

Historic Hayesville will come alive with the sights and sounds of the Cherokee, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 17 at the Cherokee Homestead Exhibit, where the Clay County Communities Revitalization Association will host the 10th annual Cherokee Heritage Festival. This is a free, family-friendly event. Activities for children of all ages will be available.

Dancer Eddie Swimmer, the first Champion Hoop Dancer in the first-held hoop dancing competition, will demonstrate his whirling hoops and humorous commentary.

Cherokee artisans will demonstrate basket weaving, finger weaving, wood carving, dart making, flint knapping, beadwork, blowguns, drum making and arrow making. You will be entertained by the Oconaluftee Indian Village dancers, hear the majestic sounds of Cherokee flutes played by Hayesville's Dan Hollifield and learn about the Cherokee culture from nationally recognized storyteller and artist Davy Arch. Darry Wood will illustrate Cherokee skills including arrows, blow guns and fire starting. Lamar Marshall, research director and historical graphics designer for Southeast Heritage, researches and maps Cherokee trails, ecology and geography in conjunction with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and North Carolina Trail of Tears Association, recreating cultural landscapes by integrating archives, early surveys and historical maps.

The festival includes the opportunity to taste authentic frybread with special toppings, purchase an original piece of Cherokee art and at the Cherokee Botanical Sanctuary, MountainTrue will provide native plant talks and information about how native plants have benefited people for thousands of years. You'll be able to take a scavenger hunt and participate in other plant-related activities.

While in Hayesville you are encouraged to visit other sites along the 2-mile Quanassee Path: A Cherokee History Trail which includes the Cherokee Cultural Center at Moss Library and the Spikebuck Mound/Quanassee Town site. Visiting kiosks at Chatuge Dam and at the Hinton Center Road boat ramp will further expand your knowledge of local Cherokee communities that were here hundreds of years ago.

The Cherokee Heritage Festival is a free, family-friendly event held at the Cherokee Homestead Exhibit, 805 Hwy 64 Business in Hayesville. Free shuttle service will be provided from several parking areas to the exhibit and museum. The event is sponsored by the Clay County Communities Revitalization Association, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Call (828) 389-3045 or visit: <http://www.cccranc.org/> for details.