



# Trail of Tears National Historic Trail

## Project Updates - Interpretation, Trail Development, & Public Awareness

### National Register

National Trails Intermountain Region (NTIR) is working closely with various association chapters and State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) to locate and protect historic sites associated with the national historic trail. In Okla. chapter members are providing archival information and property owner contacts on disbandment sites and road segments that will be nominated to the National Register. NTIR has partnered with the Mo. SHPO and chapter members to nominate significant trail segments, especially along the Benge Route.

**Retracing the Trail of Tears**

**Crabb Abbott Farm and the Trail of Tears**

**They Passed This Way**  
You are invited to walk along the same path the Cherokee traveled on the Trail of Tears in 1838-1839. It was a cold and wet December as they trudged by, not even half way to their destination in Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma).  
The 15,000 Cherokee that passed through here left their homes in the East with 650 wagons. Winter had already been a trying one, with detachments of Cherokee trapped by bad weather and frozen rivers. Imagine how the numbers of people and wagons would have melted in already muddy roads.  
The eleven detachments that left Tennessee in 1838 lost hundreds of members along the route due to exhaustion, illness, and death before the groups of weary travelers arrived in Oklahoma.

**Crabb Abbott Farm**  
As you hike the loop trail, you will see signs indicating when you are retracing the trail.  
The Trail of Tears enters the farm at its eastern edge. The first place you will see the trail is the "fork and field of Sugar Creek," as it is listed in the Pope County Records. This is the only field on Sugar Creek that has a solid rock bottom, and the fork on Sugar Creek is about 75 feet north of the field. As you walk west, you are retracing the original trail.  
Continuing along the loop trail, you will walk northwest from the farm, leading towards Grantsburg in Johnson County. Follow the signs to ensure your return to the parking area.

**A Safe Visit**  
The loop trail to the field, which includes the original route segment, is just over two miles. From here, follow the red trail towards the field. There you begin to walk the Trail of Tears, shown in blue on the map.  
For a safe and enjoyable visit, please:  
• Respect the privacy of the landowner  
• Pay attention to trail signs  
• Stay on the trail  
• Share your hiking plan with friends or family  
• Wear appropriate shoes and clothes for hiking  
• Be aware of ticks, poison ivy, and snakes  
• Carry a bottle of water and snacks  
• Leave no trace  
*Learn more at [www.nps.gov/trts](http://www.nps.gov/trts)*

**Camp Ground Cemetery and the Trail of Tears**

**A Place to Rest**  
In the early 1800s, this area was wooded and known as a camp ground by settlers and travelers, who took advantage of the fine springs nearby. Camp Ground Cemetery began in the fourth century of George Hildman. In 1834, Hildman took a land patent on the acreage that now includes the church and cemetery. When two of his children died in 1838, they were buried in "the field next to the house."  
In the winter of 1838-1839, the Cherokee were making their forced trek west and traveled along the main road, today's Tunnel Lane. Several detachments, as many as 10,000 people, camped on Hildman's land and the neighboring property on their way west. It is unknown how many Cherokee died while camping here, but family history relates that those who died were buried in the field next to Hildman's children.



### Exhibits

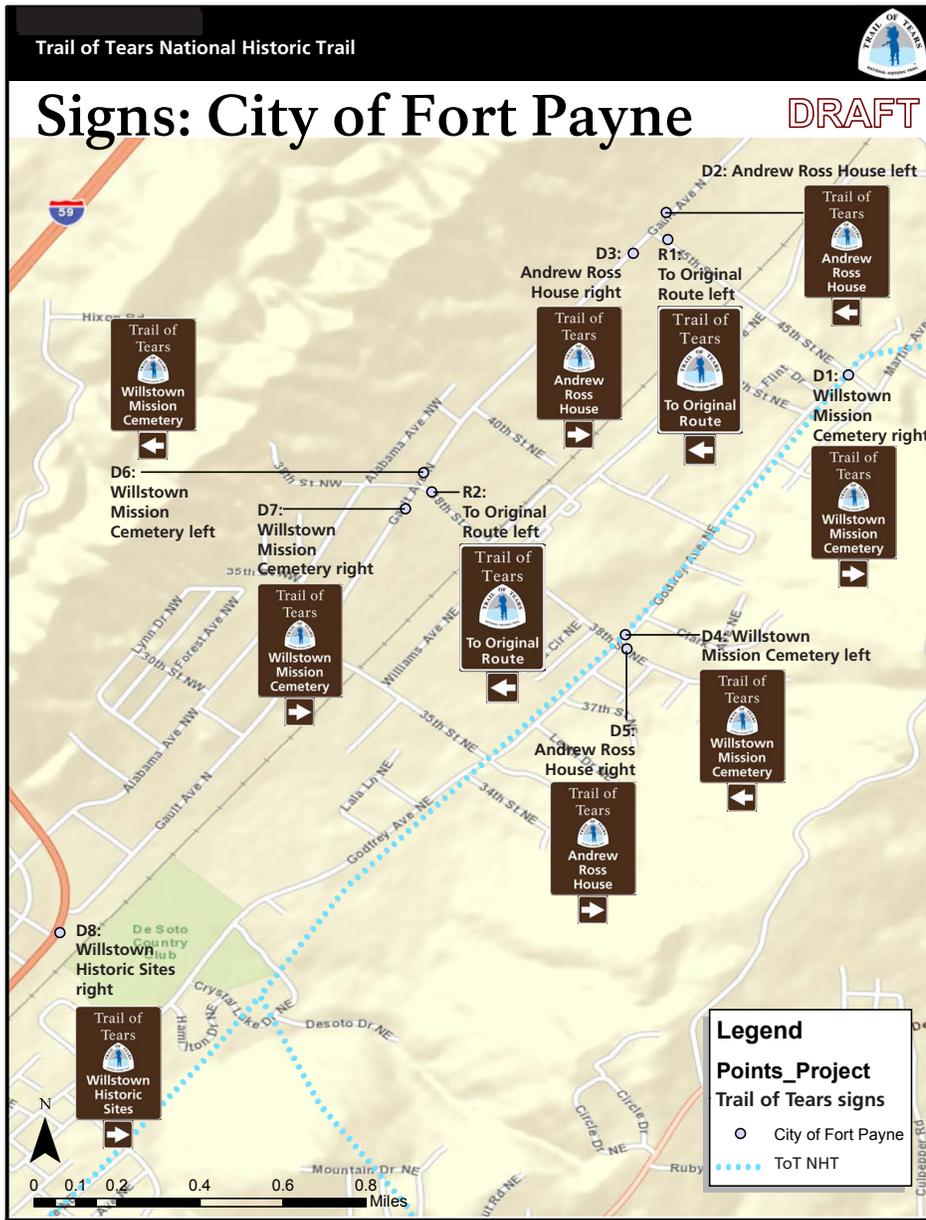
- At Crabb Abbott Farm, two upright orientation exhibits tell the story of the Trail of Tears and orient visitors to the two-mile hiking trail on the farm. Hikers retrace the original route for approximately one mile.
- At Campground Church, two wayside exhibits interpret the area in which the detachments are believed to have camped as well as the probable location of the Cherokee burial area. The exhibits also show how historical and archaeological research are used to locate and study trail resources.
- At the I-57 Rest Area, travelers heading west through Illinois travel the original route of the Trail of Tears. This contextual exhibit tells the Trail of Tears story as an overview and explains which stretch of I-57 is original route.

### New Certifications

- Running Waters (John Ridge Home), Rome, Georgia on 12/12/11
- John Martin House, Cleveland, Tennessee on 3/12/12
- Wayside Store and Bridges Tavern Site, Pleasant Grove, Illinois on 4/27/12

### Historic Building Survey

NTIR has partnered with Middle Tennessee State University's historic preservation program to do an inventory and condition assessments of significant historic buildings and structures associated with the Trail of Tears throughout nine states. This survey will update known historic buildings, plus search for and document historic buildings that are not generally known. This project will rely heavily on association members to provide leads on the whereabouts and ownership of such properties. Please contact Cultural Resource Specialist Mike Taylor at [michael\\_taylor@nps.gov](mailto:michael_taylor@nps.gov) with your knowledge and findings. The success of this project depends on you.



## Tennessee State Brochure

Work continues on the Tennessee Trail of Tears state brochure with Middle Tennessee State University Graduate Research Assistant Amy M. Kostine and NTIR staff. The brochure will mirror the Trail of Tears Official Map and Guide format. Scheduled completion is spring 2013.

## Georgia State Brochure

A cooperative agreement between the University of West Georgia and the National Park Service will produce a Georgia Trail of Tears state brochure. It will be written and designed by the end of the calendar year.

## Completed Sign Plans

- Reynolds, Madison, and Iron counties along the Hildebrand Route in Missouri
- a 9-mile stretch of original route through Coker Creek, Tennessee
- a stretch of original route along the Bell Route in Tennessee through Giles and Lawrence counties

## Signs Glorious Signs

- The Greene County Commission and the Greene County Historic Sites Board in Greene County, Missouri held a sign dedication and unveiling event on April 7 for seven Trail of Tears highway signs marking the original route.
- Columbus-Belmont State Park in Kentucky and the Kentucky Chapter held a dedication event on August 23, unveiling a new Trail of Tears entrance sign.
- The Alabama Chapter held a sign dedication event on June 23 for highway signs placed from Fort Payne to Guntersville, Alabama, unveiling the longest stretch of original route for the Trail of Tears signed to date.
- Big Springs Camp Site in Princeton, Kentucky has a Trail of Tears site identification sign.

### National Trails Intermountain Region

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

#### Comments? Write to:

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