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News-Tribune staff photo by Joe Cook
Ruth Stanford, left, and sister Mary Scott at Chieftains.

Chieftain's descendants dig for roots

By GORDON RAY JOHNSTON
Staff Writer

The house that has been Chieftains Museum for 18 years became a home again Friday.

That was when Ruth Stanford and her sister Mary Scott, great-great-great granddaughters of Major Ridge, the Cherokee leader who built the house in 1794, came home.

The two had never been in the house before. Their parents and grandparents hadn't visited the house. In fact, no one in their family that they know of has visited the house since Major Ridge and his family were driven from the property by the government in 1837.

Mrs. Stanford, 57, was aglow as she came up the steps in the rain, her arms full of gifts for the museum. She had brought an antique dress, a wrought-iron brand in the shape of a lizard and a stack of books and documents that made Josephine Ransom, the museum's director, croom with delight.

Inside, over the shuffles and queries of visiting children from Calhoun, Mrs. Scott, excited and talkative, marvelled over the exposed sections of wall which revealed the house's log cabin beginnings.

She and her sister — quieter, but just as captivated — looked at old lithographs, identifying the people in them without a glance at the accompanying placards.

They told Mrs. Ransom about the brand, a replica of Major Ridge's lizard brand that had belonged to his daughter, Sara Ridge, and about

Snake killer pained about what bit him

ATLANTA (AP) — A man who used a boat paddle to kill a poisonous snake about to bite his friend says he will pay his \$50 fine for killing wildlife, but he doesn't like it.

David McDonald, 23, of Selma, Ala., and Kellyn Barnes, 24, of Douglasville were taking a break from rafting down the Chattahoochee River near Atlanta when Ms. Barnes nearly stepped on a copperhead on the shore.

"The snake was the same grayish-green color as the ground so I didn't see him until he drew his head back like a cobra does when he's about to bite. He was inches away from my foot," she recalled.

"I panicked and screamed," she said.

McDonald rushed to her rescue, killing the snake with a paddle.

But a Chattahoochee National River Recreation Area ranger was watching him through binoculars and issued a \$50 ticket.

"All I'd done was kill a poisonous snake, which could have bitten someone," McDonald said. "He told us the copperhead is a very docile animal and that about 90 percent of his bites are dry (not poisonous). But what about the other 10 percent, which is poisonous?"

Beverly Summers of the U.S. attorney's office in Atlanta said the ranger was acting under a federal statute that bans killing any wildlife on national park land.

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marker has said he will not seek re-election. Mathis has indicated he will.

Discovery pilot dies in crackup of stunt plane

EARLE, Ark. (AP) — S. David Griggs, who flew on the space shuttle in 1985 and was to pilot a November mission, was killed in a plane crash Saturday.

The stunt plane he was flying slammed into a field just after 9 a.m. south of Earle, about 20 miles west of Memphis, Tenn., said Lamar Coleman, a dispatcher for the Crittenden County Sheriff's Department. Some reports said he was preparing for an airshow.

An astronaut since August 1979, Griggs, 49, had been undergoing pilot training for shuttle flight number 33 aboard the Discovery, scheduled for November.

NASA spokesman Jeff Carr said he didn't believe Griggs' death would delay launch of the mission he would have piloted.

have fought, said he does not see himself as a troublemaker but as one who questions policy, as he was elected to do.

Cherokee: Sisters preserve lore

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their other relatives and ancestors, all of whom seemed to know their roots ran back to a Cherokee chieftain exiled to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears 150 years ago. One first cousin of the sisters — Ridge Watie McNeir — is even named for the Major.

Mrs. Stanford, who is one-sixteenth Cherokee, talked of her lifelong wish to see the house on the banks of the Oostanaula River.

She and Mrs. Scott drove 13 hours from Woodville, Texas, to see their great-great-grandfather's house. The sisters also will visit New Echota, the Cherokee capital near Calhoun.

Although this was only the sisters' second trip together, each has been to historic family settings. Mrs. Scott has traveled to Ridge's grave in Polson Cemetery in Oklahoma.

Both sisters have worked to preserve their family's lore, both for their kin's sake and that of the Cherokee nation. Working together, the sisters persuaded

I just don't think the controversies have hurt the board," Dickey said. "Sooner or later, we've made the decisions we

Is it a salvage
"Oh, definitely,"
said. "I'm always an opti...

Fishing ...

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waiting for a bite.

The boys' patience paid off. With Storey's help, Will reeled in a carp that might have been the biggest fish of the day. To Will's delight, the 2½-foot-long fish escaped as Storey dragged it toward the bank.

"He was afraid it would die if we took it out of the water," Storey said.

Bell said Trout Unlimited had been considering sponsoring a fishing day for kids for several years. The organization was able to hold the event this year when the city of Cave Spring allowed the group to use the pond, which ordinarily is closed to fishing.

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