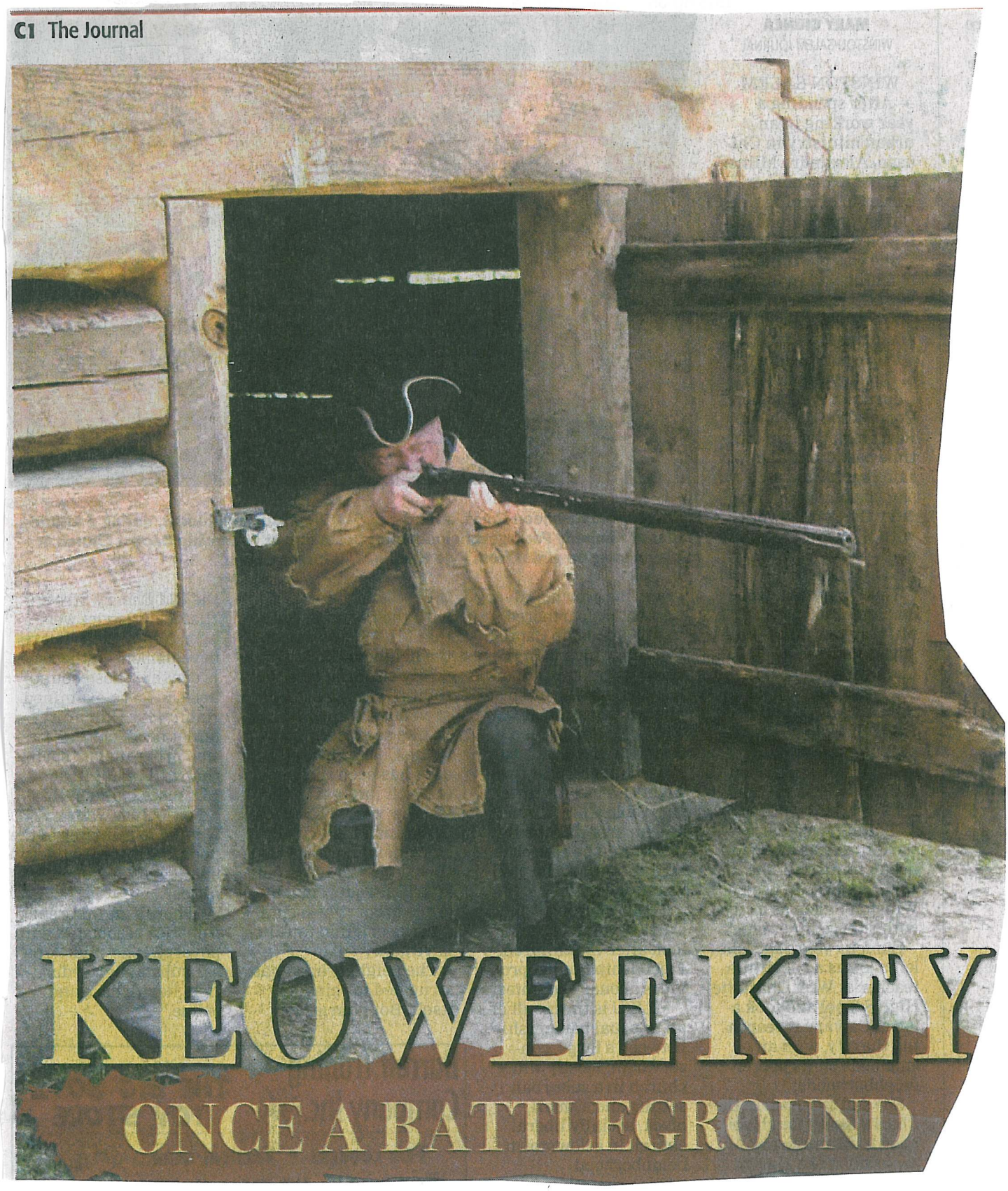
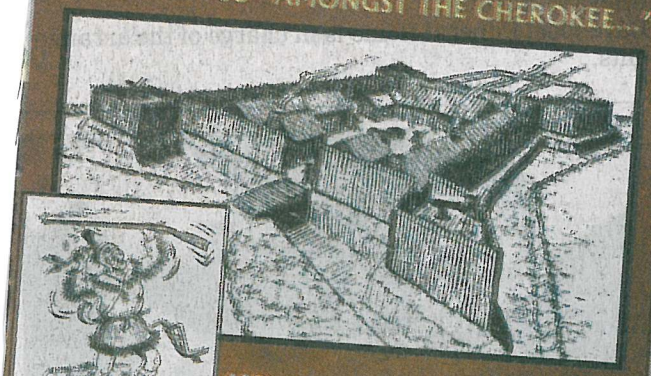
Saturday Nov. 14th



KEOWEE KEY

ONCE A BATTLEGROUND

BLOODY SAGA OF FT. PRINCE GEORGE BUILT IN 1753 "AMONGST THE CHEROKEE..."



"BLOOD RED RUNS THE SACRED KEOWEE"

Cherokees fought to save homeland from ever-encroaching whites!

ALSO, closeup looks at
— Fort Loudoun, Fort Rutledge, Star Fort!
— Photos of Cherokee Leaders Ecunnasota, Attakullakulla, Ostacite, Oskenaca, Oskosaw!

— Horrible 1761 and 1776 killings & burnings of most Cherokee towns into starvation...
— Look at 'Lower Towns' Indians, numbers of gun men, actual villages and locations!

By Jerry Lamar Alexander

Above: Written and illustrated by Jerry Alexander, "Blood Red Runs the Sacred Keowee" tells an early tale of what life was like in our area, well before Oconee County was established.

Left: British troops and settlers engaged in war with the Cherokee Indians, chasing them from areas around Lake Keowee.

FOR THE JOURNAL



This club was used by American Indians during battles and in daily life during the 1700s.

FOR THE JOURNAL

BY JESSICA SIBLEY
THE JOURNAL

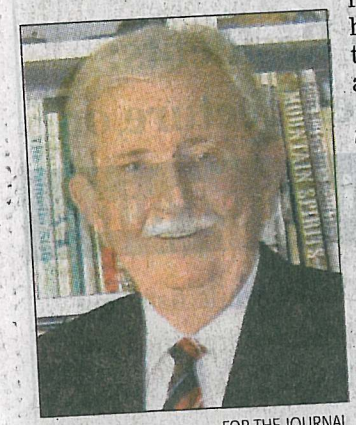
SENECA — Lakes Keowee and Jocassee, along with their surrounding land, are some of the most pristine environmental attributes our Upstate has to offer.

But in 1761, the beautiful land was turned into a war scene, and thanks to local author and historian Jerry Alexander, the story comes to life with his most recent book.

Alexander, retired journalist and cartoonist, published "Blood Red Runs the Sacred Keowee," a story about how the Cherokee Indians fought British settlers to save their homeland.

"It's important to know, as this area has so much history," he said.

The book, that took Alexander more than a year to research and complete, is his fifth historic compellation about areas in Pickens and Oconee counties.



FOR THE JOURNAL
Local author, Jerry Alexander.

And while the heritage of Upstate residents ranges in culture, Alexander took much pleasure from researching our area's roots.

"They may not teach this in the school's history classes, but it's our history," he added.

It all started with a massacre and pure retaliation.

In total, 14 powerful Cherokee chiefs were summarily slaughtered 250 years ago on the site of what is now the upscale community of Keowee Key near Salem.

The building of Fort Prince George had been long requested by the Cherokees to help defend them from attack by enemy tribes such as the Creeks, which lived in nearby central Georgia.

For a while, relations with the newly arrived white men were good, but after continually realizing the encroachment of settlers onto their traditional hunting lands, the Cherokees turned against the newcomers.

The massacre of the chiefs followed the earlier cold-blooded murder of the fort's commander, Lieutenant Richard Coytmore, along Keowee River, now Lake Keowee, by Oconostota, famous Indian war chief.

Coytmore had responded to Oconostota's request for a talk along Keowee River's banks. At a prearranged signal, Cherokee warriors hidden in bushes opened fire on the British officer, mortally wounding him. Dragged back inside the fort by two soldiers, Lt. Coytmore's life slowly drained away.

Enraged fort soldiers confronted the imprisoned hostages and violence erupted. It ended with all 14 hostages and at least one soldier massacred on the spot. This was a flash point that ignited the 1760-61 Cherokee War, which saw 15 Indian towns in Oconee and others in neighboring North Carolina and Georgia turned into raging infernos.

All the Cherokees were driven from their homes to face starvation in mountainous caves or hideaways of the Blue Ridge or Smoky Mountains. Others fled farther northward to their few remaining Overhills towns in Tennessee.

Many intimate details of this valiant, but doomed Cherokee struggle to defend their Oconee mountain homeland against British invaders, crooked deer skin traders and the continuing encroachment by settlers are outlined in Alexander's book.

"I had a great time writing it, and I'm sure many will have a great time reading about it," he added.

Today, beautiful and upscale homes dot the hillsides overlooking the famous Cherokee town of Keowee now under water. It was the capital of the Lower Cherokee Nation. Another close by village, Cane Creek Indian Town, lay just at Seneca's doorsteps — a few hundred yards past Northampton Road in Seneca's Normandy Shores community. This site is inundated by Lake Keowee as well.

Likewise, a large population of 500 Cherokees inhabited Esseneca Town, which once spread out on both sides of Seneca River, under Lake Hartwell, next to Clemson University's golf course. This was the site of a bloody ambush of S.C. Militia forces in 1776 by Cherokees and Tories as they sided with the British in the Revolutionary War. Major Andrew Pickens was prominent among the local militia who routed the Indians and burned their towns, along with all other local "lower nation" villages that had been rebuilt since the 1761 war.

Alexander's book can be found at the Oconee Heritage Center in Walhalla, Moon's Drug Store in Westminster, The Booksmith in Seneca, McClure's Bookstore in Clemson and at the Seneca Family Restaurant.

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