

Beersheba Springs Historical Society

Minutes for Meeting of July 28, 2018

4 p.m. - Grace Chapel

Past President Susan Snow welcomed attendees in the absence of President John Adams. She also took minutes in the absence of Secretary Elizabeth Gerken.

- 1.** Members introduced themselves, with connection to Beersheba. The print-out of membership records was passed around to verify the information on file. Members were to check beside their names if it was correct and make any corrections or addition needed.
- 2.** A huge thank you to those who made the Summer Barn Dance a success – Larry and Bunny Hall and Linda Ross (the Beersheba Barn manager) and to Madeline and Howell Adams for providing the BBQ.
- 3.** Museum is open Saturdays 1-4 p.m. through October; thank-you to Sharon Whitman.
- 4.** The announcement was made that we need volunteers to set up and staff the BSHS booth at the Craft Fair. Need someone to be the lead and organize this. There was no volunteer present.
- 5.** This month's speaker, Clopper Almon, Howell family member and retired Economics professor from the University of Maryland, was introduced to present his research on the Chickamauga Trace. (see attached) Joan Almon recorded the presentation, complete with slides, on her phone.
- 6.** Announced was a great program lined up for Labor Day meeting (Saturday, Sept 1st). The membership was invited to come learn about the Highlander Folk School from David Currey of the Tennessee Preservation Trust. About half of the group present had heard of the Highlander Folk School.
- 7.** Next meetings / events:
August 25, 26 - Arts & Crafts Fair at Beersheba Methodist Assembly.
Sept 1st at Grace Chapel 4 p.m. Board meeting to follow.

Clopper Almon Speaking on the Chickamauga Trace

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The Tennessee River is broad and deep. In early days there was only one place suitable to ford the river in this area, located above South Pittsburg, Tennessee in Marion County, near Battle Creek. There, foot traffic could cross the river north to south, and an important Indian trail developed which became called the Chickamauga Trace after 1775.

The Cherokee tribe had a dissenting chief, Dragging Canoe, who objected to the sale of tribal land to Richard Henderson's Transylvania Company in 1775. Dragging Canoe and his sub-tribe moved to the banks of the Chickamauga Creek near Chattanooga and took the name of the creek as their name. They soon moved downstream on the Tennessee River and founded five "lower towns" near where I-24 crosses the river. They then used the old trail that led northward through where Coalmont and Beersheba now stand to Rock Island to attack the white settlers in the Cumberland valley. The old trail became known as the Chickamauga Path. In 1794 they were decisively defeated in their home base and gave up their attacks.

Beersheba Cain probably followed the Chickamauga Trace when, on August 1, 1833, she and three companions rode horseback up a trail from William Duggan's cabin in the valley and discovered the chalybeate spring. The Chickamauga Trace is clearly shown on a map in Indian Trails of the Southeast, a federal government publication from 1928. The Cains and Dr. White built their cabins where the two-story hotel now is, and John Armfield moved them. The old Trace probably ran from the spring through what later became the hotel courtyard, then right where Dahlgren Avenue now is in front of the White House, then crossed through the Howell Cottage grounds and continued along Hunter's Mill Road and on to the south west, crossing Firescauld Creek about 300 yards upstream from the swimming hole.

The 1895 Coastal and Geodetic map shows two roads between Beersheba and Altamont. One follows approximately the route of the present Highway 56. The other seems to follow the Chickamauga Trace route. The latter must have fallen into disuse in the 1920's or 1930's, but Clopper and several intrepid companions Steve and Julie Blackwell and Jo Fassnacht found and walked the old road, almost certainly the road on the 1895 map and in all probability the old Chickamauga Trace.

They took photos of an old well-cleared road with gravel rock which showed an improved road which goes between Beersheba and Altamont, passing near Hunter's Mill (later Long's Mill and even later owned by Greeter and then purchased by the state) through both the Clem tract and the nursery land recently purchased by the state. On a walk the day before the meeting, they found that within the last three weeks there had been much bulldozer work on and near the old road just south of the Shady Valley property recently acquired by the state.

The Beersheba Historical Society much enjoyed the photos and the reports of the exploration. Well done, Clopper and friends; a great presentation!

Susan Snow

Secretary for the meeting