



# WEST GADSDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. NEWSLETTER

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West Gadsden Historical Society, a small, volunteer, local non-profit with a 501(c)(3) designation, depends solely on the generosity of our members, local businesses and all others interested in the preservation of Gadsden County's history to help us remain financially strong. As always, your donations and membership dues are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. Your consideration and help will truly be appreciated!

Vol. 12, No. 2



SUNDAY, MAY 21, 2017

For all of us who joined Dale Cox, Sunday, May 21, we truly enjoyed our afternoon. Dale spoke on the history and events that lead to the First Seminole War of 1817-1818. Further, he discussed its impact on Gadsden County and the Apalachicola River.

If you have never been present at one of Dale's programs, you have truly missed out. His insight, historical knowledge and humor insure your raptured attention. WGHS appreciates Dale's enthusiasm and interest in Northwest Florida history.

House on Monday, July 4 from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the historic Dezell House, 328 E. 8th St., and at the Greensboro Depot Railroad Museum complex, 115 Duffle St., Greensboro. Please plan to join us! This year's activities located at the Dezell House will include: (1) Annual Bake Sale – This is your chance to get some homemade baked goods while contributing to a worthy cause; (2) Coastal Seafood Lunch – We look forward to the return each year of Coastal Seafood Restaurant of Panacea who will be offering scrumptious seafood lunches from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. New exhibits have been added within the Dezell House and include many articles that are on loan from the Buddy Pitts collection. We can't wait to see you there!



TUESDAY, JULY 4

WGHS 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Open House

The West Gadsden Historical Society will celebrate its 13th Annual Open

DECEMBER 1 & 2, 2017  
200th Anniversary of Scott  
Massacre of 1817

Chattahoochee Main Street and the City of Chattahoochee have officially kicked off the 200th anniversary

commemoration of the Scott Massacre of 1817.

This battle was the first U.S. defeat of the Seminole Wars and took place at what is now River Landing Park in Chattahoochee. A large force of Red Stick Creek, Seminole, Miccosukee and maroon (Black Seminole) warriors captured a U.S. Army supply boat commanded by Lt. Richard W. Scott of the 7th Infantry Regiment.

The attack ended with the deaths of 34 U.S. soldiers, 6 women and 4 children. A seventh woman, Mrs. Elizabeth Stewart, was taken prisoner and later freed by Brig. Gen. William McIntosh's U.S. Creek Brigade at the Battle of Econfina.

The kickoff press conference formally announced plans for a commemorative event that will be held at River Landing Park in Chattahoochee on December 1 & 2, 2017.

Plans for the event include living history encampments and demonstrations, memorial services, exhibits, vendors, a marker unveiling, music and entertainment, a chance to meet Florida authors, a military parade

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and more. The event has been named an official event for the 7th Infantry Living History Association, which portrays the regiment of Lt. Scott and many of his men.

Additional reenactors, vendors, exhibitors and entertainers are needed. If you are interested in the era of the First Seminole War (1817-1818) and would like to participate, please email Chattahoochee Main Street at [info@chattahoocheemainstreet.org](mailto:info@chattahoocheemainstreet.org) or call (850) 663-2323/(623) 249-0076.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2017  
Annual Meeting

Is everyone ready for our annual wash pot pilau super? This year's event is scheduled the 1st Saturday of December. Save this date now! More information and our itinerary will be released in September. The West Gadsden Historical Society invites you to come and enjoy time visiting with your family, friends, and neighbors. We appreciate the tremendous support received each year from our members and guests, and look forward to seeing you again this year.

## PROGRESS AT THE DEZELL HOUSE

We want to thank Stephen Pitts for refinishing the wood floors at the Dezell House. They have been completed and are simply beautiful. Please remember that there are still areas within the house that need further attention. If you are interested in completing or sponsoring completion of these projects, please let us know. Remember, all donations are tax deductible!!

Other renovations to complete the Dezell House include:

- Interior paint (Kelly Clark has graciously volunteered to perform the painting.)
- Completing interior trim work
- Renovation/replacement of fireplace tile in the front hall
- Kitchen floor installation
- Kitchen appliance acquisition and installation



Currently the southern 40 miles of railroad track of the Port St. Joe Route is in disrepair and unusable. A weekly train runs to the Georgia Pacific site just south of old Federal Road on Highway 65. Recent legislation is about to change the face of Port St. Joe and the Railroad line.

From *The Port St. Joe Star*, by TIM CROFT  
“That exhale heard last week came from Gulf County officials after Gov. Rick Scott did his work on the state budget and signed landmark Triumph Legislation.

By far, the biggest win was the Triumph legislation, which included several provisions long sought by Gulf County, but nearly as noteworthy were several appropriations the governor did not strike with his veto pen.

Those included \$5 million to create a dry dock facility, tossing in another \$1 million for dredging, in the turning basin of the federally-authorized shipping channel.

In addition, the state’s \$82 billion-plus budget includes \$6 million to facilitate rail improvements along the Genesee Wyoming rail line linking the Port of Port St. Joe to points, and markets, north.”

Genesee Wyoming anticipates that it will take 18-24 months to make the needed repairs to the railroad which includes the rehabilitation of the Apalachicola River Bridge. With numerous assets, the Port of Port St. Joe is poised for development and expansion.

According to the Port St. Joe Port Authority, Port St. Joe is one of 15 state-designated ports within the state of Florida and one of only three ports along North Florida’s Gulf Coast. With the expansion of the Panama Canal and the inception of Post-Panamax shipping, some non-competitive freight handling operations currently at larger ports are expected to shift to smaller ports, especially to those that have shorter ship-to-market routes.

With a direct route north from the Panama Canal, the Port of Port St. Joe is a perfect candidate.



Most of us remember finding a spear point, arrow head, flint tool or a broken shard of pottery that was attributed to evidence to Indian inhabitants in Gadsden County.

Whether found in a newly plowed field or in a stream or river bed, it is always a thrill to find something once used by an ancient Florida Native American. We save these Indian artifacts with honor. We hold the maker in awe and credit him as a craftsman. We wish that we could go back

in time and observe their way of life and thank them for giving us a new memory and gift.

The first group of people to inhabit Florida were called Paleo Indians living 14,000 years ago. Florida had about twice the land area of today, its water table was much lower, and its climate was cooler and much drier. There were few running rivers or springs in the part of Florida that is now above sea level. The few water sources in the interior of Florida were rain-fed lakes and water holes perched on relatively impervious deposits of marl and deep sinkholes partially filled by springs. They are thought to have been nomadic hunters and gatherers.

Next, were a group known as the Archaic Indians. They lived in Florida beginning in 8000 BC until about 1000 BC. They built the first permanent settlements, but were also nomadic as they moved each season in search of food. Tools and weapons were made of stone, shell and bone.

The Woodland Indians lived in this area from about 1000 BC to 1000 AD. Their lifestyle differed from previous groups because they began to plant seeds for growing crops and they created decorative, long-lasting pottery.

The Mississippian era of Native Americans began about 800 AD. This culture differed significantly from the predecessors as they lived in towns governed by chiefs. Religious centers were on top of large earthen mounds like those found in Chattahoochee. The Florida version of Mississippian is called the Fort Walton culture, and it is very distinctive within the South because the pottery is all tempered with grit (crushed rock) or sand or grog (crushed hardened or fired clay), instead of the crushed shell characteristic of most Mississippian cultures. Their pottery was much more elaborate and effigies were made to resemble individuals and animals.



Paleo – Clovis Point



Archaic – Jackson Point



Woodland - Bullen Knife



Woodland – Check stamped pottery shards



Mississippian – Small arrow point



Mississippian/Fort Walden Pottery Shards found on the Apalachicola River

From the beginning of the 18th century, the primary Native Americans that inhabited the Gadsden County area were Muscogee (also called Creeks). They spoke Hitchiti and Mikazuki.

A series of wars with the United States resulted in the removal of most of the Native Americans of Gadsden County and other areas of the Apalachicola River Valley to what is now Oklahoma. The few who remained merged into the only two recognized tribes at the time, - the Seminole and Miccosukee tribes of Florida.

In the early 1800's, we all are aware that our white ancestors migrated to Gadsden County from North and South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia and areas northward. Many of the more prominent planters brought with them their African American work force. What is found interesting and often overlooked, is the fact that Native

Americans from South Carolina also migrated to this area.

Family groups of the surname Ayers, Brown, Scott & Stephens settled along the Apalachicola River. They came here in the early 1820's from the dwindling Catawba reservation in South Carolina where their lands had been leased to white farmers and there was no room for expansion. These families became known as the Cheraw-Catawba Indian community of northwest Florida.

The presence of Cheraw-Catawba families in the Apalachicola River valley can be documented as far back as 1828, when Absalom Scott, Jacob Scott and his wife Polly Harmon, Richard Jeffers, John Jones, and Joseph Scott appear on Jackson County tax records. It does not appear that any Catawba were present prior to that time, as they are not mentioned in the Treaty of Moultrie Creek of 1823.

According to S. Pony Hill, Tribal Chairman of the Apalachicola River Community Indian Tribal Organization (ARCITO), when the Catawba families arrived, they were not the only Native Americans in the area. Plans were already underway to clean the landscape of the Creek and Seminoles residing in this area. By the end of 1839, the final emigration of the Creek Indians living within the treaty reserves along the Apalachicola was complete, except for several bands of "hostiles" still hiding in swamps, and several communities of "White Stick" friendly Creek who were allowed to stay according to the stipulations of the Treaty of Fort Jackson. Treaty, tax, and census documents record the presence of another group of Indians living in the area of the Apalachicola River. These Indian families settled down into quiet lives as farmers, stock keepers, and ferry operators, just as

they had previously done in South Carolina.

The Cheraw-Catawba established two main communities - one at Scott's Ferry on the Chipola River, and another on Scotts Church Road in Jackson County (Scott Town). Other smaller settlements were established in surrounding counties.

The census records that most genealogists use to track ancestors can be quite confusing. Names are often misspelled, family member's ages inaccurate and addresses as we know them today were non-existent. Prior to the 1850 Federal Census, only the heads of households were listed and family members were only identified by age group and male or female. To make matters even more confusing, census records mostly identified only white residents of the county. Slave schedules listed only the name of the owner and age and sex of the slave. While some individuals might be listed as "a free person of color" this description was used for anyone of "mixed blood" in the 1850 and 1860 Federal Census. In the 1870 Federal Census, individuals were listed as White, Black or Mulatto. This again was an ambiguous term that meant any individual of mixed ancestry. The Cheraw-Catawba were labeled in historic records as Mulatto, Negroes, Dominickers, and White.

To further document that these families were of the Catawba Tribe, in 1860, Calhoun County, Florida Court case of State vs. Francis Hill, is found the testimony of Thomas Strickland: "*knew Isham Scott and Margaret parents of Eliza in Sumter South Carolina. Isham was a man of large amount Indian blood. Margaret was an Oxendine woman of clean complexion nearly white the Indian still apparent. The grandfather, one Jacob,*

*was said to be a Chief among the Catawba Indians. The Scott family, in general, are regarded as free of negro blood."* Further testimony of Francis Hill: "*Only briefly met Isham and Margaret Scott the parents of Eliza. Isham appeared to be mostly Indian. Margaret appeared to be mostly white. Neither appeared to have negro blood or considered Mulatto."* Isham, Margaret and Eliza Scott lived at Scott's Ferry.

While most Cheraw-Catawba families and their descendants lived in Jackson, Calhoun and Liberty counties, several families were found living in Gadsden County. The following Catawba-Cheraw Native Americans have been documented by S. Pony Hill in the census records of 1850 in Gadsden County:

House #	NAME	AGE	M/F	Occu	Birth
618	Stafford, William	58	m	Farmer	SC
	Mary	52	f		SC
	Frances	26	f		SC
	William	20	m	overseer	FL
	John	14	m		FL
	Ann	10	f		FL
619	Maner, Henry	28	m	Farmer	SC
	Sarah	27	f		SC
	Martin	3	m		TX
620	Scott, Thomas	22	m	Farmer	SC
	Sarah	17	f		FL
621	Larkins, Frances	38	f	NC	
	William	19	m	Farmer	NC
622	Scott, William	24	m		
	Farmer	SC			
	Martha	17	f		SC
	John	15	m		SC
	Henry	9/12	m		FL

1860 in Gadsden County:

House #	NAME	AGE	M/F	Occu	Birth
236	William H Scott	33	M	Farming	SC
	Martha F Scott	25	F		SC
	Erwin E Scott	8	M		FL
	Henry W Scott	6	M		FL
	Sarah C Scott	4	F		FL
	Joseph W Scott	2	M		FL

237	Thomas H. Scott	31	M	Farming	SC
	Sarah J. Scott	24	F		FL
	Frances C.	9	F		FL
	Sarah V.	7	F		FL
	William H.	3	M		FL

Also found by researcher Watson, Ian. (2004). Catawba Indian Genealogy. Department of Anthropology, State University of New York at Geneseo. Page 21.

In the Catawba Indian Plat Book, which records who should be receiving the rent payments for certain sections of the Catawba reservation lands (circa 1820-1850's) that were leased to white farmers, page 114 reflects:

"Quincy West Florida Apalachicola District Jamey Brown Catawba Indian intermarried with a Pamunky (sp.) Pocahontas." Originally published 1995, updated 2004, this rent record reflects that Jamey Brown was a Catawba Indian married to a Pamunkey Indian and was living in the area of Gadsden/Liberty Counties, Florida prior to the Civil War.

Life for these Native Americans in the Liberty, Jackson, Calhoun and Gadsden County area was not an easy one. Families lived together in secluded and tight knit communities.

In the 1860 Federal Census of Calhoun County, John G. Smith, the census taker, added his own personal opinion of the racial make-up of Scott's Ferry. *"The Free Negroes in this county are mixed blooded almost white and have intermarried with a low class of whites – Have no trade, occupation or profession they live in a settlement or Town of their own their personal property consists of Cattle & Hogs, They make no produce except corn & peas & very little of that, They are a lazy indolent & worthless race."*

S. Pony Hill, reflects that "The fact that Smith classified the Catawba in Florida as "free Negroes" with no trade or occupation, and in general being lazy and worthless, betrays his racist views. He could not have been completely blind to the fact that these people operated a mill and ferry, because even Smith took note that the colony's total worth was over \$4,000 (which in 1860 made it one of the wealthiest small towns in Calhoun County)."

Native Americans were not allowed to participate in white schools, socialize within white churches and were often ostracized.

The poverty, disenfranchisement, and blatant racism experienced by the elder generation during the past have led to a very present psychological barrier to anything to do with the past. S. Pony Hill has found in the 15 years of doing interviews and meetings with Cheraw-Catawba tribal elders that at least half have significantly been affected by their childhood experiences in very negative ways that continue to affect them and their descendants. Many still feel great shame and can verbalize their feelings only with great effort, if at all.

For full information on the Apalachicola River Community Indian Tribal Organization (ARCITO), visit their website at [www.dominickerindians.org/](http://www.dominickerindians.org/)

On this site is found a list of Florida Cheraw-Catawba Surnames:

- Ammons
- Ayers
- Barnwell
- Bass
- Bennett
- Bird
- Blanchard
- Boggs
- Brown
- Bullard
- Bunch
- Bryant
- Brooks
- Chason
- Chavis
- Conyers
- Copeland
- Davis
- Doyle
- Goins
- Hall
- Harris
- Hicks
- Hill
- Holly
- Ireland
- Jacobs
- Johnson
- Jones
- Kever
- Laramore
- Linton
- Lollie
- Lolly
- Long
- Lovett
- Mainer
- Martin

- Mayo
- Moses
- Oxendine
- Perkins
- Porter
- Potter
- Revell
- Rollin
- Scott
- Simmons
- Smith
- Stafford
- Stephens
- Sweat
- Thomas
- Whitfield
- Williams

This article is not intended to provide a full history of these brave Native American families who migrated to our area of Florida. It is presented here only to embrace the diversity of the people who have made Northwest Florida their home.

Remember this description at the beginning this column?

...We save these Indian artifacts with honor. We hold the maker in awe and credit him as a craftsman. We wish that we could go back in time and observe their way of life and thank them for giving us a new memory and gift.

Maybe we should do this with all the folks still among us. Old or young, no matter the color of their skin, no matter their education, no matter socioeconomic status, no matter ...

It is just a thought.

## OUR DONORS

*Other than Memberships, Memorials & Honorariums*  
6/17/2016 - Present

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## HAVE YOU SENT IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES?

### IF YOU HAVE, THANK YOU!

Sadly, many of you did not re-join this year. If as a yearly member, you **DO NOT SEE YOUR NAME LISTED BELOW**, your **MEMBERSHIP HAS EXPIRED** and this will be your **LAST NEWSLETTER**. **WGHS** does **NOT** want to **LOSE YOU**. You are an integral part of **WGHS** and our continued success. Please send your **\$25** annual membership dues today. **THANK YOU**.

Your **MEMBERSHIP, PURCHASE OF ITEMS AND MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS** support West Gadsden Historical Society's mission to preserve the history of Gadsden County. **WGHS** continues to meet the growing demand for collections and programs both online and at the various events held each year. Now is the time to partner with us to ensure that future generations may continue to discover Gadsden County's history and heritage. Our mission relies on your partnership to keep the County's stories alive! **YOUR GIFTS SUPPORT EVERYTHING WE DO**. Education and public events, research and preserving collections - we could not do them without you! **Please remember that your donations and contributions are tax deductible.**



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