History Beneath Our Feet: Archaeology and the Cherokee Trail of Tears

A free symposium hosted by the Funk Heritage Center of Reinhardt University will be held on Saturday, September 21, 2013 from 9 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. An optional luncheon will follow.

How has archaeology enhanced our understanding of Cherokee history, especially the story of the Trail of Tears? This program will bring together archaeologists who have worked in the field of Cherokee archaeology for comments and discussion with the general audience.

2013 marks the 175th anniversary of the Trail of Tears when Cherokee Indians in Georgia were forced to leave their homes. Speakers will take this occasion to evaluate what we know about the historic Cherokee of northwest Georgia. Symposium presenters have been chosen because of their professional involvement with teaching, preserving and studying Cherokee history and archaeology.

Symposium Schedule

8:30 a.m. Registration & Coffee
9:00 a.m.
Welcome: Dr. Thomas Isherwood, President, Reinhardt University
Introductions: Dr. Joseph Kitchens
Executive Director, Funk Heritage Center

9:15 a.m. Presentations
- Archaeology of the Trail of Tears Fort Sites — Mr. Jeff Bishop
- The Hickory Log Artifacts: What we discovered — Mr. Paul Webb

9:55 a.m. Break

10:10 a.m. Presentations
- Cherokee Archaeology: The View from Georgia—Dr. Ben Steere
- Preserving the Cherokee Heritage — Dr. Russell Townsend

11:50 a.m. Break

12:05 p.m. Open discussion Q and A

12:30 p.m. Optional luncheon with the presenters $12 *

Program seating is limited. Call 770-720-5970 for reservations and information.

*Pre-paid luncheon reservation due by September 11, 2013, make check for $12 to Funk Heritage Center, denote luncheon.

Meet the Speakers

Mr. Paul Webb, MA in Anthropology from the University of Georgia. He was the archaeologist on the Hickory Log excavation site in Canton in 1995 and has organized and studied the artifacts from this excavation. He will discuss the historical importance of these artifacts. His professional work includes current projects on the lands of the Eastern Band of Cherokee in North Carolina.

Dr. Ben Steere, Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Georgia. His research focus is on the historic Cherokee period and the field of public archaeology. He will talk about how archaeological evidence retrieved from North Georgia archaeological sites has revised our knowledge of historical events, leading to interpretations certain to influence future educational content in the schools.

Dr. Russell Townsend, Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Tennessee. He has been the Historic Preservation Officer for the Eastern Band of Cherokee in North Carolina for more than a decade. He coordinates preservation, historical and archaeological studies. Dr. Townsend brings an experienced assessment to the program and will discuss the tribal perspective on the value of historical archaeology to their self understanding.

Mr. Jeff Bishop is a Graduate Research Assistant at the Center for Public History at the University of West Georgia. He has been the President of the Georgia Chapter of the Trail of Tears for six years. He works with the Trails Office of the National Park Service to develop interpretation and research for the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and authored a series of histories and reports on the Cherokee removal sites in Georgia.

Tour the Bennett History Museum following the luncheon.

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