

# TRAILS IN HISTORY

*Official Newsletter of the Lee County Historical Society*

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Published Quarterly

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**LCHS Summer Meeting**

**July 12, 2009**

**2:30 PM**

**at the Auburn City Hall Annex**

**130 Tichenor Ave., Auburn, Alabama**

*(enter on the west side of the building)*

## **Architectural Traditions of the Creek Indians**

**Speaker:**

**Mr. Richard Leon Thornton,**

**Architect & City Planner**



Mr. Richard Leon Thornton received a Professional Degree in Architecture from Georgia Institute of Technology in 1972. He has extensive knowledge of Pre-Columbian architecture & town planning practices and is the author of six books on Native American culture. He has lectured on the subject at several schools and colleges through the years.

Mr. Thornton is on the roll of Perdido Bay Muskogee (Creek) Indian Tribe of Georgia and Florida and is Architectural History Consultant for the Muskogee (Creek) Nation since 2004. He is a member of the Society for Georgia Archaeology, the Marble Valley Historical Society, and the National Trail of Tears Association.

**LEE COUNTY HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

P. O. Box 206  
LOACHAPOKA, AL 36865

Organized October 25, 1968, chartered as a non-commercial, non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Alabama, Charter filed with Probate Court, Lee County, Alabama, November 8, 1968.

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Vice-President: Charles C. Mitchell  
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Term expires December 31, 2009  
Doyle Keasal  
Charles H. Mitchell  
Betty Patterson  
Janet Sugg  
Peggie Webster  
Barbara Gosser

**MUSEUM HOURS**

(Summer)

**TUESDAY - FRIDAY**

**12 noon - 5:00 pm**

**SATURDAY**

**12 noon - 4:00 pm**

*Closed - Sunday and Monday*

**MUSEUM CALENDAR**

**July 11, 2009** - Second Saturday  
living history, 10am - 4pm  
River City Antique Car Club

**July 12, 2009** - LCHS Meeting  
2:30pm, Richard L. Thornton,  
Architectural Traditions of the  
Creek Indians

**August 8, 2009** - Second Saturday  
living history, 10am - 4pm

**September 12, 2009** - Second  
Saturday, living history,  
10am - 4pm

**October 24, 2009** - Historical Fair

**LCHS MEMBERSHIP**

Due: January 1 of each year  
Individual: \$20 per individual  
Family: \$30 (spouse and children)  
*Additional Donations Appreciated*

All memberships and donations to LCHS are tax deductible. Please send your check (payable to LCHS), your mailing address (and e-mail address if applicable) to

Lee County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 206  
Loachapoka, AL 36865

# LCHS President's Report

by Deborah McCord

Great things are happening at LCHS! As of the second day of June our museum is open Tuesday through Friday from 12:00-5:00 and every Saturday from 12:00-4:00. Our faithful volunteers are assisting in serving as hosts/hostesses. We are also hosting two history students (**Shannon Kipphut** from Auburn University and **James LaRoque** from the University of Chicago) this summer to assist with historical document preservation. We hope to soon be listed on more Alabama attractions and travel brochures so that the public will know to visit the museum during regular hours.

Our trade center has taken on a face lift and looks wonderful. The removal of the old stucco and replacement with new may ensure that it is around for another 164 years, at least. The interior plaster is being repaired and soon the building will receive insulation. Our heart-felt thanks goes to **Carl Summers, Jr.**, **Charles H. Mitchell** and all of the Building and Grounds committee members for their efforts in getting

this done. There are still major renovations to be made as funding becomes available, especially central heat/air to control the climate and reduce the damage to our priceless artifacts from heat and moisture. Your continued donations are greatly appreciated.

The Second Saturday events continue to be outstanding. Thanks so much to **Charlie C. Mitchell** for coordinating all these efforts. Our average attendance for Second Saturdays so far this year has been around 100. The Whistle-Stop Pickers (dulcimer group) plays at the bandstand from 1:00-3:00 on Second Saturdays. **Esther Marshall** is beginning a class for spinning lessons starting in June. **Gerald Melshimer** always has something good cooking in the cabin or over an open fire. The gardens are shaping up nicely thanks to **Charlie and Peggy Mitchell**. If you haven't been out for Second Saturday, please come and check it out. If you have been, please come back. It's a great experience!

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*Charlie and Peggy Mitchell at work in the McLain Garden.*

**President's Report**

*continued from page 3*

LCHS was featured twice in April on WSFA-TV Channel 12: once for the Lee County Gathering Old Time Music Festival in April and once for the Second Saturday events. If you didn't get to see the clips, go to County Road 12 features on [www.wsfa.com](http://www.wsfa.com).

Our Old Time Music Festival was deemed a success by all involved. We had wonderful reviews from the participants who were thrilled with our facilities. Our first effort was profitable and plans are being made to hold it again next year.

Thank you for your continued support of the LCHS.

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## **First Annual Lee County Gathering, Old Time Music Festival held in April 2009**

The last weekend of April, the LCHS hosted the first annual **Lee County Gathering, Old Time Music Festival**. It was two days of classes, continuous jams, concerts, and dancing. Allen and Deborah McCord along with Bob and Rose Taunton served as hosts for the weekend event. People came from Tennessee, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana and from across our state to participate in fiddle, mandolin, guitar, banjo, dulcimer, autoharp, story-telling, shaped-note singing, or contra dance classes. Camping was available on-site. About 100 people participated each day. LCHS volunteers manned the gate and cookhouse. Put the fourth weekend of April on your calendar for next year and we will do it bigger and better.



# Museum Renovation Update

by Carl Summers, LCHS Past President

A total of \$125,925 has been raised for the Museum Renovation Fund. For this we are most thankful to 124 members and friends for their contributions, to the **Lee County Commissoon** who contributed \$6,000 and to **Senator Ted Little** for a Community Service Grant of \$9,000. Our special thanks go to **Ann Pearson, Ruth Ann and Dwight Bond and Judy Nunn** who gave us especially generous contributions.

These funds have allowed us to complete the repair and painting of the vintage windows, to patch the plaster inside the Museum and to remove and replace the exterior stucco. The latter was most important as it stabilized the building we hope for another 164 years. The work was timely as when the exterior stucco was removed it was found that a lot of the mortar between the rocks was gone and the rocks were loose. We were fortunate to have **Simpson Plastering Co.**, a large experienced stucco contractor from Birmingham, to do the work. They did a first class job. The Society is indebted

to **Charles H. Mitchell** who donated his time and expertise to supervise both the window and the stucco renovations.

The total cost of the work to date is \$107,023 which leaves us a balance on hand of \$18,900. This allows us to take a few more steps with the renovation. The next job will be to insulate the ceiling above the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor with R-30, 12 inch Fiberglas and this should make the building a little more bearable during the hot summer months.

**Another \$65,000 is needed to finish the renovation including a central heating and air conditioning system.** It is only then will we be able to say that we have a truly year round facility. We earnestly ask for your donation for this purpose.

Donations to this fund are kept in a separate account and when there is enough on hand we will proceed with the work. All donations are tax deductible. Checks should be made payable to LCHS and mailed to **LCHS, P.O. Box 206, Loachapoka, AL 36865**. Thank you for your support!



*Workers from Simpson Plastering Co. remove and replace the exterior stucco on the Trade Center. The restoration should help preserve the building for another 164 years.*

# The Architectural Traditions of the Creek Indians: Cultural Background

By Richard L. Thornton, Architect & City Planner

Although most Alabamans today probably assume that the Creek Indians are an ancient, indigenous ethnic group, that once occupied all or most of their state, the Creek Tribe, in fact, is a political entity that is not much older than Alabama itself. The ethnic label “Creek” does not even appear on maps until 1765. Until after the American Revolution, maps described locations of specifically named tribes within the geographical regions denote as “Creek.” The word “Muscogee” (which nowadays is considered synonymous with “Creek”) does not appear on any maps until very, very late in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

Prior to the late 1700s, what is now the State of Alabama was a patchwork quilt of indigenous ethnic groups, speaking several languages and many dialects. During the 1500s, 1600s and 1700s indigenous survivors of a series of invasions, wars, plagues, slave raids and forced relocation, repeatedly formed alliances and settled new villages. Over time they evolved mixed cultural traditions and adopted hybrid languages. This process of internal cultural assimilation among the Creeks continued even after the majority of traditional Creek towns were forcibly relocated to Oklahoma.

The archives from the earliest European expeditions and colonization efforts in Alabama describe a very different ethnic landscape that observed by the waves of settlers in entered Alabama in the early 1800s. Creek scholars can identify the ethnic identities of the aboriginal peoples by the indigenous words recorded by the chroniclers of the de Soto, de Luna and de Pardo Expeditions in the 1500s. All of the town names recorded in what is now Alabama (except the coast), Georgia (except the southeastern corner), eastern Tennessee, western North Carolina, the Florida Panhandle, south central North Carolina, and most of

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*The archives from the earliest European expeditions and colonization efforts in Alabama describe a very different ethnic landscape that observed by the waves of settlers in entered Alabama in the early 1800s.*

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South Carolina are Muskogean words. By Muskogean, we mean that they were members of the language family from which modern Choctaw, Chickasaw, Muskogee, Alabama, Hitchiti, Koasati, etc., languages evolved.

That being said, the words within the State of Alabama that can be translated by a Muskogee dictionary are limited to along the upper Coosa River, the Tallapoosa River Basin & the middle Chattahoochee River Basin. The majority of towns in the state had Alabama language names. The Apalachicola of southeastern Alabama (*later members of the Creek Confederacy*) spoke a lan-

guage halfway between Hitchiti and Choctaw. Peoples speaking dialects similar to Chickasaw and Natchez occupied the Tennessee River Basin. There were towns speaking dialects of Choctaw in west Central and southeastern Alabama, and some small tribes speaking Siouan and Choctaw dialects along the coast. There were also Yuchi trading centers and towns speaking extinct languages scattered around the region.

The geographic center of the original Creek Motherland was at modern day Macon, Georgia. It was here, at the ancient town of Ochesee, that representative of many provinces came together in the late 1600s to form a political alliance to combat the horrific slave raids being sponsored by the Colony of Virginia, the constant incursions of Spaniards from the south and Algonquian-speaking invaders from the north. Lee County, Alabama would have been on the far western edge of this alliance – the People of One Fire.

### **Spanish Colonial Period and the Plagues**

There is archival and archaeological evidence that European diseases began to sweep through the Southeast as early as 1500 AD. A smallpox plague in the Yucatan spread across the Caribbean and was carried to the Gulf Coast by Native American merchants. In the early 1540s, when the Hernando de Soto Expedition bullied its way through the Southeast, the Native provinces were thriving in the interior. However, when Tristan de Luna's foraging parties traveled from Pensacola up through the heart of Alabama, eighteen years later, the countryside was desolate. Survivors told de Luna's captains that waves of diseases had followed in the path of de Soto.

In 1566-67 Juan de Pardo set off from Santa Helena, the capital of the new Spanish colony of La Florida, (*on Parris Island, South Carolina*) to explore the hinterlands and found a new colony at the great town of Kusa, in northwestern Georgia. He never made it to Kusa, but his chronicler, Licenciado Juan de la Bandero, kept meticulous records of the towns and the landscape. His chronicles suggest that most of the Southern Highlands provinces, including those in eastern Alabama, were still doing fairly well.

That was to change in 1585. An epidemic began in the highlands of central Mexico, then spread across the interior of the Southeast. It was a hemorrhagic fever that often killed its victims within a day. The disease is said to have been spread by fleas that parasitized rodents living in cool, temperate mountains. The plague did not affect the sweltering Gulf Coastal plains of Mexico or the Southeast, but spread to the Southern Highlands. At least 80% of the indigenous people of the Mexican Highlands died in 1585. At least that percentage died in the Southern Highlands, because we know that all of the major towns in northeastern Alabama, northern Georgia, eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina were abandoned about that time. Mound building activities pretty much ceased after that time.

Spanish efforts at colonization first concentrated on the South Atlantic Coast. The first effort to establish a town was on Sapelo Island, Georgia, in 1526. That colony was abandoned within 6 months. A more successful town was established at Santa Helena (SC) in 1563. Given the scarcity of Iberians willing to immigrate to the New

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## **Creek Indians**

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World, colonization efforts shifted to mainly establishing mission stations and small forts along the coast. Later, the Franciscans developed a chain of small missions on the Chattahoochee River as far north as Columbus, Georgia. Some Native Americans living in what is now Lee County, probably had contact with this northernmost mission & trading post. By the mid-1600s there were more missions and mission Indians in Georgia, than ever existed in all of California. Hostile Muskogean tribes in the interior began to attack the mission with increasing ferocity. Eventually, the Spanish withdrew to within the walls of St. Augustine. Spaniards also established gold mining camps in the mountains of Georgia, which lasted until about 1700.

Various European diseases continued to periodically sweep through the Southeastern Indian settlements for the next 250 years. It has been estimated that by 1800, the Native American population of Alabama was somewhere between 10% to 2% of its level in 1492. Most of the ancestral Alabama (tribe) population was apparently wiped out by 1600 AD. Thus, the descendants of the people, who once built the great towns at Moundville and Bottle Creek, Alabama, were reduced to being a minor ethnic group, and forced to merge with other peoples in order to withstand attacks from their enemies.

Between 1600 and 1800, the more fertile lands in Alabama were often re-occupied by ethnic groups from other regions. After 1585 Holocaust the Kusa (*Coosa Creeks*) moved from northwestern Georgia to the Childersburg, Alabama, area. Some Hilapi (*Hillabee or*

*Pee Dee Creeks*) began a migration from South Carolina through Georgia and then to the region just north of Auburn, Alabama. The Sawakee (*Creeks*) moved from South Carolina and the North Carolina/Georgia mountains to west-central Georgia and east-central Alabama. *Saugahatchee* Creek in Lee County, Alabama, is the frontier English way of saying *Sawakee-hachee* = Raccoon People River. Several other ancestral branches of the Creeks from eastern Tennessee moved downstream along the Tennessee River into Alabama. The Kowita (*Creeks*) began moving out of the North Carolina & Georgia Mountains into the Chattahoochee River Basin. The Kowitas still occupied a huge chunk of the North Carolina Mountains until they were occupied by Europeans. Meanwhile, Chickasaw towns throughout the region began drifting westward toward the Mississippi, or southward into what is now considered "Creek" territory.

## **English Colonial Period and Native American Slavery**

The English were largely ignorant of what is now Alabama until after the American Revolution. English colonial maps contained very little detailed information about the landscape west of the Chattahoochee River or north/west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. However, after the founding of Charlestowne, South Carolina, in 1674, the English developed a brisk trade with the ancestors of the Creeks living in South Carolina and Georgia. By the eve of the American Revolution, traders based in Augusta, Georgia were ranging throughout most of Alabama.

Shortly after being reinstated as Governor of Virginia in 1660 by newly crowned King Charles II, William Ber-

keley pushed through a series of laws institutionalizing human slavery. Prior to that time, Europeans, Native Americans and Africans, who worked without earning wages, were theoretically indentured bond servants, who would be free when their time of servitude had expired. However, the new laws defined Native American and African servants as private property, not humans. By law, they were bound to their owners until death. All offspring from these slaves would also be slaves, unless freed by their masters.

Beginning in 1642, Berkeley had grown increasingly wealthy from the trade of furs and Native American slaves obtained by the fierce Rickohocken Tribe of southwestern Virginia. He encouraged the Rickohockens to attack

their neighbors for the purpose of obtaining slaves in order to satisfy the insatiable demand for labor among Virginia planters. During the period of the English Commonwealth, Berkeley had lost his governorship, but continued to develop plantations and trade relations with the Rickohockens. Puritan judges sent from England, however, did not recognize Berkeley's right to enslave Native Americans from tribes that were on good relations with the colony. If they escaped, they often would be freed since their owners did not have the proper legal paperwork that was required to keep indentured servants for seven years. That is why one of Berkeley's first priorities in 1660 was to have a legal framework for slavery.

As a reward for Berkeley's service to Royalist cause in the English Civil

War, Charles II also appointed him one of the eight Lord Proprietors of the new Colony of Carolina. It was to be a feudal colony in which all major landowners had titles of nobility, and everybody else leased property from them. But despite the ravages by several plagues, the most fertile lands in the Deep South were still occupied by culturally advanced agriculturalists, living in permanent towns. Berkeley and his buddies decided that the Indian farmers must be removed from the landscape, if the

Colony of Carolina was to be easily developed into feudal estates.

A law was passed by the Virginia General Assembly, which authorized the governor to issue muskets, munitions and travel supplies to the Rickohockens, in return for their agreement to

head south and obtain thousands of Native American slaves. The Southeastern Indians were almost helpless when the surprise attacks began. They were familiar with Spanish military tactics, and were winning the war with the Spanish, but were unprepared for early morning attacks by Indians from far-away, who fired muskets and were primarily interested in taking slaves, not gaining glory. The slave raiders typically killed all males above the age of 14. Those others, who were unable to make the walk in chains to Virginia slave markets, were also killed.

An ethnic cleansing began that stretched from Carolina Piedmont to southern Alabama. The indigenous communities in the Carolinas and what is now eastern Georgia got the worst

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*Saugahatchee Creek  
in Lee County is the  
Frontier English way  
of saying **Sawakee-  
hachee** = *Raccoon  
People River.**

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## ***Creek Indians***

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of it. However, as enormous areas of the Carolinas became depopulated after 1690, Cherokee slave raiders ranged as far south as Lake Okeechobee, Florida or as far west as the Mississippi River. Until 1720 the primary source of trade income for the Cherokees was Native American slaves. Apalachicola (*Creeks*) of southeastern Alabama also became involved with the slave trade. They were armed by the Colony of South Carolina to make raids on Apalachee Mission Indians in the Florida Panhandle. Apalachicola merely means “Apalachee People” in their language. The non-Christian Apalachicola evidently justified their brutality toward their cousins because they had become thralls of the Spanish. Approximately, 20,000 Apalachee were killed in slave raids or marched in chains to the slave markets on the South Carolina coast. It is estimated that at least 600,000 Native Americans were enslaved by Europeans between 1542 and 1752, when King George I banned Native American slavery.

The Cherokee slave raids are the primary reason that the ancestors of the Creeks concentrated their villages in the general vicinity of Lee County, Alabama, and Columbus, Georgia. The first mention of the Cherokees in any European colonial document is in 1684. This is also the last the year that the word Rickohocken is mentioned in English colonial documents. Prior to 1684, the mountainous regions now called Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee were labeled Rickohockens. Afterward they were labeled Chorakees, and subsequently, Cherokees. Chorakee is a Creek word, which

means either “splinter group” or “people who take scalps.” Surviving Rickohocken words are similar to some Cherokee dialects. This strongly suggests that at least some of the ancestors of the Cherokees were originally Rickohockens. Until 1752, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina issued slave branding irons to each of the 14 bands of the Cherokees. In response to the raids and expanding Cherokee population, many Muskogean towns in North Carolina, eastern Tennessee and northern Georgia moved southwestward into what is now Alabama. For example, originally the Apike (*Abika Creeks*) lived in the vicinity of Knoxville, TN and the Taskeke (*Tuskegee Creeks*) lived in the vicinity of Lake Fontana, North Carolina. The town of Tallassee, Alabama, was originally on the Little Tennessee River in the Great Smoky Mountains.

## **French Colonial Period**

French explorers, soldiers and traders began canoeing up the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers in the 1690s. Unlike the English, they produced accurate maps of the region. They also stayed on good terms with most of the Indian towns throughout their stay in Alabama. In 1714 Fort Toulouse was constructed at the conjunction of the Coosa & Tallapoosa Rivers, near modern day Wetumpka. The fort was originally built to protect the Alabama Tribe from Cherokee slave raids and Louisiana Colony from English encroachment. However, it quickly attracted numerous ethnic groups considered ancestral to the Creeks. When looking at the old French maps of the environs of Fort Toulouse, one can see names of towns visited by the Spanish when they were

exploring the mountains of North Carolina & Tennessee. For example, Cauche was on the Hiwassee River near Murphy, North Carolina, in 1567. Tanasee was on Hiwassee Island in the Tennessee River in 1567. Tamasee was in the mountains of South Carolina until the early 1700s. The Coushetta (*Koasati*) were living in the mountains of Tennessee & North Carolina in the late 1600s.

The small garrison of French Colonial Marines armed the Abika, Kusa and Tallapoosa Creeks at the start of the French & Indian War. Their fierce attacks on the Cherokees in 1756 drastically shrunk the boundaries of Cherokee claimed territory. The Cherokees sued for peace. The British then sent blankets saturated with the pus of small pox patients into the Cherokee villages. About a third of the Cherokees died, and the remainder lashed out at their former allies. However, the British won the French & Indian War in the north, and the marines at Fort Toulouse were forced to walk back to either Mobile or New Orleans. Many, if not most, of their Indian allies went with them to Louisiana. After the region came under the sovereignty of the British Crown, and ultimately the Americans, several of the French allies' towns disappeared. They were replaced with towns settled by Creeks from Georgia, North Carolina and Northern Alabama. Shawnee from Kentucky and North Carolina also immigrated there.

**Understanding Native American Traditions In East Central Alabama**  
Architecture is a physical manifestation of a community's cultural values and

traditions. Somewhere between 90 and 98 percent of Alabama's indigenous population died as a direct result of contact with Spanish invaders. That population was replaced by immigrants with similar, but not the same, cultural traditions as the aboriginal peoples. Many of those, who composed the first wave of immigrants departed with the French Marines in 1763. They were re-

placed by a second wave of immigrants – again with similar, but not the same, cultural traditions. It was the second wave that blended with the remnants of the aboriginals and first immigrants to create an ethnic group that is now labeled the Creek Indians.

Thus, to understand the evolution of “Creek” architecture and town-planning traditions as manifested in Lee County, AL in the late 1700s, one must look at a regional and historical perspective. For example, the Sawakee ~ Raccoon People lived along the banks of the Sawakeehatchee River in South Carolina for at least a thousand years before taking refuge in what was to become Lee County and naming their new stream, the Sawakeehatchee. There they intermarried, plus shared their language and tradition with neighbors from the North Carolina Mountains, the Tennessee River Valley, the Piedmont of Georgia, the Blue Grass Country of Kentucky and often European traders. The end result was the construction of towns planned, and buildings designed in an eclectic style that blended the traditions of many cultures in both the New World and the Old.

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*The British sent blankets saturated with the pus of small pox patients into the Cherokee villages. About a third of the Cherokees died...*

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# Loachapoka Students Study History through Quilting

by Sheila Eckman

Students at Loachapoka Elementary School study history in a unique personal way. The result is a beautiful story quilt currently on loan to the LCHS museum in Loachapoka.

**Mrs. Dee Shealey's** students interviewed family members and community members to gather stories, each of which is presented on one square of the quilt. The story quilt is the outgrowth of a program sponsored by Pacers, a state-wide non-profit organization which supports rural schools, and additional funds were raised locally.

"The goal of the project," said Shealey, "is to link the students with the community. The quilt offered a medium in which the local history could be documented and an opportunity for students and community members to work side by side." Those guiding the students in their project included relatives, school members and **Mozelle Benson**, noted local quilter. Ms. Benson visited the school to display some of her quilts and students also visited her studio in Waverly, Alabama.

The intergenerational aspect was fascinating, according to Shealey. "One family told me that some of their grandmother's stories were being heard for the first time." The children learned from the stories and gained an appreciation for life without electricity and hospitals, and for children who came in from school and worked in the fields.

"I learned many things about my family's past, especially my aunt's," said **Kamia Slaughter**, "and it gave me a different view of their history." **Alexis Williamson** was fascinated to learn that



*Loachapoka student's history quilt project is currently on display at the LCHS museum.*

her grandmother had her tonsils removed on the kitchen table. **Wiltavious Brown's** favorite aspect of the project was seeing the quilt hanging in the capitol. He was also surprised to know how long Loachapoka has been a town. [The earliest known village was settled by Indians by 1796. It was officially incorporated as a town in 1910.] **Jamal McIntosh** enjoyed learning his grandmother had been caught in a tornado. Others helping with the quilt were **Sylvia Stevens**, **Selina Dowdell**, and **Megan Kriel**.

The students' story quilt has been displayed in the capitol building in Montgomery, in conjunction with a state-wide Pacers meeting last year. The students are now working on one for this year's convention. "This year's quilt focuses on the history of Loachapoka," said Shealey, "so the students are coming to the museum to research that history." For that quilt, they have interviewed Loachapoka natives **Fred Lord** and octogenarian **Ruth Ann Bond**.

# Museum Report

## Jessie Summers, LCHS museum Curator

Come see the new arrangements of the school, military and textile exhibits! They look simply splendid in their new locations. Our one room school is now in the log cabin where **Jeannette Frandsen** and **Vera McNutt** will conduct the classes. **Mary Lynda Crockett** donated a dear little desk and chair for the youngest students.

**Chad Mitchell** designed a new display for the military collection in the upstairs hall that focuses on military personnel from Lee County. The northeast room has been transformed by **Esther Marshall** into textile demonstration area.

**James Carlisle** (whose grandfather lived in the upstairs of the Trade Center, and whose father was born and grew up there), and **Gail Langley** both made generous gifts towards the building renovation. Their gifts speak of their devotion to the Society's mission and are now in the fund for installing a heating and air condition system.

Many thanks to **Arvle Marshall**, for making and installing three screen windows and two screen doors and repairing the door to the outside stairway.

**Lori Johnson** was awarded Alabama Heritage Grant to bring speakers and demonstrators to **Richland School** in Auburn. LCHS was asked to participate on two different occasions. **Jessie Summers** demonstrated churning butter, and **Allen and Deborah McCord** and **Bob and Rose Taunton** did a program on the origin of the dulcimer and dulcimer playing techniques. We were glad to have been asked to Richland because the public schools haven't been able to schedule fieldtrips to LCHS this past school year. Children, teachers, and parents from **The Village School** did come to the museum, however.

About 50 children from the summer enrichment program at **Loachapoka School** visited to celebrate **Juneteenth Day** (June 18). They enjoyed learning about pioneer living, and also playing in the sprinklers on that hot day.

A chapter of the **DAR** held their April meeting with us, as did the **Auburn Study Club** in May. The first of June members of **Olli (Lifelong Learners)** came for a brown bag lunch and a tour of the museum. We were happy to welcome many new members.



*Ted Isham, Curator of the Creek Council House Museum in Okmulgee, Oklahoma visited our Museum on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Okmulgee is the capitol of the Creek Nation. In this picture, Ted Isham, Pete and Denise Dunaway examine a Lee County map that shows the Indian names on property that was deeded to them after the Treaty of 1832.*

# Textiles: A SnapShot Look at History

by Esther Marshall

When the opportunity arose to move the textile exhibit upstairs in the Trade Center, we were very happy to make the move. The new location has room to demonstrate each step as we follow fiber preparation from raw material to finished garment or accessory. All steps in the process are done by hand (no electricity necessary!) just as it was done prior to 1800 on the frontier. Someone has suggested that these are "slow clothes", and indeed, done by hand is a slow process. Clothing and assorted "textile arts" can be used to date a given time period. Fiber, fashion, and color all play a part in identifying when something was made.

Spinning raw fiber into yarn requires several steps in preparation, depending on the fiber. Cotton needs to be deseeded and carded prior to spinning. Flax requires a number of steps, so we

purchase it ready to spin. Wool or other animal fiber must be washed, picked clean of "barnyard", carded and then spun. After spinning, all yarns must be washed and dried under tension to set the spin. Depending on its final use, yarns may be scoured, bleached or dyed. Several different types of spinning wheels are used, depending on the fiber being spun.

The next step is weaving. There are many ways to accomplish this. We are using a loom that was made by hand about 1880, in southern Indiana. A smaller LaClarc "Dorothy" loom is available for use by children on Fair Day and during school tours. The "Dorothy" was originally used as a sample loom to try out a pattern before committing a much larger quantity of yarn to the larger loom. Fabric strips have been produced over the years and are



*The textiles display has moved to the second floor of the Trade Center. The military display has moved into the east hall of the Trade Center, and the one room school exhibit is now in the east room of the log cabin.*

on display. Other forms of weaving are demonstrated as well.

About the time the textile room was being moved upstairs a Singer treadle sewing machine was donated by **Bill and Samera Baird**. A little oil, and TLC by **Dr. Arvle Marshall**, got it in working order. Several people have said "My Grandmother had a machine just like that" or "I learned to sew on a machine just like that one". Now, we can take the process one more step and produce a garment from the woven fabric. Left over scraps are used for quilts, rag rugs, or dolls. **Dr. Charlotte Ward** has been working on a quilt for several years on Fair Day and occasionally during school tours. This quilt is on display here in the textile room, along with several samples of handmade laces.

**Spinning Classes**

This summer, we have begun offering some spinning classes, in hopes of developing more formal textile programs in the future. Current classes discuss fibers and preparation, drop spindle spinning, inkle and off loom weaving, and other fiber uses.

Drop spindles and inkle looms are available for use at the museum. Serious spinners should plan to acquire a spinning wheel (a list of sources is available). For more information about fiber arts classes, please contact **Esther Marshall** via e-mail at [sweetbaysprings@bellsouth.net](mailto:sweetbaysprings@bellsouth.net)

**Upcoming Events on Second Saturdays**

The second Saturday of every month, volunteers gather at the LCHS Museum in period attire to demonstrate their arts and crafts. Blacksmiths are usually working at the forge, spinners and weavers are at work, and someone is always cooking up a meal in the fireplace or outdoors. Come and see!

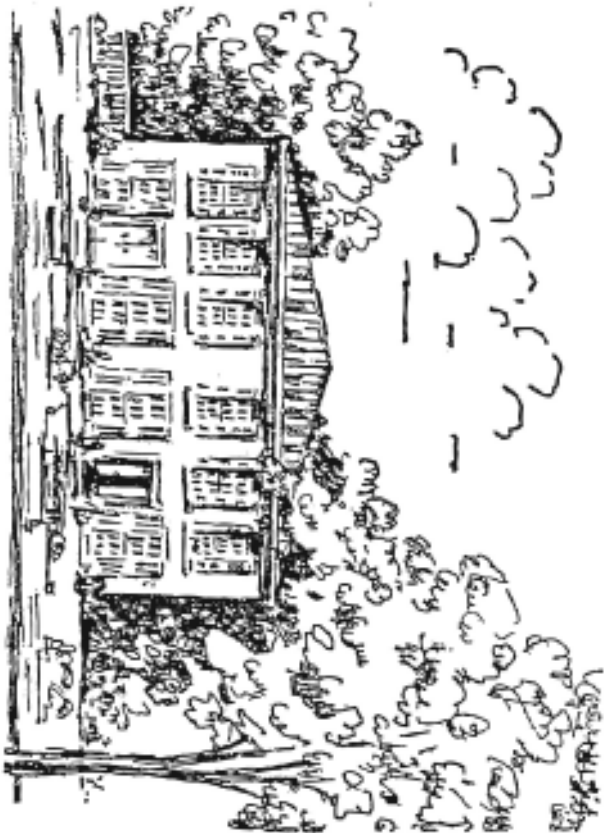
**July 11, 2009 - The River City Model A Ford Car Club from Columbus, GA,** visit the museum and showcase their classic automobiles. Esther Marshall continues the class in spinning and Inkle weaving. Visit the crops garden and the McLain Garden to see familiar crops and unusual medicinal plants. Find out what local Indians grew as the "Three Sisters". The Whistle Stop Pickers practice dulcimer and other old time instruments on the bandstand under the shade of the pecan trees. Fresh watermelons taste just as good as they did 100 years ago.

**August 8, 2009.** The crops are "laid by" and the "livin' is easy." It's too warm to do anymore than necessary to keep the homestead going. The watermelon crop is in and it is a perfect time to have a watermelon cuttin' under the shade of the pecan trees. Dulcimer music under the pecan trees is very relaxin'.

**September 12, 2009.** There is a football game in town this evening, but that won't stop our re-enactors from spending a Saturday morning demonstrating their crafts. There will be outdoor cooking, spinning, weaving, and blacksmithing. Herbs from the McLain garden will be used in preparation of today's meal. Crops in the field need harvesting, and there are fall crops to be planted.

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