

May 19, 2013

Vol 126, No 39

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Best and brightest

Of the five students selected as finalists for Outstanding Senior at Maryville College, three grew up together in Clinton.

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Champions

Norris Middle Schools girls bring home state golf championship.

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The Courier News

SUNDAY



CHRIS SILCOX

Several state and local dignitaries joined Barry Thacker and Carol Moore, of the Coal Creek Watershed Foundation, on Friday morning, May 17, for a ceremony "officially" ending hostilities of the Coal Creek War with the signing of a Peace Treaty some 125 years after the conflict subsided. Fourth- and fifth-grade students at Briceville Elementary School participated in the event by respectively signing the treaty and assisting in mounting a plaque declaring the site among the National Register of Historic Places. Pictured with the students include: (far left) Richard Burroughs, the Chief of Staff for Anderson County Mayor Terry Frank; (second from left) Carol Moore, Coal Creek Watershed Foundation volunteer and board member; (fifth from left wearing black sweater) Anderson County Mayor Terry Frank; (left center with treaty) Dist. 33 State Representative John Regan; (back center) Dist. 4 Anderson County Commissioner Tim Isbel; (front right) Coal Creek Watershed President Barry Thacker.

And finally ... Peace in Coal Creek

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Fourth and fifth-grade Briceville Elementary School students were joined by several local and state dignitaries on a wooded hillside on a side road in the Beech Grove community of Lake City Friday morning, May 17, to "officially" sign treaties to end the hostilities of Coal Creek War, an armed labor uprising fought in those same hills and valleys more than 120 years earlier.

The Coal Creek War began in 1891 when coal mine owners in the Coal Creek Watershed attempted to replace free coal mine workers with convict miners leased out by the government. The free miners retaliated by destroying prison stockades



Fourth and fifth-graders from Briceville Elementary School assist in mounting a plaque declaring Fort Anderson at Militia Hill, located on a wooded hillside in the Beech Grove community of Lake City, as a site on the National Register of Historic Places during a Friday morning, May 17, ceremony.

and buildings as small but violent skirmishes broke out amongst supporters of the free miners and supporters of the state's convict-leasing system. Hundreds of miners were killed or injured in the battles. In the aftermath of the conflict, the state government chose to not renew its convict-lease contracts when they expired in 1896.

The Coal Creek War is considered by historians to be among the most significant episodes in American labor history.

Coal Creek Watershed Foundation President Barry Thacker and several students from BES mounted a National Register of Historic Places plaque at Fort Anderson on Militia Hill Friday to commemorate the hillside where some integral battles in the Coal Creek War were fought. An enlarged photo from the 1890s was on display at the

• PEACE to 5-A

Peace

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ceremony showing the same area where the ceremony took place as it looked during the time of the Coal Creek War.

Among the dignitaries who signed the Peace Treaty Friday morning included: Anderson County Mayor Terry Frank, Dist. 4 Anderson County Commissioner Tim Isbel, Dist. 7 Anderson County Dist. 33 State Representative John Reagan, and Tennessee Senator Randy McNally.

Each dignitary addressed the BES students at the ceremony.

Frank discussed with the fourth- and fifth-graders the cause of the Coal Creek War, saying that this is a topic very important to her because, like many of the BES students, her father, uncles and grandfather worked as coal miners. The Mayor also reminded the students how fortunate they are that Thacker and Coal Creek Watershed volunteer

and board member Carol Moore make such a profound effort to educate Briceville students on the rich history of their ancestors and reward the students for their accomplishments.

Regan encouraged the students to immerse themselves with history at every opportunity.

"Knowing our history is so important in all of our everyday lives because, as the old saying goes 'those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it,'" said Reagan. He noted that Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam had actually taken an interest in Friday's ceremony and the signing of the Peace Treaty. "I think if he'd known about this a little earlier the Governor might have been here with us today to personally sign the treaty. I'll certainly give him the report that we have signed this treaty to end the hostilities of the Coal Creek War."

The Coal Creek Watershed Foundation has been working to preserve the history of that area for the last 13 years.