

### III—STORIES AND STORY TELLERS

Cherokee myths may be roughly classified as sacred myths, animal stories, local legends, and historical traditions. To the first class belong the genesis stories, dealing with the creation of the world, the origin of the heavenly bodies and elemental forces, the origin of life and death, the spirit world and the invisible beings, the ancient monsters, and the hero-gods. It is almost certain that most of the myths of this class are but disjointed fragments of an original complete genesis and migration legend, which is now lost. With nearly every tribe that has been studied we find such a sacred legend, preserved by the priests of the tradition, who alone are privileged to recite and explain it and dealing with the origin and wanderings of the people from the beginning of the world to the final settlement of the tribe in its home territory. Among the best examples of such genesis traditions are those recorded in the *Walam Olum* of the Delawares and Matthews' *Archo Origin Legend*. Others may be found in Cusick's *History of the Six Nations*, Gatschet's *Creek Migration Legend*, and the author's *Jicarilla Genesis*.<sup>1</sup> The Cheyenne, Arapaho, and other plains tribes are known to have similar genesis myths.

The former existence of such a national legend among the Cherokee is confirmed by Haywood, writing in 1823, who states on information obtained from a principal man in the tribe that they had once a long tradition, then nearly forgotten, which recounted the history of their wanderings from the time when they had been first placed upon the earth by some superior power from above. Up to about the middle of the last century this tradition was still recited at the annual Green-um dance.<sup>2</sup> Unlike most Indians the Cherokee are not conservative, and even before the Revolution had so far lost their primitive customs from contact with the whites that Adair, in 1775, calls them a nest of spotted hornets who for more than thirty years had been fast degenerating.<sup>3</sup> Whatever it may have been, their national legend is now lost forever. The secret organizations that must have existed formerly among the priesthood have also disappeared, and each man now works independently according to his individual gifts and knowledge.

The sacred myths were not for every one, but only those might hear who observed the proper form and ceremony. When John Ax and

<sup>1</sup> *American Anthropologist*, vol. xi, July, 1898.  
1600 page 20.

<sup>2</sup> Adair, *American Indians*, p. 51, 1775.

other old men were boys, now some eighty years ago, the myth-keepers and priests were accustomed to meet together at night in the fat, or low-built log sleeping house, to recite the traditions and discuss their secret knowledge. At times those who desired instruction from an adept in the sacred lore of the tribe met him by appointment in the *âsi*, where they sat up all night talking, with only the light of a small fire burning in the middle of the floor. At daybreak the whole party went down to the running stream, where the pupils or hearers of the myths stripped themselves, and were scratched upon their naked skin with a bone-tooth comb in the hands of the priest, after which they waded out, facing the rising sun, and dipped seven times under the water, while the priest recited prayers upon the bank. This purificatory rite, observed more than a century ago by Adair, is also a part of the ceremonial of the ballplay, the Green-corn dance, and, in fact, every important ritual performance. Before beginning one of the stories of the sacred class the informant would sometimes suggest jokingly that the author first submit to being scratched and "go to water."

As a special privilege a boy was sometimes admitted to the *âsi* on such occasions, to tend the fire, and thus had the opportunity to listen to the stories and learn something of the secret rites. In this way John Ax gained much of his knowledge, although he does not claim to be an adept. As he describes it, the fire intended to heat the room—for the nights are cold in the Cherokee mountains—was built upon the ground in the center of the small house, which was not high enough to permit a standing position, while the occupants sat in a circle around it. In front of the fire was placed a large flat rock, and near it a pile of pine knots or splints. When the fire had burned down to a bed of coals, the boy lighted one or two of the pine knots and laid them upon the rock, where they blazed with a bright light until nearly consumed, when others were laid upon them, and so on until daybreak.

Sometimes the pine splints were set up crosswise, thus, XXXX, in a circle around the fire, with a break at the eastern side. They were then lighted from one end and burned gradually around the circle, fresh splints being set up behind as those in front were consumed. Lawson describes this identical custom as witnessed at a dance among the Waxhaw, on Catawba river, in 1701:

Now, to return to our state house, whither we were invited by the grandes. As soon as we came into it, they placed our Englishmen near the king, it being my fortune to sit next him, having his great general or war captain on my other hand. The house is as dark as a dungeon, and as hot as one of the Dutch stoves in Holland. They had made a circular fire of split canes in the middle of the house, it was one man's employment to add more split reeds to the one end as it consumed at the other, there being a small vacancy left to supply it with fuel.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lawson, Carolina, 67-68, reprint 1860.

To the second class belong the lost whatever sacred character they now merely as humorous explanation. While the sacred myths have a character of prayers and observances, it is only a custom is based upon an animal myth. The animals are known as a rule only to the people of the shorter animal stories are more common and are found in almost identical form in other southern tribes.

The animals of the Cherokee myths were larger and of more perfect type than those of the other tribes. They had chiefs, councils, and laws, and were treated as human kind upon terms of perfect equality. In some unexplained instances they descended to the earth and ascended to *Galûn'lâti*, the world of the dead. The removal was not simultaneous, but at their own time. The animals that we know of in the present, came upon the earth later, and were not mythical animals, but only weak imitations of the original. However, the present creature is the same as the original. Trees and plants also were alive and had their place in council, but do not speak.

Each animal had his appointed station. The frog was the marshal and leader in the council, the messenger to carry all public affairs, and the dance besides. He was also the great character which he bears in eastern mythology, as well as in the southern mythology, having been originally a man, with a human form.

As with other tribes and countries, every deep bend in the mountain has its accompanying legend. It is told in a paragraph, to account for one chapter of a myth that has its origin many miles away. As is usual when a people live in the same country, nearly every incident assumes more definite character.

There is the usual number of adventures, some of them irredeemably strange and wanting. The authentic are short at best, seldom going back of their oldest men; and although important of the southern tribes, many centuries with Spanish, English, F



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To the second class belong the shorter animal myths, which have lost whatever sacred character they may once have had, and are told now merely as humorous explanations of certain animal peculiarities. While the sacred myths have a constant bearing upon formulistic prayers and observances, it is only in rare instances that any rite or custom is based upon an animal myth. Moreover, the sacred myths are known as a rule only to the professional priests or conjurers, while the shorter animal stories are more or less familiar to nearly every- one and are found in almost identical form among Cherokee, Creeks, and other southern tribes.

The animals of the Cherokee myths, like the traditional hero-gods, were larger and of more perfect type than their present representa- tives. They had chiefs, councils, and townhouses, mingled with human kind upon terms of perfect equality and spoke the same language. In some unexplained manner they finally left this lower world and ascended to *Galûn'lâtî*, the world above, where they still exist. The removal was not simultaneous, but each animal chose his own time. The animals that we know, small in size and poor in intel- lect, came upon the earth later, and are not the descendants of the mythic animals, but only weak imitations. In one or two special cases, however, the present creature is the descendant of a former monster. Trees and plants also were alive and could talk in the old days, and had their place in council, but do not figure prominently in the myths.

Each animal had his appointed station and duty. Thus, the *Walá'sí* frog was the marshal and leader in the council, while the Rabbit was the messenger to carry all public announcements, and usually led the dance besides. He was also the great trickster and mischief maker, a character which he bears in eastern and southern Indian myth gener- ally, as well as in the southern negro stories. The bear figures as having been originally a man, with human form and nature.

As with other tribes and countries, almost every prominent rock and mountain, every deep bend in the river, in the old Cherokee country has its accompanying legend. It may be a little story that can be told in a paragraph, to account for some natural feature, or it may be one chapter of a myth that has its sequel in a mountain a hundred miles away. As is usual when a people has lived for a long time in the same country, nearly every important myth is localized, thus assuming more definite character.

There is the usual number of anecdotes and stories of personal adventure, some of them irredeemably vulgar, but historical traditions are strangely wanting. The authentic records of unlettered peoples are short at best, seldom going back much farther than the memories of their oldest men; and although the Cherokee have been the most important of the southern tribes, making wars and treaties for three centuries with Spanish, English, French, and Americans, Iroquois,

Shawano, Catawba, and Creeks, there is little evidence of the fact in their traditions. This condition may be due in part to the temper of the Cherokee mind, which, as has been already stated, is accustomed to look forward to new things rather than to dwell upon the past. The first Cherokee war, with its stories of *Âganstâ'ta* and *Âtâ-gûl'kâlû'*, is absolutely forgotten. Of the long Revolutionary struggle they have hardly a recollection, although they were constantly fighting throughout the whole period and for several years after, and at one time were brought to the verge of ruin by four concerted expeditions, which ravaged their country simultaneously from different directions and destroyed almost every one of their towns. Even the Creek war, in which many of their warriors took a prominent part, was already nearly forgotten some years ago. Beyond a few stories of encounters with the Shawano and Iroquois there is hardly anything that can be called history until well within the present century.

With some tribes the winter season and the night are the time for telling stories, but to the Cherokee all times are alike. As our grandmothers begin, "Once upon a time," so the Cherokee story-teller introduces his narrative by saying: "This is what the old men told me when I was a boy."

Not all tell the same stories, for in tribal lore, as in all other sorts of knowledge, we find specialists. Some common minds take note only of common things—little stories of the rabbit, the terrapin, and the others, told to point a joke or amuse a child. Others dwell upon the wonderful and supernatural—*Tsul'kâlû'*, *Tsuwe'nâhî*, and the Thunderers—and those sacred things to be told only with prayer and purification. Then, again, there are still a few old warriors who live in the memory of heroic days when there were wars with the Seneca and the Shawano, and these men are the historians of the tribe and the conservators of its antiquities.

The question of the origin of myths is one which affords abundant opportunity for ingenious theories in the absence of any possibility of proof. Those of the Cherokee are too far broken down ever to be woven together again into any long-connected origin legend, such as we find with some tribes, although a few still exhibit a certain sequence which indicates that they once formed component parts of a cycle. From the prominence of the rabbit in the animal stories, as well as in those found among the southern negroes, an effort has been made to establish for them a negro origin, regardless of the fact that the rabbit—the Great White Rabbit—is the hero-god, trickster, and wonder-worker of all the tribes east of the Mississippi from Hudson bay to the Gulf. In European folklore also the rabbit is regarded as something uncanny and half-supernatural, and even in far-off Korea he is the central figure in the animal myths. Just why this should be so is a question that may be left to the theorist to decide. Among the

Algonquian tribes the name, *wabi*, with that of the dawn, *waban*, so really the incarnation of the eastern drives away the dark shadows which. The animal itself seems to be regarded type of defenseless weakness protects alert vigilance, and with a disposition unexpected moments. The same strongly to the primitive mind of which Harris puts into the mouth of Brer Rabbit in his fable "wuz at racket wuz en hand,"<sup>1</sup> was paraphrased by Suyeta in introducing his first rabbit *une'gutsâtûl' gesd'i*—the Rabbit was told. The expression struck the author recorded as spoken.

In regard to the contact between the could be borrowed from one by the that in all the southern colonies Indian kept in servitude and worked in the field to the time of the Revolution. Not long when such things were the order of the early as 1693 complaining that their slave hunters. Hundreds of captured tribe of the Appalachee were distributed colonists in the early part of the eighteenth and others shared a similar fate in 1776 Cherokee prisoners of war were for the same purpose. At one time the ernor of South Carolina that he was persuaded by his encouragement of slave hunts. As they dwindled they were compelled to assist negroes until they finally lost their that race, so that a considerable proportion of negroes is unquestionably Indian.

The negro, with his genius for imitation especially of the comic variety, must have learned from the Indian in this way, while on the other hand his pride of conservatism and his contentment have taken but little from the negro, and have found its way back to the free world. These stories are common to widely separated parts and can be no suspicion of negro influences. The story has variants, not only among the

<sup>1</sup> Harris, J. C., *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His*



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Algonquian tribes the name, *wabos*, seems to have been confounded with that of the dawn, *waban*, so that the Great White Rabbit is really the incarnation of the eastern dawn that brings light and life and drives away the dark shadows which have held the world in chains. The animal itself seems to be regarded by the Indians as the fitting type of defenseless weakness protected and made safe by constantly alert vigilance, and with a disposition, moreover, for turning up at unexpected moments. The same characteristics would appeal as strongly to the primitive mind of the negro. The very expression which Harris puts into the mouth of Uncle Remus, "In dem days Brer Rabbit en his fambly wuz at the head er de gang w'en enny racket wuz en hand,"<sup>1</sup> was paraphrased in the Cherokee language by Suyeta in introducing his first rabbit story: "*Tsi'stu wuliga'nátátáñ' uné'gutsátú' gese'v*—the Rabbit was the leader of them all in mischief." The expression struck the author so forcibly that the words were recorded as spoken.

In regard to the contact between the two races, by which such stories could be borrowed from one by the other, it is not commonly known that in all the southern colonies Indian slaves were bought and sold and kept in servitude and worked in the fields side by side with negroes up to the time of the Revolution. Not to go back to the Spanish period, when such things were the order of the day, we find the Cherokee as early as 1693 complaining that their people were being kidnaped by slave hunters. Hundreds of captured Tuscarora and nearly the whole tribe of the Appalachee were distributed as slaves among the Carolina colonists in the early part of the eighteenth century, while the Natchez and others shared a similar fate in Louisiana, and as late at least as 1776 Cherokee prisoners of war were still sold to the highest bidder for the same purpose. At one time it was charged against the governor of South Carolina that he was provoking a general Indian war by his encouragement of slave hunts. Furthermore, as the coast tribes dwindled they were compelled to associate and intermarry with the negroes until they finally lost their identity and were classed with that race, so that a considerable proportion of the blood of the southern negroes is unquestionably Indian.

The negro, with his genius for imitation and his love for stories, especially of the comic variety, must undoubtedly have absorbed much from the Indian in this way, while on the other hand the Indian, with his pride of conservatism and his contempt for a subject race, would have taken but little from the negro, and that little could not easily have found its way back to the free tribes. Some of these animal stories are common to widely separated tribes among whom there can be no suspicion of negro influences. Thus the famous "tar baby" story has variants, not only among the Cherokee, but also in New

<sup>1</sup> Harris, J. C., *Uncle Remus, His Songs and his Sayings*, p. 29; New York, 1886.

Mexico, Washington, and southern Alaska—wherever, in fact, the piñon or the pine supplies enough gum to be molded into a ball for Indian uses—while the incident of the Rabbit dining the Bear is found with nearly every tribe from Nova Scotia to the Pacific. The idea that such stories are necessarily of negro origin is due largely to the common but mistaken notion that the Indian has no sense of humor.

In many cases it is not necessary to assume borrowing from either side, the myths being such as would naturally spring up in any part of the world among primitive people accustomed to observe the characteristics of animals, which their religious system regarded as differing in no essential from human kind, save only in outward form. Thus in Europe and America the terrapin has been accepted as the type of plodding slowness, while the rabbit, with his sudden dash, or the deer with his bounding stride, is the type of speed. What more natural than that the story-teller should set one to race against the other, with the victory in favor of the patient striver against the self-confident boaster? The idea of a hungry wolf or other beast of prey luring his victims by the promise of a new song or dance, during which they must close their eyes, is also one that would easily occur among any primitive people whose chief pastime is dancing.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, such a conception as that of Flint and the Rabbit could only be the outgrowth of a special cosmogonic theology, though now indeed broken and degraded, and it is probable that many myths told now only for amusement are really worn down fragments of ancient sacred traditions. Thus the story just noted appears in a different dress among the Iroquois as a part of their great creation myth. The Cherokee being a detached tribe of the Iroquois, we may expect to find among the latter, if it be not already too late, the explanation and more perfect statement of some things which are obscure in the Cherokee myths. It must not be forgotten, however, that the Indian, like other men, does some things for simple amusement, and it is useless to look for occult meanings where none exist.

Except as to the local traditions and a few others which are obviously the direct outgrowth of Cherokee conditions, it is impossible to fix a definite starting point for the myths. It would be unwise to assert that even the majority of them originated within the tribe. The Cherokee have strains of Creek, Catawba, Uchee, Natchez, Iroquois, Osage, and Shawano blood, and such admixture implies contact more or less intimate and continued. Indians are great wanderers, and a

<sup>1</sup> For a presentation of the African and European argument see Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus*, introduction, 1883; and *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*, introduction, 1886. (Carter), *Uncle Remus Traced to the Old World*, in *Journal of American Folklore*, vi, p. 23, October, 1901. In regard to tribal dissemination of myths see Boas, *Dissemination of Tales among the Natives of North America*, in *Journal of American Folklore*, iv, p. 12, January, 1891; *The Growth of Indian Mythology*, in the same journal, ix, p. 32, January 1896; *Northern Elements in the Mythology of the Nevada*, in *American Anthropologist*, x, p. 11, November, 1897; introduction to *Teit's Traditions of the Thompson River Indians*, 1898. Dr Boas has probably devoted more study to the subject than any other anthropologist, and his personal observations include tribes from the Arctic regions to the Columbia

myth can travel as far as a redstone was customary, as it still is to a large party, sometimes even a whole tribe, to other tribes, dancing, feasting, and their friends for weeks or months. Their hosts would return the visit. Trade routes crossed the continent north and south, and when the subject has been raised it is not surprising that this intertribal commerce was a part of Indian life as is our own. The existence of a trade jargon or a sign language over wide areas. Their far-reaching, for Pontiac welded tribes from the Atlantic border to the emissaries of the Shawano prevailed throughout the whole region of Saskatchewan.

In view of these facts it is as unwise as of every myth as to claim a Cherokee origin. What we know of the character of the ceremonial and the mystic, and of the Cherokee, it may be inferred that that tribe. We should naturally connect with the myths of the Creeks the former area of the Mobilian trade, the home of all the more important nations of the country. As the majority of the dozen counties still familiar to the many attached to the ancient territory are lost.

Contact with the white race seems to have had an impression on the tribal mythology current among the Cherokee. These have not been reported as being plainly European, and the example of some collectors who have found an Indiana language is necessarily an Indian collection from the North and West and the celebrated Hausmärchen, as told to their Indian campmates and half-breed, may be thought that missionary influence is a tradition, but such is not the case. It is a tradition, and there is no amalgamation of that stories of a great fish which swam



Alaska—wherever, in fact, the myth is to be molded into a ball for Rabbit dining the Bear is found all the way from the Pacific to the Atlantic. The idea that the origin is due largely to the common belief that man has no sense of humor.

It is not to be assumed that the myth borrows from either the East or the West, but naturally springs up in any part of the continent. It is assumed to observe the characteristic of the myth system regarded as differing only in outward form. Thus it has been accepted as the type of myth which is due to his sudden dash, or the deer which is due to its speed. What more natural than to race against the other, with the rabbit against the self-confident bear, or the deer against the other beast of prey luring the rabbit to a trap, or the deer to a dance, during which they would easily occur among any people who are fond of dancing.<sup>1</sup>

It is not as that of Flint and the Rabbit, but as that of the cosmogonic theology, though it is probable that many myths have been really worn down fragments of a story just noted appears in a different part of their great creation myth. If the Iroquois, we may expect to find it too late, the explanation and the myths which are obscure in the Cherokee, however, that the Indian, like the white man, has no sense of amusement, and it is useless to expect to find any to exist.

As to a few others which are obviously borrowed from other nations, it is impossible to fix a date.

It would be unwise to assert that the myth originated within the tribe. The myth of the Cowba, Uchee, Natchez, Iroquois, and the admixture implies contact more than that of the Indians are great wanderers, and a

<sup>1</sup>For a full treatment see Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus and His Sayings*, introduction, 1886; Gerber, *American Folklore*, vi, p. 23, October, 1893. In *Classification of Tales among the Natives of North America*, 1891; *The Growth of Indian Mythologies*, 1891; *Elements in the Mythology of the Navaho*, 1891; *Introduction to Teit's Traditions of the Thompson*, 1891. For a study to the subject than any other anthropologist has made from the Arctic regions to the Columbia.

myth can travel as far as a redstone pipe or a string of wampum. It was customary, as it still is to a limited extent in the West, for large parties, sometimes even a whole band or village, to make long visits to other tribes, dancing, feasting, trading, and exchanging stories with their friends for weeks or months at a time, with the expectation that their hosts would return the visit within the next summer. Regular trade routes crossed the continent from east to west and from north to south, and when the subject has been fully investigated it will be found that this intertribal commerce was as constant and well recognized a part of Indian life as is our own railroad traffic today. The very existence of a trade jargon or a sign language is proof of intertribal relations over wide areas. Their political alliances also were often far-reaching, for Pontiac welded into a warlike confederacy all the tribes from the Atlantic border to the head of the Mississippi, while the emissaries of the Shawano prophet carried the story of his revelations throughout the whole region from the Florida coast to the Saskatchewan.

In view of these facts it is as useless to attempt to trace the origin of every myth as to claim a Cherokee authorship for them all. From what we know of the character of the Shawano, their tendency toward the ceremonial and the mystic, and their close relations with the Cherokee, it may be inferred that some of the myths originated with that tribe. We should naturally expect also to find close correspondence with the myths of the Creeks and other southern tribes within the former area of the Mobilian trade language. The localization at home of all the more important myths indicates a long residence in the country. As the majority of those here given belong to the half dozen counties still familiar to the East Cherokee, we may guess how many attached to the ancient territory of the tribe are now irrecoverably lost.

Contact with the white race seems to have produced very little impression on the tribal mythology, and not more than three or four stories current among the Cherokee can be assigned to a Caucasian source. These have not been reproduced here, for the reason that they are plainly European, and the author has chosen not to follow the example of some collectors who have assumed that every tale told in an Indian language is necessarily an Indian story. Scores recorded in collections from the North and West are nothing more than variants from the celebrated Hausmärchen, as told by French trappers and voyageurs to their Indian campmates and halfbreed children. It might perhaps be thought that missionary influence would be evident in the genesis of the tradition, but such is not the case. The Bible story kills the Indian tradition, and there is no amalgamation. It is hardly necessary to say that stories of a great fish which swallows a man and of a great flood

which destroys a people are found the world over. The supposed Cherokee hero-god, Wâsi, described by one writer as so remarkably resembling the great Hebrew lawgiver is in fact that great teacher himself, Wâsi being the Cherokee approximate for Moses, and the good missionary who first recorded the story was simply listening to a chapter taken by his convert from the Cherokee testament. The whole primitive pantheon of the Cherokee is still preserved in their sacred formulas.

As compared with those from some other tribes the Cherokee myths are clean. For picturesque imagination and wealth of detail they rank high, and some of the wonder stories may challenge those of Europe and India. The numerous parallels furnished will serve to indicate their relation to the general Indian system. Unless otherwise noted, every myth here given has been obtained directly from the Indians, and in nearly every case has been verified from several sources.

"I know not how the truth may be,  
I tell the tale as 'twas told to me."

First and chief in the list of story tellers comes A'yûñ'inî, "Swimmer," from whom nearly three-fourths of the whole number were originally obtained, together with nearly as large a proportion of the whole body of Cherokee material now in possession of the author. The collection could not have been made without his help, and now that he is gone it can never be duplicated. Born about 1835, shortly before the Removal, he grew up under the instruction of masters to be a priest, doctor, and keeper of tradition, so that he was recognized as an authority throughout the band and by such a competent outside judge as Colonel Thomas. He served through the war as second sergeant of the Cherokee Company A, Sixty-ninth North Carolina Confederate Infantry, Thomas Legion. He was prominent in the local affairs of the band, and no Green-corn dance, ballplay, or other tribal function was ever considered complete without his presence and active assistance. A genuine aboriginal antiquarian and patriot, proud of his people and their ancient system, he took delight in recording in his native alphabet the songs and sacred formulas of priests and dancers and the names of medicinal plants and the prescriptions with which they were compounded, while his mind was a storehouse of Indian tradition. To a happy descriptive style he added a musical voice for the songs and a peculiar faculty for imitating the characteristic cry of bird or beast, so that to listen to one of his recitals was often a pleasure in itself, even to one who understood not a word of the language. He spoke no English, and to the day of his death clung to the moccasin and turban, together with the rattle, his badge of authority. He died in March, 1899, aged about sixty-five, and was

buried like a true Cherokee on the Peace to his ashes and sorrow for his the tradition of a people.

Next in order comes the name of Ax, born about 1800 and now considered the oldest man of the nation of the Creek war, at which time and was already married and a father were sold by the treaty of 1819. or doctor, he was recognized, before an authority upon all relating to the making of rattles, wands, and a poetic and imaginative temperament stories, of the giant Tsul'kâlû', of the spirit people, but he had also a number of animal stories. He speaks no English and piercing eye is a fine specimen standing his great age he walked stick to the last ball game, where his interest, and would have attended the interposition of friends.

Suyeta, "The Chosen One," was minister to an Indian congregation supernatural, perhaps through direct but has a good memory and liking same class. He served in the Confederate fourth sergeant in Company A, and is now a well-preserved man. English, but by an ingenious system of concordance for verifying references also a first-class carpenter and mason.

Another principal informant was Cheowa, who died a few years ago a doctor and made no claim to special but was able to furnish several volumes of evidence for a large number obtained.

Besides these may be named, Chief N. J. Smith; Salá'li, mentioned Tsésa'nî or Jessan, who also served as principal conservatives among the younger men of mixed blood inheritors of a large share of Indian a recognized leader of ceremony.

Among informants in the west James D. Wafford, known to



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made without his help, and now  
cated. Born about 1835, shortly  
r the instruction of masters to be  
ion, so that he was recognized as  
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A, Sixty-ninth North Carolina  
ion. He was prominent in the  
en-corn dance, ballplay, or other  
mplete without his presence and  
ginal antiquarian and patriot,  
ent system, he took delight in  
e songs and sacred formulas of  
f medicinal plants and the pre-  
pounded, while his mind was a  
happy descriptive style he added  
a peculiar faculty for imitating  
st, so that to listen to one of his  
even to one who understood not a  
nglish, and to the day of his death  
gether with the rattle, his badge  
9, aged about sixty-five, and was

buried like a true Cherokee on the slope of a forest-clad mountain. Peace to his ashes and sorrow for his going, for with him perished half the tradition of a people.

Next in order comes the name of Itägû'nähî, better known as John Ax, born about 1800 and now consequently just touching the century mark, being the oldest man of the band. He has a distinct recollection of the Creek war, at which time he was about twelve years of age, and was already married and a father when the lands east of Nantahala were sold by the treaty of 1819. Although not a professional priest or doctor, he was recognized, before age had dulled his faculties, as an authority upon all relating to tribal custom, and was an expert in the making of rattles, wands, and other ceremonial paraphernalia. Of a poetic and imaginative temperament, he cared most for the wonder stories, of the giant Tsul'kälû', of the great Uktena or of the invisible spirit people, but he had also a keen appreciation of the humorous animal stories. He speaks no English, and with his erect spare figure and piercing eye is a fine specimen of the old-time Indian. Notwithstanding his great age he walked without other assistance than his stick to the last ball game, where he watched every run with the closest interest, and would have attended the dance the night before but for the interposition of friends.

Suyeta, "The Chosen One," who preaches regularly as a Baptist minister to an Indian congregation, does not deal much with the Indian supernatural, perhaps through deference to his clerical obligations, but has a good memory and liking for rabbit stories and others of the same class. He served in the Confederate army during the war as fourth sergeant in Company A, of the Sixty-ninth North Carolina, and is now a well-preserved man of about sixty-two. He speaks no English, but by an ingenious system of his own has learned to use a concordance for verifying references in his Cherokee bible. He is also a first-class carpenter and mason.

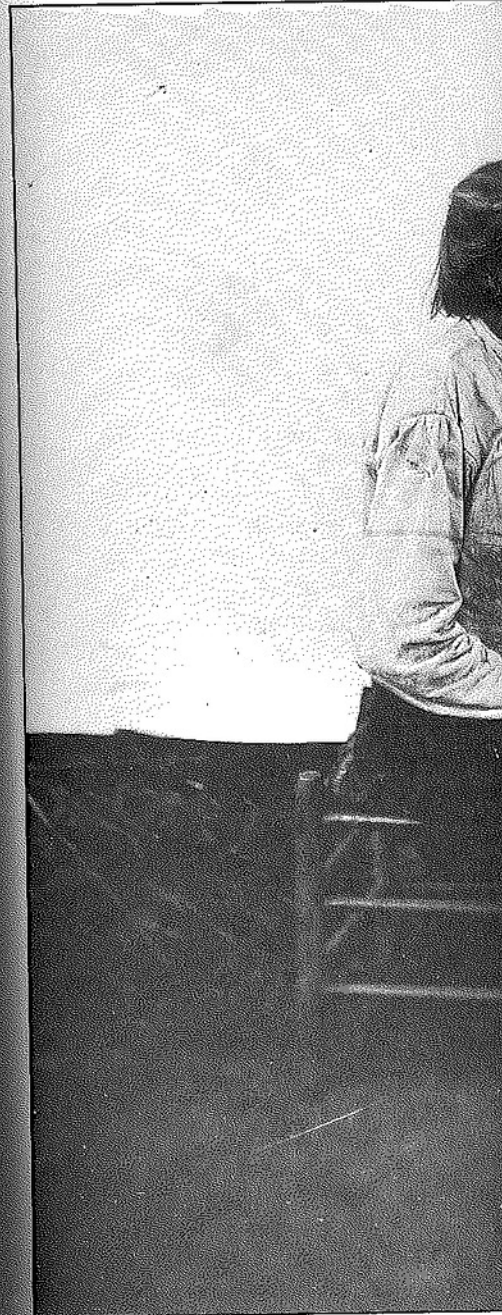
Another principal informant was Ta'gwädihi', "Catawba-killer," of Cheowa, who died a few years ago, aged about seventy. He was a doctor and made no claim to special knowledge of myths or ceremonials, but was able to furnish several valuable stories, besides confirmatory evidence for a large number obtained from other sources.

Besides these may be named, among the East Cherokee, the late Chief N. J. Smith; Salâ'li, mentioned elsewhere, who died about 1895; Tsësa'nî or Jessan, who also served in the war; Ayâ'sta, one of the principal conservatives among the women; and James and David Blythe, younger men of mixed blood, with an English education, but inheritors of a large share of Indian lore from their father, who was a recognized leader of ceremony.

Among informants in the western Cherokee Nation the principal was James D. Wafford, known to the Indians as Tsuskwänûn'näwa'tä,

"Worn-out-blanket," a mixed-blood speaking and writing both languages, born in the old Cherokee Nation near the site of the present Clarkesville, Georgia, in 1806, and dying when about ninety years of age at his home in the eastern part of the Cherokee Nation, adjoining the Seneca reservation. The name figures prominently in the early history of North Carolina and Georgia. His grandfather, Colonel Wafford, was an officer in the American Revolutionary army, and shortly after the treaty of Hopewell, in 1785, established a colony known as "Wafford's settlement," in upper Georgia, on territory which was afterward found to be within the Indian boundary and was acquired by special treaty purchase in 1804. His name is appended, as witness for the state of Georgia, to the treaty of Holston, in 1794.<sup>1</sup> On his mother's side Mr Wafford was of mixed Cherokee, Natchez, and white blood, she being a cousin of Sequoya. He was also remotely connected with Cornelius Dougherty, the first trader established among the Cherokee. In the course of his long life he filled many positions of trust and honor among his people. In his youth he attended the mission school at Valletown under Reverend Evan Jones, and just before the adoption of the Cherokee alphabet he finished the translation into phonetic Cherokee spelling of a Sunday school speller noted in Pilling's Iroquoian Bibliography. In 1824 he was the census enumerator for that district of the Cherokee Nation embracing upper Hiwassee river, in North Carolina, with Nottely and Toccoa in the adjoining portion of Georgia. His fund of Cherokee geographic information thus acquired was found to be invaluable. He was one of the two commanders of the largest detachment of emigrants at the time of the removal, and his name appears as a councilor for the western Nation in the Cherokee Almanac for 1846. When employed by the author at Tahlequah in 1891 his mind was still clear and his memory keen. Being of practical bent, he was concerned chiefly with tribal history, geography, linguistics, and every-day life and custom, on all of which subjects his knowledge was exact and detailed, but there were few myths for which he was not able to furnish confirmatory testimony. Despite his education he was a firm believer in the *Nûnné'hî*, and several of the best legends connected with them were obtained from him. His death takes from the Cherokee one of the last connecting links between the present and the past.

<sup>1</sup> See contemporary notice in the Historical Sketch.



PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR, 1888

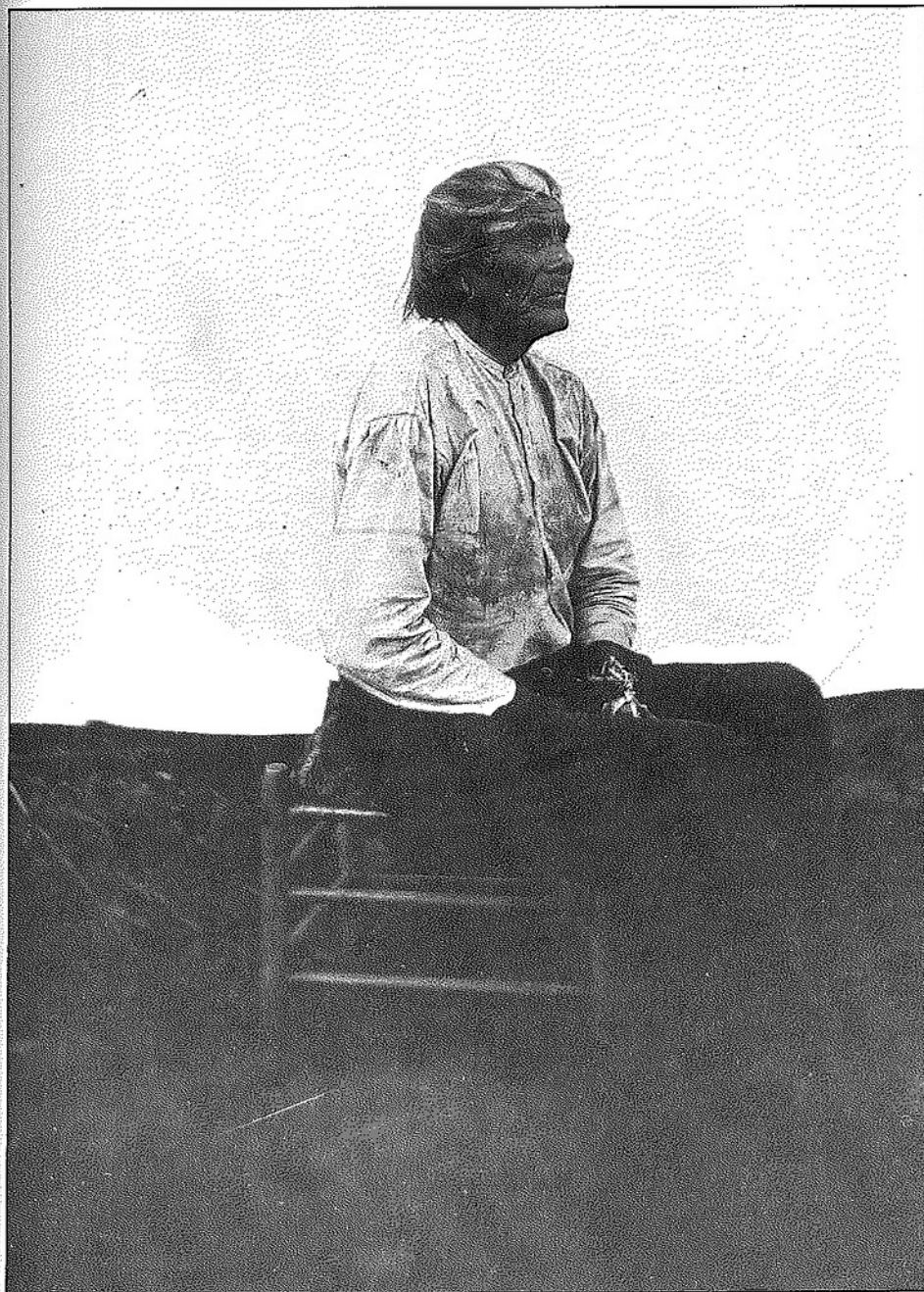
JOHN AX



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Historical Sketch.



PHOTOGRAPH BY AUTHOR, 1888

JOHN AX (ITAGÛ'NÛHĪ)