

## Prologue

The idea for this project was the result of a meeting of the Stanford Cherokee Club at my home about 20 years ago. I had been asked to serve as an elder to the group, a role which I accepted. I immediately realized that I was completely unqualified.

That experience taught me that the role of an elder is not necessarily knowing everything, but to help the talents of the group work together to achieve a worthy goal.

After dinner, our conversation turned to the upcoming Stanford Powwow. No one really knew if they should wear traditional clothing, and if so, what it would look like.

Then someone said that the other kids on the Powwow committee teased them because “Cherokees didn’t have a culture”, and asked me to talk a bit about Cherokee culture. I couldn’t.

I grew up in Muldrow, Oklahoma, a small town within the boundaries of Cherokee Nation where my grandmother was born in 1889. She was not a citizen of the United States until Oklahoma statehood in 1906, and never learned to read or write English.

The political paradigm of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was that native people should be Anglicized to reach a higher level of culture. Part of this policy was the complete absence of education regarding North American history prior to European contact.

This work is my belated effort to bring a better understanding of the rich history of North American people before the Europeans came. My focus on Eastern North America and the history of the ephemeral Nation of 1759 is due to my desire to further our understanding of the ancient culture of the Cherokee and other peoples who were ethnically cleansed from the Southeast in the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This work covers almost 15,000 years of history, and so does not provide a great amount of detail. I have attempted to make this work accessible to those who do not have a background in archeology, but I have provided academic citations for those who would like additional information.

