


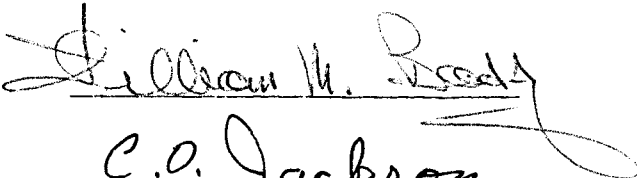
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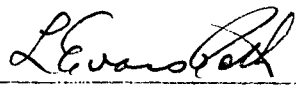
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A

CHEROKEE DEATH CUSTOMS

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ABSTRACT

Cherokee death customs remain a vital part of Cherokee culture even though acculturation processes have been taking place for almost 200 years. Cherokee beliefs about death and dying are so deeply rooted in the traditional culture that they have survived without major changes since the early contact period. The influence of the dominant Appalachian white society has altered the rationale behind the wake, multiple soul concept, and perceptions of the afterlife. However, the rituals and omens associated with these beliefs have not changed. In spite of the fact that scholars have been predicting the demise of Cherokee culture, the subtleties of this culture are as strong today as in the past.

INTRODUCTION

The information for this study was collected through historical documents and interviews among the Cherokee Indians on the Qualla Boundary in Cherokee, North Carolina. The Qualla Boundary is the largest reservation in the eastern United States, and is the home of the only federally recognized tribal entity in North Carolina. The Qualla Boundary consists of 56,573 acres in five counties and approximately 8400 people are on the tribal roll.

The Cherokees have attracted the academic interest of many scholars. Included are noted ethnologists such as James Mooney, John Witthoft, Duane King, Raymond Fogelson, William Harlan Gilbert, and Frank R. Speck. Although a considerable amount of work has been done in Cherokee Studies, studies of certain aspects of traditional culture have barely scratched the surface. One such area of study is Cherokee death customs. Because of the paucity of published material on this subject and the passing of many traditional ways, I undertook this study for the purpose of recording information I acquired as a lifelong resident of the Qualla Boundary and as a participant in a culture that may be totally alien to future generations.

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CHAPTER I

THE CHEROKEE CONCEPT OF DEATH

"Today, the world would be overcrowded if the Sun had not created death" (Hughes, 1979). John Howard Payne, more than a century ago also recorded a version of the "Origin of Death" from Yowiyoka, circa 1835 in which he surmised that the Sun recognized that the world was not large enough to support all of its inhabitants should they keep multiplying and never die. As a result, the Sun decided that people must not have immortality (Payne, 1837: 11). Thus, the Sun, the great giver of life, in the traditional Cherokee belief system was also the Creator of Death.

Mooney (1972: 252) recorded a myth of epic proportion on death and dying. In 1887, he was given the following account:

The Daughter of the Sun

The Sun lived on the other side of the sky vault, but her daughter lived in the middle of the sky, directly above the earth, and every day as the Sun was climbing along the sky arch to the west she used to stop at her daughter's house for dinner. Now, the Sun hated the people in the earth, because they could never look straight at her without screwing up their faces. She said to her brother, the Moon, "My grandchildren are ugly; they grin all over their faces when they look at me." But the Moon said, "I like my younger brothers; I think they are very handsome"-because they always smiled pleasantly when they saw him in the sky at night, for his rays were milder. The Sun was jealous and planned to kill all the people, so every day when she got near her daughter's house she sent down such sultry rays that there was a great fever and the people died by hundreds, until everyone had lost some friend and there was fear that no one would be left. They went for help to the Little Men, who said the only way to save themselves was to kill the Sun. The Little Men made medicine and changed two men to snakes,

the Spreading-adder and the Copperhead, and sent them to watch near the door of the daughter of the Sun to bite the old Sun when she came next day. They went together and hid near the house until the Sun came, but when the Spreading-adder was about to spring, the bright light blinded him and he could only spit out yellow slime, as he does to this day when he tries to bite. She called him a nasty thing and went by into the house, and the Copperhead crawled off without trying to do anything.

So the people still died from the heat, and they went to the Little Men a second time for help. The Little Men made medicine again and changed one man into the great Uktena and another into the Rattlesnake and sent them to watch near the house and kill the old Sun when she came for dinner. They made the Uktena very large, with horns on his head, and everyone thought he would be sure to do the work, but the Rattlesnake was so quick and eager that he got ahead and coiled up just outside the house, and when the Sun's daughter opened the door to look out for her mother, he sprang up and bit her and she fell dead in the doorway. He forgot to wait for the old Sun, but went back to the people, and the Uktena was so very angry that he went back, too. Since then we pray to the rattlesnake and do not kill him, because he is kind and never tries to bite if we do not disturb him. The Uktena grew angrier all the time and very dangerous, so that if he even looked at a man, that man's family would die. After a long time the people held a council and decided that he was too dangerous to be with them, so they sent him up to Galun'lati, and he is there now. The Spreading-adder, the Copperhead, and the Rattlesnake, and the Uktena were all men.

When the Sun found her daughter dead, she went into the house and grieved, and the People did not die any more, but now the world was dark all the time, because the Sun would not come out. They went again to the Little Men, and these told them that if they wanted the Sun to come out again, they must bring back her daughter from Tsusgina'i, the Ghost country, in Usunhi'yi, the Darkening land in the west. They chose seven men to go, and gave each a sourwood rod a hand-breadth long. The Little Men told them they must take a box with them, and when they got to Tsusgina'i they would find all the ghosts at a dance. They must stand outside the circle, and when the young woman passed in the dance they must strike her with the rods and she would fall to the ground. Then they must put her into the box and bring her back to her mother, but they must be very sure not to open the box, even a little way, until they were home again.

They took the rods and a box and traveled seven days to the west until they came to the Darkening land. There were a great many people there, and they were having a dance just as if they were at home in the settlements. The young woman was in the outside circle, and as she swung around to where the seven men were standing, one struck her with his rod and she turned her head and saw him. As she came around the second time, another touched her with his rod, and then another and another, until at the seventh round she fell out of the ring, and they put her into the box and closed the lid fast. The other ghosts seemed never to notice what had happened.

They took up the box and started home toward the east. In a little while the girl came to life again and begged to be let out of the box but they made no answer and went on. Soon she called again and said she was hungry, but still they made no answer and went on. After another while she spoke again and called for a drink and pleaded so that it was very hard to listen to her, but the men who carried the box said nothing and still went on. When at last they were very near home, she called again and begged them to raise the lid just a little, she was smothering. They were afraid she was really dying now, so they lifted the lid a little to give her air, but as they did so there was a fluttering sound inside and something flew past them into the thicket and they heard a redbird cry, "kwish! kwish! kwish!" in the bushes. They shut down the lid and went on again to the settlements, but when they got there and opened the box it was empty.

So we know the Redbird is the daughter of the Sun, and if the men had kept the box closed, as the Little Men told them to do, they would have brought her home safely, and we could bring back our other friends also from the Ghost country, but now when they die we can never bring them back.

The Sun had been glad when they started to the Ghost country, but when they came back without her daughter, she grieved and cried, "My daughter, my daughter," and wept until her tears made a flood upon the earth, and the people were afraid the world would be drowned. They held another council, and sent their handsomest young men and women to amuse her so that she would stop crying. They danced before the Sun and sang their best songs, but for a long time she kept her face covered and paid no attention, until at last the drummer suddenly changed the song, when she lifted up her face, and was so pleased at the sight that she forgot her grief and smiled.

According to the sacred story, "The Daughter of the Sun: The Origin of Death" preserved in the oral traditions of the Eastern

Cherokee today, the Sun is definitely the Creator of Death. Not explicit in the myth is the rationale behind the sacred explanation.

Adair (1775: 20), who spent forty years with the Chickasaws and Cherokees stated, "the American Indians pay only a civil regard for the Sun" and discounted the Sun as a religious factor. He presented the Cherokees as worshippers of Yo-he-wah, the Divine Fire or the Spirit of Fire, "the celestial cherubim, fire, light, and spirit." Corkran suggests Payne's informants to have been descendants of the Natchez remnants who joined the Cherokees after 1740. He believed the Sun worship to be incorporated into the Cherokee concept from the Divine Fire (Corkran, 1955: 35-36). Cherokee observances were divided into a sun and fire. Ye-ho-wah or Yi-ho-wa was the source of holy fire, and of a group of celestial beings who created the sun, earth, and other celestial bodies who leave the sun and moon as "lords of lower creation" (Payne, 1837: Vol. I: 17, Vol. III: 1; Vol. IV: 210). Taking over, the Sun completed the work of creation, formed the man and woman . . . caused the trees, plants, and fruits to grow and continues to order, watch over, and preserve everything on earth" (Payne, 1937: Vol. IV: 210). In this belief the Sun is the creator. He is addressed in a Cherokee morning prayer for success during the day: A ke yu by gy-Squa ne lo ne hi--"Sun, my Creator" (Payne, 1837: Vol. 1: 20).

The oral traditions also exemplify other ways of dying. Deaths of violence are seen in the oratory of the Eagle's Revenge, Origin of Corn and Game, and Kalanu (Mooney, 1972: 292, 242, 401). As a

result, deaths were caused by spirit or soul loss, spirit intrusion, witchcraft and scorcery, and not obeying cultural restrictions.

Soul loss was brought about by any enemy working against a person. The enemy took hold of a person's soul and buried it out west in the Night Land. Loss of the soul did not mean death. One could live without a soul and slowly pine away. Cases of acute loneliness, homesickness, melancholy, and dejection were explained in this manner (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 141).

Spirit intrusion is caused by someone with supernatural powers, perhaps a witch or an "atawehi." The spirit intrusion is manifested as a recognizable disease. Many months or even years can go by before the latent spirit is noticed and the affected person becomes virulent. An example of spirit intrusion recorded by Mooney and Olbrechts was described as "spoiling the saliva." In this situation, the person became despondent, withered away, and died. The most obvious signs of spirit intrusion consisted of dreams of ghosts, snakes, and fish. The victim suffered much from the decline of his psychological state as he did from the physiological disorder (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 15-16).

Soul loss and spirit intrusion cannot be separated into distinct categories. They are both of a larger category of witchcraft and scorcery. A person who performs maleficent activities is called "tskili," "svnoyi etohi" meaning one who walks at night, or "atawehi" meaning one who has utmost power. Their activities are performed without any reasonable motives (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 29-31). The term "Raven Mocker" (kho lo na a ye li ski) is an

obsolete term today (Hughes, 1979: 3). All three definitions were consolidated into one English definition "witch" (Fogelson, 1975: 11). Today, beliefs persist among traditional people about such activities. Explanations for death are frequently attributed to supernatural causes as opposed to natural ones. Stories of such occurrences are easily elicited from informants. Common examples relating to these activities were as follows:

Upon cleaning a bedridden man/woman, bruises or blue spots were noticed on the body of which the sick person never had before. The explanation for this incident was that the sick person got too close and was hit while trying to gain more life. Many examples proved that because the person had been caught, he/she died very shortly. Normally, when one was proven to be a "tskili" within four days death would occur.

The family was taking care of a sick person while in the hospital. All at once, a large bird hit against the wall. While watching the patient, he made a final gasp for air like it was knocked out of him. A note was made that he was caught and thrown from his adventures.

While cleaning an elderly woman, the family members noticed the soles of her feet which resembled third degree burns. Earlier, a sickness had prevailed on a small child. While using fire as part of the medicinal formula, someone had walked on the coals, and extinguished the fire. The explanation given for this was that she knew that the Indian doctor was going to find her identity. Therefore, extinguishing the fire provided a means to show her ability to use her power in preventing the doctoring.

All of the examples were made in reference to older people being the culprits. Older people were given the power to assume different forms. Old age in Cherokee society was and is still associated with power (Fogelson, 1975: 120). Many assumptions are made, even if the person had not been actively involved in doctoring rituals or witchcraft. Traditionally, newborns were given the power

to be able to perform maleficent activities. There are contemporary reports of this activity being practiced today. To attain the power to perform such activities is to learn it from one who is willing to provide the information.

From Olbrecht's account, the procedure to produce witches was begun at birth for twins. No mother's milk was given for 24 days. They were fed only the liquid from fermented hominy at night and isolated from any visitors. At the end of this period, a decoction of smooth sumac, Rhus glabra L., was given to the mother which enabled "her milk to glow abundantly" and the result was two very powerful witches. Metamorphasical powers were unlimited to these witches (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 127-130).

In 1957, Charles Holzinger gathered basic information on this procedure. With parental consent an infant could be made into a witch. The infant was isolated from the mother's breast for seven days and given a special decoction with the following procedure:

The first born child is fed on tea for seven days before it sucks titties. Just the mother, daddy, and conjurer are allowed to see the baby. It's got too much power, like the ravens it can go over everthing's head. It can look right through a house or a woman's dress. It can tell just by looking what you're going to say. If they do only part of it (i.e. terminate the ritual before the full seven days), it can crawl like a possum, but if it's the seven days it can fly.

Another method involved a fast and the drinking of a decoction of a rare plant, Claviceps sp. (Witthoft, 1970: personal communication), which resemble a beetle-like insect (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 30). The plant was misidentified as Sagittaria latifolia Willd.

by Mooney and Olbrechts. Metamorphosis for creatures living on the ground was attained if the infusion was drunk after a four day feast. If the ritual lasted seven days the individual could be transformed into various flying creatures (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 30).

Fogelson (1975: 123) recognized the seven day treatment produced a Raven "ka lo: na a: yeli: : ski" or a "Raven Mocker." The behaviors of the Raven Mocker were many and the existence of this character is told in oral traditions following a death:

. . . the men hid close to the new grave and exactly at midnight all kinds of living creatures appeared. Bats, dogs, cats, birds, and other life forms were seen. The two men had been told to leave when the Head Man, the Raven Mocker made its appearance. To add to their astonishment a large black bird came flying in, dressed in black and dove straight to the grave. The Raven Mocker dug up a new grave and placed the coffin on top of the ground. After this amazing incident, one of the men became so frightened that he shot the Raven Mocker. The Raven Mocker at once flew straight into the coffin and disappeared into the new grave. The other creatures dispersed quickly fading into thin air. At this point, the two frightened men fled the scene. . . . (King, 1977: 191-192).

Evidence of this belief during the early historic period is given by John Haywood, an early colonial historian. He gives one of the earliest concise descriptions of Cherokee witchcraft and nature of death. Referring to his travels dating back to 1768, this description is found in his book Natural and Aboriginal History of Tennessee, published in 1823:

In ancient times the Cherokees had no conception of any one's dying a natural death. They universally described the death of those who perished by disease to the intervention or agency of evil spirits, and witches, and conjurors, who had connexion with Shing or evil spirits. They ascribed to their witches and conjurors the power to put on any shape

they please, either of bird or beast, but they are supposed generally to prefer the form of a cat or of an owl. They ascribe to them the power of passing from one place from the Good Spirit, they assign the knowledge of the divine will, the procurement of rain by supplication, the giving of victory in a ball play and the power to avert misfortune by conciliating the favor of God. . . . Their witches and conjurors are supposed to receive their faculties from evil spirits, and are punished to this day with death. Suspicion affixes to them the imputation of this crime. A person dying by disease, and charging to his death to have been procured by means of witchcraft, or spirits by any other person, co-signs that person to inevitable death. They profess to believe that their conjurations have no effect upon white men (Haywood, 1823: 250-251).

The practice of Cherokee witchcraft was a living reality as opposed to supernatural superstition. In 1824 the Arkansas Cherokee passed legislation making it a capital offense to murder a suspected witch. Accusations against one practicing witchcraft was punishable by whipping. Mooney (1972: 138) suggested this was probably due to missionary influence supported by enlightened or learned men.

The Cherokee epideminology did not contain the germ theory of disease. To the native inhabitants another cause of disease and death was explained in terms of breaking cultural restrictions with animal spirits. The animal spirits were far more considerable in size, power, swiftness, and other qualities surpassing their earthly successors. The motives of the animal spirits were mainly dictated by self defense, or in a spirit of vengeance for the wrong done against them by the human race (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 25-26). The oral tradition explaining the interrelationship of men, animals, and plants is given in the "Origin of Disease and Medicine."

In the old days the beasts, birds, fishes, insects, and plants could all talk, and they and the people lived together in peace and friendship. But as time went on the people increased so rapidly that their settlements spread over the whole earth, and the poor animals found themselves beginning to be cramped for room. This was bad enough, but to make it worse Man invented bows, knives, blowguns, spears, and hooks, and began to slaughter the larger animals, birds, and fishes for their flesh or their skins, while the smaller creatures, such as the frogs and worms, were crushed and trodden upon without thought, out of pure carelessness or contempt. So the animals resolved to consult upon measures for their common safety.

The Bears were the first to meet in council in their town-house under Kusa'hi mountain, the "Mulberry place," and the old White Bear chief presided. After each in turn had complained of the way in which Man killed their friends, ate their flesh, and used their skins for his own purposes, it was decided to begin war at once against him. Someone asked what weapons Man used to destroy them. "Bows and arrows, of course," cried all the Bears in chorus. "And what are they made of?" was the next question. "The bow of wood, and the string of our entrails," replied one of the Bears. It was then proposed that they make a bow and some arrows and see if they could not use the same weapons against Man himself. So one Bear got a nice piece of locust wood and another sacrificed himself for the good of the rest in order to furnish a piece of his entrails for the string. But when everything was ready and the first Bear stepped up to make the trial, it was found that in letting the arrow fly after drawing back the bow, his long claws caught the string and spoiled the shot. This was annoying, but some one suggested that they might trim his claws, which was accordingly done, and on the second trial it was that the arrow went straight to the mark. But here the chief, the old White Bear, objected saying it was necessary that they should have long claws in order to be able to climb trees.

One of us has already died to furnish the bow-string, and if we now cut off our claws we must all starve together. It is better to trust the teeth and claws that nature gave us, for it is plain that man's weapons were not intended for us.

No one could think of any better plan, so the old chief dismisses the council and Bears dispersed to the woods and thickets without having concerted any way to prevent the increase of the human race. Had the result of the council been otherwise we should now be at war with the Bears, but as it is, the hunter does not even ask the Bear's pardon when he kills one.

The deer next held a council under their chief, the Little Deer, and after some talk decided to send rheumatism to every hunter who should kill one of them unless he took care to ask their pardon for the offense. They sent notice of their decision to the nearest settlement of Indians and told them at the same time what to do when necessity forced them to kill one of the Deer tribe. Now, whenever the hunter shoots a Deer, the Little Deer, who is swift as the wind can not be wounded, runs quickly up the spot and, bending over the blood-stains, asks the spirit of the Deer if it has heard the prayer of the hunter for pardon. If the reply be "Yes," all is well, and the Little Deer goes on his way, but if the reply be "No," he follows the trail of the hunter, guided by the drops of blood on the ground until he arrives at his cabin in the settlement, when the Little Deer enters invisibly and strikes the hunter with rheumatism, so that he becomes at once a helpless cripple. No hunter who has regard for his health ever fails to ask pardon of the Deer for killing it, although some hunters who have not learned the prayer may try to turn the Little Deer from his pursuit by building a fire behind them in the trail.

Next came the Fishes and Reptiles, who had their own complaints against Man. They held their council together and determined to make their victims dream of snakes twining about them in slimy folds and blowing foul breath in their faces, or to make them dream of eating raw or decaying fish, so they would lose appetite, sicken, and die. This is why people dream about snakes and fish.

Finally the Birds, Insects, and smaller animals came together for the same purpose, and the Grubworm was chief of the council. It was decided that each in turn should give an opinion, and then they would vote on the question as to whether or not Man was guilty. Seven votes should be enough to condemn him. One after another denounced Man's cruelty and injustice toward the other animals and voted in favor of his death. The Frog spoke first, saying "We must do something to check the increase of the race or people will become so numerous that we shall be crowded from off the earth." See how they have kicked me about because I'm ugly, as they say, "until my back is covered with sores," and here he showed the spots on his skin. Next came the Bird--"no one remembers now which one it was who condemned Man because he burns my feet off," meaning the way in which the hunter barbecues birds by impaling them on a stick set over the fire, so that their feathers and tender feet are singed off. Others followed in the same strain. The Ground-squirrel alone ventured to say a good word for Man, who seldom hurt him because he was so small, but this made the others so angry that they fell upon the Ground-squirrel and tore him with their claws, and the stripes are on his back to this day.

They began to devise and name so many new diseases, one after another, that had not their invention at last failed them, no one of the human race would have been able to survive. The Grubworm grew constantly more pleased as the name of each disease was called off, until at last they reached the end of the list, then some one proposed to make menstruation sometimes fatal to women. On this he rose upon his place and cried: "Waden! (Thanks) I'm glad some more of them will die, for they are getting so thick that they tread on me." The thought fairly made him shake with joy, so that he fell over backward and could not get on his feet again, but had to wriggle off on his back, as the Grubworm had done ever since.

When the Plants, who were friendly to Man, heard what had been done by the animals, they determined to defeat the latters' evil designs. Each Tree, Shrub, and Herb, down even to the Grasses and Mosses, agreed to furnish a cure for some of the diseases named, and each said: "I shall appear to help Man when he calls upon me in his need." Thus came medicine; and the plants, every one of which has its use if we only knew it, furnish the remedy to counteract the evil wrought by the revengeful animals. Even weeds were made for some good purpose, which we must find out for ourselves. When the doctor does not know what medicine to use for a sick man the spirit of the plant tells him.

(Mooney, 1972: 250-251)

From early written accounts of the Cherokee death customs, the Cherokee conceived of death or of a dead person with fear. Lieutenant Henry Timberlake who traveled for three months in the Cherokee country in 1760, gives a short mention of their treatment of the dead. He reported that the dead were seldom buried, but were thrown into the river. Also, if a person other than a Cherokee such as a white man was available he would bury the dead with a reward generally granted (Timberlake, 1927: 90-91). James Adair, a Scotch-Irish trader in the Indian country for nearly forty years, made observations of Indian culture in the mid-eighteenth century (Adair, 1971). However, special considerations need to be taken as his thesis seems to be tightly centered around proving the Indians were part of the Lost

Tribe of Israel. Throughout his account, "History of the Indians" Hebrew parallels are drawn to show the similarities concerning death. For example, "The Israelites became unclean only by touching their dead, for the space of seven days" (Adair, 1971: 132-133). In a later account he notes that the "Cherokee observe this law of purity in so strict a manner as not to touch a corpse of their nearest relation though in the woods. The fear of pollution (not the want of natural affection, as the unskilled observe) keeps them also from burying their dead. . . ." From his recollections of Cherokee life they left their dead unburied at a distance from their purification grounds (Adair, 1971: 133).

John Howard Payne writing between the years 1835-36 still notes the fear of the diseased as well as the dead. If one should touch a diseased person he would be unclean as if he touched a dead body (Payne, 1835: 16).

Mooney and Olbrechts (1932: 131-132) point out that the nature of death perceived in the 1930s was multifaceted. Indirectly, a person showing signs of losing ground and becoming weak and despondent and of losing his life added to the fatal outcome of a person's life. Also a dying person would express his wish that they should not trouble themselves anymore. The dying person felt that he was "going out west" to "usv'hi: 'yi" (literally, the dark land) or to the area where the dead aboded, "tsu'sgino'i" (literally, it means the devil's place).

Gulick (1960), writing about the existing aboriginal vestiges and assimilated values in the years 1956-58 does not deal with the nature of death to any degree. He writes only a brief note of the funeral and witchcraft which will be discussed in later chapters.

An informant from the 1940s era noted that only two of the people in the most traditional community of Big Cove were called upon to prepare the dead. People did not associate with the dead because of its unclean nature. The informant strongly believed death played an important role in life. His involvement with the dead interfered with his own garden production. During the planting season, his attempts at gardening were unsuccessful. His explanation was that all growing things such as vegetable plants were stunted by the presence of a death form. There was a practical side to consider at that time. A mortician had to care for his family. At that time menial farming activities were the sole means of support for his family (J. S., 1976: personal communications).

In everyday life, deaths are conceptualized as being caused by many factors. Today, the modern medical doctors list the major causes of death among the Cherokees as diseases of the heart, malignant neoplasms, diabetes mellitus, motor vehicle accidents, and other accidents and homicides (Merritt, 1973: 4-5, 45; Taylor, 1975: 27). With these causations, the average Cherokee death rate was 31.60 per year between the ages of 65 and 84 during the years of 1968-72 (Merritt, 1973: 5).

CHAPTER II

DREAMS AND OMENS OF DEATH

Dreams and omens play an important role in the Cherokee world view. Not only do they predict the future but they also rationalize modifications in human behavior. When the outcome of a particular activity is uncertain a good dream or sign could encourage a doubter to persevere. If the sign is bad, the opposite is true. In 1756, a Cherokee war party returned to the Little Tennessee Valley after a six week expedition to the Mississippi River against the French. They did not engage the enemy because they said the signs were bad. They blamed the failure of the expedition on William Gererd DeBrahm (Skejegunsta Dutchee) who had given strong drink to Oconostota immediately prior to their departure in violation of Cherokee culture restrictions (DeVorsey, 1971: 113).

Dreams which foretell death are classified by Carl Gustav Jung (1966: 89-90) as anticipatory dreams. Jung felt that these dreams point to future possibilities. The dream may provide information to supplement the conscious attitude. He believed dreams occur in the present, therefore, they are important to the present (Jung, 1966: 90-91).

The earliest written accounts of Cherokee death omens are from Payne's manuscript dating around the 1830s. In the 1930s, William Harlan Gilbert collected some dreams and omens. Olbrechts completing

James Mooney's work during the years 1928-31 also obtained a wealth of information on death.

In comparison, many of the dreams and omens may be borrowings from either neighboring Indian tribes or recently from Appalachian whites. Today it is interesting to note that those who are strong believers in the Judeo-Christian theology can tell their dreams and omens as the "gospel truth." Over the years, the co-mingling of traditions on the Qualla Boundary has made it difficult to determine the etymologies of certain motifs associated with dreams and omens.

From these historical accounts we can determine the cultural changes in Cherokee attitude toward death. The first overview will be made with Payne's collection in comparison with Gilbert's, Mooney and Olbrechts', and today's ideology which is listed as Hughes. The second overview is compared with Mooney's and Olbrechts' information. The third overview presents the current dreams and omens not obtained by any of the previous authors. A cross-cultural comparison is also given with the information received from the residents located in the foothills of south-central Kentucky near the Tennessee state line (Montell, 1975). This information is one of the most recent studies completed in the Pennyroyal area.

Overview 1

Dreams of Death

The first overview is a list of dreams obtained by Payne, in comparison with Gilbert, Mooney and Olbrechts, and today's ideology presented by Hughes.

- Payne 1835
Seeing person going toward the west. The person is sure to die.
- Mooney 1943
He found that if a member of the family left he/she would die within 2-3 years.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert found this same dream, except the person was given one year to live.
- Hughes Present
Dreaming about a person leaving is a sign that someone is going to die.
- Payne 1835
Dreaming of anyone handling eagle feathers in his hand.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Incarnation on one's self for death.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney made no mention of this dream.
- Hughes Present
One dream reflected that eagle feathers brought death. Several people noted it brought about cold weather. One person noted that handling an eagle feather brought about cold weather.
- Payne 1835
Dreaming of a house burning.
- Gilbert 1943
Gilbert found the same dream and meaning.
- Mooney 1928-32
Mooney's informants noted that when a cabin burned completely one of the inmates dies.
- Hughes Present
The same dream occurs today.
Another variation is a house burning to the ground.

- Payne 1835
Anyone going downstream in high water.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert noted this dream meant trouble. The type of trouble was not specified.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney makes no mention of this dream.
- Hughes Present
Going downstream means death. The explanation is that when a person dies he cannot go back upstream where the sun comes up every morning. All Cherokee burials face downstream today.
- Payne 1835
To dream of a family or any individuals' singing and dancing.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert's information was that this dream meant serious sickness for the family.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney did not mention this dream.
- Hughes Present
This dream is still reported today. To many people today it was a person's last time to sing and dance. After death they would never do this again.
- Payne 1835
Water rising around the house and running into the house.
- Gilbert 1928-32
During Gilbert's time this dream meant a disease would be inflicted on someone.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney did not report this dream.
- Hughes Present
This same dream is described today. Also dreaming of crossing a small stream means death.

- Payne 1835
A person with clean clothes.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert's information reflected this dream meant sickness.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney did not make any mention of this dream.
- Hughes Present
Many people say that if one dreams of wearing new clothes it means death. The majority of the Cherokee people usually dress the deceased in new clothes. Dreaming of one dressed in a black suit is another sign of death. Black signifies death and many deceased men are dressed in either black or navy blue suits. The association of one dressed in black and on a train going west triplicated the definite belief in death. One person reported that if one was sick and someone dreams of them wearing white clothes, the sick person will live.
- Payne 1835
A fence burning down.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert makes no mention of this dream.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney does not describe this dream.
- Hughes Present
No Cherokee had heard of this dream. They did make reference to a house burning down.
- Payne 1935
In a ballgame, the dreamer's team wins. One member of the dreamer's settlement will die.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert does not cite this dream.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney does not mention this dream.
- Hughes Present
If a ballteam loses in a dream, it will win the ballgame in reality, or vice versa.

- Payne 1835
Train rushing to a cabin. One inmate will die in 6-12 months.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert did not find this dream.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney makes no reference to this dream.
- Hughes Present
Many variations exist for this dream. The most general one is that if one just dreams of a train, a death will occur. Another dream is that of a train bearing down on a person. This dream is very common among the Cherokee people.
- Payne 1835
Train journey with a companion. Companion will die within 6-12 months.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert does not cite this dream.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney does not refer to this dream.
- Hughes Present
This dream is one of the many variations associated with a train.

Omens of Death

The following are omens of death collected by Payne, Gilbert, Mooney and Olbrechts, and Hughes.

- Payne 1835
Seeing an eagle or crane flying low on the ground.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert does not allude to this omen.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney makes no reference to this omen.
- Hughes Present
This omen is closely related to the handling of eagle feathers or dreaming of eagles. Handling eagle feathers brings frost or cold. Dreaming of eagles means a member of the family is being conjured on.

- Payne 1835
Startling a fox or wolf and have him turn around and bark.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert does not cite this omen.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney makes no mention of this omen.
- Hughes Present
This exact omen does not occur. However, many variations exist for this omen. A fox close to a house predicts a future anomaly. In one incident a man tried to shoot a fox and as soon as he loaded his gun and aimed, the fox was nowhere to be seen. Another situation was that a hunter made up his mind to shoot a fox and aimed. For some reason there was no way he could shoot the fox while it was staring at him. These men claimed the fox has a lot of power. A fox howling in the distance is also considered a very valid sign of death. Generally as a rule foxes do not come close to the house. Others say that if one hears a fox barking, it will bring good luck. The opposite of it is also common in that it brings bad luck. No mention was made about the wolf.
- Payne 1835
Seeing a snake or Uktena.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert collected this same information.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney makes no mention of this omen.
- Hughes Present
Currently, a dream about snakes brings trouble. If the dream about one getting bitten by a snake occurs in the spring, it means the dreamer's family member will get sick. Also it means that someone is conjuring on you. One incident was related about persons seeing two snakes fighting each other. Four days later the dreamer's brother was killed in a fight. However, seeing a snake without any strange phenomena did not predict anything unusual.

- Payne 1835
Seeing a Nayehi (those that live in bluffs or high mountains).
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert noted the same omen.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney makes no mention of this omen.
- Hughes Present
Seeing Little People is a common omen that means one will die. Others say that if one relates the incident before seven days are up, the person will die. Today there is no distinction about the different types of Little People. They all fit into a general category.
- Payne 1835
To see a giant species of an animal.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert noted this same omen.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney makes no mention of this omen.
- Hughes Present
None of the people interviewed knew about this omen.
- Payne 1835
Seeing two squirrels fighting and one is killed.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert makes no reference of this omen.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney made no mention of this omen.
- Hughes Present
No one knew of this omen.

- Payne 1835
Hearing wailing and moaning.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert noted the same omen.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney makes no mention of this omen.
- Hughes Present
Today, wailing or moaning is still a common omen. Usually, the sounds come from the graveyard where the burial will take place. Sounds were known to be heard from the church that was going to hold the funeral service. In case it was a small child, a baby was known to have been crying.
- Payne 1835
Apparition of a friend.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert makes note of this omen.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney did not mention this omen.
- Hughes Present
This omen means that if precautions are not taken, someone will die. Usually this is considered by some people to be the spirit of one who is looking for an extension to his life. If it is a woman, the real person is a man in disguise and vice versa.
- Payne 1835
Hen crowing.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert noted this same omen.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney also noted this omen.
- Hughes Present
To some Cherokees this omen warns of death. To others it meant that the hen's liver was going bad. Some of them noted that once a chicken was killed, it had an enlarged heart. Others testified its liver was all wasted. Either situation caused the hen to make funny noises. Many believed the hen dies when its liver is all wasted.

- Payne 1835
A hominy pestle moving with no one touching it.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert makes note of the same omen.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney does not mention this omen.
- Hughes Present
No one knew of this omen.
- Payne 1835
A screech owl making sounds.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert's information revealed this meant that there was going to be sickness in one's family.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney noted that illness was going to occur when a screech owl was perched near one's house.
- Hughes Present
All the Cherokee people interviewed agreed that an owl made different noises from its usual sounds if it was giving a message. An owl's hoot also told of death and sickness. Many of the Cherokees agreed that there were two types of owls. One was the friendly bird and the other one was an owl called "u: tse lv: hi" meaning one who was in the guise of an owl and was a "tsikili."
- Payne 1835
A tree top falling without the wind toward the house.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert noted this referred to a relative's death.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney's information revealed this omen meant death. Specifically there was no mention of which relative would die.
- Hughes Present
Hearing a tree fall is a valid sign of death today. If one hears a big tree falling in the distance, it means an adult will die. Hearing a small tree or some small limbs fall will mean an infant's death. After hearing a tree fall two

to three and four days will pass before someone dies. Also hearing the direction the tree falls is where the death will occur. Usually the community knows that something will occur within a few days.

- Payne 1835
Whippoorwill near the house. This meant death caused by a witch.
- Gilbert 1928-32
Gilbert was informed this meant sickness.
- Mooney 1943
Mooney obtained the same information. The cry of a whippoorwill was important at that time.
- Hughes Present
Hearing a whippoorwill is a common omen to some people regarding a death. It has to have a distinct unfamiliar sound. Like the owl many regard the whippoorwill as a song bird which produces beautiful music. One can usually tell when the whippoorwill is only a bird and when it is a "tsikili." Many people remember the beautiful sounds it makes in the early summer evenings.

Overview 2

The following is a list of dreams and omens given by Mooney and Olbrechts in 1932 which neither Payne nor Gilbert mentioned. Today's analogies are also cited as Hughes.

- Mooney 1943
Dogs howling dismally.
- Hughes Present
This omen exists today. To some Cherokees death occurs within one month. Others said death will occur in seven days. Another omen was that of a dog laying on its back as a definite sign of death. This reflected that someone would be in that same position. A dog flopping around also predicted that something unusual would happen.

- Mooney 1943
Fish rolling over and over in the water.
- Hughes Present
This omen means it will bring illness to a family member.
- Mooney 1943
Fox howling.
- Hughes Present
This omen occurs today. The fox as a general rule does not make a howling sound nor does it ever come close to a residence. When a fox did come close to a house, it was for a certain reason.
- Mooney 1943
Hearing noises in a graveyard.
- Hughes Present
This omen is reported and the noises reflected are those that will be heard during burial. Common noises include someone crying, people speaking, sounds of dirt being thrown on the casket, and the sound of people walking around.

Overview 3

Other dreams and omens that exist today are listed as follows.

These were not given by Payne, Mooney and Olbrechts, and Gilbert.

Present Dreams

Dreaming of white lilies.

Dreaming about a ball of fire headed for someone's house.

Dreaming of an airplane falling.

Dreaming of big crowds or several people gathered at someone's house.

Dreaming of fresh dirt.

Dreaming of a person trapped in muddy water. Others felt that this brought about toothaches.

Dreaming of a wedding. Many felt that if one dreams of a funeral, someone will get married.

Dreaming of a bus in front of a house.

Dreaming of losing one's tooth, dress, shoes, etc.

Dreaming of someone happy.

Dreaming of a dead person.

Dreaming of an automobile and no one getting out of it.

Present Omens

Hearing a death bell or a ringing in the ears. Others felt a warm sensation came to the ears before death. The way one was facing when this sensation came was the direction of the forecasted death. One Cherokee said that when this happened, one should say seven times "ke sti ya kwa tv nv ihsti skina" meaning "I am not ready yet Devil (Satan)." Therefore this saying is a protection against death.

Hearing a house cracking. The direction of the cracking is the direction death will occur.

Hearing a raven.

Rooster crowing mournful sounds.

Dog laying on its back.

Seeing a light on at the graveyard.

Having a lot of dirt left after a burial.

Hearing church bells (the bells ringing according to the age of the person).

Seeing a ball of fire headed for someone's house.

Seeing, feeling, and talking about the place one is going to after death during an illness. Once before a man died he became very hot and discussed where he was and what it felt like to be there (Hell). Another person described the beautiful, calm, and serene place she was seeing (Heaven).

Hearing piano music from a church.

Seeing lights at a church and hearing someone crying.

Planting a willow tree and when it grows above one's house, it is time for someone to die.

Dog leaving and never returning to the house.

The Cherokee beliefs were collated with William Lynwood Montell's collection found in Ghosts Along the Cumberland which reflect Appalachian white death symbolism. Parallel accounts were found for the two cultures and the similarities were quite striking.

Dreaming of losing one's teeth was found in both cultures. In ten Kentucky counties, the location of the teeth was very important. Loss of the lower teeth meant a younger member of the family was going to die; one of the parents was going to die if one dreamed of losing an upper tooth (Montell, 1975: 19). To the Cherokee dreaming of losing one's tooth, dress, shoes, or anything personal is a sign of death.

To the Appalachian whites, death is a sign of marriage/wedding, and of birth. To the Cherokee, dreaming of a dead person prompted death. Montell notes this meant the dreamer was close to death. Many felt if one dreamed of a funeral it also meant a marriage. Dreaming of a marriage or wedding is a sign of death.

Ringing of a death bell associated with the human body is very prevalent in the Appalachian counties. Variations in those counties were as follows: "My right ear rings real loud for awhile, then stops suddenly; if a death bell rings, in your ear, you will hear of a death in three days; when a bell rings in your ear at night, a close friend will die; it is a sign of a family death if the death bell rings faintly in your ear, then becomes real loud; a ringing in the ear is a sign of death, and the direction of the death is determined by whichever ear rings" (Montell, 1975: 21). One of the basic similarities was the use of the direction. The Appalachian white people seem to be more specific with the degree of the ringing, and also with time. The Cherokee do have a precaution against the death warning. None was mentioned for the Kentucky foothills.

To dream of muddy water was another similarity. It was a sign of death. It was also considered bad luck for someone in the family to become sick (Montell, 1975: 29). Some Cherokee believed this also brought about toothaches.

Flowers play an important role in funerals. To dream of any flowers meant death to the Kentuckians (Montell, 1975: 32). The Cherokee have a more specific belief in that to dream of white lilies is a sign of death. In the Cherokee funerals there is often a lot of discussion about the number of flowers a person receives. It usually points to the number of friends one has had in the community.

Trees are also very predominant to both the Cherokee and Appalachian people in Kentucky. To the Cherokee, if one plants a

willow tree and it grows as high or higher than one's house, then it is time for someone in that family to die. To the Appalachian whites if a willow tree is planted and it becomes high enough to shade your grave you will die, or if you set out a weeping willow and it lived you will be a weeping widow (Montell, 1975: 33).

Several death beliefs relating to animals and birds were very similar between the two cultures.

A very common omen among the Cherokee was that of a howling dog. The Cherokee believe death occurs within seven days and also in a month after the howling takes place. The temporal aspect was not included with the Appalachian white explanation except a person would die within a few days when one was seriously ill. Another variation was that if a dog howled or bayed at the moon it meant death (Montell, 1975: 35).

A dog lying on its back and remaining motionless predicted death to the Appalachian white. To the Cherokee it meant that someone in the community would be in that same predicament. A dog leaving the house was also common to both cultures. To the Cherokee a dog leaving and never returning was a sign that its master would no longer be there. Following is a narrative from Kentucky:

I had an old dog named Butch. He never ever come into the house. But one night before Bert died, he come to the door; and Bert said to let him in. That dog came into the house and walked over to Bert's bed. Bert patted the dog on the head; then Old Butch turned and walked out; and Minnie said something was going to happen, sure 'nough, Bert died that night (Montell, 1975: 35).

This narrative implies that Bert was ill and also that the dog was giving its farewell presentation.

Dismal crowing of a rooster projects a sad occurrence to the Cherokee, namely death. A rooster crowing at midnight was the same omen in both cultures. Six other variations were found among the people of Kentucky which included:

If a rooster crows and its tail is toward the door, then someone is going to die in that family.

If a rooster crows facing the house, it is a sign of death.

If a rooster comes up to your front steps and crows, there will be a death in the family.

When a rooster goes around and crows all the time, some relative is going to die.

If a rooster goes on a roost and crows an uneven number of times there will be a death. If the rooster crows an even number of times, you will hear of a wedding.

If a rooster crows at your door in the morning at least three times, it means bad news; in the afternoon, it is a sign of death (Montell, 1975: 36-37).

In the Cherokee culture, a crowing hen has been an omen of death since Payne's written work in the 1800s. In the Appalachian white culture this same information came from an informant who was born around 1877 (Montell, 1975: 37). There is evidence that a crowing hen was killed. To the Cherokee there is physical evidence that internal disorders occur that cause the hen to crow. Several Cherokee people testified that once the hen was killed, the liver was wasted or that it was very enlarged.

An owl hooting is a common omen found in both cultures. For Kentuckians, a period of three days was given for death to occur (Montell, 1975: 39). Very important to the Cherokee was the type of sounds an owl makes. There was a definite distinction between an owl and "utse:lvhi" namely, that of a "tskili."

The whippoorwill is also a common omen in the two cultures.

To the Cherokee, it makes a very distinctive sound, like the owl, when it is forecasting death. The Appalachian white informants did not discuss the type of cries, calls, or sounds it makes to signify death.

Four other variations that exist in that culture are as follows:

When a whippoorwill calls out at night, the number of times he calls will be the number of days before a death in the family.

If a whippoorwill stays near your home, there will be a death within twenty-four hours.

If a whippoorwill hollers close to the house, there will be a death in the family.

If a whippoorwill lights on a sick person's bed post and sings death will follow (Montell, 1975: 40-41).

Many of the current dreams and omens were directly associated with a funeral. Naturally, dreaming of a dead person is evidence of a death. Flowers, too, are a common item at a funeral. Then a Cherokee person is buried in the ground, justifying the dream about fresh dirt. After a funeral, a careful watch is made so that most of the earth is used to cover the new grave. Dreaming of crowds substantiates the truth that many people gather at one's death. Then upon death, the normal procedure is to dress the deceased in new or clean clothes. Hearing wailing or moaning sounds further extends the belief these are the sounds that will soon be heard. Seeing lights in a graveyard further denoted that activity will be taking place in that location. In more recent times, many funerals have taken place in the church. The use of church bells and hearing piano music at church without the assistance of anyone adds to the belief in these forecasts.

Seeing, feeling, and talking about one's state of mind further enhances the destiny of Heaven or Hell.

Of special interest is the strong belief in trains, buses, and airplanes as dreams of death. These are not aboriginal but are new introductions to the Cherokee (King and King, 1976: 58). Their association with death warnings may refer to the mode of transportation used during a funeral.

Water has always had a symbolic significance to the Cherokee. To the Cherokee it was called "Long Man" or "Long Snake." The Cherokee went to water to insure long life. This ritual occurred so that the participants faced upstream toward the rising sun (Hudson, 1976: 173). In juxtaposition, we can see the importance of death being associated with downstream and muddy water.

Referring to birds, one can understand the raven being associated with death. The black color of this bird symbolizes death. Traditionally, many birds were of specific symbolic value in the Southeast. Several bird motifs are found depicting the ceremonial system. One informant related a story about a raven that always perched near his house. Every evening it appeared in the same place. One evening he took a good look at it and noticed its eyes were a flashing red. Shortly after this incident, someone in the family died. Other birds that are very important to the concepts of death include the owl and whippoorwill. Their association with death can be determined by the type of cry each one makes. The rooster and hen are fairly new introductions to the native inhabitants of North America. Their behavior during the time of death can account for this inclusion in the death warnings.

Of the quadrupeds, the dog was very important. Skeletons of dogs have been found in the Southeast since the Archaic Period. Large dogs were discovered at the Eva site in Tennessee (Hudson, 1976: 47). The dog is also found in oral traditions of the Cherokee (Hudson, 1976: 153). The use of the dog in medicinal formulas is also recorded (Hudson, 1976: 34). The same medicine given to make a person a witch was given to dogs to assure a sure tracker (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 30).

The fox as a death omen goes back to John Howard Payne. It does not exist in any special symbolism in the oral tradition. Possibly, the scarcity of seeing and hearing a fox adds to the depth of the warning.

Serpent symbolism was an important element in the belief system of the Southeastern Indians (Hudson, 1976: 64). Symbolic motifs of serpents have been found at prehistoric archaeological sites. The importance of the snake must be a very traditional idea. John Howard Payne mentions the Uktena also. Several legends are recorded enhancing their supernatural abilities. The feeling toward snakes was one of fear and reverence.

Unexplained phenomena such as seeing a ball of fire or ghostly white apparitions are known in all cultures. The ball of fire concept is very common to the majority of the Cherokee. Almost immediately, the majority of the Cherokee state that it is a favorite form of a witch during metamorphosis.

Spiritual beings, the Little People, have been very important in the Cherokee culture. The Nayehi, those beings that lives in bluffs or in high mountains, were mentioned by Payne in the early 1800s. Many oral traditions about Little People that have been passed from generations also exist.

The natural environment has been held in high esteem by North American Indians. The belief in the balance of nature has been illustrated many times. Some trees, possibly due to the physical appearance and name such as the weeping willow, very easily could be associated with death. Other trees such as the cedar, pine, spruce, holly, and laurel are identified with the living as a gift for staying awake during a seven day fast (Mooney, 1972: 239-240).

The Southeastern Indians believed in a balanced opposition (Hudson, 1976: 156). Possibly, dreaming of good brought about bad results and vice versa. Or, as one informant stated before his friend's death, "It was the last time I saw him happy and it's all for me to know that he was alright."

An analogy about noises in the house is puzzling. Some Cherokee jokingly said the cracking of the house resembled the cracking and drying of bones. Water circling a house could foretell the house being washed away to show the loss of a person.

The loss of personal items could, of course, revert to the idea that a vacuum is created upon death.

In retrospect, the author feels that the traditional concepts of death are as follows: big crowds, fresh dirt, dirt left over, water, someone happy, dead person, raven, dog, light at a graveyard, and a ball of fire. These concepts are found in many oral traditions which have existed for many years. Of course, we cannot really prove they are of Cherokee origin. Many of these may still be borrowings from the settler's ideology and other Southeastern tribes. To the Cherokee today, the believers of these death warnings discussed these beliefs and said they should not be taken too lightly.

CHAPTER III

PRE-BURIAL ACTIVITIES

According to an 18th century observer, the Cherokee made no preparation of the dead and the bodies were thrown into the river and seldom buried (Timberlake, 1927: 91). The accuracy of this statement is challenged by the archaeological record. Excavations at each of the Overhill towns visited by Timberlake in 1762 have yielded historic inhumations.

At the time of Timberlake's visit in 1762, Citico was one of the largest towns in the Overhill area. He gives the population of the town as 204 men which made a total population of 600-800 people. The small representation of 18th century Cherokee burials in the 1967-68 excavation may be accounted for by several factors. First, it is assumed that the settlements of the earlier Dallas Period were much more compact than those of the 18th century Cherokee. The excavations at Citico in 1967-68 centered around the townhouse area completely within the palisade wall built in the immediate prehistoric period. Timberlake's map shows Cherokee houses at Citico in 1762 on both sides of Citico Creek and dispersed beyond the fortifications of the Dallas site (King, 1981: personal communication).

More recent excavations have yielded evidence of Cherokee occupation outside the area occupied in prehistoric times (Newman, 1978: personal communication). Olinger (1969: 36) offers another explanation. He believes the Cherokee burials were interred later than the Dallas,

therefore their interments may not have been as deep and may have been more susceptible to natural erosion and cultivation. Unfortunately, the entire burial area was not excavated. The remaining burials may have been scattered over a much larger area as the Cherokee did not have a very compact settlement pattern (Gilbert, 1943: 316).

The most common Cherokee burials at Citico were found in oval pits. Twenty-three examples of the thirty-four identifiable Cherokee burials used this type of burial pit. A very important archaeological discovery was evidence for previously unknown preparations for the eighteenth century burials. Several pits had linings and/or coverings of wood, bark, moss, hides, stone, and other organic and inorganic material (Olinger, 1969: 39-40). However, among the Cherokee burials only three had a possible vegetal floor lining which seemed to envelop the skeletal remains like a shroud. The type of material used could not be determined in the field. Only one Cherokee burial had another preparatory treatment which appeared to have been a bark covering rather than a shroud (Olinger, 1969: 42).

To substantiate the possible use of linings or coverings, Will West Long felt it very important that the coffin be covered with a black cloth. Will's knowledge included information about a shroud being made from Apocynum cord. Witthoft suggests this was very similar to the death clothes of the Longhouse Iroquois. These clothes were costumes prepared in early adulthood and stored. These were of aboriginal tailoring (sash, breech clout, leggings, etc.), sombre with no decoration of any sort although they were usually made of commercial cloth (wool duffle) (Witthoft, n.d.: 2).

James Adair (1775: 180-181) reflecting Hebrew ideology noted the "gathering of the bones." During one of his visits, he saw Indians returning with wrapped bones in white deerskin and these remains being mourned. Articles were also included in the grave for the afterlife. He noticed that if a person died at the home, the corpse was washed and anointed, and taken outside for fear of pollution. The body was then placed in a sitting position westward with the grave goods. As most of Adair's writings are particularly of the Chikkasah (Chickasaw), it is questionable whether this reflects the same customs of all South-eastern tribes (Adair, 1775: 187). Later he states the Cherokee did not practice "bone gathering." His explanation was that the Cherokee were more intelligent than the other English-American Indians in their religious rites. The Cherokees were known to heap up stones as monuments for the dead (Adair, 1775: 180, 185).

During Mooney's and Olbrechts' (1932: 134) research, as soon as a person breathed his last, usually a male member of the family forced the legs to a straight position and placed the hands over the stomach one on top of the other. The female relatives closed the eyes and tied a white kerchief around the face and under the chin to keep the jaw from dropping. The body was then washed by members of the same sex but not by relatives. The deceased was dressed in his/her best clothes. Relatives or people of the community gave the deceased valued clothes, new hats, shoes, silver, or trinkets which were the objects one liked to dress the corpse in. A woman was usually given a favorite cup or saucer. Personal property such as a golden cross

was included. No food was put into the coffin with the exception of salt with both sexes. This custom was unexplainable at that time. Today salt is used by the singers for clearing up their throats (Parris, 1980: personal communication). Originally, salt may have been used for the prevention of decaying flesh. A bottle of milk was included with small children. If a woman happened to die in childbirth, the infant was placed in the right arm of the woman.

Once the body was prepared, it was not placed in the coffin until two or three hours before burial. The corpse was laid on slanting wooden boards. A sheet covered the body. When one wanted to view the body, the sheet was thrown back from the face which was viewed for a few minutes. Gilbert in the 1930s observed the same body preparation as described in the Swimmer Manuscript.

In the 1960s, anthropologist John Gulick observed that morticians were fully responsible for the preparation of the body for interment. The only preparations by the Cherokee were grave digging and carrying the coffin to the graveyard.

The mutual or "poor aid" society or "Gadugi" was very important to the Cherokee community. Once a year the people gathered at the graveyard to choose a chief undertaker, a secretary, gravedigger, coffin maker, and two warners or messengers who notified the members of approaching work. The assembly of people cooperated to clean the graveyard of weeds and straighten the tombstones. After a death, this gravedigging company was notified and the chief undertaker gave notice to assemble and dig the grave. The gravediggers consisted of

six volunteers who served for one year terms. The coffin was then fabricated by the coffin maker and his two assistants (Gilbert, 1943: 213). The corpse was then placed inside the coffin and after viewing was taken to the cemetery. An ordinary Christian burial service was held at the house of the deceased (Gilbert, 1943: 256-257).

Between 1928-31 the same observations were made by Mooney and Olbrechts (1932: 136). The coffin was constructed by the foreman and the company of volunteers who were elected for one year. The coffin at that time was covered with black cloth nailed to the boards. However, the role of the coffin maker was becoming obsolete.

In reviewing local tribal resolutions passed by the Cherokee Tribal Council, the need for a coffin maker was still apparent in the 1930s. A resolution was passed in 1931 to pay J. A. Saunooke for coffin fixtures. Then on October 23, 1936 the Business Committee decided that a supply of lumber be kept on hand both at Cherokee and at Snowbird communities. The people encountered a lot of difficulty obtaining the coffin lumber when it was needed (Resolution 31).

In Resolution 30 (1948), an appropriation of \$125 was made for the funeral of Judas Wesley who died in jail. This payment was made to Moody's Funeral Home in Sylva, North Carolina. The use of an undertaking establishment becomes more evident in Resolution 35 (1948). At first, payment for burials were made only to "indigent" Cherokees. The contracting seems to have started in 1948. However, there is a tendency to believe the use of an undertaking business began a few years earlier. According to Resolution 35, \$1,000 was appropriated

for the indigent members. The provisions also provided for persons aged 65 and older who could not afford to pay their funeral bills. Also, anyone having any type of insurance would not benefit from this resolution. Inferences are made to the effect that the Cherokee people did buy insurance and used an undertaking business at this time.

Resolution 300 was passed which stated that \$250 would be allocated per person for burial expenses, and Moody's Funeral Home would provide services for only the old and needy. Then Resolution 337 was passed for Alfred K. Walkingstick, an enrolled member of the Eastern Band to sell burial insurance from Allied Security Insurance Company. Assistance for the indigent families continued. In Resolution 350, payments were made to the Allied Security Insurance Company for 17 indigent families. The total premium came to a \$392.23 per year which was paid out of the Welfare Miscellaneous.

The beginning use of the modern funeral home seems to signal the end of the important role of the poor aid society. The poor aid society or "Gadugi" was an important economic and reciprocal institution. This was a communal organization of men who "tilled the fields, erected private and public buildings, and helped neighboring towns frequently" (Fogelson and Kutsche, 1961: 96). This autonomous self-sufficient unit also included a grave diggers' foreman, a carpenters' foreman, four female cooks, overseers, warners for advance notification of work days, a communal treasury, and aid to the poor, aged, and misfortunate. At the turn of the century the Gadugi began to hire out their services to white farmers. Funds received were placed in the communal

treasury (Fogelson and Kutsche, 1961: 96,97,104,108). Gilbert (1943: 362) reported, the hiring out of the Gadugi:

. . . led to a dependence on white people for wages and subsistence instead of a reliance on their unaided cultivation of the soil by mutual aid. Consequently the gadugi came under the North Carolina regulations as to corporations and became subject to taxation. Unable to meet the taxes from their earnings the gadugi soon declined and most disappeared in the opening years of the twentieth century.

With the decline of the Gadugi, the preparation of the body was relegated to Moody's Funeral Home around the 1940s (Resolution 30). One is located in Sylva, North Carolina and the other in Bryson City, North Carolina. The residents of Jackson and Swain counties can decide which funeral home will prepare the body. These two funeral homes belong to the same family. Since that time, all funeral arrangements are negotiated through that establishment.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAKE AND FUNERAL

The wake is an all night watch over the body of a dead person before burial (Pei, 1972: 1116). The funeral is described as the service immediately before burial (Parris, 1980: personal communication). The graveside service includes the parting words directed to the family and is shorter than the funeral service. The Cherokee wake begins as soon as the deceased is brought to the designated church or home. Before the body is brought to the specified place, friends and relatives will have already assembled. Preparations for the wake include an overall cleaning of the home or church. A generalized description of the wake and funeral service at home follows.

The wake begins around 5 o'clock which coincides with the arrival of the hearse from Moody's Funeral Home. Several men assist the funeral directors in carrying the casket inside. It is placed in an accessible place close to a window and door. A dim fluorescent light is turned on above the casket. It is then opened halfway to show the upper torso. Several members of the community come in to view the body. They are very solemn. Some of the people cry softly while viewing the body. The members of the family then go to the casket. Extreme emotional displays are directly dependent upon the closeness of the mourner to the deceased. Members of the community console the members of the family by conversation filled with religious metaphors and euphemisms, which include "He is okay now, he's with

God, he's better off than you and I are, he looks like he is sleeping, and he's in Heaven now, he won't be hurting anymore." As more people arrive they begin to sit around, especially on the porch and speak in solemn tones. Some mourners bring flowers and/or food. Conversations usually begin with everyday activities and eventually lead to the deceased. As night approaches more people arrive. There are about fifty people now and the flowers are very numerous. The preacher stands to start the service.

The wake (sit-up) begins with a prayer of consolation to the surviving family members. The singing begins with "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder." The preaching then starts . . . ultimately leading to the subject of Resurrection. A call for rededication of life is made so the living can be prepared for death. After the service, group singing begins with trios, quartets, and church groups all taking their turns. Around 9:45, a coffee break is called. Coffee, cakes, doughnuts, pies, and sandwiches all donated by the community are offered on the kitchen table. The singing continues. Around 11:30 the large crowd begins to dwindle. Only a few people are left. Four are in the kitchen, three sit in the living room, five visit on the porch, and five men gather around the fire. Five of the people form a nucleus in the house and begin to sing songs. Light laughter and joking is carried on. Some people are dozing in their chairs. Small children are put to bed. Family members retire for the night. Some of them have already isolated themselves earlier. Around 3 o'clock only two people are awake in the house. Outside two men keep talking and continually build the fire. The lights are kept on in the house all night long.

Beginning at 6 o'clock the next morning a lady begins to make preparations for breakfast. She cooks whatever is available. Chicken, eggs, sausage, biscuit bread, oatmeal, and coffee along with orange juice are served. The breakfast dishes are washed and the house is swept and cleaned. More people begin to arrive around 9 o'clock. By 10 o'clock there are many people gathered for the funeral service. Many of them view the body as they come to the house. At 11 o'clock the service begins with singing, followed by a prayer for the family members. A eulogy is then given. The preaching begins with a verse from the Bible. Again the subject of Resurrection is mentioned. After the funeral service, the people get up to view the body for the last time. The family members go first. They all gather around the casket. Some cry softly, while others mourn loudly. One family member does not want to leave the casket and has to be assisted to a chair. The male members cry softly and go outside. The female members continue to cry loudly. Other members of the congregation line up to view the body. Many of them cry openly. Then they go outside. Once everyone has viewed the body, the casket is closed and sealed by the funeral home directors. The memory book is closed and given to a family member. Members of the congregation gather the flowers and put them in different cars and in the hearse. A procession is lining up with the local police as the lead car. The family cars line up behind the hearse.

Once at the graveyard, four male members of the congregation await the arrival of the hearse to carry the casket to the grave site. The casket is placed above the grave on steel beams. The people gather

around the grave. A short scripture reading is given following the prayer. The minister than thanks the people for the family for their assistance during their bereavement. After this he shakes hands with the family members. The funeral directors then lower the casket into the grave. One of them places the first shovel of dirt on the casket. Other male members of the congregation start assisting randomly. These six men shovel dirt for about five minutes and other men step up to take their places. This goes on until the grave is completely filled. The funeral director then places the flowers on the grave. Today there are more than enough flowers. Some of them are placed on nearby graves. The family group stays until everything is taken care of. The other people begin to leave. When everyone is gone, the tent covering the grave is taken down. The family then goes to the house where the funeral service was held.

Around 1950-1960 a burial song was sung while the grave was being filled (Parris, 1980: personal communication). The song is of Christian influence and the song translates as follows:

Funeral Hymn

The Lord speaks
and I give up
All my people
On earth to fall.

When all is risen
They will rise again
It will happen
The last day.

Where God is sitting
Several will come
And their work
Will be examined.

Those that believe
 Will be in Heaven with God
 Those who don't believe
 Will live in the bad place (Hell).

God teach me
 My life is too short
 I want to be ready
 When I die.

(Pale Moon, 1980: 51).

None of the earlier writers made any mention of this song.

Around the 1930s (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 135), during the wake the corpse was placed in a slanting position on wooden boards. A sheet covered the body. When anyone came to look at the corpse, the sheet was thrown back from the face. The person viewed the face, then went away without speaking. The body was kept in the house two to three days, due to government restrictions. In previous years, the body was kept up to seven days. During the wake, selective friends and neighbors took turns watching the body and singing while the others slept. This singing was an all night vigil (Hill, 1979: personal communication). At this time the meaning of the wake was lost. There was a faint idea it may have been held to prevent witches from "stealing the liver." The singing was completely of Christian origin. Whether traditional Cherokee laments were sung or not is undetermined.

Gilbert (1943: 256) reiterates the same customs observed by Olbrechts. Gulick (1960: 98) noted the funeral was for the survivors, and more of a positive value to those who survived. The funeral was the most important ritual to the Eastern Cherokees. It is very evident that the Cherokees were very acculturated. The funeral was very similar to the non-Indian funeral. Gilbert states that even among the most

conservative Cherokees, it was the type of Christian funeral introduced by the white frontiersmen. Not one hint is given by Gulick of any traditional traces of the wake.

Currently, the traditional reason for the wake is not known. The answer given for it was "the deceased should not be left alone." For many people a well-planned wake consisted of several people staying awake all through the night, having enough food, a well-attended wake, several flowers, and many singers. Many discussions were held about the ill-planned wake. Several wakes were held without any food, except coffee and doughnuts. The explanation given for this was the community no longer had much respect for the dead or that the family members responsible for the activities did not plan for the wake and thus did not care. Traditionally, it is believed the wake was to prevent liver loss, which is dealt with in Chapter V.

One of the important vestiges that has survived through the years is the use of the fire. Fire was the "most active and efficient agent." When a favor was needed, it was accompanied by an offering (Payne, 1835: Vol. I: 20-21). Corkran (1955: 37-38) concludes that the relationship of the fire priests to the Creator appears to stem from Cherokee observances much older than Sun worship and the undying fire with its shamans and rituals which form the ancient center of Cherokee faith. From it developed the concept of Divine Fire as represented in temple fires and in the person of the fire priest. As a result fire and water, present day and night, winter and summer, and maintaining life without the sun's help were superior objects of devotion (Corkran, 1956: 28).

The reverence for fire is recorded in two eighteenth century manuscripts. The earliest account was of Alexander Longe's observations from 1711-1725 among the Overhill. He wrote about a Cherokee temple or townhouse which had a round hearth in the middle of the structure, containing a fire which never went out. The temple fire had a character unlike the common fire, as no one was allowed to take any of it from one building. Upon lighting his pipe in the temple and leaving, one of the Indians snatched it from him and emptied it before returning it to him (Corkran, 1953: 22).

Longe (Corkran, 1953: 22) stated:

. . . the priest had given orders to take the pipe out of my mouth and put out the fire and delivered me the pipe again and prayed me not to be angry for they dreaded letting the fire that belonged to the temple . . . to be kared abrod like common fire and that the grāt god did nott permit to karrie aneything that was sett aparte for him abrod and be mixed with common fire.

The ashes of the fire were considered as sacred as the fire itself. Longe (Corkran, 1953: 23) related:

. . . they will not suffer the ashes that's taken off the altar to be kared out the temple only once a year and then the prest ofers meate oferings mead by firs and those that is apoynted to karrie out the ashes must fast and drink physic two days and ther is a place apoynted close by the temple to put the ashes.

In January 1759 William Richardson wrote: "At Chotte they had a great dance tonight, which I took for some religious ceremony paid to the fire as they frequently bowed to it" (Corkran, 1953: 21-22). Customarily, there was a correlation of the fire, magical strength, and knowledge and vigilance of the Cherokee conjuror with the wake. The idealogy was that witches attempted to steal the liver soul the

first night after death. Therefore, the conjuror kept his solitary vigil before the fire placed in the room with the corpse (Witthoft, n.d.: 5).

Will West Long believed the fire was of utmost importance to the conjuror. In keeping his vigilance, he would recite chants or formulas which invoked the aid of the fire symbolizing an old woman. The conjuror kept the fire built up wanting to feel the presence of a witch and listened to hear the "Raven Mockers." Periodically, raking the coals and ashes from the hearth, he formed a small rectangle with raised ridges for walls representing a sacred enclosure as a square ground, house, or yard. Pinches of tobacco were dropped into the center of the sacred enclosure. No hazard was seen if the tobacco burned evenly and quietly. If it flared, burst, and threw out sparks a witch was approaching in the direction of the sparks. As a witch was about to make an entrance he burned the tobacco in the fire, singing formulas which enabled the fire to kill the witch. The conjuror may see or hear the cries of fighting rival witches for rights to the corpse for its soul (Witthoft, n.d.: 10). This tobacco was also used when an illness occurred. "Tsoła akayv:li" was laid on the ground. If the tobacco moved around like a snake, a Raven Mocker was around (Parris, 1980: personal communication).

Witches did not appear in the disguise of owls, hawks, or other birds to Will West Long, and he claimed it was superstition. Runningwolf, an associate of Will's, insisted they came as owls and hawks. He had killed a witch in the disguise of a hawk by magic and gunshot. Molly Sequoyah Runningwolf, wife of Will's associate, mentioned both

claims. She did not believe owls were "witches" and doubted any birds were (Witthoft, n.d.: 10).

The importance of the fire was greatly revered by Will. The fire on the hearth had consciousness, emotions, and had a life of her own. She was an important member of the family and household. Proper treatment of the fire was essential to the well being of the family. Proper treatment of the hearth contributed to the health, strength, and magical powers of an old woman. During the Green Corn ceremony, putting out the fire on the last day and starting the ritual, new fire was of extreme importance (Lewis and Kneberg, 1954: 54). The proper sharing of the meals by burnt offerings to the fire played an important role. Once the rituals were conducted well, the old woman was strong and vigorous and protected the family from the witch attacks and other ills. If the needs of the fire were neglected and proper rituals forgotten, the health and strength of the female symbol declined. Her efforts to protect the family began to falter and wither. Witches could snatch a bit of liver substance. Thus, illness occurred. The fire, being a woman of good intentions once danger appeared, took on the disguise of an owl and hovered around the house at night, screeching to warn the household of their demise (Witthoft, n.d.: 11).

In this situation, a conjuror was elicited to discover the faults and correct them with ritual means to strengthen the fire, and to attack the witches. The conjuror was paid with white cloth along with monetary gifts and other presents if one should agree (Witthoft, n.d.: 11).

Objections toward shooting an owl were very strong with Will. His analogy was, "People confuse friends with their enemies" (Witthoft, n.d.: 11). Modern ills and witchcraft had happened because people neglected the important rituals and proper use of fire.

Today, the analogy of hearing an owl is similar to Will's idea. Some Cherokees believe there are two types of owls. One is a bird, and the other is called "u:tselvhi," meaning a person in the guise of an owl. Many people believe owls are only out for the night. However, the more traditional believers say the owl is a "bad omen." Many stories are told of an owl shot down and a particular person's death resulting from a gunshot wound (even if the person was bedridden).

CHAPTER V

THE MULTIPLE SOUL CONCEPT

The concept of soul is central to the religious ideology of both traditional and Christian Cherokees. Many Cherokee feel the center of the soul comes from the heart and there is only one soul (J. Cucumber, 1980: personal communication). Literally, "akwa:tanvthv" today refers to soul and heart. It also refers to the type of thinking and type of mind a person has.

The multiple soul concept which is common in aboriginal North America has all but disappeared among the Eastern Cherokees. Glimpses of this part of the traditional Cherokee belief system are revealed in information imparted by Will West Long, who was a very knowledgeable Cherokee traditionalist, to John Witthoft in the mid 1940s. According to Will, the Cherokee had a multiple soul concept involving four souls and four stages of death. The existence of these souls lasted for a year (Witthoft, n.d.: 2). These four souls were referred to as "askina" by Will West Long. "Askina" is a rare and obsolete root word. To the northern Iroquoian speakers, it means "the soul of the bones" and was also used as a term for the substance of deer antler. Witthoft feels that "askina" is not imaginary as it is found in early and modern ritual texts of the Mohawk, Huron, and Cayuga. No morpho-phonemic change has occurred in the dialects or languages. He firmly believes it is a "frozen" ritual term from Old Iroquoian (Witthoft, n.d.: 3).

In the 1800s the integration of the English language into the Cherokee language occurred. The word "askina" was used in the Cherokee New Testament in a very different context. Witthoft (n.d.: 4) argues that the translators under the supervision of Elias Boudinot made an error in his translation. "Askina" in the Cherokee Phoenix is used for "devil" or "evil" and that the Cherokee language did not have a primary root word or any root word for "devil" or "evil." Possibly from that time on the Cherokee word "askina" was used as an extension to mean "evil." We have to consider that the New Testament was translated a hundred years ago. The use of traditional concepts was being broken down at that time. Today the Cherokee word for "bad" or "evil" is "u:yo." Currently, the statement "askina natv:ne" is used at minimum "to do evil." The word "askina" is also seldom used. Further references can be made to mean "devil" or "devilish ways." Perhaps the traditional total concept of "soul" is responsible. If "askina" was the traditional word for soul then it is also obsolete.

Of the four souls, once the animating soul left the body, all life processes ended, and the other souls also began to die (Witthoft, n.d.: 4).

Of the four souls, the first soul or "askina" of conscious life left the body in Heaven or Hell immediately after death, continuing it's personal life. The "askina" remained nearby for a period of time, seen as a ghost, who was harmless and powerless. Will West believed this soul eventually followed the "trail of Kanati" to the western land of the dead or to the "Darkening Land" (Mooney, 1972: 253). Will believed no one had any knowledge of that land

or situation (Witthoft, n.d.: 2). Other people during Will's time believed the soul went into the river and followed the river to a spring-head where it went down into an underworld.

The first soul was the soul that communicated with the loved ones until death rejoined them. A "ringing in the ears" was a sign that a deceased loved one, usually a mother, was calling to the living person to join the soul of the dead one. Will felt this was a sign of approaching old age (Witthoft, n.d.: 3). Ringing in the ears is a common euphemism of approaching death today. Generally, this must be the soul that comes back to the people today. When a loved one is missed tremendously today, the Cherokee say it is the spirit of the deceased calling to those left behind.

Location-wise this first soul or "askina" was located in the head under the front fontanelle. This soul was consciousness. It had personality, memory, continuity, was unitary and not quantitative in its essence. It also created or secreted the watery fluids of the head. When the conjuror pronounced his magical attacks on this soul, it was called "spoiling the saliva."

The term "spoiling the saliva" is rarely used in any present form. When a magic practitioner uses his powers on another person the term "U:hyo" is used meaning "he is doing bad/evil things." Balance of nature was very evident in that animals as well as humans had souls. "Askina of ants" was responsible for kidney disease. Possession of a different soul, namely animal souls, caused devilish behavior meaning demonical possession. Mooney and Olbrechts (1932: 17) do mention the first soul of an animal was "askina."

The second soul, that of physiological life, was located in the liver. It was of primary importance in doctoring and in conjuring. This soul was a substance. It had no individuality and was quantitative, meaning there was more or less of it. This secreted yellow and black bile, gastric juice, etc. The destruction of the liver substance produced lassitude, the "yellow" (jaundice or hepatitis or cirrhosis), or the "black" (deep depression or gall bladder attacks or acute pancreatitis). The depletion of the liver substance (absence of the soul) produced physiological deaths. This soul could be attacked by a conjuror by diseases of "yellows" or "black," reproducing the systems of witch attack. The soul could be consumed by witches to produce the standard diseases of the liver, gall bladder, and pancreas. In this manner, the witch extended its lifeform by extra supplies of liver-souls (Witthoft, n.d.: 4).

This liver soul was gradually diffused back to nature as a life force. It took a week for all of it to disappear from the body providing it was a normal death. Providing it was not a liver-soul loss death, the soul continued for a week and was available as a resource for extended life. With each day after death, the soul resource dwindled and was less tempting to the witch. The greatest danger was the first night after death and less danger after the first night after burial. Much less fear for soul loss occurred the second night after burial. Loss of the liver soul to witches did not do any damage to the first soul of the deceased or to the living community. Use of the liver soul loss by witchcraft means was

viewed as a desecration of the corpse. Attempts by the witches gave the conjuror an opportunity to kill the witch, thus eliminating one who was dangerous in other contexts (Witthoft, n.d.: 5).

The witch attacks for the liver were expected at night just prior to death, during the first night after death and soon after burial. Therefore, the conjuror kept his vigil at the expected time of attack. The strength or health of the victims were the defenses or obstacles to be successful against attacks. If alive, the strength and magical power, vigilance and knowledge of the conjuror were upheld. The more powerful witches made their attempts to steal the liver-soul the first night after death and the first night after burial. Only the feeble, incapable, desperate witches were tempted by the small residues six days after death. The great crises and the great magical conflicts came the night after death, with the conjuror keeping his solitary vigil before the fire in the room with the corpse (Witthoft, n.d.: 5).

The circulation soul located in the heart was the third soul and blood was its secretion. It was a non-individual soul and was quantitative. It took a month for it to die, its' substance gradually diffusing back into nature as a life force. It was of no use to witches or conjurors after death. The living, however, could be attacked by magic through the blood soul in methods of "blood sucking" producing the anemic disease (Witthoft, n.d.: 5).

The fourth soul was located in the bones. After a year, its essence gradually diffused to nature. The bone soul contributed to

the growth of crystals in the ground, especially quartz crystals used in the divination and conjuring (Witthoft, n.d.: 6). Witthoft did not allude that any conjuror had knowledge against the soul of bones.

Another oral tradition exists to explain the origin of quartz crystals. A witch named Spearfinger was responsible for the crystal and is accounted for in the following manner:

Long ago lived an old woman named Spearfinger. She was different from other people. She lived close to a Cherokee village. As men, women, and children went by she would stick them with her long finger which was very sharp. With her sharp finger, she was taking their liver out and eating it. If she couldn't reach them she would call to them, "come here awhile let me kill the lice on your head." For sure she was not killing them. Actually, the Cherokee people were being killed. This went on for several months. The people became antagonized as their number decreased. In time, Spearfinger had killed several women and children and many hunters. They tried all kinds of solutions to trap her. Finally, when they had almost given up they trapped her. They fired upon her with guns. "Lots of gnats," she was saying as they caught her. They tied her up and put her into a hole. Spearfinger was ignited. While she was burning she said, "You should be learning medicine." As it burned and popped, it made a whistling sound and the saying were the formulas for doctoring.

The fire kept burning and finally the Cherokee people felt that she was burned to ashes. When they scattered the ashes, they found a small solid shining crystal. They decided to call it "ulv sha thi." As a medicine man picked up the crystal it fell into seven pieces of divining crystals. For this reason, only the people who know how to use this crystal have one today (King, 1975: 121-143).

The time a living person spent caring for the grave was very important to the Cherokees. Will West explained that a grave was tended and weeded for a year, but was neglected and forgotten after that. After twelve months, there was nothing of significance left in the grave. The mourning process also ended a year after death. This was

primarily due to the process separating the dead from the living when it was completed (Witthoft, n.d.: 4). Witthoft seems to think that the basic four-soul system was much more widespread than just among the Cherokee. However, the recorded data is too sparse and incomplete for comparisons.

As the soul and mind are synonymous to the Cherokee, the soul has its' seat in our heart and the heart sends our mind out (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 141). During Mooney and Olbrechts' research they found the soul did not leave the body during sleep or dreams. Sickness was not caused as despondency was caused by an enemy working against the soul. This did not mean instant death. One could live without a soul for a while and pine away if it was not counteracted.

Mooney and Olbrechts discuss only one soul and not four souls. They could not trace the origin of the soul. Upon death, the soul left the body and traveled for seven days to the ghost country (tsu'sgin'a), in the Night Land (u'sv'hi:yi) in the west. Their informants even at that time were not sure if the soul returned at all. If it did return, people became ill, sick, and they came to show the way to the ghost country. In the Night land, life was exactly the same. The existence of the ghost country was related in the following experience:

About 37 years ago T. became very ill and the people felt he was going to die and they gathered around his bedside. He became unconscious and did not breathe for an hour. T. felt as if he got up from his bed and walked along a path leading to a meadow. Along the meadow, he saw a building; he entered, and found it filled with children. He had to walk through the first three buildings before he saw the chief. At the fourth building the door was locked and he had

to ask for admittance. Once inside there was an old white man with a very long beard sitting at a desk. This man had a big account book and a pen and began to write T.s name in the book. However, he thought again and said, "I think you had better go back home again. You will come back here again in 33 days from now; then you will come to stay, and then we will write your name in the book." The old man then gave T. a small disk-like object for finding his way home. T. felt himself drop through a trapdoor at a terrific speed and soon landed on the mountain top close to home. He followed the disc and went into his cabin where his friends and relatives were gathered and stretched himself on the couch. When he opened his eyes he found everyone relieved as they had taken him to be dead (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 142-143).

Lewis and Kneberg (1954: 68) gathering information to be used in the construction of the Oconoluftee Indian Village also wrote that the Cherokee believed in an afterlife. Christian influence is reflected in the belief that the good went to a place where it was light and pleasant. The bad offenders would go to a place where they would be tortured. They contend that a soul lingered about a place where a body died for as long as he had lived there, and then went back to the place where the person had previously lived, and so on to each place, staying there as long as the body stayed, then took its final leave. A prayer was sung at bedtime:

Let my soul be in the first heaven, let my soul be in the second heaven, and so on to the seventh heaven.

The first heaven was supposed to be as high as the tops of the trees, the second as high as the clouds, until the seventh heaven, which was supposed to be the place where the Supreme Being resided.

Today many Cherokees feel that "something" or someone returns after death. Shortly after a death there is a belief that the deceased will in some form reappear if the right precautions and counteractions are not taken. The recapitulations of the dead include:

"coughing of the dead person"

"noises in the house related to the deceased"

"actual appearance of the dead person"

"footsteps of the dead"

"furniture being moved in what was once the deceased's room"

"the deceased actually making conversation with the living (usually to one member of the family)"

"doors opening without any help from any member of the family"

"deceased walking towards home in familiar attire using characteristic gestures"

Numerous other examples were given to illustrate the reappearance of the deceased. There is a definite division between the conservative Cherokee believers and non-adherents; the Cherokee people there were those who definitely felt some form of counter-action should be taken to alleviate the presence of the dead. Others felt that nothing should be done because "It was only _____." One explanation for not being afraid of the phenomena observed was "All my life I have lived in a house filled with love. _____ couldn't possibly do anything to hurt us." In this incident this family were strong believers of the Christian religion. In the teachings of the Christian beliefs many Cherokee people also believe that the soul or spirit of the dead does not return and that they are already destined for Heaven or Hell. The impersonations are those of evil spirits doing the work of Satan (J. Parris and J. Cucumber, 1980: personal communication). The modern day Cherokees also do not adhere to the concept of "soul" as ascribed by Will West Long. Many made reference that the Bible says we have only one soul, one heart, and one mind. The idea of the four souls was totally obscure to these people.

Like the Cherokees, some Appalachian whites from the Kentucky area also believe that a spirit does return, especially in the form of a ghost (Montell, 1975: 93-94). Another Appalachian idea is that the dead do not return. The following is an excerpt from Rabun Gap, Georgia:

The Bible teaches that the dead do not return and do not know anything. If one doesn't believe in the Bible, you just as well not believe in anything. The mediums that say they could talk to the dead, they're evil spirits (Wigginton, 1973: 326).

CHAPTER VI

BURIAL SITES

The most common 18th century Cherokee custom was to bury the corpse near or within their own dwelling. Some burials in or near townhouses suggest individuals of political prominence. There is also historical documentation of burials away from the village area.

In 1761, during the Grant Expedition against the Cherokees, the following account was given by Captain Christopher French (1977: 287-288):

Saturday 27th June

I cross'd the River with a party of 80 light Infantry & destroy'd about 100 acres of Indian Corn & burn'd five Houses. On our return we were shown a great Rock by the River side under which our Guide told us, a great Warrior was buried, sitting, with laced Cloaths on, & a conjuring Box by him. We had a Curiosity to see him, but when we had open'd the entrance the stench added to our hurry to return prevented our going any further. We return'd by the lower Ford which was extremely rapid & reach'd to the breast in some places.

This incident occurred at Stichowee which is about 20 miles from Cowhee.

Timberlake (1927: 90) in his report stated the Cherokee seldom bury their dead. Adair (1775: 133) also confirms the Cherokee reluctance to come in contact with a dead body and notes "the fear of pollution (not the want of natural affection, as the unskilled observe) keeps them from burying their dead."

Martin Schneider, traveling among the Overhill Cherokees from 1783 to 84, wrote:

Their dead they bury without Ceremony. If Poor People die, they burn them in their own House, viz. if it is bad & if the Wife will not stay in it. But with the Chiefs they have another method; they lay them in close Coffins of Reed & put them upon Props 10 Feet high & so let them stand, till all tumbles together of itself

(Williams, 1928: 261-262)

John Sevier in the 1780s noted the Cherokees were buried in the cellar of the Indian Cabins (Olinger, 1969: 104). Mooney and Olbrechts in the 1920s noticed that Cherokee burial sites were situated along the slopes of hills. The reason was mainly to prevent the soil and bodies from being washed away or swamped if they were placed in the lowlands. There was no preference for either the "dark or sunny" side of the mountain (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 136). Most graves were designated with a simple marker or were not marked at all. Many were associated with particular families and during Gulick's research only one cemetery adjoined a church. A Western Cherokee burial ground near Stillwater, Oklahoma dating around the 1880s was photographed. The graves were covered by small slot-side houses to give shelter for the spirits and protection (Cozzen, 1972: 8). This type of house was not known in Eastern Cherokee burials.

As acculturation began to occur, the Cherokees accepted non-Cherokee burial practices. Oconostota, a noted Cherokee leader visited Joseph Martin at Chota and requested that he be buried like the white people with his face toward the Long Knife, the name he called Virginia. At his death, Joseph Martin made a coffin out of a canoe and interred him according to his wish. Oconostota and two other burials in the vicinity of the Chota townhouse were interred in

extended positions (King and Olinger, 1972: 222-227). It has been suggested that these burials reflect the acculturation process taking place in the last quarter of the 18th century (King, 1981: personal communication). Although they perhaps represent the first Cherokee burials exhibiting Christian traditions, it is not known when the practice of flexed burials which were so common at Chota and other sites in the Little Tennessee Valley was discontinued. Today, the only Cherokee burial practice is the extended inhumation in a manufactured coffin.

Most people on the Qualla Boundary are buried in family cemeteries. Recently, there has been an increasing tendency for the establishment of more private family cemeteries. Many of these are near private residences within the confines of the family's possessory holding.

Many cemeteries were once extended family cemeteries and even included some non-relatives within the community. Originally, the community cemeteries were also located on private property. Following this tradition, these cemeteries are located on a hillside or on sloping terrain. The proper etiquette before burial is to ask the owner for the right to bury a certain person. If a Cherokee is married to a non-Indian or an Indian of a different tribe, it is permissible to bury them on the Qualla Boundary with permission of the owner.

Immediately after the Civil War, several families of blacks settled at the head of Goose Creek in the Birdtown Community. Around

1925, when that area of the community became part of the Qualla Boundary, the blacks left and moved to a neighboring area. The only remnants of that population is their cemetery. The only markers are rock slabs and many do not have any identifiable inscriptions at all (Owle, 1980: personal communication). The grave stones are very similar to those found in the early Cherokee cemeteries.

Cherokee cemeteries are no different than those of their surrounding white neighbors. Most have metal markers identifying the deceased. Several also have marble tombstones. Many of the cemeteries are taken care of while others are ignored until an additional interment takes place there. Some cemeteries have only one burial, while others have interred several families. As a result many cemeteries are known only by the names of persons buried there. Figure 1 shows the location of cemeteries in the Big Cove Community. Birdtown cemeteries are shown in Figure 2. Cherokee Community or Yellowhill Township is shown in Figure 3. The cemeteries of Bigwitch, Painttown, and Wrights Creek are located in Figure 4. Figure 5 shows the location of cemeteries in the Soco or Wolftown Community.

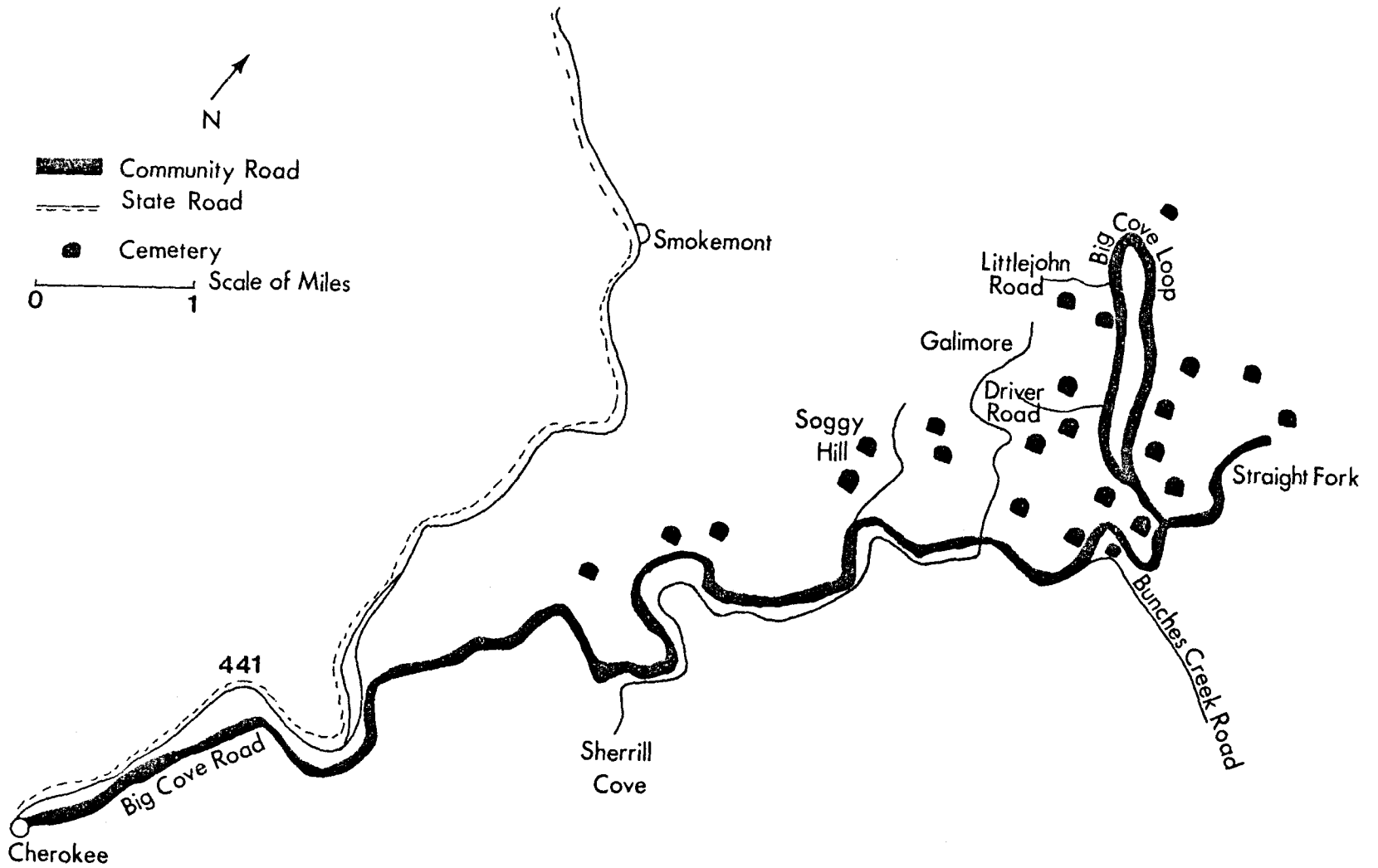


Figure 1. Map of Big Cove Cemetery Locations.

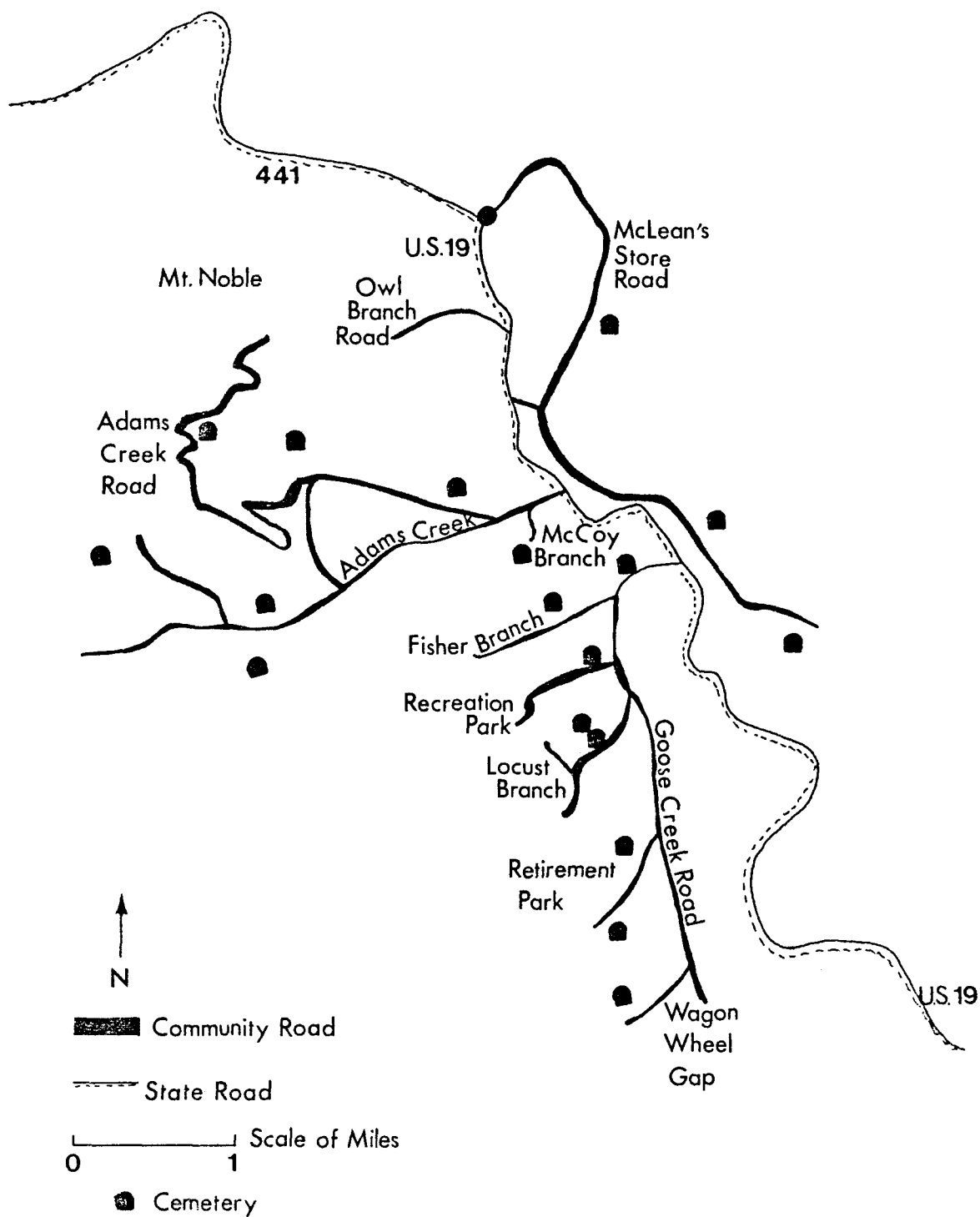


Figure 2. Map of Birdtown Cemetery Locations.

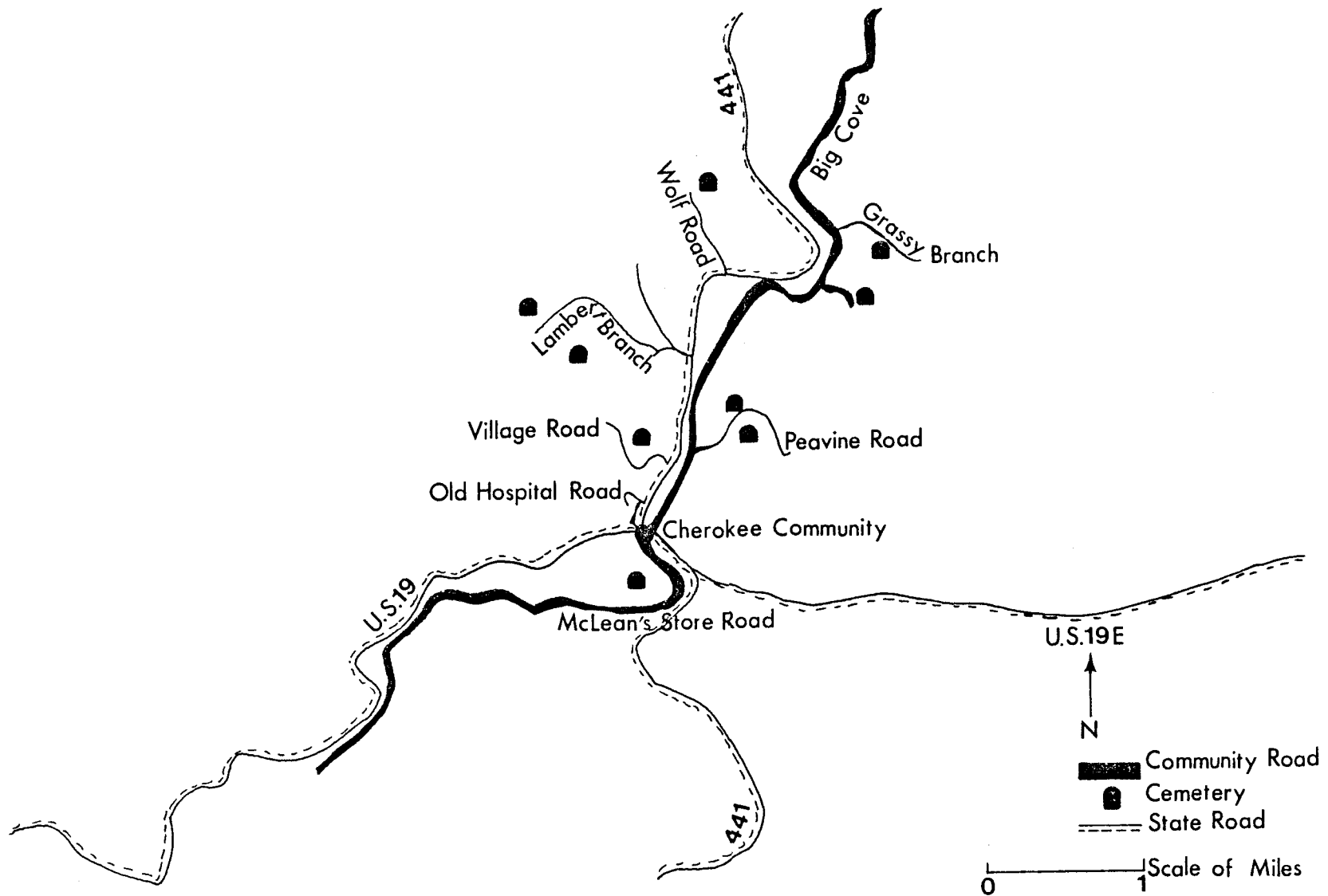


Figure 3. Map of Cherokee Cemetery Locations.

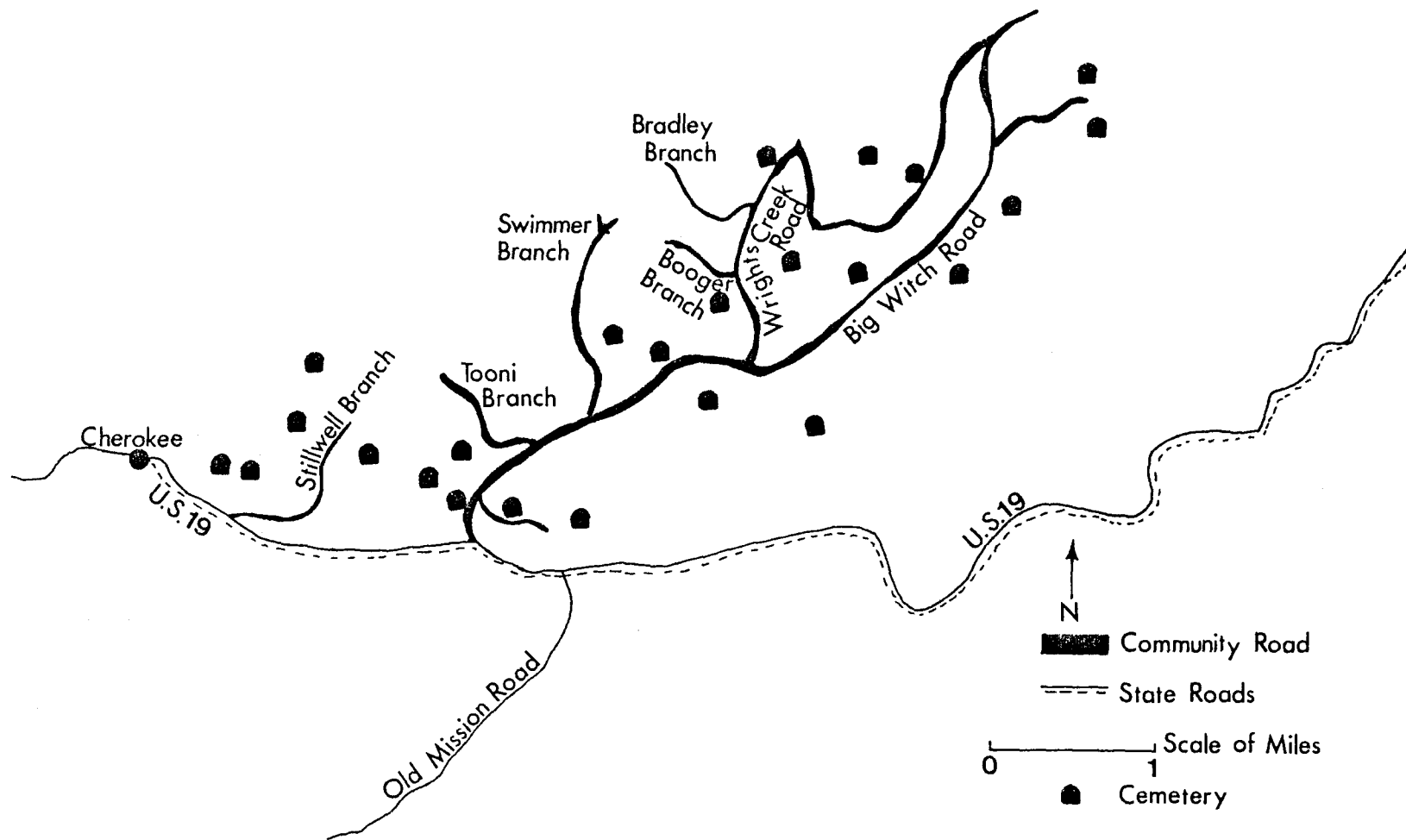


Figure 4. Map of Painttown, Wrights Creek and Big Witch Cemetery Locations.

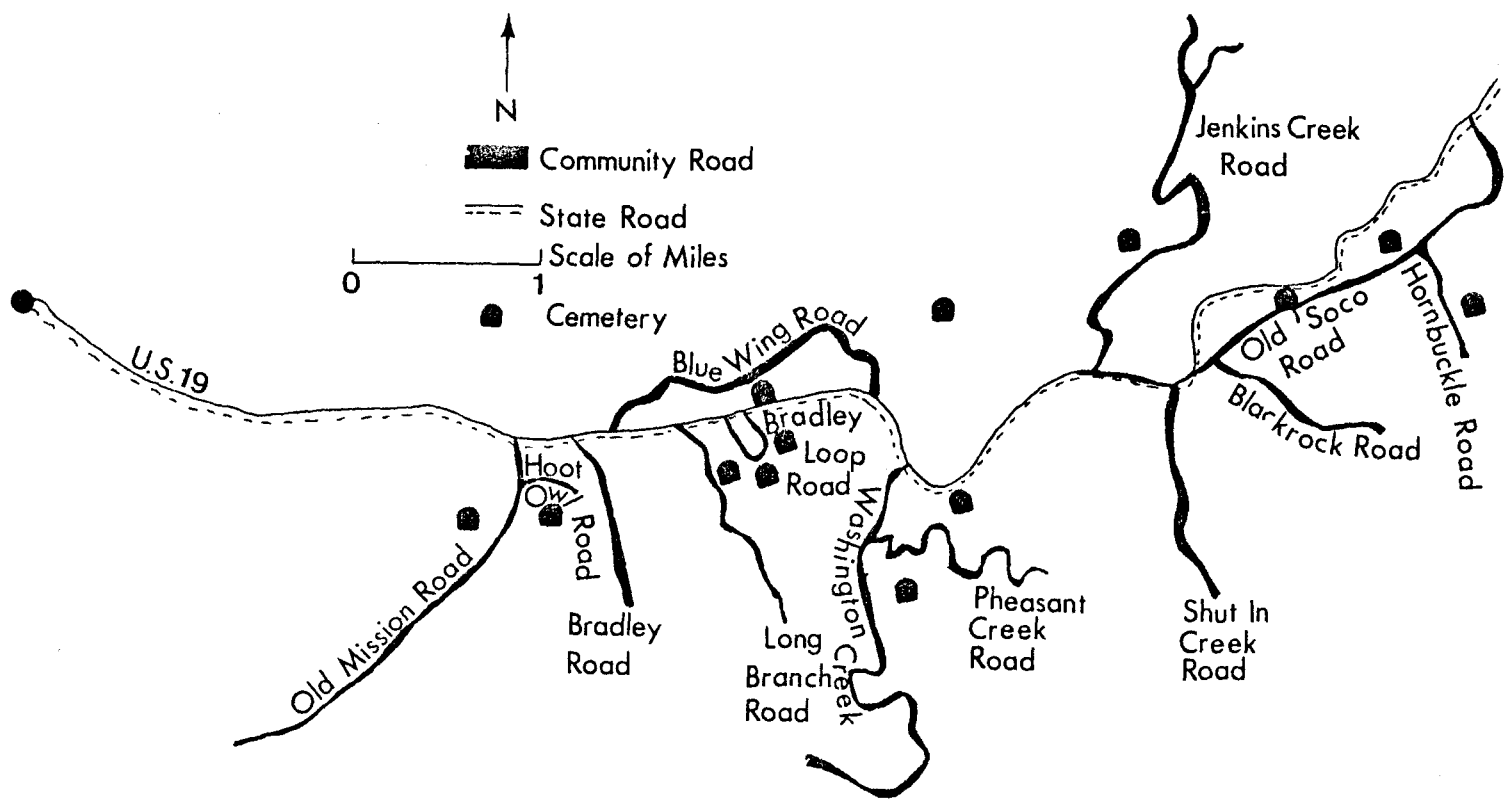


Figure 5. Map of Soco (Wolftown) Cemetery Locations.

CHAPTER VII

POST BURIAL ACTIVITIES

The diachotomy of purity and pollution is the central theme in the Cherokee belief system. Nowhere is this more evident than in the beliefs concerning death. Contact with the dead through preparation of the dead for burial or attending a funeral can cause spiritual contamination which is both harmful and contagious. A case in point involved an elderly couple in the Yellowhill Township who was visited by a woman who had recently attended a funeral. The head of the family was suffering from an illness which became noticeably worse after receiving the visitor. All members of the family blamed his condition upon the contagious pollution associated with the deceased. In discussing the incident, family members were unanimous in their decision that the woman should not have come to their house.

Purification rituals revolved around the "going to water" ceremony. Immediately after burial the nearest of kin went "to water" for purification. If the ritual was not performed immediately, it was performed the next day. For the ritual to be effective, it was repeated for four days. White cloth and beads were used as divinatory articles. The Indian Doctor chewed old tobacco "tso la akayvli." He sprayed the juice from his mouth onto the neck of the family members. The household members could not go out for four days, they could not visit other people's houses, and could not engage in any social functions. Essential domestic duties such as cutting firewood and

other subsistence activities were allowed. The added belief was that whatever the household members did, they would do for the rest of their lives. Attending only to necessities of life brought dutiful and reliable occupations, intelligent well-providing sons and husbands; the women alert and soliticious wives and mothers. If any were to go out and gossip or engage in unnecessary "phases of social life, one would be a ficklerake or a heedless hussy" (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 139).

A new fire was also started. The house was then smoked with pine branches, burned in a cooking vessel, which took away "all that was left of death and disease." Originally, every house in the settlement may have been smoked (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 139). Anyone who had taken part in the care of the deceased went through scrupulous purification rites (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 139).

The accounts by Payne in the 1800s illustrate a definite division between life and death. Once the burial was completed the man who buried the corpse entered the house alone and removed the dead person's articles and destroyed, buried, or burned them. The old fire ashes and wood were also removed and a new fire of cedar boughs and goldenrod weed was started. The family then took an emetic and went to a stream where they plunged in seven times, alternately facing east and west. The family then returned in separation being unclean for a period of four days. Later the community accepted them in the council house as a token of affection. As a minister plays the important role of comforting, the chief

priest often comforted mourners and feasted with them (Gilbert, 1943: 348).

Traditionally, a dance took place seven days after the burial. This final act was to reunite the bereaved family with the rest of the town. This dance speeded the spirit on its journey and diverted the attention of the sorrowing relatives. It was hoped the mourners would lift up their faces and laugh again. The plaguing spirit of death would then be cleansed from the minds of the mourners and they would not be in danger of dying (Gilbert, 1943: 348).

At that time (1932) a widow usually remained single for a long time. For ten months her hair grew loose without any particular care. Her appearance was very careless. The mourning period at times lasted for seven days. At times she was given to her brother-in-law or nearest relatives unless she was very opposed to that person (Gilbert, 1943: 348).

There was no visitation of graves. It was believed that witches haunted the new burial. Supposedly witches swooped down on the grave, exhumed the corpse, and ate its liver (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 139-140).

No winter provisions were touched for a period of four days. If they were not alone the provisions "would be exhausted in no time." Graveyards were cleaned and hoed once a year, usually in August because of the influence of the whites. This unhealthy work lasted for a period of three years only (Mooney and Olbrechts, 1932: 140).

Today, after a funeral some family member makes sure that no one is affected by the deceased through the ritual of "going to water." This can be achieved either by going to a riverside, a small branch, or one can get water from the creek and put it into a small container. The Indian doctor will use the water and his abilities to foresee any dangers that lie ahead for the immediate family. He can tell which of the family members will be affected most by the death. Usually, "he will sit the container of water (if inside the house) in front of him and look into what is happening." If there is some reason to show concern the head member of the family will be told. Then a series of "going to water" will be advised for the afflicted until the danger of being affected is cleared.

Purification by smoking the house is still practiced. Pine boughs are lit until adequate smoke is attained. Then the head of the family usually takes the boughs and goes into every room of the house and "smokes them." This counteracts the deceased from entering the house and "taking the life of one of the family members." This is probably a carry-over from counteracting dangers involved in a person's immediate future from a "tskili." If a family feels a "tskili" is endangering a Cherokee home the house is smoked for protective measures. For the most part this type of ceremonialism is initiated for the protection of the living from the dead. Several variations of smoking the house are found on the Qualla Boundary. The use of wild tobacco and pine boughs is the most prominent of the variations. Some say that the smoking should be done to all four

corners of the house. Others say that smoking the pine boughs has to be done in the center of the house, and letting the smoke rise up to the ceiling for a period of seven days. The use of pine as an evergreen signifies life. It received its longevity for enduring the task of staying awake for seven days. For doing so, pines are always green and the greatest for medicine (Mooney, 1972: 240). If there is continual harassment from the dead, there will be continual protection procedures for the living.

As death signifies the end of life, precautions are taken to observe this. After a funeral, one should not work in a garden where everything is growing. If one should do so, the living plants die (J. Smith, 1980: personal communication).

Many times a person continues to grieve for the deceased. For further prevention, one should take their hand and dig into the ground and obtain a handful of dirt. This should be mixed with water and drunk (F. Reed, 1979: personal communication).

Carrying a casket brings about tiredness to the arms. To counteract this, the burrow of the red crayfish is used. One should take the mud around the opening of the crayfish burrow and rub it on the muscles. This removes the tiredness and brings life back to the limbs. The red crayfish is considered to have important medicinal powers (King, 1977: 246).

CHAPTER VIII

PRESENT ESCHATOLOGY

When a natural death occurs at the Cherokee Indian Hospital, the doctor on duty can pronounce the person dead. Moody's Funeral Home is summoned to the hospital to pick up the body. The medical examiner in Bryson City or Sylva, North Carolina is then called to the funeral home to examine the body and to sign the death certificate. All of the doctors in Bryson City, Swain County, are medical examiners. Generally, the doctor on duty will perform this service (R. Sutton, 1979, P. Douthit, 1980: personal communication).

If a person dies at home and the person's condition was well-known so that it is determined a natural death, the body can then be moved. Usually, the Cherokee Rescue Squad is called for assistance. The funeral home is then notified. The funeral home usually picks up the body. In the case of any suspicious or traumatic situation where the cause of death is questionable, a medical examiner has the sole right to examine the body. The medical examiner has the right to order an autopsy. The closest pathologists to the Cherokee area are in Haywood, Macon, and Jackson counties, North Carolina. Generally, the one in Jackson County is utilized due to the close proximity. If a very special case is determined, then the body is referred to the medical examiner's office in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The funeral home is responsible for taking the body to the pathologist's office. In some cases, a family will request an autopsy. In such situations,

the family pays for the autopsy and transportation expenses (Douthit and Sutton, 1979: personal communication).

When an autopsy is performed for a Cherokee Indian, the Indian Health Service, namely the Cherokee Indian Hospital, pays for the service. At present the cost is approximately \$200 (Bradley, 1980: personal communication).

Once the hospital personnel have notified the funeral home of a death, the funeral directors prefer that family members stay at the hospital until the funeral director arrives to give consolation and advice. At this time, he sets up an appointment with the family, usually the next day, to plan for the services. At the funeral home the family then decides on the type of casket, clothes, service, and place of interment. Every enrolled member on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian Roll is entitled to \$400 for funeral expenses. More than \$400 can be spent on a service depending on the individual's financial status. During one's lifetime, if the deceased paid Social Security, a death benefit of \$255 was paid to the funeral home if it was filed and there was no living spouse. Currently due to budget reductions, this is no longer possible. In a situation of a remaining spouse, the Social Security benefit is made to the spouse. He/she can do whatever is convenient with the money. The average cost of Cherokee funerals range between \$800-\$900 (Douthit and Sutton, 1979: personal communication).

For the veteran who was honorably discharged, the Veterans Administration pays \$150 for burial expenses. As the Cherokee do own possessory land and family plots, one does not buy a burial plot.

With a military service, the Quartermaster General will provide a headstone or marker for the service (P. Douthit, 1980; Knowledge, 1976: 6).

Many Cherokee pay a Mutual Burial Insurance through the North Carolina Burial Association Commission in Raleigh. A maximum benefit of \$200 is paid per person. Whether one has insurance or military service, a Cherokee will have a decent funeral. The least expensive funeral includes the services of the funeral home and a gray pine casket and costs \$400 solely paid by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (Douthit, 1980).

If a family member dies away from the Qualla Boundary, arrangements are also made through the local funeral home (Anonymous, 1976: 2). The deceased is prepared by the distant funeral home and the expenses sent to the local funeral home. The Eastern Band then pays their portion of the expenses plus the remaining costs if necessary (Douthit, 1979: personal communication).

Among the services the funeral director requires certain vital statistics to complete a death certificate. The vital statistics are the full legal name, date and place of birth, social security number, address, length of residence, name of spouse, and name and birthplace of father, and maiden name, birthplace of mother, and name(s) of children. The cause of death and place of burial or cremation also become part of the certificate (Anonymous, 1976L 4). The funeral director also places the newspaper obituaries and contacts anyone else the family wishes to be notified (Anonymous 1976: 4-5).

The practice of cremation is not very popular in the Appalachian mountain area. The local funeral director had no knowledge of a

person requesting cremation. This is considered true for the ideology of the Appalachian area as a whole (Douthit, 1980). Many Cherokee people feel it is only right to return "back to dust."

CONCLUSIONS

According to Charles Hudson, "we cannot hope to reconstruct the Southeastern belief system in the fullness of its original form. Unlike anthropologists who may spend up to ten or even twenty years analyzing the belief system of a single living preliterate people, we who study the Southeast are largely limited to what we can learn from the documentary information collected by early naturalists, historians, and anthropologists." He goes on to say "fieldwork with contemporary Southeastern Indians cannot supply the information that we need about their ancestors who lived so long ago, and so to answer our most important questions we must rely on historical documents" (Hudson, 1976: 121).

Although Hudson's assessment is factual there is still considerable ethnographic material available among contemporary Southeastern Indians. Perhaps we will never be able to reconstruct the totality of Cherokee beliefs about such important cultural phenomena such as beliefs and rituals associated with death, but we can gain important insights into the subtleties of the remaining vestiges of traditional culture by such studies.

The research of this thesis has lead to both a thorough investigation of historical documents as well as extensive interviews with a number of people within the communities of Big Cove, Birdtown, Wolftown, Painttown, and Yellowhill of the Qualla Boundary.

Whenever possible, current beliefs were compared and contrasted with early 19th and 20th century beliefs about death. The differences

witnessed through time do not seem to suggest major changes in the belief system but rather additional insights, both positive and negative, which add to the completeness of our understanding of an ancient aspect of Cherokee culture.

As far as the concept of death, many traditional Cherokees adhere to the notion that there is no such thing as a natural death. In the modern world an interesting paradox arises when these people seek the assistance of modern medicine in conjunction with traditional remedies. Although a death may be attributed to an identifiable disease such as cancer, diabetes, and tuberculosis, the placement of that disease in the victim is still attributed to malevolent entities with supernatural powers as discussed in Chapter I.

Another identifiable vestige of the traditional belief system is found in the perpetuation of recurrent motifs in dreams and omens. Many of the current motifs unique to Cherokee culture recorded by observers generations ago are still current today.

Burial customs have shown the most dramatic change in Cherokee society during the last 200 years. The preference for flexed and partially flexed inhumations of the 18th century have given way to extended burials and Christian compass orientations with the head toward the west. In the 20th century, store bought coffins, funeral homes, and embalming preparation have replaced the traditional function of the Gadugi except for digging the grave.

The wake is perhaps the most important vestige of traditional mortuary customs in Cherokee society. However, the original rationale

for the wake which is deeply rooted in the belief system, particularly the multiple soul concept and the susceptibility of the deceased to be victimized by the liver eater, has been lost. The rationale for the wake today is to show respect for the deceased. However, at the same time it serves the purpose of solidifying the family and social ties of the survivors. The traditional family funeral has given way to fundamentalist Christian beliefs.

The multiple soul concept has been completely replaced by the Christian concepts of soul and the afterlife. The Darkening Land of the West spoken of only in the vaguest of terms seems to be difficult to reconcile with the directional symbolism of Christian theology. Early Christian missionaries searched for terms to equate to biblical ideas, in some cases completely changing the semantics of some Cherokee words, such as "askina" which prior to the 19th century referred only to the "soul" or "spirit" entity, but was transferred to mean "ghost, devil, or demonic being."

The tradition of burying the deceased close to home has continued into the 20th century. The trend towards more private family plots is reminiscent of the patterns recorded in the 18th century Cherokee townsites. Among traditional Cherokees the concepts of purity and pollution regarding the dead are still prevalent. These deeply rooted ideas have survived two centuries of Christian influence. These vestiges will probably outlast all other remnants of traditional culture including the most obvious, the Cherokee language.

The inevitability of death has resulted in the preservation of the most basic and rudimentary traditional beliefs on the subject. At the same time, the pressures of the dominant society including Christian theology and modern medicine have altered the more traditional rituals and explanations of death. However, in spite of the fact that scholars have been predicting the demise of the Cherokee culture for 150 years it is apparent that the more subtle elements of culture do not change easily and while individual life is temporary, life itself goes on as does the culture passed on from one generation to the next.

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Resolution 31

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Resolution 30

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Resolution 35

1948 Contracting to an undertaking establishment for better burial procedures for indigent members.

Resolution 300

n.d. \$250 allocation for burial expenses for all members of Eastern Band.

Resolution 337

n.d. A. K. Walkingstick to sell burial insurance.

Resolution 350

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