



## Trail Tree Newsletter

June 2017

This is Volume 37 of the Quarterly Trail Tree Project Newsletter. We hope the topics in this newsletter will be of interest to you. If you want us to report on other things, just let us know and we will be happy to do that. Below is all the latest news.

### Trail Tree (TT) Database

#### *Trail Tree Database*

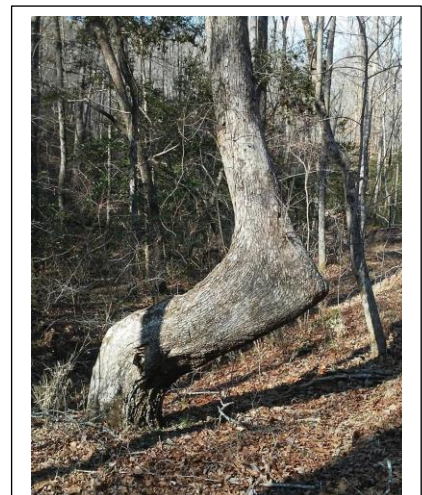
The Trail Tree submittals have slowed down a little as we approach the summer months. However, there is new interest in parts of the country from which we have not received tree submittals from before. So, we have a number of trees to share with you all.

#### *Trees of Interest*

I've selected some of trees from all over the United States submitted in the last few months to show the extent of Marker Trees nationwide. Further, we are now learning more about the purpose of each tree that has been found which is helping us to understand more about how the Indians used these trees for marking sites. This aspect of Indian cultural heritage has made us realize how little we knew when we wrote our book, *Mystery of the Trees* in 2011. We may have to rewrite the book in the future as we are learning so much more about the trees.

### GA Trees

We have a lot of active researchers in GA so I'm going to show more of the trees from that state than others but also because of the variety of the trees and their suspected purpose. The tree to the right is a trail marker tree found on an old Indian trail. Last month I wrote about Diane and I following the trail used by Col. Marinus Willett in 1790. He was George Washington's secret agent to the Creek Indian Nation. That trail crossed over North GA heading into AL. The tree was right on the trail and is probably marking a water source along the trail.



GA Tree

The 2<sup>nd</sup> GA tree is also located on an Indian Trail which leads to the top of Sharptop Mountain. This tree was located during a hike to the top of Sharptop Mt. to check out a potential sacred site in that location. The tree seems to have a special purpose which we may be able to discuss later. This trail leads from a probable Creek Indian village location at the base of the mountain. The tree is 43 inches in diameter.

Paula is one of our newest researchers in GA and has assembled a team of folks to join her in the search for the Marker trees. I'm going to include three trees that Paula's team have found that have been sitting in plain sight for years only to have been found recently. The 1<sup>st</sup> tree was located in a forested area. The purpose was determined to be marking two graves. The double vertical limbs indicate it is marking the location of two graves. There are also two appurtenances on the hip of the tree to signify two graves. The 2<sup>nd</sup> tree found by Paula is a typical configuration for marking a trail or water source. However, this tree is marking four graves which may have been put in front of the marker after it was bent since it is not the typical configuration for four graves.



**43 Inch Diameter GA Tree**



**GA Tree Marking 2 Graves**



**27 Inch Diameter GA Tree**



**Appalachian Trail Marker**

Paula's third tree find is located on the Appalachian Trail. The "Y" configuration of the tree may be indicating the trail going in both directions or related to some other interpretations regarding trail direction at that location. Many marker trees have been found on the Appalachian Trail which indicates it was an Indian Trail

long before it became a tough hike trail along the Appalachian Mountains from GA to Maine.

## AR Trees

We always have a number of trees submitted from AR by Bob Gaut and his team but I thought I would show this time some of the other trees coming in from other researchers in AR. The first tree from AR was sent in by Molly. This tree with its double vertical limbs is another grave pointer for two graves. The tree like the one from GA has two appurtenances on the hip indicating the location of two graves.

The second tree from AR was sent in by Nick from the far NW corner of AR. This tree is believed to be marking a water source.



**AR Grave Pointer Tree**

## VA Trees

It is not often that we receive trees from VA as the effects of urban renewal have destroyed so many of them. But some do remain and over the past several years we have received a few that have been added to the national database. The first tree from VA was received from Donna. It is located east of Roanoke, VA. This tree is 33 inches in diameter and obviously is being used for a children's make-believe horse.



**AR Tree**



**33 Inch Diameter VA Tree**

Donna is traveling the VA countryside riding horse in search of other trees. She has submitted some other trees and they will be shared in the next newsletter.

We were informed about the second tree in VA by a mother whose child attended an elementary school in Loudon County, VA. The school was built a number of years ago. The principal of the school made sure the workers protected the tree in the parking area of the school. She thought the tree was special and needs to be protected. That tree is in fact a Marker tree marking a grave at that location. Not having a regular research team in Loudon County, VA, we sent in our son Mark and grandson Patrick who live in the Northern VA area to locate the tree. It is amazing that the tree has survived the school construction as the tree is located on a small island in the parking lot. It could have easily been cut

down but thanks to the principal it remains as a silent sentinel today. That tree is 44 inches in diameter indicating it is very old.

### NC Tree

Stevie sent in a tree from middle NC that seems to point to a stream as a water source. This tree is the typical “4” tree configuration which has often been associated with the purpose of marking water sources. The tree is 44 Inches in diameter.

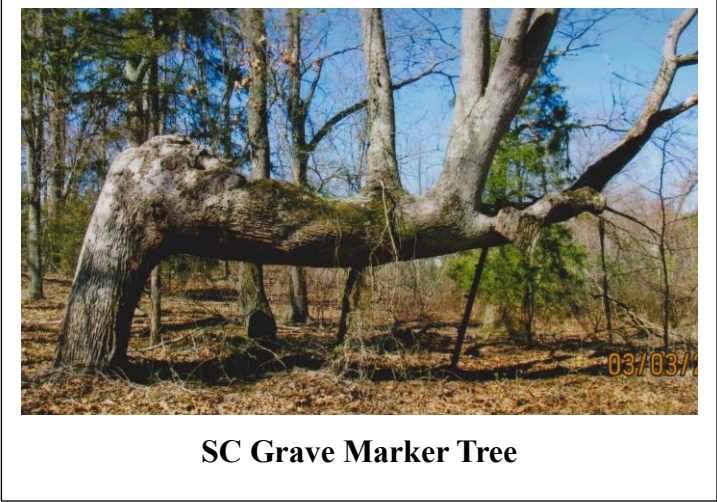


### SC Tree

Griffin found his tree near St. Matthews, SC. This unique tree is a grave pointer tree for multiple graves. Because of its location, it is probably related to the Catawba Indians who occupied that part of SC and still do.

### OH Tree

Hal has lived in the Ohio area for his entire life. He first saw his tree 37 years ago when he moved on the land where the tree is located near Columbus. This area of Ohio has a rich Indian history including the Delaware, Shawnee, Wyandot and others. The tree has a very unique configuration which was determined to be marking a very old Indian grave. Part of the limb pointing downward broke off years ago but the general configuration of the tree still remains. There may be Indian trails in this vicinity as well as village sites. However, there are few old maps to help with the evaluation of the tree location. Hal’s tree is 44.6 inches in diameter.



## Indian Heritage Sites Mapping Program

In the last several newsletters, we reported on our improved abilities to locate and map Indian sacred sites using dowsing rods. We have to be somewhat careful with this methodology as it cannot be scientifically proven. Yet we continue to be amazed at what can be accomplished using this ancient technique. For hundreds of years and maybe longer, dowsing has been used as a means to locate water for wells. Utility crews before the advent of electronic measuring tools used dowsing to locate power, telephone and water lines in the ground. Some still have a pair of rods on their truck in case the electronic devices quit working. For us, these simple tools are opening the door to greater understanding of the Indian sites we are locating. At the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Wilderness Wildlife Conference at Pigeon Forge, TN held in May of this year, we did a presentation entitled, "Using Dowsing to Unlock New Understanding of Indian Cultural Heritage Sites." The presentation detailing what we were learning using the dowsing rods was well received with a lot of audience questions and interest. We are now revisiting many of the Indian sites we have been to in the past several years to further document the sites and to learn more about why the sites are located where they have been found. We have added a new web site at [www.dowsingindiansites.org/](http://www.dowsingindiansites.org/) to share what we are learning using dowsing. This site is under construction but there are some of our reports shared on the site and more will be added over time.



**44.6 inch Ohio Tree**

This summer, we will be traveling in NM and CO to document many Indian sacred sites in those two states which we have not previously visited. We will also be doing more research on Indian burial marking trees to learn about the similar configurations used by the various tribes.

### ***Mystery of the Trees Presentations and Book Signings***

We have done a number of presentations this year but now are on break while we switch to doing more research. We will restart doing presentations in the fall. Interestingly, this year, we have been asked to share what we are learning about Indian culture with members of our church. Some of our other colleagues have been asked to do the same in their church. We have now done four presentations with the Sunday School and one with a special study group. There was a special interest in what we had learned about Indian Spirituality from our decade of being in the presence of the tribal elders so we created a new talk on that subject and have added it to our listing of available presentations.

If you want to schedule a presentation for 2017, contact us at our email address [mountainman93@gmail.com](mailto:mountainman93@gmail.com) to schedule a time. If you would like a list of the presentations, contact me at the same email address. The presentations are offered for free but traveling to overnight venues is not feasible unless a large audience of at least 60 people can be guaranteed.

## Facebook

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