Ga'axk'a now took out some tobacco and threw it over the cliff. The voice spoke again:

"Now I will tell you a story."

Feeling greatly awed the boy listened to a story that seemed to come directly out of the rock upon which he was sitting. Finally the voice paused, for the story had ended. Then it spoke again saying, "It shall be the custom hereafter to present me with a small gift for my stories." So the boy gave the rock a few bone beads. Then the rock said, "Hereafter when I speak, announcing that I shall tell a story you must say, 'Nio,' and as I speak you must say 'Ho'; that I may know that you are listening. You must never fall asleep but continue to listen until I say 'Da neho niga'g i is.' (So thus finished is the length of my story). Then you shall give me presents and I shall be satisfied." The next day the boy hunted and killed a great many birds. These he made into soup and roasts. He skinned the birds and saved the skins, keeping them in a bag. That evening the boy sat on the rock again and looked westward at the sinking sun. He wondered if his friend would speak again. While waiting he chipped some new arrow-points, and made them very small so that he could use them in a blow gun. Suddenly, as he worked, he heard the voice again. "Give me some tobacco to smoke," it said. Ga'axk'a threw a pinch of tobacco over the cliff and the voice said, "Hau hi' 'a" and commenced a story. Long into the night one wonderful tale after another flowed from the rock, until it called out, "So thus finished is the length of my story." Ga'axk'a was sorry to have the stories ended but he gave the rock an awl made from a bird's leg and a pinch of tobacco.

The next day the boy hunted far to the east and there found a village. Nobody knew who he was but he soon found many friends. There were some hunters who offered to teach him how to kill big game, and these went with him to his own camp on the high rock. At night he allowed them to listen to the stories that came forth from the rock, but it would speak only when Ga'axk'a was present. He therefore had many friends with whom to hunt.

Now after a time Ga'axk'a made a new suit of clothing from deer skin and desired to obtain a decorated pouch. He, therefore, went to the village and found one house where there were two daughters living with an old mother. He asked that a pouch be made and the youngest daughter spoke up and said, "It is now finished. I have been waiting for you to come for it." So she gave him a handsome pouch.

Then the old mother spoke, saying, "I now perceive that my future son-in-law has passed through the door and is here." Soon thereafter, the younger woman brought Ga'axk'a a basket of bread and said, "My mother greatly desires that you should marry me." Ga'axk'a looked at the girl and was satisfied, and ate the bread. The older daughter was greatly displeased and frowned in an evil manner.

That night the bride came to her husband. "We must now go away. My older sister will kill you for she is jealous." So Ga'axk'a arose and took his bride to his own lodge. Soon the rock spoke again to relate wonder stories of things that happened in the old days. The bride was not surprised, but said, "This standing rock, indeed, is my grandfather. I will now present you with a pouch into which you must put a trophy for every tale related."

All winter long the young couple stayed in the lodge on the great rock and heard all the wonder tales of the old days. Ga'axk'a's bag was full of stories and he knew all the lore of former times.

As springtime came the bride said, "We must now go north to your own people and you shall become a great man." But Ga'axk'a was sad and said, "Alas, in my own country I am an outcast and called by an unpleasant name." The bride only laughed, saying, "Nevertheless we shall go north,\" taking their pelts and birdskins, the young couple descended the cliff and seated themselves in the canoe. "This is my canoe," said the bride. "I sent it through the air to you."

The bride seated herself in the bow of the canoe and Ga'axk'a in the stern. Grasping a paddle he swept it through the water, but soon the canoe arose and went through the air. Meanwhile the bride was singing all kinds of songs, which Ga'axk'a learned as he paddled.

When they reached the north, the bride said, "Now I shall remove your clothing and take all the scars from your face and body." She then caused him to pass through a hollow log, and when Ga'axk'a emerged from the other end he was dressed in the finest clothing and was a handsome man.

Together the two walked to the village where the people came out to see them. After a while Ga'axk'a said, "I am the boy whom you once were accustomed to call 'Ca'i-dödä.' I have now returned." That night the people of the village gathered around and listened to the tales he told, and he instructed them to give him small presents and tobacco. He would plunge his hand in his pouch and take out a trophy, saying, "Ho ho! So here is another one!" and then looking at his trophy would relate an ancient tale.

Everybody now thought Ga'axk'a a great man and listened to his stories. He was the first man to find out all about the adventures of the old-time people. That is why there are so many legends now.

[1923]

Cherokee

The Cherokee originally occupied an extensive area of the Southeast, including parts of present-day North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. When they were encountered by the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto in the mid-sixteenth century, the Cherokee formed a large and complex nation made up of many smaller tribal units. Only rough estimates of the combined population of these units are possible, but it is thought that there were about 50,000 Cherokee in 1670. A series of smallpox epidemics introduced by European explorers decreased the Cherokee population by as much as 50 percent by the mid-1700s. The well-organized Cherokee were an agricultural people who lived in small villages with a central council house devoted to meetings and religious ceremonies. Although the social structure was matrilineal, women did not have as much power as they did in the tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy.
How the World Was Made (Clarence)
Sequoyah

This portrait of Sequoyah holding a copy of his alphabet of the Cherokee language, which he spent over a decade developing, appeared in Indian Tribes of North America (1837-44), by Thomas McKenney and James Hall.

The Cherokee spoke several dialects of Iroquoian. Theirs was an oral culture until 1821, when a written alphabet of the Cherokee language was developed by one of their leaders, Sequoyah (1776-1843). By making literacy available to the Cherokee in their own language, Sequoyah sought to combat their growing assimilation into the dominant, English-speaking culture of the United States. In 1828, the Cherokee Phoenix became the first newspaper in the United States published in a Native American language and English. Like other native peoples throughout the early history of the colonies and the United States, the Cherokee were pressed to give up lands to white settlers. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which authorized the president to exchange lands west of the Mississippi for the lands held by eastern tribes, including the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee, who included a population of over 17,000 in Georgia, resisted by filing a lawsuit against the state of Georgia. The Supreme Court refused to hear the case, ruling that the Cherokee had no legal standing and therefore could not sue the state. Eight years later, thousands of native peoples were forcibly removed from their lands and marched over one thousand miles to "Indian Territory," present-day Oklahoma, a trek the Cherokee call the "Trail of Tears." Over 4,000 Cherokee died during the arduous removal. In the new territory, the Cherokee rebuilt their nation and developed a constitution, well before Oklahoma became a state in 1907.

Reading "How the World Was Made" (Cherokee).

The rich oral culture of the Cherokee includes a wide variety of legends, myths, and stories. The following is an account of how the natural world was made and how it might be destroyed. Unlike many other Native American creation stories, the Cherokee account does not provide explanations for the origins of animals and humans. This story was transcribed and translated by the anthropologist James Mooney (1886-1921). The text is taken from the nineteenth annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution (1900).

HOW THE WORLD WAS MADE

The earth is a great island floating in a sea of water, and suspended at each of the four cardinal points by a cord hanging down from the sky vault, which is of solid rock. When the world grows old and worn out, the people will die and the cords will break and let the earth sink down into the ocean, and all will be water again. The Indians are afraid of this.

When all was water, the animals were above in Gà’éñ’tà’sì beyond the arch; but it was very much crowded, and they were wanting more room. They wondered what was below the water, and at last Dåyuni’sì, "Beaver’s Grandchild," the little Water-beetle, offered to go and see if it could learn. It darted in every direction over the surface of the water, but could find no firm place to rest. Then it dived to the bottom and came up with some soft mud, which began to grow and spread on every side until it became the island which we call the earth. It was afterward fastened to the sky with four cords, but no one remembers who did this.

At first the earth was flat and very soft and wet. The animals were anxious to get down, and sent out different birds to see if it was yet dry, but they found no place to alight and came back again to Gà’éñ’tà’sì. At last it seemed to be time, and they sent out the Buzzard and told him to go and make ready for them. This was the Great Buzzard, the father of all the buzzards we see now. He flew all over the earth, low down near the ground, and it was still soft. When he reached the Cherokee country, he was very tired, and his wings began to flap and strike the ground, and wherever they struck the earth there was a valley, and where they turned up again there was a mountain. When the animals above saw this, they were afraid that the whole world would be mountains, so they called him back, but the Cherokee country remains full of mountains to this day.\(^1\)

When the earth was dry and the animals came down, it was still dark, so they got the sun and set it in a track to go every day across the island from east to west, just overhead.

It was too hot this way, and Tsíiskà’sì’íì, the Red Crabfish, had his shell scorched a

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1. Gà’éñ’tà’sì: The Cherokee otherworld, where at one time all the animals lived.
2. Full of mountains to this day: The Cherokee originally occupied a large area of the southern Appalachian Mountains.
Chocow

[1900]

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