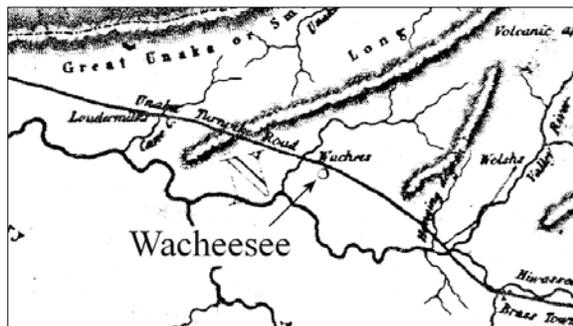


Figure 188. Detail of Rhea map (1832) indicating the Unaka Turnpike Road and "Wacheesee."

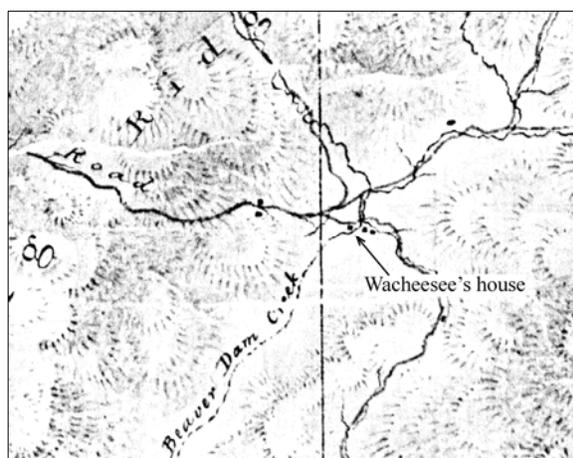


Figure 189. Detail of 1838 Army "Map of a Portion of the Cherokee Country..." indicating the Unaka Road and Wacheesee's residence.

and the Unaka Mountains. Wacheesee's home and community were noted landmarks along the turnpike; Mathew Rhea's 1832 map for the Tennessee Gazette depicts "Wachees" on the "Unicoi Turnpike Road" at Beaverdam Creek. In 1835, Lieutenant Charles Noland journeyed with Major Benjamin Currey and Reverend John Schermerhorn from the Cherokee Agency (Calhoun, Tennessee) to the Valley River in a failed attempt to convene a removal treaty conference. Of their route along the Unicoi Turnpike, Noland wrote:

We have the finest landscape perhaps in the world, all others I have seen are perfectly tame compared to it. Arrive at Wa-chi-sas an old Indian (7 miles) continue up the valleys to Mr. Rays (7 miles)...(Noland 1990:17).

The other landmarks that Noland recorded along the turnpike were all waystations or "houses of entertainment" used as stock stands; Wacheesee's improvements may also have served as an unlicensed stock stand and "public house." Federal property appraisals conducted in 1836 indicate "Wacheesee living on Beaverdam Creek where the Unicoy road crosses" in possession of one dogtrot cabin, an old house, three other cabins, 22 acres of cleared cropland, 50 peach trees and five apple trees. His neighbors in Wacheesee Town included "Six Killer living on Beaverdam Creek North side above Wacheesee," "Connaluska living on same creek near Six Killer," Sam Wacheesee upper house on Beaverdam Creek," "Wolley Beaverdam Creek opposite Wacheesee," "Conneweelah near Wally below," "Chinequa on Unaka Road S. of Wacheesee," and "Panther 4 miles N. of Singleton Ray, ½ mile south of Unaka Road" (Welch and Jarrett 1836). Post-removal claims indicate all of these households as part of the Wacheesee kindred.

The Wacheesee community was spared by the first round of arrests of Cherokee citizens on June 12; when John Phelps returned from the Cherokee Agency on June 21, 1838, he noted that Wacheesee remained at home:

We met Capt. Webster with another large party of Cherokees; passed Wachissas hamlet where we saw the old man going from his field to his house, and finally reached Camp Hiwassee about 5 o'clock P.M (Phelps 2000:32).

Subsequent sweeps detained the members of Wacheesee Town; it is unclear whether they traveled east to Fort Butler, or were simply taken directly from their homes and incorporated into one of the contingents of prisoners who passed through Wacheesee Town en route to the emigration depot at the Cherokee Agency. The rigors of the trip and life in the internment camps were too much for the aged Wacheesee, who died in the camps at Calhoun, Tennessee in August, 1838. Wacheesee's death threw the family into turmoil, and the elder sons petitioned Emigration Superintendent Nathaniel Smith for permission to travel back to North Carolina, ostensibly to recover family belongings. General Scott provided a written travel permit dated August 13, 1838; the permit required their return to Fort Cass by August 23. The large Wacheesee kindred, including Wacheesee's widow, Chickanailah, son Sam and his wife Lucy, son Conaluska and his wife Annawagi, son Chinoque, and daughters Wallee and Conawilla, Nicey and Running Wolf, Chinoque Owl and others hurriedly left the camps with the permit, and disappeared into the fastness of the Unaka Mountains. In recounting their return to North Carolina to support spoliation claims, Wacheesee family members neglected to note that the permit was a temporary leave:

...when they were taken to the agency and upon the death of her husband Genl Scott permitted her [Chickanailah] to return and become a citizen of North Carolina she therefore considers herself justly entitled to her compensation...(Chickanailah 1843)

...after the death of Father he went to Genl Nat. Smith superintendent of Cherokee Removal and told him that his Father was dead and that more of his connection sick that he want leave to return to the mountains, that he set down and that Nat. Smith wrote and permitted his Mother Chickanailah himself Panther Canawella Walla Chinoque Wahchesses Locust and [illegible] and

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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families all included in the permit to [illegible] and become citizens of the state of North Carolina (Sam Wacheesee, 1843)

When the Wacheesee families arrived at their homes on Beaverdam Creek, they found their possessions already plundered. Household goods, crops, and livestock had been carried away by troops and members of local white families. Chickanailah and her children later filed claims for spoliation of property; Chickanailah and Wacheesee's lost property included:

1 Black mare 5 years old worth	\$60.00
1 Bay stud horse 4 years old	70.00
1 Black stud [illegible] horse 3 years old	40.00
1 Bay colt 1 year old worth	20.00
1 Large fat hog worth \$8	8.00
30 Bushels sweet Potatoes 50 pr bushel	15.00
45 Bushels Irish Potatoes 50	22.50
1 Rifle Gun worth \$20.00 & 1 other Gun \$15.00	35.00
1 Large Pot \$4.00 & 1 other Pot worth \$3	7.00
1 Large oven and lid \$3.00 & Bake oven and lid 1.50	4.00
2 Tin Buckets \$1.50 each & and 1 other Bucket \$1.00	4.00
1 Bucket 75 & 2 other Buckets 50 each	1.75
4 pails 50 each & 6 Tin Cups 12 1/2 each & 4 Bowls 25 each	3.75
2 Pitchers \$1.00 each & 1 hand saw \$2.00	4.00
1 Large Auger \$1.00 & 1 other auger 75	1.75
1/2 Bushel salt \$1.50 & 2 pr Pot hooks 50 each	2.50
2 pr. of [illegible] worth \$2.50 & 6 hoes 75 each	9.50
3 Mattocks \$2.00 each & 4 axes \$2.00 each	14.00
3 Tomahawks \$1.00 each & Butcher Knife \$1.00	4.00
1 Pocket Knife \$1.00 & other Pocket Knife 50	1.50
2 Pocket Knives 25 each & 1 Plough \$1.50	2.00
1 Bull Tongue \$1.00 & 1 singletree worth 50	1.50
1 chisel 50 & 1 Drawing Knife 50	1.00
3 Sifters 50 each & 2 bags 75 each & 2 Baskets 25 each	3.50
3 Back Baskets 50 each & 1 Bear skin \$2.00	3.50
4 Chairs 50 each & 1 set of spoons 75	2.75
2 pd Powder 50 pr pd. & 2 [illegible] Locks 50 each & 1 Lock \$1.00	3.00
1 Dragoon Bridle worth	5.00
2 other Bridles worth \$1.50 each	3.00
1 Man saddle worth	12.00
1 other Man saddle worth	10.00
1 other Man saddle	15.00
2 [illegible] Locks worth 62 1/2 each & Latch & Steeple 50	1.75
60 Chickens 12 1/2 each & 6 Ducks 25 each	<u>9.00</u>
	401.75

(Chickanailah spoliation claim, File 663, Records of the Fourth Board of Commissioners for Cherokee Claims, Record Group 75, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration)

The total loss of their homes, crops, livestock and other possessions was overwhelming, and the Wacheesee families had few options for survival. They made their way westward along the Unicoi Turnpike to the Burnt Stand, where they sought sanctuary with Emmanuel Shuler, an old acquaintance. Shuler testified:

...in the month of August 1838, the three families of poor Indians as charged in his account came to his house entirely destitute of any thing to eat and applied to him for support and stated to him if he did not help them they must starve as they were alone and knew of no one to apply to But

him, as an act of humanity he took them in and furnished them with provisions from his House...(Shuler 1843).

Shuler claimed compensation from the U.S. Board of Cherokee Commissioners:

...for subsisting and furnishing Sam Wahcheser and family six in number of poor Indians, with provisions from my house from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of August 1838 to the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 1839-making this three hundred and sixty five days for each Indian at 20cts per day making for one Indian \$73-in number 6 making for the 6 in family \$438...Cr[edit] By work and labor done by them for me-\$30-remaining due-\$408.00 (Shuler 1846).

During their stay at Shuler's, the Wacheesee families successfully evaded the troops who combed the Unaka and Hanging Dog mountains for fugitives. In the aftermath of the removal operations, the Wacheesee families joined other former fugitives in founding a new Cherokee community on John Welch's property along the Valley River at Marble, North Carolina. By 1851, some the Wacheesee families moved across the Snowbird Mountains to join the Buffalo Town and Cheoah, while others went to Sand Town on Cartoogachaye Creek in Macon County.

**Site Location and Field Reconnaissance**

Documentary evidence clearly indicates the Wacheesee house site "on Beaverdam Creek where the Unicoy road crosses the same" in the present-day community of Unaka, North Carolina. The 1832 Rhea map (Figure 188) depicts "Wachees" on the eastern side of Beaverdam Creek and on the south side of the Unicoi Turnpike. This location corresponds to Tract 92 of District 5, which state surveyor Reuben Deaver's 1837 field books note included "a good mill seat and an improvement occupied by a very old Indian called Watcheseh." Welch and Jarrett's 1836 appraisal indicates that Wacheesee owned cropland on both sides of the creek, but that his buildings were all on one (unspecified) side of Beaverdam Creek. Three Army surveys conducted in January 1838 depict Wacheesee's residence on the west side of Beaverdam creek, at the edge of the uplands on the south side of the Unicoi Turnpike (Figure 189, 190). The most detailed of these surveys Wacheesee's residence 575 ft (175m) west (S78°W) of the turnpike ford over Beaverdam Creek. The ford (at UTM [16] 760,930e, 9,387,987n) appears to have been located approximately 125m north-northwest of the present-day Joe Brown Highway bridge over Beaverdam Creek. The western bank of the creek is extensively remodeled at the presumed ford, and bears no evidence of the former crossing. On the eastern side, a shallow, linear depression leading to a notch in the creekbank may represent the ford approach. Eighty-five meters west of the ford, a 75m segment of the Unicoi Turnpike roadbed is preserved as a current farm road (Figure 191); the western end of this segment is truncated by Joe Brown Highway. With the turnpike ford and the extant turnpike segment as reference points, the approximate position of the Wacheesee housesite (as

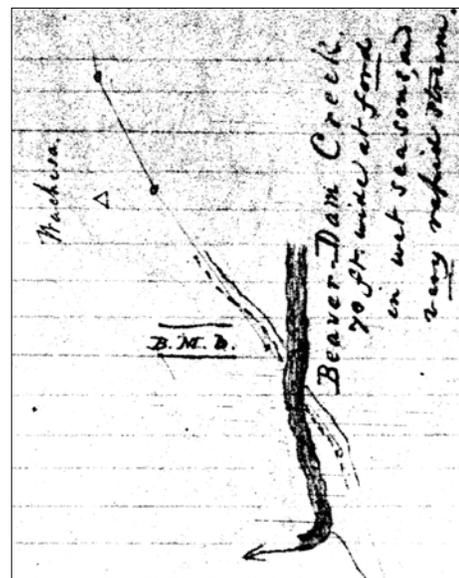


Figure 190. Detail of 1838 Army survey sketchmap indicating the Unicoi Turnpike ford over Beaverdam Creek and the Wacheesee residence.



Figure 191. Unicoi Turnpike roadbed near the Wacheesee residence site.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

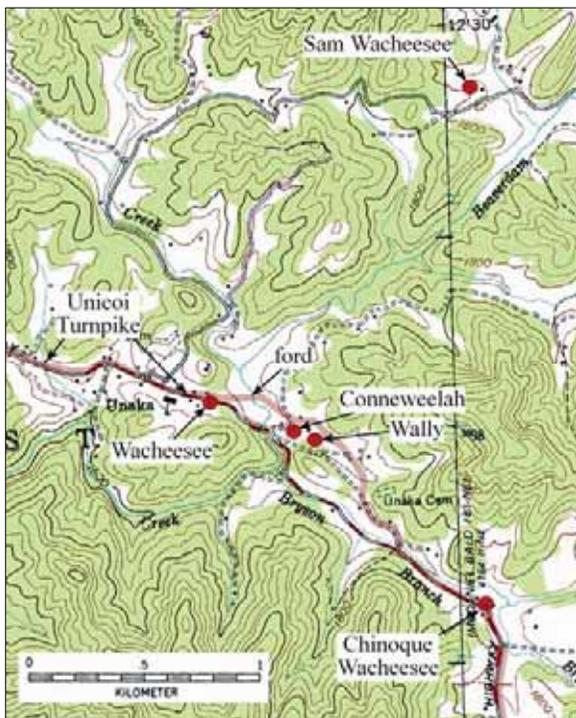


Figure 192. Detail of the Unaka and McDaniel Bald, NC 7.5' quadrangles indicating the locations of Wacheesee's Town households.

Unicoi Turnpike route at the presumed Wacheesee house site.

### Recommendations

Field inspection of the historically documented Wacheesee home site located no evidence of a Removal period Cherokee occupation, and ascertained that the immediate vicinity of the presumed house site has been significantly affected by modern land use. It appears likely that the Wacheesee house site has been obliterated by construction, but the probable destruction of the site cannot be conclusively asserted. Lacking direct evidence of the Wacheesee household occupation, the site locality cannot be recommended to consideration for the National Register of Historic Places. Nonetheless, the locality around Unaka (particularly at the former Unaka Elementary School) presents a proximate opportunity for public interpretation of the Wacheesee family's experiences during removal and of the role of the Unicoi Turnpike during the 1838 Cherokee removal.

Other mapped elements of Wacheesee's Town (Figure 192), such as the home sites of Wally, Conneweloh, Connaluska, Sam Wacheesee and Chinoque Wacheesee, may survive as archaeological components representative of the community. Documentation of the archaeological record of these households would lend a material aspect to the dramatic Removal-era events of arrest, escape, and return of the Wacheesee's Town community, and would help illustrate the contexts of resistance that characterized the removal in the North Carolina mountains.

indicated by the 1838 surveys) can be projected onto the modern landscape. As gauged by these reference points, the Wacheesee house site appears to have been located at UTM[16]760,715e, 3,898105n, adjacent to or beneath the current Joe Brown Highway (Figure 192).

Investigators inspected exposed road banks and adjacent soil surfaces (including driveways, paths, garden plots, and building driplines) across a 50m by 100m transect parallel to the south side of the reconstructed route of the turnpike in the presumed vicinity of the Wacheesee house site and found no materials that could be attributed to a Removal era occupation. The apparent absence of such diagnostic archaeological materials in the vicinity of documented location of the Wacheesee residence may indicate that road construction (or private residential construction in adjacent areas) has obliterated or effectively obscured the Wacheesee house site. Grading for construction of the Joe Brown Highway (Cherokee County Road 1326) significantly affected a 30m wide corridor that intersects the

### John Wayne, Jr. Cabin Site



Figure 193. Frémont's sketchmap indicating the "John O'Wayne 2<sup>nd</sup>" farmstead.

produced 200 bushels of corn in 1834. John Wayne, Jr. was presumably related to John Wayne, Sr., who lived upstream at Cootlohee, and who maintained a second residence and farm at Dry Creek, Tennessee, near Tellico Plains. Federal agents Welch and Jarrett appraised John Wayne's real property in 1837, and noted that his Cherokee name was *Tequanney*. The appraisers described the family farmstead as:

John Wayne (or <i>Tequanney</i> ) living on the N.E. side of Highwassee River above George, has one	
hewed log cabin 13 ft square stick & clay chimney board roof door locked	\$30.00
one ditto log cabin 12ft square stick and clay chimney board roof also locked	\$25.00
3 other small buildings @ \$6 ea	\$18.00
one other new hewed log cabin on a hill off from the river 13ft sqr stick & clay chimney stone back and jams board roof nailed on	\$32.00
14 acres bottom land in cultivation @ \$10	\$140.00
25 peach trees @ \$.50 9 apple trees @ \$1.00	\$21.50
(Welch and Jarrett 1836:4)	

Further documentation of the John Wayne, Jr. household is scant, although "Taquany" is listed in Captain L.B. Webster's roster of Cherokee prisoners transported from Fort Butler, N.C. to Fort Cass, TN between June 19<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> 1838.

### Documentary Evidence and Archaeological Investigations

The location of the John Wayne, Jr. farmstead is documented by John C. Frémont's February 18, 1838 survey notes for the Hiwassee River trail between the Tennessee state line and Hanging

The John Wayne, Jr., cabin site reflects a brief farmstead occupation by the John Wayne, Jr (aka *Tequanney*) household on the eve of the Cherokee removal. This family of fullblood, monolingual Cherokee farmers were part of "Chicken's Town," a dispersed, kin-based settlement along an isolated section of the Hiwassee River near the Tennessee state line. The John Wayne, Jr family did not play a prominent role in Cherokee politics, nor were they distinguished by noted events in the 1838 removal. Instead, they represent the unheralded majority of poor Cherokee farmers forced into exile by distant, unknowing, and uncaring politicians. The experiences of this "historically voiceless" segment of the Cherokee population are not well documented or understood, and the John Wayne, Jr. Cabin Site helps to illuminate the lifeways of the social and economic group for whom the "Trail of Tears" was most difficult.

In 1835, War Department census agent Nathaniel Smith documented the "John Wayne, Jr." family resident on the Hiwassee River near the Tennessee state line, and noted five fullblood Cherokee household members, with two females over age 16, one female under age 16, one male over age 18, and one male under 18 years of age. The family possessed two houses and farmed 15 acres on which they

The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

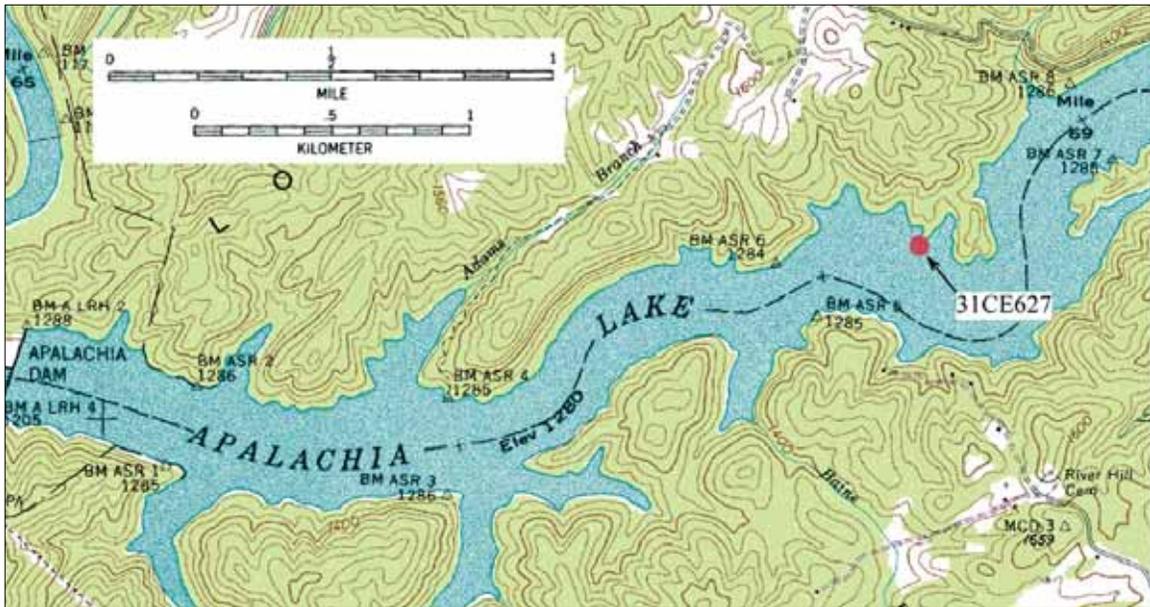


Figure 194. Detail of the Farner, NC-TN 7.5' quadrangle indicating the location of the John Wayne Jr. Cabin Site (31CE627).

Dog Creek (Figure 193). Frémont's sketchmaps depict the Cherokee farmstead "John O'Wayne 2<sup>nd</sup>" situated on the north side of the river near river mile 68. It is unclear whether Frémont's field sketch depicts Wayne's primary dwelling, the "hewed log cabin 13 ft square stick & clay chimney board roof door locked" described by Welch and Jarrett, or the "new hewed log cabin on a hill" listed in the same appraisal. A 1995 reconnaissance of Apalachia Reservoir (Riggs et al. 1996) identified a 19<sup>th</sup> century Cherokee site component (31Ce627) in the corresponding location on an upland toeslope approximately 168m (550ft) north of the Hiwassee River at River Mile 68.2 (Figures 194, 195). Site 31CE627 is located The site is largely situated on Tennessee Valley Authority property below the maximum pool level of Apalachia Reservoir. The historic Cherokee site component at 31CE627 covers an estimated 1000m<sup>2</sup> of a low, eroded, upland spur that projects into the river floodplain, . Site elevation is approximately 1280ft (389m) AMSL, slightly below the maximum pool level of Apalachia Lake, and within the normal daily fluctuation range of the reservoir. The slope of the site surface ranges between 3° and 10°, and the western and southern boundaries

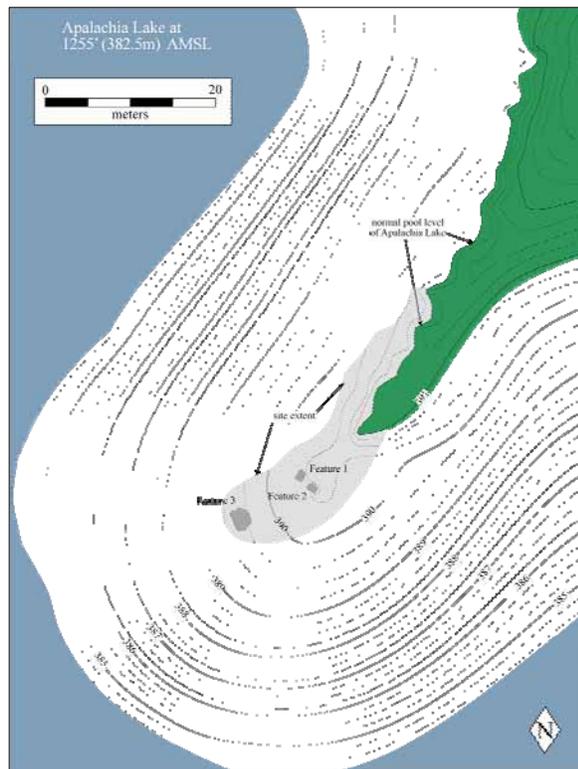


Figure 195. Contour map of the John Wayne, Jr. Cabin Site (31CE627).

of the site are defined by abrupt slope transitions

(>20°). The site area may also encompass a narrow, above pool portion of the spur situated on U.S.D.A. Forest Service lands. Intact sediments on the above pool portion exhibit 10-12cm of grayish brown gravely sandy loam underlain by yellowish brown stony clay loam subsoil. Deflation of the below pool site surface has resulted in the loss of 30-45cm of site sediments, and the subsoil is completely exposed. The site surface exhibits a heavy load of stranded clasts of various sizes, but is devoid of reservoir deposited mud sediments. Micaceous schist outcrops are present on the slope immediately south of the site area.

Intensive surface reconnaissance of this location identified six artifacts that were sparsely distributed over a 1000m<sup>2</sup> area on the southern and eastern sides of the spur. These include four Qualla series ceramic sherds, one of which is the rim of a large, recurvate walled jar with a partially smoothed, plain surface and a plain appliqué rimstrip (Figure 201). Two commercially manufactured artifacts were recovered from the site surface: a cast iron kettle body fragment and a machine headed cut nail. This scant collection is appear consistent with other Removal period assemblages from the study area and are attributed to the historic Cherokee component. Intensive inspection of the deflated surface also identified three subsurface pit features in the southwestern quadrant of the site. Two of these pits are adjacent, approximately 9.6m southwest of the reservoir shoreline. The third pit is situated 9m farther southwest. These features were obscured by thin layers of unconsolidated subsoil and were initially distinguished by their differential moisture retention and by the incidence of ceramic sherds atop one of the features. Closer inspection revealed that the pit margins were defined by narrow (~1-2mm) drying cracks as a result of the shrinkage of the pit fill matrices. These drying cracks delineated the perimeter of each pit, revealing rectangular plans that measure 1.26m x 0.95m, 1.15m x 0.74m, and 1.0m x 0.97m. The depths of surviving pit fill were not assayed in 1995. The shapes and dimensions of these pits are consistent with substructure cellars documented at a number of nineteenth century Cherokee residential sites, and their incidence and spatial separation may be interpreted as evidence for two distinct structures. Welch and Jarrett's property appraisal does not indicate a second building with the new cabin on the hill, but the family may have constructed an ancillary structure after the appraisal.

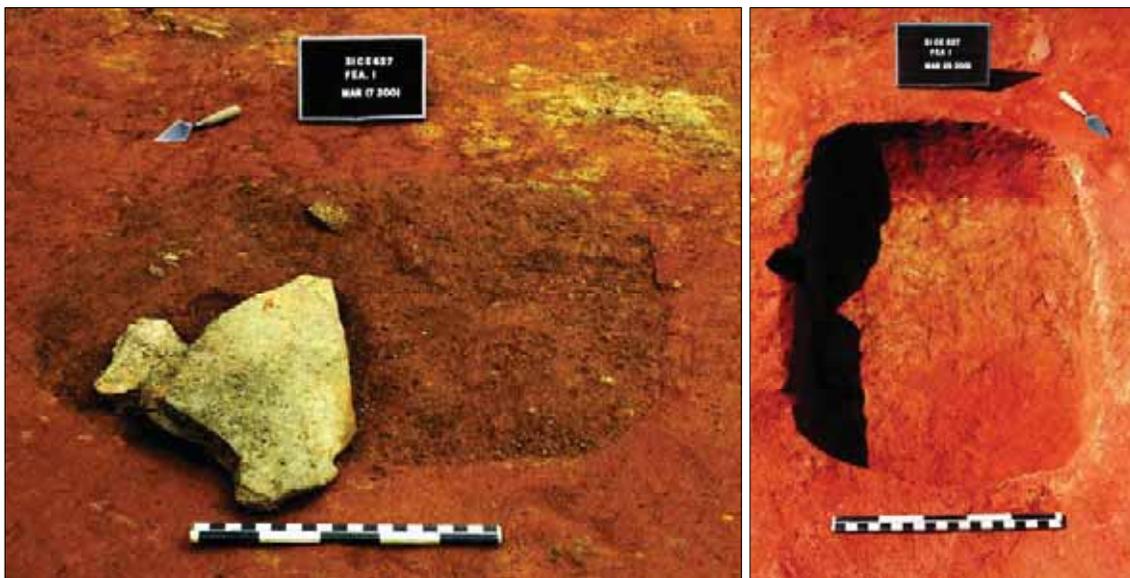


Figure 196. Feature 1, surface (left) and excavated (right) views.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

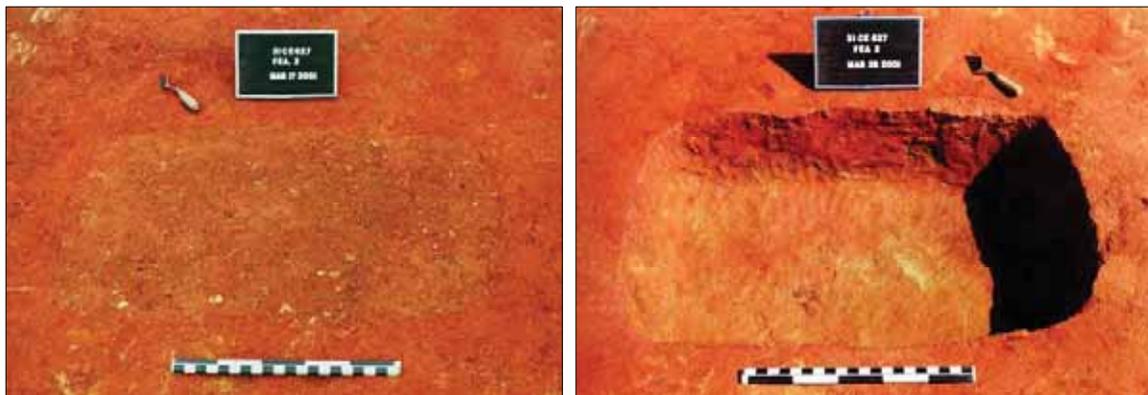


Figure 197. Feature 2, surface (left) and excavated (right) views.

During subsequent investigations in 2000, the three discrete subsurface contexts identified in 1995 were documented and excavated. These contexts were first troweled clean for definition, then photographed, documented with scale drawings, and excavated. Features 1 and 2 proved to be subrectangular pits excavated into stiff residual clay and decomposed schist bedrock. These two pits, arranged at right angles less than two meters apart, appear to have been substructure cellars associated with a Cherokee residence documented in this location by U.S. Army surveyors in 1838. These features conform in dimensions and morphology to cellars documented in other Removal Period Cherokee contexts in the region (Riggs 1996, 1999).

Feature 1, a subrectangular cellar pit, measures 1.27m (ne-sw) x 84cm x 23cm (Figures 196, 199). The matrix consisted of two zones, an upper stratum of red clay loam with schist gravel and large slabs of micaceous schist, and a lower zone of dark yellowish brown clay loam. The pit walls and floor exhibited a thin, uniform red clay coating which contrasted markedly with the decomposing bedded schist and red clay into which the pit intruded. This thin coating is interpreted as an intentionally applied lining; Feature 2, located less than one meter to the southeast, exhibited a similar lining.

The pit matrix yielded few artifacts, but associated materials clearly indicate affiliation with a 19<sup>th</sup> century Cherokee household. A single ceramic sherd is consistent with the Qualla ceramic series diagnostic of historic era Cherokee occupations. This small grit tempered sherd exhibits a rough-plain exterior surface and a smudged interior surface; the incurvate exterior profile probably denotes a neck sherd from a jar form. Two small chips of dark olive green wine bottle glass represent marginal retouch flakes, probably removed from bottle shards to produce scrapers or other unifacial edged tools. Wine bottle glass debitage is common in mid-to late eighteenth century Cherokee contexts, and has been documented in Removal period contexts at the Chewkeeskee Cabin Site (31Ce276) (Riggs 1999). A small (2.78cm x 1cm x .01cm) sheet silver bangle (Figure 198) recovered from Feature 1 is an irregular teardrop shape with a small diameter (.12cm) perforation punched in the narrow end. The bangle is lightly incised around the margin on both faces as well as with incised lines that subdivide the interior faces.



Figure 198. Obverse and reverse of sheet silver bangle.

This appears to schematically represent a horse's head in profile, lateral protrusions representing ears, the bangle perforation corresponding to the nostril and the curved lower edge of the bangle denoting an arched neck. Incised lines within the outline may represent a halter or bridle. A flat silver ring may represent another part of the same composite ornament. The ring measures 2.15cm in diameter and .02cm in thickness, with a slightly irregular form and uneven thickness indicative of hand production (rather than standardized commercial production). This earring and bangle are almost certainly the work



Figure 199. View of cellar pits at 31CE627 after excavation.

of a Cherokee craftsman; such personal ornaments are well represented in early nineteenth century depictions of Cherokee individuals, and native silversmiths are well documented in the 1809 Meigs census (Meigs 1809) and by Removal period spoliation claims (Riggs 1999).

Feature 2, another rectangular cellar pit (Figures 198, 199), is located approximately 1.5m southeast of Feature 1 and is oriented at a right angle to the first pit. Feature 2 measures 1.18m (nw-se) x 76cm and extends 28cm below the current deflated surface; it was likely 60-75cm deep when originally excavated. Four strata were identified in the pit matrix. The uppermost stratum consisted of gravely brown loam mottled with reddish brown clay loam; this was underlain by a zone of reddish brown clay loam. Feature 2 deposits yielded three Qualla series ceramic sherds, a small dark olive green bottle glass flake, three iron cut nail fragments, an iron staple fragment, and a small lead casting sprue.

Feature 3 (Figure 200), evident as a dark, irregular stain at the time of the 1995 reconnaissance, proved difficult to relocate during the 2001 investigations, and appears to have suffered considerable deflation during the interim. Concerted visual reconnaissance and sediment testing with a small diameter auger located a faint, irregular disturbance in the approximate location documented in the 1995 survey.



Figure 200. Exposed surface of Feature 3.

Trowel cleaning of loose gravels and soil from the surface of the feature revealed an indistinct, roughly oval stain measuring 2.43m x 2m. The margins of the disturbance were irregular and indistinct. In order to assess fill matrices a slot trench was excavated through the feature. This trench revealed a thin, irregular organic stratum underlain by sterile, loose, unconsolidated clay. The irregular oval shape, expansive scale, and hillslope location is interpreted as representing an intrusion created by the collapse of a tree and uprooting of the tree's root mass. The smaller, organic horizon at the surface, which yielded fragments of a ceramic pan during the 1995 reconnaissance, which contained numerous charred peach pits, is likely a trash deposit dumped into a vestigial and depression atop the old tree fall. Peach trees were commonly grown on Removal period Cherokee farmsteads, and peach pits are commonly found on such sites.

Five plain sherds that were recovered from the surface of Feature 3 refit to form the base of a flat bottomed pan measuring 17cm in diameter (Figure 201). Two of the sherds evince slightly



Figure 201. Qualla series ceramic sherds recovered from 31CE627.

of 31CE627 provides a commanding view of the approaches on the Hiwassee River trail, it occupies an exposed position subject to northwesterly winds, and is situated almost 200m from the nearest secondary water source (discounting the Hiwassee River itself). These characteristics appear inconsistent with use of the hilltop cabin as a primary dwelling, and suggest some ancillary function.

Although investigations at the John Wayne, Jr. Cabin site recovered scant material assemblages, the site yielded important information regarding the spatial organization and content of Removal era Cherokee homes and ancillary buildings in the region. These results are congruent with significance Criterion D for National Register listing, the quality of having yielded or being “likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.” In addition, the John Wayne, Jr. Cabin site is representative of a class of sites, the homes of Cherokee detainees, most directly and intimately associated with the mass Cherokee Removal of 1838, an event that “made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history,” with relevance at local, state, and national levels. This quality is referable to Register Criterion A, and supports consideration of the site as eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. However, because the site matrix is heavily deflated and few (if any) intact archaeological deposits remain at 31Ce627, the site may not retain sufficient integrity of register listing.

smudged check stamped surfaces; one of these appears to be the basal disk of a globular jar. The remaining two body sherds have smoothed surfaces.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

The nineteenth century Cherokee association of the component is indicated by ten Qualla series ceramic sherds, a cast iron vessel fragment, a cut nail fragment, and a sheet silver bangle. The low density and limited range of materials evident at the John Wayne, Jr. Cabin site may reflect a relatively brief span of site occupation (< two years). The precise nature of this occupation is unknown; the John Wayne, Jr. household may have maintained residence in their earlier dwelling and devoted the “new” cabin to some specialized use that involved a limited assortment of household goods. By comparison to the presumed location of the earlier dwelling, the position of the buildings appear problematic. Although the hilltop location

### John Welch House Site (31Ce673)

John Welch (ca. 1791-1852), a well-to-do Anglo-Cherokee planter who lived near present-day Marble, NC (Figures 202 and 203), weathered the 1838 Cherokee Removal and sponsored a post-removal Cherokee enclave on his extensive property. Military correspondence indicates that Welch, who had secured a legal exemption from removal by permit from Superintendent Nathaniel Smith, encouraged other Cherokees to evade removal troops. Lt. Col. John Gray Bynum, the commander at Fort Montgomery observed:

...I collected yesterday about 80 Indians. They had all received orders from Welch on Valley River to leave home & take to the mountains (Bynum 1838f)

The army also determined that Welch and his neighbors were hiding and feeding the fugitives. Captain George Porter reported:

I have, with my company, taken post here convenient to two points (one of which is Welch's, the other Colvard's) where the Indians are fed and harboured and where the trails from the mountains, on both sides of the river, concentrate....Welch's family and Nancy Colvard...should be apprehended and sent in... Welch's people I understand have liberty from Genl. Eustis. These two families are doing a great deal of mischief (Porter 1838).

The army seized Welch when he traveled to the Cherokee Agency to receive disbursements for his properties in the New Echota cession (H.L. Scott 1838b). He was held without charge for months in the Fort Cass brig, while the army tried to force him to order Cherokee fugitives in from the North Carolina mountains. The military released Welch when the last of the emigration detachments departed from the agency, and he traveled back to his Valley River home, where his white wife (Elizabeth Blythe Welch) and son-in-law (Dr. J.A. Powell) had secured the family farm and other properties. The Welch property soon became a haven for landless Cherokees who had hidden from the army, and by 1840, almost 100 Cherokees lived under Welch's patronage (Finger 1984, Hindman 1841, Thomas 1840). The community persisted until John Welch's death in 1852. The Welch family maintained the property and home until 1869, when Elizabeth Welch sold the Welch farm and moved to the Cheoah Valley..

#### Documentary Evidence of the John Welch House Site

The Welch farmstead is first documented by Matthew Rhea's 1832 map (Figure 202), which indicates the home on the north side of Valley River at the end of a spur road off the Unicoi Turnpike. The 1835 War Department census of the Cherokee Nation indicates John Welch as resident on Valley River, with more than 100 acres under cultivation by six black slaves and a family consisting of one "half-breed," 9 "quadroons," and one "white connected by marriage" (U.S. War Department 1835). William Welch and Nimrod Jarrett's 1836 appraisal of John Welch's holdings (the most highly valued Cherokee property in North Carolina) reveal well-developed properties comparable to those of Anglo-American planters in the frontier South:

John Welch Living on the north side of Valley River above Hanks Improvement  
1 Large Hewed log Building 16-40 1 1/2 story high lower floor laid with Plank-  
upper floor in one room laid with loose plank-1 stick and clay

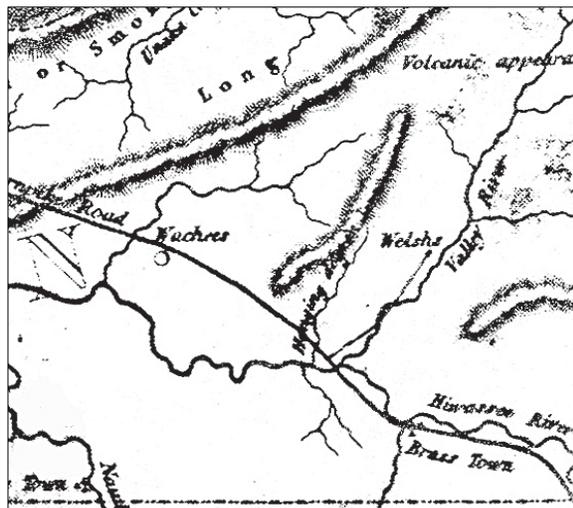


Figure 202. Detail of 1832 Matthew Rhea map indicating the John Welch house on Valley River.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

chimney stone back and jams 2 plank shutters hung with iron hinges one half of the House covered with shingles, the other half with boards nailed on	191.00
1 hewed log Kitchen 14-14 Puncheon floor Stick and Clay Chimney Stone Back shed in front Board Roof	30.00
1 cabin 12-12 Puncheon floor Stick and Clay Chimney Stone Back Board Roof	15.00
1 Hewed log smoke House 12-12 B[oard] Roof	18.00
1 Small lumber House 11-11 B.[oard] Roof	11.00
1 Stable 12-12 Trough and Rack B.[oard] Roof nailed on	15.00
1 Corn Crib 7-20 Round logs board R.[oof]	15.00
1 Horse lot containing 450 Rails a \$2 [2 cents]	9.00
1 Hewed log cabin above the spring 12-12	15.00
1 Spring House covered with boards	3.00
1 Shop House 12-12 B.[oard] Roof	4.00
90 Acres in cultivation at the Home place at 10-	900.00
11½ Acres in the Bottom above the House now called Neds place a 10	115.00
1 House near the large farm where Wm Crawford lives	20.00
The lot around the House	5.00
1 Cabin where Shedrick Baley lived 16-16 Puncheon floor Stick and Clay Chimney Stone Back Board Roof	16.00
Lot around the House	7.00
116 small Peach trees a 25	26.50
52 large Peach trees a 75	39.00
4 large Apple Trees a \$6 1 small a 1.50	25.50
1 Cabin at the upper end of the field occupied by Jonathon Parker 14-14 Puncheon floor board Roof stick and clay chimney	15.00
1 Stable at the same place	1.00
1 old grist mill nearly Rotten down	50.00
1 other Cabin occupied by Jonathon [sic] Blyth near where Parker lives 14-14 Puncheon floor wood chimney stone back Board Roof	20.00
one other cabin at the same place 14-14 Puncheon floor Stick and Clay Chimney Stone Back and Jams Board Roof	25.00
1 Stable and crib joined together	7.00
1 Lot inclosed in cultivation around the House	14.00
1 Improvement on Lying Rock Creek below Saluwaga and adjoining James Blythes- now rented to Jesse Smith 1 Cabin in the field 12-14 Puncheon floor wood Chimney Board Roof	18.00
1 Cabin on oposite [sic] side of the creek 14-16 Plank floor Stick and Clay Chimney Stone Back and Jams	15.00
One stable 12-12-Trough and Rack B.[oard] Roof	8.00
20 Acres in cultivation a 9	180.00
25 Peach trees a 50	12.50
One Improvement on the North side Vally River on a branch above Charley Jones occupied by Leonard Painter 2 old cabins a \$8 each	16.00
3 Acres upland in cultivation a \$7	21.00
31 Peach trees a 50	15.50
One Improvement called the Yeociss place on the south side of Vally River above Chelataske and James Whitaker 1 House 16-16 hewed logs Puncheon floor wood Chimney Stone Back and Jams Board Roof	25.00
1 Cabin 8-18-hewed logs, Puncheon floor Board Roof	10.00
1 other 12-13 wood Chimney B.[oard] Roof	13.00

## John Welch Home Site

1 small Stable 11-11	6.00
1 Corn Crib 7-11	4.00
40 Acres inclosed 16 in cultivation a 10	160.00
1 small smoke House	12.00
Extra fencing 24 Acres	48.00
1 large Apple tree\$2 2 small do 50	3.00
36 Peach trees a 37 1/2	13.50
	2205.00
Add for Houses	305.50
Add for fruit trees	84.00

(Welch and Jarrett 1836:64-66)

In 1837, surveyor Reuben Deaver noted Welch's location on Lot 71, District 6, which included "a butiful situation for building occupied by John Welch and General Jackson (natives)."

Two of the 1837-1838 Army Corps surveys identify the Welch home, albeit imprecisely (see Figures 203 and 204). Like Rhea's map, the army sketchmaps indicate Welch at the approximate middle of the Valley River Valley, on the north side of the river and adjacent to the road. However, the Army survey sketchmaps of the state (or Franklin) road (constructed 1836-1837) suggests that Welch was positioned a considerable distance northwest of the road. It is likely, however, that the state road incorporated the earlier wagon road from Welch's to the Hiwassee River (indicated on the 1832 Rhea map), and therefore ran immediately past Welch's house. S. Moylan Fox's 1850 survey through the Valley River Valley (Figure 205) for the proposed Western Turnpike traced the state road from Valletowns (now Andrews) past the Welch home (Fox 1850). Fox's survey was far more precise and detailed than previous efforts, and Fox's sketchmaps depict the Welch homestead on an upland bench overlooking a spring hollow, west of Welch Mill Creek and immediately north of the old state road (labeled "Murphy Road"). The old state road made a peculiar bend to access the foot of the hill on which the Welch house stood, perhaps an



Figure 203. Location of John Welch farmstead [labeled "Welsh (half breed)"] on the 1838 Army Corps map of southwestern North Carolina.

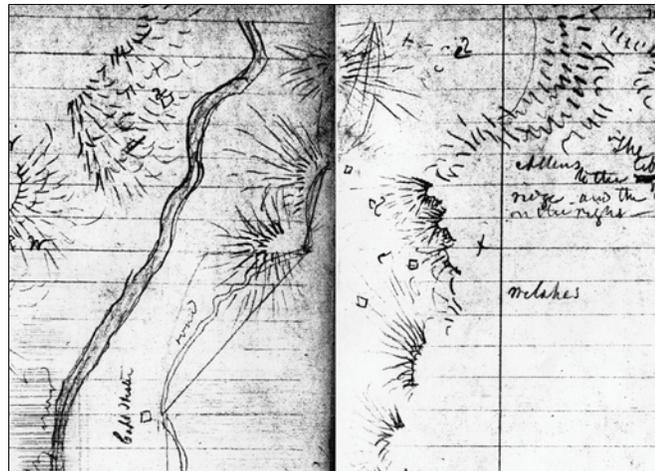


Figure 204. Welch's (labeled "Welshes") home indicated on 1838 U.S. army sketchmap of the Valley River and state road survey map.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

indication that the course of the road was determined by the prior placement of the Welch home. An 1860 gold mining survey map (Figure 206) of the Valley River Valley depicts the homes of Elizabeth Welch, Ned Welch, William Parker, and Nancy Hawkins relative to the Western Turnpike, the Valley River, and Welch Mill Creek (Blake 1860). This map indicates the John and Elizabeth Welch home adjacent to a distinctive S-shaped recurvate segment of the turnpike. Field examination of the site locale identified a deeply entrenched, abandoned recurvate roadbed that appears to correspond to this segment of the former turnpike. Documentary evidence indicates that the Welch home was situated immediately north-northeast of the. This presumed house area is situated in a broad, gently sloping toe of the northernmost of a group of residual upland knobs that occupy the middle of the Valley River Valley. The setting is a commanding hilltop location that provides a panoramic view of Welch's former holdings.

### **Archaeological Investigations**

Archaeological reconnaissance of the presumed Welch house site (centered on UTM (17) 236,153e, 3,897,535n) revealed a sparse scatter of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century domestic materials indicative of a residential occupation, as well as materials indicative of later 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century occupations. Investigators then scanned a portion of the site area with metal detectors in order to determine the presence, density, and general distribution of metal artifacts referable to the Welch occupation. This technique was also used as a means to identify concentrations of metal artifacts indicative of archaeological feature deposits. Investigators recovered mid-19<sup>th</sup> century metal artifacts from 12 tests before encountering a discrete feature deposit evident at the base of the 20 cm clay loam plowzone. Expansion of the shovel test revealed the corner of a square or subrectangular feature filled with ashy, organically enriched soil. Approximately 3-4 centimeters of the feature deposit (brown clayey loam with abundant charcoal) were removed from the surface of the pit; this yielded

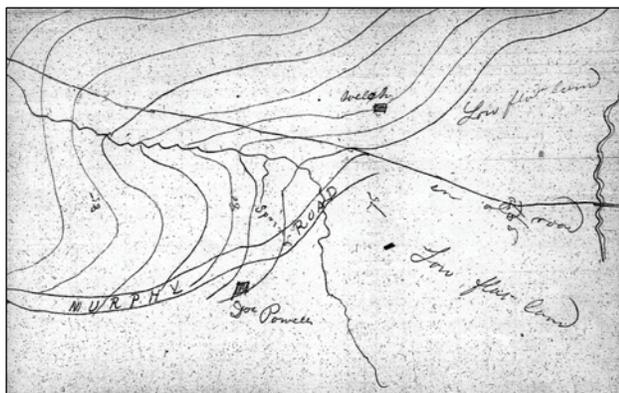


Figure 205. Detail of 1850 Western Turnpike survey sketchmap indicating the Welch house.

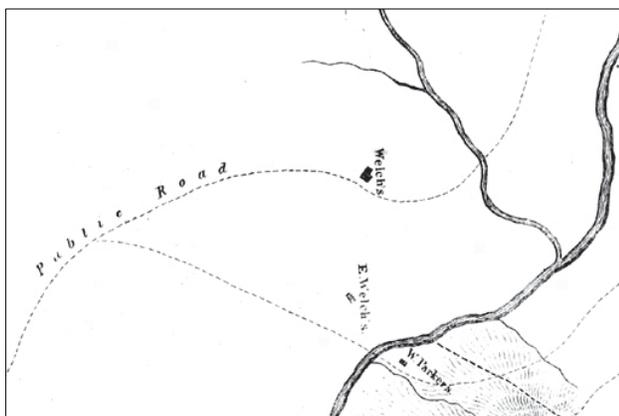


Figure 206. Blake map (1860) map of the Valley River gold district indicating the John Welch house.

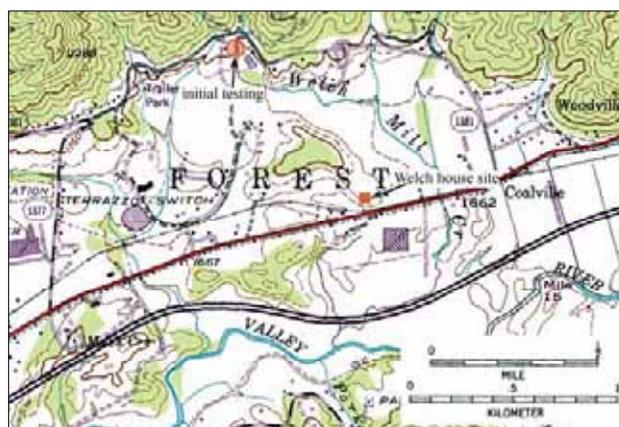


Figure 207. Detail of the Marble, NC 7.5' quadrangle indicating the location of the John Welch House Site (31Ce673).



Figure 208. View of the John Welch House site (31Ce673), facing east.

whiteware and yellowware sherds, cut nails, brass pen knife liners, and a carved, drilled schist disk. Assay of the surrounding area using a one-inch tube sampler revealed deposits that delineated a roughly square (1.80 m x 1.75 m) deposit that consistently extended 40cm below the base of the plowzone. This feature was provisionally identified as a sub-structure pit cellar, a type of storage facility ubiquitous in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century domestic contexts in the southern mountains. This probable pit cellar was interpreted as evidence of the location of the Welch residence or one of its dependencies; the pit location closely corresponds to the position of the Welch house indicated on the 1850 and 1860 maps (Figures 205, 206) and can be construed as the location indicated on the 1838 Army survey (Figure 203) pit identified during testing most certainly represents the Welch residence, given the location of the Welch farmhouse on the mid-nineteenth century maps.

On a return visit to the site, investigators hand excavated approximately 14.5 square meters of plowzone deposits to expose the pit cellar in order to recover a sample of pit content. Excavation of the plowzone revealed two additional cellar pits aligned parallel to the first pit. Each of the features was documented with digital and color slide photography, then documented with measured plan view drawings. Feature excavation then proceeded by hand removal (trowel only) of half of each feature's matrix to expose a profile view of feature stratigraphy; bisection was effected on the long axis of the feature. Horizontal control was maintained with respect to natural stratigraphy, and recovered contents were segregated and packaged according to feature section and stratum. Photographs and measured drawings were made of each feature profile and stratigraphic elevations were recorded relative to known feature and site datum points. Following such documentation, the remaining portion of each feature was hand excavated. Excavation of the matrix of each feature



Figure 209. Exposed pit cellar surfaces prior to excavation.



Figure 210. Pit cellars after excavation.

was continued until demonstrably sterile subsoil was encountered. Once a feature had been completely excavated, a final plan view photograph was made of each.

With the exception of larger artifacts hand recovered during excavation, all materials and soils recovered from these features were packaged and returned to the UNC Research Laboratories of Archaeology for water screen or flotation processing. With the exception of 10 liter per stratum soil samples retained for future analyses, all feature soils (approximately 1500 liters) were either washed through nested 1/4 inch and window mesh wire screens for recovery of artifact and ecofact content, or flotation processed for recovery of ethnobotanical content with heavy fractions captured in window mesh screen.

Each of the features revealed evidence of rapid, contemporaneous deposition, with similar strata of wood charcoal and charred plant matter, and artifact crossmends between pit deposits. Materials recovered from the pit cellar deposits (Table 4) include a wide array of commercially manufactured ceramic sherds, including serving wares such as whiteware, ironstone, and yellow ware, as well as alkaline glazed stoneware and lead

glazed redware storage or food preparation containers (Figures 211-213). Glass fragments include leaded glass tumbler fragments, probable pitcher or mug fragments, and variety of glass containers, including (ironically) a whiskey flask fragment bearing the probable portrait of President Andrew Jackson (Figure 214). Table cutlery from the cellar deposits includes four two-tined iron forks with bone or antler handles, two table knives, and an iron tablespoon. Household goods include a tinned iron and brass candlestand (Figure 216). Clothing hardware comprises bone, brass, and iron buttons, as well as brass hooks and eyelets (Figure 215). Personal items include a small penknife, a whetstone, a clay marble, a complete carved chlorite schist tobacco pipe (Figure 217) and a number of small polished stone pebbles interpreted as game pieces. Ammunition is well represented, with a gunflint and a percussion cap, homemade stone and lead bullet molds, lead balls and shot, and sprue. Architectural remains are surprisingly scant, with only 38 cut nails and two fragments of window pane.

Table 4. John Welch House Site (31Ce673) Artifact Inventory (preliminary).

<b>Kitchen/dining</b>		<b>arms/ammunition</b>	
<i>Ceramics</i>		gun flint	1
whiteware		brass percussion cap	1
shell edge	81	lead bullet mold	1
transfer-printed	42	bullet mold	1
sponge decorated	23	lead ball	2
hand-painted	36	lead sprue	3
annular	17		
mocha	10	<b>architectural</b>	
plain	263	cut nail	38
unidentified	2	window glass	2
creamware	4		
yellow ware	8	<b>personal items</b>	
ironstone	6	pocket knife	1
alkaline glazed stoneware	66	whetstone	1
redware	5	marble	1
		chlorite schist pipe/ pipe fragment	4
<i>tableware/cutlery</i>		carved schist disk with drilled center	1
carved/polished utensil handle	1	polished gaming pebble	6
2 tined fork w/ antler handle	1	pecked cobble	2
2 tined fork w/ bone handle	3	talc pencil (?)	1
table knife with hachured bone handle	1	carved talc fragment	2
knife blade fragment	1	quartz crystal fragment	1
tablespoon (tinned iron)	3		
		<b>activities/tack</b>	
<i>glassware/containers</i>		horse shoe	1
olive green bottle fragment	5	iron bands/chain links/scrap	11
flask fragment	7		
tumbler fragment	6	<b>personal ornamentation</b>	
pitcher/mug fragment	1	glass bead	9
medicine vial fragment	3		
drinking glass fragment	1	<b>household furnishing/lighting</b>	
unidentified container fragment	6	candlestand (brass & tinware)	1
unidentified glass fragment	3		
<i>cookware</i>			
cast iron dutch oven lid fragment	2		
<b>clothing/sewing</b>			
straight pin (brass)	31		
bone button (5 holes)	6		
brass button	3		
pewter button	1		
iron button	1		
clothes hooks, eyelets (brass)	5		
brass candle holder	1		



Figure 211. Blue shelledge decorated white-ware plate recovered from 31Ce673.



Figure 212. Blue sponge decorated whiteware sherds recovered from plate recovered from 31Ce673.

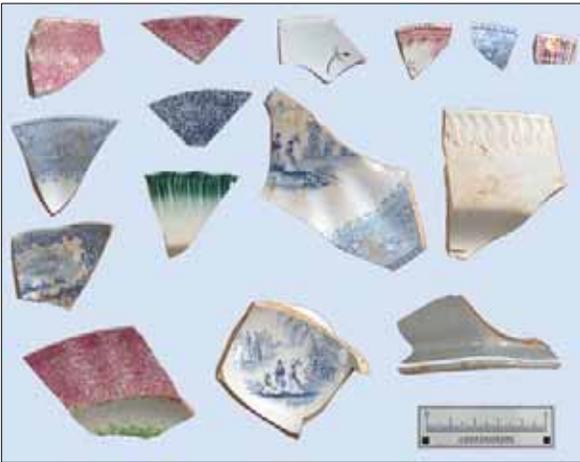


Figure 213. Whiteware sherds recovered from 31Ce673.



Figure 214. Fragment of probable Jackson whiskey flask recovered from 31Ce673



Figure 215. Clothing, sewing, and personal ornaments recovered from 31Ce673



Figure 216. Portion of a tinware and brass candlestand recovered from 31Ce673.

Charred botanical materials recovered from the cellars comprise a wide array of food remains, including local produce such as maize, wheat, rye, barley, beans, peaches, and apples, but also commercially obtained foods such as rice and coffee and wild plant foods chestnuts, hickory nuts, acorns, and honey locust. Faunal remains are dominated by domestic species such as pig, cow, and chicken, but include wild species such as deer, turkey, rabbit, squirrels, small birds, and fish.

Associated materials indicate that the cellars were abandoned and filled during the late 1840s to early 1850s. Because the rapid, simultaneous filling of the pits probably took place after removal of the covering superstructure, these facilities were probably not situated beneath the Welch domicile (which stood until ca. 1870), but were instead associated with an ancillary building, such as the free-standing kitchen documented in the 1836 valuation as “1 hewed log Kitchen 14-14 Puncheon floor Stick and Clay Chimney Stone Back shed in front Board Roof.” While the material assemblages clearly postdate the removal era, the abundance, diversity, and content of the assemblages are consistent with occupation by the Welch household. Most of the materials indicate a highly westernized lifestyle with ready access to a wide range of consumer goods, consistent with economic and cultural status of an English-speaking Anglo-Cherokee family that ranked among the wealthiest in the region. Native affinities may be represented by the traditional Cherokee carved stone tobacco pipes and other carved stone objects in the assemblage, and the notable incidence of a wide range of wild plant and animal foods in the assemblage may reflect maintenance of traditional food preferences by the Welch family.

The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century contexts identified at 31Ce673 date well within the span of the Welch family’s ownership and occupation of the property, and the feature deposits represent a filling event that dates around the time of John Welch’s 1851 death. The location of these contexts appears to correspond to the position of the Welch home as mapped in 1838, 1850, and 1860. Thus, it appears likely that 31Ce673 is the site of the John Welch house at the time of removal and was the center of a dramatic sequence of conspiracy, peaceful resistance, and community resurgence that distinguished the removal response of Cherokee citizens in southwestern North Carolina from that in other parts of the Cherokee Nation.

### Evaluation and Recommendations

The Welch family’s role in organizing community-level resistance against the forcible removal of the Cherokee Nation, and sponsoring the subsequent resurgence of the Valley River Cherokee community, presents a remarkable, yet unsung, aspect of the events and processes that surrounded the Cherokee Trail of Tears. As the central place in the planning and execution of resistance against military removal, the John Welch House site (31Ce673) assumes a high degree of historical significance within the broader context of the 1838 Cherokee removal. The house site is also important as representative of occupations by Anglo-Cherokee planter-entrepreneurs, the most westernized segment Cherokee society. Thus, the John Welch House site possesses qualities of historical association with “events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history” and “with the lives of persons significant in our past,” conformable to National Register criteria A and B. Although no standing architecture or above-ground ruins mark the site, the documented presence of intact archaeological contexts, such as substructure cellar pits (which



Figure 217. Carved chlorite schist tobacco pipe recovered from 31Ce673.

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represent surviving architectural elements) indicate a substantial degree of site integrity. These contexts have yielded substantial material assemblages that significantly inform our understanding of the lifeways of Anglo-Cherokee families in the post-Removal era. The documented presence of the Welch household at the site between 1832 and 1869 fuels expectations that Removal era contexts and deposits are also represented at 31Ce673. The documented and implied presence of these contexts and associated materials corresponds to National Register Criterion D, the quality of archaeological sites “that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.” In view of the documented historical and archaeological significance of the John Welch House site, it is recommended that the site be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places after additional archaeological survey and testing has definitively established the site’s boundaries.

## Situagi House Site

Situagi, a Cherokee national councilman and the Aquohee District judge, led one of thirteen overland emigration detachments that traversed the Trail of Tears in 1838–1839. Situagi's contingent of approximately 1250 Aquohee District emigrants departed the Agency depot (Charleston, TN) on September 8, 1838 and disbanded in present-day Oklahoma on February 2, 1839. In the west, Situagi continued his leadership of the mountain Cherokees settled in the Delaware District.

Situagi (also rendered as: *Situwakee*, *Sotowega*, *Suddawaga*, *Suddawig*, and *Settiwig*) first appears in the documentary record as *Situwakee*, a fullblood head of household residing at Great Tellico in eastern Tennessee, where he claimed a 640-acre life estate reservation as provided by the 1819 Calhoun Treaty. Like most reserves, Situagi and his family were quickly ejected from their property by white squatters, and the family moved 45 miles southeast along the Unicoi Turnpike to resettle at Aquohee, where he functioned as a town chief and as the elected judge of the Aquohee District. Situagi settled across the river from Valleytowns Baptist Mission (Figure 218), and managed town fields for Aquohee adjacent to the mission establishment. Missionary Evan Jones described Situagi as “an industrious old man” who supported the Valleytowns Mission for its educational role, but did not subscribe to the Baptists’ religious doctrines. Welch and Jarrett’s 1836 property appraisals describe Situagi's farm:

Sutawakee (50 to 60 years old) living on the west side Hiwassee River opposite the mission

one hew'd log cabin 15 ft sqr puncheon floor hew'd joists stick and clay chimney stone back and jams shed in front	\$40.00
one cabin 13 ft sqr wood chimney	18.00
one cabin wall 12 by 14 ft	14.00
an old cabbin 10 by 10	8.00
12 acres in cultivation upland and bottom \$10.00	120.00
9 peach trees 75 8 small D° 25	8.75
1 apple tree	4.00
one improvement on opposite side of the river adjoining the mission	
38 acres in cultivation above Yonah 10	380.00
12 peach trees	506.00
2 old corn cribs \$5.00	10.00
	<u>\$608.75</u>
[addition for] houses \$67.50 trees \$14	81.50

As a prominent Aquohee District leader, Situagi was a Cherokee constitutional convention delegate and a signatory to the constitution that formally established the Cherokee republic. As an ardent nationalist and opponent of the Indian Removal policy, Situagi oversaw and signed landmark memorials from the Aquohee District Courthouse (see previous treatment of the courthouse, this volume) that were published for national audiences in the *Cherokee Phoenix* newspaper. As the removal controversy grew, Situagi was closely aligned with Principal Chief

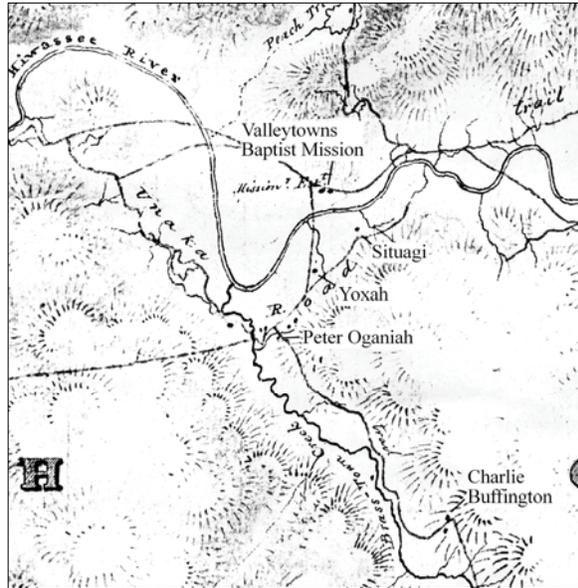


Figure 218. Detail of 1838 Army “Map of a Portion of the Cherokee Nation...” with modern annotation indicating the Situagi house site.

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John Ross and the Patriot Party, and regularly traveled with delegations to Washington to lobby for the Cherokee cause.

As a respected leader of the culturally conservative Cherokee majority, Situagi lent legitimacy to the Ross government and bolstered the Patriot Party's efforts to unify the Cherokee people against removal. The "industrious old man" held the people of the Aquohee District together through the trials of the forced emigration, and helped to maintain the cohesiveness and political integrity of the tribal conservatives in the strange new lands of the West.

### Documentary Evidence and Archaeological Investigations of the Situagi House Site

The location of the Situagi homesite is first documented by Welch and Jarrett's 1836 valuation, which indicates that he was on the "west side Hiwassee River opposite the mission." The 1837 Deaver survey field books state Tract 147 in District 3 consisted of 365 acres and was "improved and occupied by old Indian Suttiwaga." A December 18, 1837 Army survey of the Unicoi Turnpike between Fort Butler and Fort Hembree mapped the home and field of "Sotowega," as well as a "Trail to hut of Sotowega a chief," and "Sotowega's creek" in western Clay County (Figure 219). Reconstruction of this line of survey places the Situagi home in the vicinity of UTM[17] 231,570e, 3,882,715n, approximately two kilometers northeast of present-day Brasstown, North Carolina, and centered within Lot 147 of District 3.

The Army sketchmap depicts the house located approximately half-way between the Unicoi Turnpike and the Hiwassee River, due west of a distinctive curve in the turnpike route. Here, the turnpike tracks the base of the colluvial slope bordering Suddawig (i.e., Situagi) Bottom (Figure 220), a landscape feature that encompasses a complex system of ancient and more recent river terraces. Situagi's house is depicted in the midst of his cultivated land, which Welch and Jarrett describe as a 12-acre field of both "upland and bottom." This suggests that Situagi's D-shaped field (see Figure 219) straddled the first and second terrace formations, and the more elevated third terrace, which is delineated by an abrupt 3-4m scarp. A bold, high volume spring issues from the base of this scarp at UTM [17] 231,565, 3,882.765n; this feature, which provides ready access to abundant fresh water, may have influenced the selection of the Situagi house seat.

Investigators examined a 200m x 300m area surrounding this spring for evidence of the Situagi family occupation (Figure 221). Most of the area is maintained as as pasture, but two

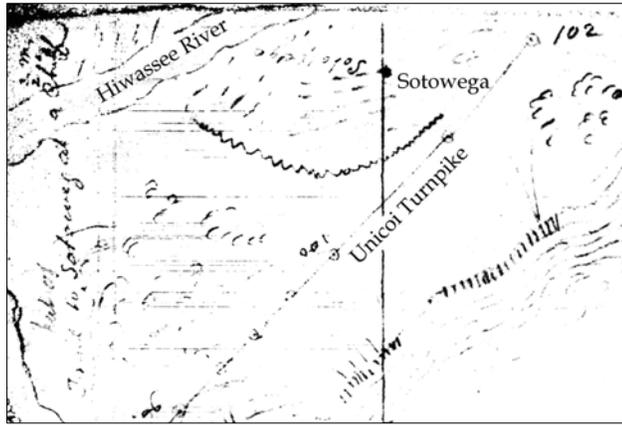


Figure 219. Location of Situagi home site (labeled "Sotowega") indicated on an 1837 U.S. Army survey sketchmap.



Figure 220. Detail of the Peachtree, NC 7.5' quadrangle with the locations of the Situagi house site and other features derived from 1837 survey notes.



Figure 221. 1998 aerial view of the Situagi house locality with annotations indicating areas considered by archaeological survey.

cultivated parcels and a number of cattle paths and wallows presented surface exposures for visual inspection. The owner of the garden plot near the eastern of the locality had collected archaeological materials from the plot over a sustained period, and allowed investigators to inspect his collection, which included abundant Middle Woodland period Pigeon and Connestee series ceramic sherds, as well as lesser quantities of historic era Cherokee Qualla series sherds. The Qualla ceramics from the garden plot include check stamped and rectilinear complicated stamped wares with notched rimstrips, attributes characteristic of local Cherokee pottery from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century through the Removal era. This garden area did not yield any English tablewares or other commercially manufactured good commonly associated with Removal period Cherokee contexts, and most likely represents earlier occupations associated with Aquohee or Aquonatuste (located across the river at the Townson site [31Ce15]). Similarly, the cultivated plot along the northern edge of the survey area (shaded red in Figure 221) evinced a moderately dense cluster of Middle Woodland period ceramic and lithic artifacts, and lesser quantities of historic era Qualla series sherds sparsely distributed along the northwestern side of the plot. One collector indicated that he

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had recovered two blue hand-painted pearlware or whiteware sherds and several fragments of dark green bottle glass (materials that may be diagnostic of 19<sup>th</sup> century occupation) from this area, but these materials could not be relocated for examination.

Systemic shovel testing in the adjacent area (indicated by blue shading in Figure 221) recovered abundant Woodland period ceramic sherds and lithic debris across much of the area, as well as sparsely distributed Qualla series sherds, but did not locate any manufactured goods diagnostic of Removal period occupation. Along the crest and frontslope of the third terrace (shaded yellow in Figure 221; Figure 222), the area deemed most likely to have been the seat of Situagi house,



Figure 222. View of the third terrace front at the Situagi house locality. Tree line corresponds to fence line on terrace crest. Arrow indicates small cluster of materials that may be referable to a Removal era occupation.

investigators conducted systematic shovel testing (placed at 10-meter intervals) and metal detector reconnaissance. These tests recovered historic era Cherokee Qualla series sherds in two small clusters. One area, which yielded three sherds, is located on the second terrace backslope, at the northern edge of the yellow shaded block (at UTM[17] 231,610e, 380,900n). The second cluster of nine Qualla series sherds is situated along the terrace crest around an old fenceline (at UTM[17] 231,580e, 3,882,740n), approximately 35m-50m southeast of the spring (Figure 224). These tests also recovered a plain whiteware sherd, as well as three fragments of cast iron cooking vessels, and a probable iron saddle brace, materials consistent with Removal period Cherokee domestic occupations.

While evidence of historic era Cherokee occupation is widespread across the area examined, much of this material is probably associated with the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century villages of Aquohee and Aquonetuste. Possible Removal period materials clustered on the third terrace crest near the springhead may demarcate the Situagi house area, but more intensive investigations are needed to confirm this association. It is likely that the Situagi house seat, like other documented Removal era Cherokee home sites in the region, includes a substructure cellar pit surrounded by a relatively small ( $\approx 400\text{m}^2$ ), sparse scatter of household debris. Further investigation of the Situagi house locality should focus upon this relatively small ( $\approx 1500\text{m}^2$ ) area immediately south-southeast of the springhead, with a specific goal of isolating any cellar or other pit context associated with the house. Because such cellar pits present relatively small search targets ( $< 4\text{m}^2$ ), purposive survey for the Situagi cellar will require either broad areal stripping of plowzone deposits or systematic close interval (one-meter) sampling of subplowzone deposits with small diameter auger or posthole diggers.

### Recommendations

Situagi's roles as Aquohee District judge, Cherokee national councilman, constitutional delegate, anti-removal activist, and conductor of a Trail of Tears emigration detachment clearly identify the Aquohee District leader as a person "significant in our past," at local, state, and national scales, conformable to NRHP Criterion B for National Register listing. If, upon further investigation, the Situagi house site can be confirmed and demonstrated to possess contextual

## Situagi House Site

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integrity, it will be demonstrably eligible for National Register inclusion by virtue of association with Chief Situagi as a historical personage. In addition, the archaeological manifestation of the house may also augment the significance of the site with respect to NRHP Criterion D, applicable to properties that “have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.”

### **Aquone and 31MA604**

Aquone, a small Cherokee community situated along the Nantahala River near the mouth of Jarrett's Creek, was the most remote and isolated settlement affected by the removal operations of 1838. Baptist missionary Evan Jones, who visited "Egwonee" in 1829, remarked that it was "a small town...surrounded by a great distance on all sides, by most impassable mountains...they have had little intercourse beyond their own neighborhood (Jones 1826-1846 [December 19, 1829])."

The community was initially settled around 1821 by families displaced by the Calhoun Treaty of 1819. Many of the Acquone households were related to Shawnee John (aka John Benn, French John), who had claimed reserve rights where he resided on the Caney Fork of the Tuckasegee. After Shawnee John and his family were displaced from their reservation by state claimants, they removed to the remote Nantahala River Valley, presumably beyond the grasping reach of the whites.

The 1835 War Department enumeration of the Nantahala River Valley communities documented 44 households (population 199) but does not identify specific localities such as Aquone, Nantahala, Chinleantee, and Briar Town. Welch and Jarrett's 1836-37 valuations of Cherokee properties recorded a total of 42 Cherokee households in the Nantahala River Valley, of which 15 were associated with Aquone (Table 5). All of these were simple farmsteads, with single-room cabins of unhewn logs, a few log corn cribs or stables, small orchards of peach and apple trees, and small plots (1-12 acres) of cultivated land.

Army surveys performed in the winter of 1837-38 indicate "Acone Town" at the mouth of Jarrett's Creek, and locate nine houses (Figures 223, 224). John C. Frémont accompanied one crew that traveled along the state road from Franklin and spent the night in Aquone: :

About dark we reached the Nantaheyle River, at an Indian village [Aquone]. The Indians were having a feast and a carouse and were all drunk. The squaws hid us in a log out-cabin, half filled with shucked corn. We did not pass a comfortable night. The shouts of drunken Indians and rats running over us kept us awake; and we were glad when morning came. The night had been cold and our bath-tub was the Nantaheyle River. There was ice along the banks and the water in my hair froze into fretful quills (Frémont 1956:24).

In May 1838, the military established a post (Camp Scott) near the mouth of Choga Creek in the midst of Aquone. North Carolina militia posted at Camp Scott were responsible for the arrest and deportation of the Cherokee residents of the upper Nantahala Valley, and most of the inhabitants of Aquone were probably gathered at the camp. However, William H. Thomas' 1840 census of the Cherokees remaining in the East documents dozens of former Briartown and Aquone

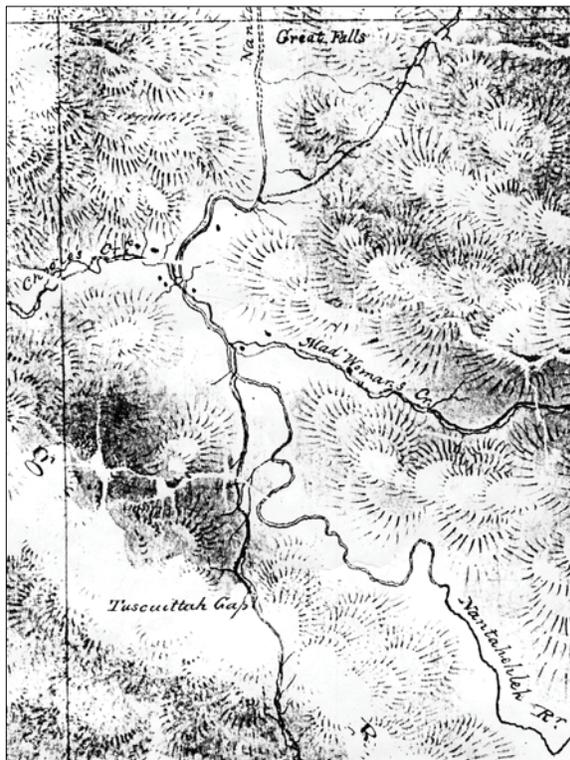


Figure 223. Detail of the 1838 "Map of a Portion of the Cherokee Nation..." illustrating the Aquone community as mapped by Army surveyors..

Table 5 Abstract of Welch and Jarrett's 1836 valuations of Cherokee properties in "Acquonee Town."

Household	Location	Cabins	Corn cribs	Stables	Acres farmed	Peach trees	Apple trees	appraised value
Hogbite	Nantahala River	1		1	8		10	\$114.00
Chalowee	below Hogbite	1			8	7	1	\$45.50
Deer Out of the Water	near Hogbite	1			1			\$20.00
Arch	above Deer Out of the Water	2	1		12			\$151.00
Takah	on the River above Arch	1			4.5	34		\$67.00
Naqueesah	on the River near Takah	1						\$11.50
Nickatie	mouth of large creek, E. side River				3			\$21.00
Ahyanoolah	mouth of large creek E. side of river below Shawnee John	1			7			\$74.00
Elowee	above Ayahnoolah	1			5			\$55.00
Suaga	above Elowee	1			1.5			\$20.00
Shawnee John		1			12	4		\$105.00
Little Nanney		1	1		7.5	17	30	\$103.25
Chewauchucker	near Little Nanny	1			12		30	\$126.00
Suaga	Cabin on E. side of river near Ahyanoolah	2	1	1	6			\$71.00
Choga	on a creek, w. side of river	2		1	12			\$122.00
Suwaga	W. side of River above Choga	3		1	5			\$82.00

Cherokees who either eluded the Camp Scott troops or who were knowingly left behind when the militia was abruptly discharged at the end of June. In September 1838, Lt. H. L. Scott, who led an expedition to the mountains of North Carolina to round up Cherokee fugitives, observed:

Between 30 and 40 others [Cherokees], I have been informed, are now near Fort [sic] Scott, they having been left there by the Volunteers, when they were discharged ( H.L. Scott 1838a).

Thomas' census indicates that many of the former residents of Aquone, including Elowee, Choga, and Nancy ("The Mad Woman") moved to Qualla Town after the removal and took up residence in the Oconoluftee Cherokee communities.

### Landscape Reconstruction and Archaeological Investigations

The community of Aquone was documented by two lines of survey in 1837-1838. Adams' survey of the Great State Road descended Jarrett Creek (which he labeled "Acone Creek") and seven cabins, along with corn patches and corn cribs along the lower half mile of the creek before its confluence with the Nantahala River. These include the homes and improvements of Nickatie, Ahyanoolah, Elowee, Shawnee John, Suaga, and Mad Woman. The line of survey then turned down the Nantahala River and followed the state road along the river to the mouth of Choga Creek, passing two residences (Suwaga) on the west side of the river upstream from Choga Creek. The

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survey then turned westward to ascend Choga Creek and passed three cabins attributed to Choga. No other residences were indicated upstream from Choga. Another survey followed a trail across Tuni Gap, and down Little Tuni Creek to the Nantahala River. The notes for this survey depict cornfields, but no residences until a cabin labeled “Jim” near the mouth of Jarrett Creek. The survey continued downstream past the mouth of Choga Creek, and indicates a residence on the east side of the river above the mouth of Rocky Branch. These notes also indicate the home of Hogbite on the east side of the river north of Lee Branch. Welch and Jarrett’s valuations indicate that the home of Chalowee was downstream from Hogbite, while Deer out of the Water, Arch, Takah, and Naqueesah lived upstream from Hogbite.

All of these locations, with the possible exception of the Chalowee’s home site, are indented by Nantahala Lake, a Duke Energy power generation reservoir. Because the reservoir levels fluctuate only slightly under normal power generation conditions, and because the reservoir is relatively steep-sided, most of the Aquone housesites are inaccessible to archaeological reconnaissance and evaluation. However, in the fall and winter of 2002, the TRC-Garrow archaeological consulting groups performed an archaeological survey of the exposed surfaces (Benyshek and Webb 2003). This survey located a single Removal-era Cherokee farmstead site, designated 31MA604, on the east side of the Nantahala River approximately 950m southeast of the mouth of Jarrett Creek. The site is located roughly 750m south of Jarrett’s Creek and 300m northeast of the original bed of the Nantahala River, on a level ridge toe adjacent to a small, unnamed branch. This location would have been in the field of view of the Tuni Gap trail survey of 1838, but survey notes do not indicate a homestead here. Neither do Welch and Jarrett’s valuations indicate a property here, unless the Shawnee John, Little Nanney or Chewauchucker homes were this far upstream from Jarrett Creek.

Artifacts recovered from the site surface and from shovel test pits include 106 Qualla series ceramic sherds (Figure 225), wares diagnostic of Cherokee household occupations. These include nine rim sherds with folded or appliqué rimstrips. Surface treatments include 31 sherds with rectilinear complicated stamped motifs, 17 sherds with plain surfaces, and 49 body sherds with unidentifiable surface treatments. A carved chlorite schist tobacco pipe (Figure 226) is also produced in a style characteristic of the second quarter of the nineteenth century. A sawn soapstone block (Figure 226) may represent a manufacturing blank for another such pipe.

Mass produced commercial goods recovered from 31MA604 are also consistent with a Removal-era occupation. Ceramic vessel fragments include three pearlware sherds and a mocha decorated creamware sherd. Glasswares consist of three olive green rum/wine bottle fragments, six

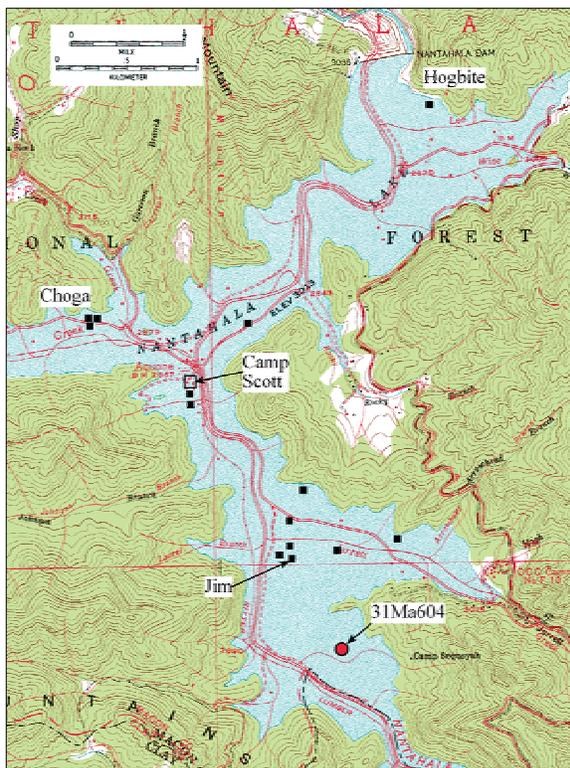


Figure 224. Detail of the Topton, NC 7.5' quadrangle with overlay of 1936 map data and reconstruction of the Aquone settlement as documented by 1837-1838 Army surveys. Residences indicated by black squares.



Figure 225. Qualla series ceramic sherds



Figure 226. Carved chlorite schist tobacco pipe (left) and sawn soapstone block (right).

blue ribbed liquor flask fragments, and an aqua-tinted bottle base fragment (Figure 227). Three cast iron vessel fragments (Figure 228) probably represent the flange of a Dutch oven lid.

Particularly interesting is a fragment of a brass military insignia identified as an eagle motif cap badge (Figure 229). This badge style was prevalent during the 1820s, and cannot be directly attributed to the militia occupation at nearby Camp Scott. Other artifacts recovered from 31MA604 include a piece of lead sprue, and an English prismatic blade gunflint (Figure 229).

**Evaluation and Recommendations**

Shovel testing at 31MA604 indicates that site sediments are largely intact beneath a mantle of lake deposited overburden. Because the site evinces substantive material content and exhibits a strong potential for contextual integrity, Benyshek and Webb (2003) recommend that 31MA604 should be considered potentially eligible for National Register inclusion with reference to Criterion D. They further recommend that 31MA604 should be more intensively investigated to provide evidence of 19<sup>th</sup> century Cherokee lifeways and material variability in the most remote of Cherokee communities.

Although 31MA604 cannot be definitively associated with a particular Cherokee household, the site is important as a representative domestic site from the Removal era, and particularly as one that illustrates the material lifestyle of families that resided in the remote

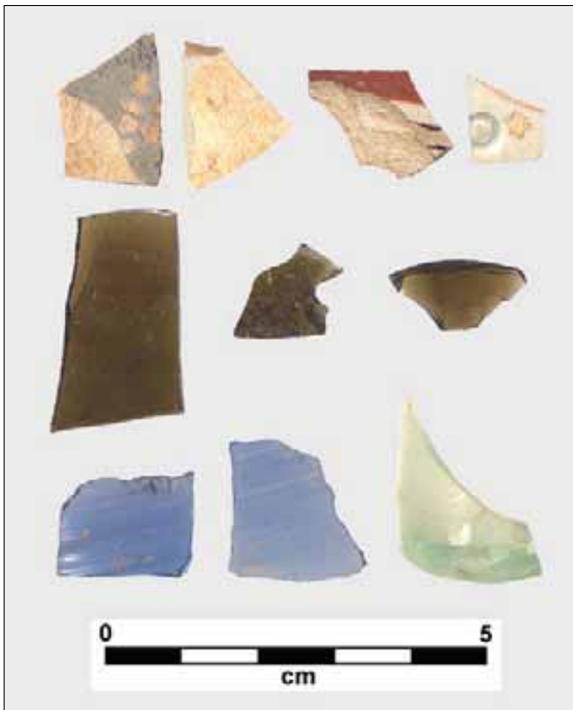


Figure 227. (right) Ceramic and glass artifacts recovered from 31MA604.



Figure 228. Cast iron vessel fragments from 31MA604.

## The Cherokee Trail of Tears in North Carolina

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Figure 229. Brass cap badge, obverse (left) and reverse (center) and English gunflint (right).

fastness of the Nantahala Mountains, the “darkest part [i.e. most conservative] of the Nation.” This site presents material evidence of the communities that most completely and successfully resisted the forced removal. Numerous descendants of the Aquone community among today’s Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians bear witness to the tenacity of those who remained behind, and sites such as 31MA604 represent the material heritage of this particular sector of Cherokee society.



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