

Gaqka 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 'Hěn'; that I may know that you are listening. You must never fall asleep but continue to listen until I say 'Dā'neho nigagā'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. Gaqka threw a pinch of tobacco over the cliff and the voice said, "Hau'nio'," 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." Gaqka 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 Gaqka was present. He therefore had many friends with whom to hunt.

Now after a time Gaqka 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 Gaqka a basket of bread and said, "My mother greatly desires that you should marry me." Gaqka 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 said to her husband, "We must now go away. My older sister will kill you for she is jealous." So Gaqka arose and took his bride to his own lodge. Soon the rock spoke and began 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. Gaqka'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 Gaqka 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 Gaqka 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 Gaqka 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 Gaqka 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 Gaqka said, "I am the boy whom you once were accustomed to call 'Cia'dōdā.' 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 Gaqka 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.

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 (1861-1921). 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

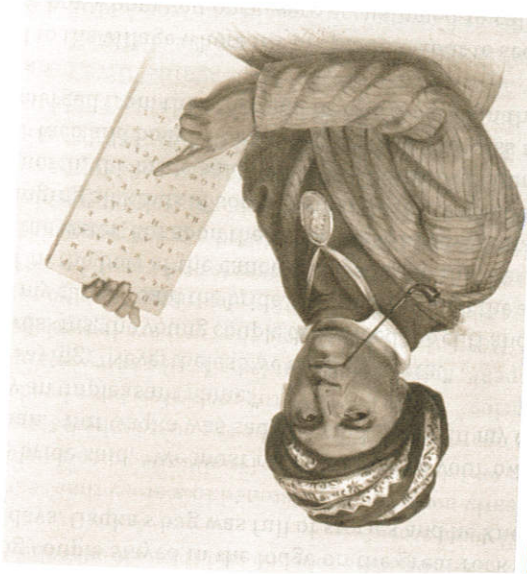
The earth is a great island floating in a sea of water, and suspended at each of the four cardinal points by a cord hanging down from the sky vault, which is of solid rock. When the world grows old and worn out, the people will die and the cords will break and let the earth sink down into the ocean, and all will be water again. The Indians are afraid of this. When all was water, the animals were above in Galûn'lati,¹ 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 Dayun'isi, "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 Galûn'lati. 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.²

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 Tsiska'giti, the Red Crawfish, had his shell scorched a

1. Galûn'lati: 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.

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* (1836-44) 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 made to march 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.



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de Soto led an expedition through the southeast looking for gold and hoping to open a trade route to China. Taking a chief as a captive, de Soto demanded servants and women from the Choctaw, who attacked his invading army at the town Mabila (Mobile, Alabama). The Spanish troops burned the town but were forced to withdraw, and the Choctaw had no further contact with Europeans until French and English settlers began to move into the area around 1700. Choctaw scouts served on the side of the colonists during the American Revolution, and through a program initiated by General George Washington many Choctaw adopted white customs and culture, intermarrying and converting to Christianity. Along with the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole, the Choctaw were consequently known as one of the "Five Civilized Tribes."

The passage of the Indian Removal Act in 1830 empowered President Andrew Jackson to force those five tribes to move to "Indian Territory," present-day Oklahoma. The French traveler and writer Alexis de Tocqueville, who witnessed the beginning of the removal of the Choctaw in Memphis, recalled that he had watched "the expulsion, one can say the dissolution, of one of the most celebrated and ancient American peoples." Despite the losses and hardships they endured during the long series of removals, the Choctaw maintained their tribal identity and customs. Cyrus Byington (1793-1868), a Christian missionary from Massachusetts who joined with the Choctaw in Mississippi in 1821 and later established a mission in Oklahama, spent nearly fifty years developing an orthography, grammar, and dictionary of the Choctaw language, and his authoritative works were instrumental in preserving and perpetuating the language among the Choctaw. Near the end of World War I, several Choctaw servicemen in the American Expeditionary Force became the first of the Native American "code-talkers," securing military communications and consequently playing a pivotal role in an important victory over German forces. Today, the Choctaw Nation is the third largest tribe in North America, with over 200,000 members in southeastern Oklahoma.

Reading "Nanih Waiya (The Choctaw Creation Legend):" This story, narrated and translated by Choctaw Elder Charles G. (Charley) Jones (1918-2004), is a version of the legend told to generations of Choctaw children. *Nanih Waiya*, which in Choctaw means "leaning or stooping hill," is the name of an ancient earthwork mound probably dating from 100 BCE to 300 CE. Since much of it has been leveled by plowing and cultivation, it is impossible to determine the exact size of the original mound, which today is 25 feet tall, 140 feet wide, and 220 feet long. Venerated by the Choctaw people, the sacred mound plays a central role in their origin legends. In his unfinished version, Jones thus describes the mound as the place of "the first creation of man," from which each of the Muskogean tribes emerged in turn and subsequently settled throughout what is now the southeastern United States. The text is taken from *Legends of the Choctaw* (1992).

bright red, so that his meat was spoiled; and the Cherokee do not eat it. The conjurers put the sun another handbreadth higher in the air, but it was still too hot. They raised it another time, and another, until it was seven handbreadths high and just under the sky arch. Then it was right, and they left it so. This is why the conjurers call the highest place *Gũlkwãgine Dìgãlũh Jãtĩyũh*, "the seventh height," because it is seven handbreadths above the earth. Every day the sun goes along under this arch, and returns at night on the upper side to the starting place.

There is another world under this, and it is like ours in everything—animals, plants, and people—save that the seasons are different. The streams that come down from the mountains are the trails by which we reach this underworld, and the springs at their heads are the doorways by which we enter it, but to do this one must fast and go to water and have one of the underground people for a guide. We know that the seasons in the underworld are different from ours, because the water in the springs is always warmer in winter and cooler in summer than the outer air.

When the animals and plants were first made—we do not know by whom—they were told to watch and keep awake for seven nights, just as young men now fast and keep awake when they pray to their medicine. They tried to do this, and nearly all were awake through the first night, but the next night several dropped off to sleep, and the third night others were asleep, and then others, until, on the seventh night, of all the animals only the owl, the panther, and one or two more were still awake. To these were given the power to see and to go about in the dark, and to make prey of the birds and animals which must sleep at night. Of the trees only the cedar, the pine, the spruce, the holly, and the laurel were awake to the end, and to them it was given to be always green and to be greatest for medicine, but to the others it was said: "Because you have not endured to the end you shall lose your hair every winter."

Men came after the animals and plants. At first there were only a brother and sister until he struck her with a fish and told her to multiply, and so it was. In seven days a child was born to her, and thereafter every seven days another, and they increased very fast until there was danger that the world could not keep them. Then it was made that a woman should have only one child in a year, and it has been so ever since.

[1900]

Choctaw

The Choctaw are descendants of the Paleo-Indians, who occupied the North American continent as early as 11,000 to 14,000 BCE, and their language is part of the Muskogean language family, an important linguistic group that also includes Creek, Chickasaw, Seminole, and Apalachee. Farmers who lived in permanent villages, the Choctaw flourished in what is now the southeastern United States, including Mississippi, Alabama, and parts of Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. Their first contact with Europeans was in 1540 when the Spanish explorer Hernando