



EEC Corner Spotlight

Chapter Program & Projects

Program X Project Icebreaker

Title: Historian Presents Local Civil War History

Summary: A local historian, T. G. McKenzie, presented fascinating facts about Meigs County during the Trail of Tears and Civil War. We met at Cottonport Marina which is the site of Cottonport Ferry that transported both Northern and Southern troops throughout the war. While he was presenting, we could see the ramp coming into the water on the Rhea County side of the Tennessee River. Although there were no battles in Meigs, troops certainly traveled through and camped in Meigs. In fact, one of the roads in Meigs was renamed "No Pone Road" because no pone (corn) could be found in the valley because so many hungry soldiers passed through.

TG presented us with much information including how each county voted during the decision of whether to secede from the union. Meigs voted for secession but by a narrow majority. As we looked at the map it was obvious that the flatter the land, the more likely the county was to vote for secession. Most mountainous counties voted to remain in the union.

One of the most interesting facts that none of us knew is that the Emancipation Proclamation did not apply to Tennessee. The proclamation applied to the "rebellious states." You see, Tennessee had already been claimed by the Union. Remember that Tennessee was the last to secede and the first to rejoin.

We also talked about the Trail of Tears. Meigs has the Cherokee Removal Memorial Park in the lower end of Meigs County. It is located near the site of former Blythe Ferry where stockades contained Indians who were waiting to walk west. Ironically, the Blythe family was Cherokee, so they had to ferry everyone across and then leave their home to walk to Oklahoma. He discussed how different prominent families moved in to Meigs County to take occupancy of land that had formerly been owned by Cherokee Indians.

This was a great meeting, and we highly recommend inviting a local historian to your meeting.

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