



Trail Tree Newsletter

September 2015

This is the Volume 30 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

I thought the submissions of trees had slowed down early this year and we were heading into a time when we were approaching the ending of trees being found. Not so by a long shot! All of a sudden 2-3 months ago, the pace of submissions picked up. Not only did the pace pick up but the size of the trees being found increased significantly. The Big'uns are still out there to be found and recent media attention has increased the awareness of people who are now joining the search to find them. The next section will report on some of the more interesting trees that have been submitted in the past several months.

Trees of Interest

Camp Mintahama, MO Trees

We were informed over a year ago about a Marker Tree at the Girl Scout Camp Mintahama near Joplin, MO. Since we were traveling this summer through that area, we asked if we could visit the camp and were granted permission. Mike Henningsen, the camp ranger, met us at the camp and told us that not only was there one Marker Tree at the camp but also two others in close proximity. The trees are 35.7, 49.4 and 22.6 inches in diameter.

Camp Mintahama has been in use since the mid-1900's and before that is was in the hands of its early pioneer family. The land has been preserved in its almost virgin state since it came into use by the Girl Scouts. Mike Henningsen told us there are trees on the property that are somewhere in the five foot diameter range.



Camp Mintahama 35.7 In. Diameter Tree



Camp Mintahama 49.4 In. Diameter Tree



Camp Mintahama 22.6 In. Diameter Tree

Maryland Tree

Clifton Lough sent in a tree he found near Frostburg, MD. This tree is very near some Indian Paths known as Nemaquin Path and the Mingo Path. These trails were later widened to become the Braddock Trail. General Braddock blazed his path as part of the American Revolution to capture Fort Duquesne near today Pittsburgh, PA. Clifton's tree is 36 inches in diameter.

South Carolina Tree

Adam Lyles discovered a tree on his property west of Westminster, SC. The tree is 46 inches in diameter and points to a known Cherokee village site which was part of the Lower Cherokee towns.



Maryland Tree 36 In. Diameter

Alabama Tree

Ed Bruchac found his tree on land near Margaret, AL. The tree is 32.5 inches in diameter. It is uncertain as to what the tree is pointing toward but there is a very old cemetery in the direction of the pointer so it could be pointing toward a burial site.



Alabama Tree 31.5 In. Diameter



South Carolina Tree 46 In. Diameter

North Carolina Trees

We received two more trees from North Carolina that are not that far apart but submitted by two different people. Donald Lambe submitted his tree from near Liberty, NC. His tree is almost 46 inches in diameter. Jill Battersby submitted her tree from near Winston-Salem, NC. Her tree is 30 inches in diameter.



Liberty, NC Tree 46 In. Diameter

Arkansas Tree

Jeff Harness located a tree near Cedarville, AR pointing toward East Cedar Creek. His tree is approximately 36 inches in diameter.

Schoharie County, NY

John Mullins found his tree while out hunting in Schoharie County, NY. He first discovered it 35 years ago and noted it was located in an area of the forest which has a lot of virgin oaks in addition to this tree he found. Because of their age, he stated that some of the virgin trees are now dying so the marker Tree may be near the end of its natural life. The tree is almost 46 inches in diameter. John's tree is a maple tree.



**Winston-Salem, NC Tree
30 In. Diameter**



Arkansas Tree 36 In. Diameter

Indian Trails Mapping Program

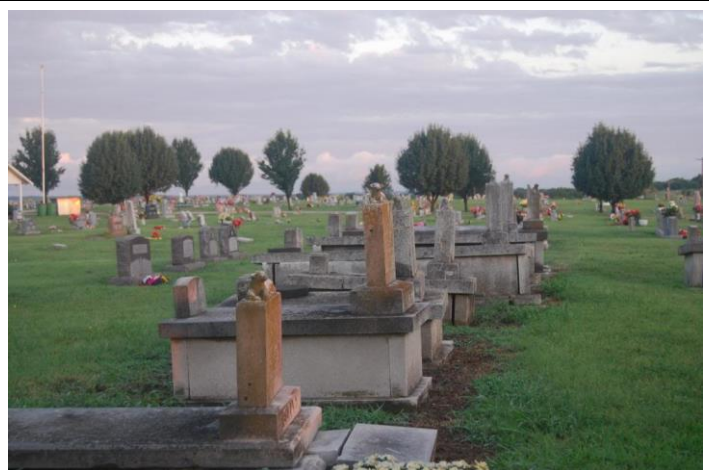
As a part of our Indian Trails Mapping Program, we also do mapping of Indian sites and places that appear to have some relationships to Indian Heritage. In April, we were discussing some new research work we were doing on Indian Rock Structures with Peggy Thompson while in AR. She took us to a local cemetery that has some interesting rock grave house structures. Since being introduced to these grave structures and researching this topic much further, we have discovered that the Indians throughout the North American Continent had a customary practice of building a grave or spirit house structure over a grave. Sometimes the structure is made of rock and sometimes of wood. In discussing this custom with the elders, it has been determined that this is not practiced to a great extent anymore but used to be a part of their customary practice in burying their dead. This practice may have also been used by pioneers of Scot-Irish heritage whose customary burials in the old country included the use of rock cairns, dolmens and passage grave houses. Since many Scot-Irish married into the Indian tribes, this may have been a shared cultural practice.

A research report on these structures has been written and will be included in our future book on Indian Heritage to be published maybe later this year but more likely 2016.

I've included pictures of the rock spirit houses in an Indian cemetery in OK and wood structures found in FL. These have been found all over the US including Alaska. On a recent trip to do research in and around Lake Guntersville State Park in Guntersville, AL, we discovered more rock grave spirit houses at an old cemetery that dates back to the time of



New York Tree 46 In. Diameter



Rock Spirit Houses at Indian Cemetery in OK

the Indian removal from eastern Alabama. In all likelihood, more of these structures will be found in other cemeteries throughout the US.

Fall has begun so the leaves will be coming off the trees soon and we can begin again doing research on Indian Trails and other sites that are easier to find in the winter months.

Mystery of the Trees Documentary

The *Mystery of the Trees* film was selected by the Gwinnett Center International Film Festival and screened on 1 August during the festival. It was one of five films selected in the non-fiction feature film category. There were over 200 submittals in the seven categories of the festival.

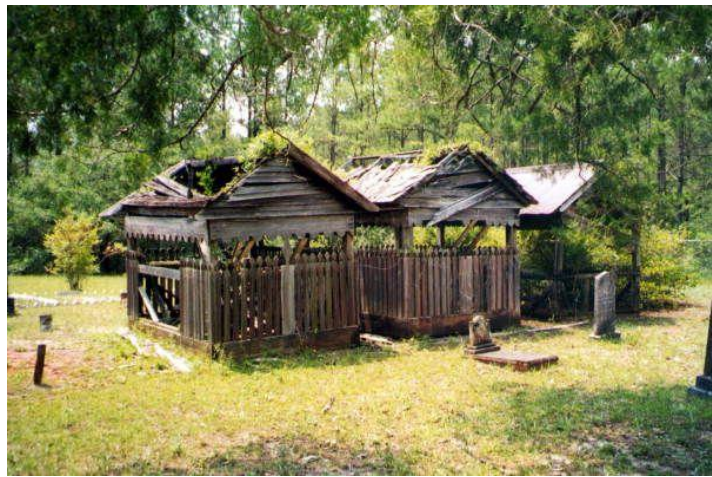
We are continuing to have screenings of the film across the country. During our trip out to Colorado for the 3rd Annual Ute Prayer Tree Conference, a screening was done in Colorado Springs which was attended by 175 people. The film was also shown to the attendees of the Ute Prayer Tree Conference. Other showings are being planned for the near future.

If you would like to schedule a screening in your area, contact Don Wells at mountainman93@gmail.com.

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

With the *Mystery of the Trees* book having been sold out earlier this year, we have curtailed our normal schedule of 30-35 presentations a year. So far we have done 18 in 2015 including a number of screenings of the documentary. There are three more scheduled for 2015.

The demand for the book is still fairly high so the Mountain Stewards Board of Directors has voted to commit some of our limited resources to reprinting a limited number of books (500). **The print order has gone to the printer and we should have books for sale again by late October.** We have also



Wooden Spirit Houses in FL



Spirit Grave Houses Discovered at King Chapel Cemetery at Lake Guntersville State Park, AL

decided to offer a special book and movie package for the holiday season. The two, valued at \$47.50, will have discounted price of \$37.50. Due to the increased cost of printing, the price of the individual books will have to be raised. Watch the sales site, www.mysterytrees.org for the announcement of when the new products will be available. We will also announce the availability on the Mystery Trees Facebook page.

Stories of Our Indian Culture – In the Southeast is close to being completed in the draft and will be going to the editor in October. We are hoping to get this new book out by end of 2015 but it will more likely be in early 2016. We have not yet decided how we will publish the book but will announce that when the decision is made.

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