

# **Cherokee Heritage Festival in Historic Hayesville, NC**

**August 30, 2018**

**Sandy Nicolette**

Historic Hayesville will come alive with the sights and sounds of the Cherokee on Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup> from 10am – 3pm at the Cherokee Homestead Exhibit, where the Clay County Communities Revitalization Association will host the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Cherokee Heritage Festival. Visitors to previous festivals have commented, “The exhibit is the perfect place to see the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians sharing their culture.” You will want to come to this year’s festival, even if you have been before, since you will always find something new to enjoy.

Champion hoop dancer, Eddie Swimmer, has agreed to thrill attendees with his whirling hoops and humorous commentary again this year. No doubt it took Swimmer many years to perfect the art of hoop dancing which earned him the title of Champion Hoop Dancer in the first-held hoop dancing competition. For those of you who have difficulty managing one hula hoop, you will be fascinated to see Swimmer make intricate patterns with up to 32 hoops. You might even be one of the attendees selected to try out your hoop skills under Swimmer's tutelage.

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 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. Amanda Swimmer, 95-year-old potter, will demonstrate why she has come to be so well-regarded by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and honored throughout North Carolina. You'll want to taste authentic frybread with special toppings and purchase an original piece of Cherokee art. Activities for children of all ages will be available.

At the Cherokee Botanical Sanctuary, Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition Restoration Coordinator Tony Ward 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.

The adjacent Clay County “Old Jail” Museum will be open for the day and features Cherokee displays, local historical displays, and local art. There is no entrance fee. A silent auction of work by regional artists will be held on the museum grounds. 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.

The Cherokee Heritage Festival is held at the Cherokee Homestead Exhibit, Hwy 64 Business in Historic Hayesville, North Carolina. 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.ccra-nc.org/> for more information.



