

THE PEACHTREE VALLEY AND VALLEY TOWN MISSION: A BAPTIST
RECATORIZATION OF A CHEROKEE LANDSCAPE

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ABCFM.....American Board of Christian Foreign Missions
- BFMB.....Baptist Foreign Mission Board
- BJ*.....Phillips, Joyce B. and Paul Gary Phillips ed. *The Brainerd Journal, A Mission to the Cherokees, 1817-1823*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.
- BMM*.....*Baptist Missionary Magazine* 11-15, 1816-1838.
- ECSEBCI.....Cozzo, David. "Ethnobotanical Classification System and Medical Ethnobotany of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians." PhD dissertation. University of Georgia, Athens, 2004.
- HMSFC*.....Mooney, James. *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. Fairview, NC: Historical Images, 1992.
- HNCB*.....Paschal, George Washington. *History of North Carolina Baptists Volume II*. Raleigh: The General Board North Carolina Baptist State Convention, 1955.
- LDL*.....*The Latter Day Luminary* 1-6, 1819-1825.
- MSMC*.....McClinton-Ruff, Rowena, ed. *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees, Volumes 1, 1805-1813, and 2, 1814-1821*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska, 2007.
- PBP*.....Payne, John Howard, and Daniel Butrick. *The Payne-Butrick Papers, Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6*. Editors William L. Anderson, Jane L. Brown, and Anne F. Rogers. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2010.
- PCJR*.....Ross, John. *The Papers of Chief John Ross, Volume I, 1807-1839*, ed. Gary Moulton, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984.
- PMVS*.....Setzler, Frank M. and Jesse D. Jennings. *Peachtree Mound and Village Site, Cherokee County North Carolina*. Smithsonian Institution Bureau Of American Ethnology Bulletin 131, Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1941.

ABSTRACT

THE PEACHTREE VALLEY AND VALLEY TOWN MISSION: A BAPTIST RECATEGORY OF A CHEROKEE LANDSCAPE

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Peachtree Valley in Clay county, North Carolina has a long history of diversity in plant, animal, and human habitation. The Cherokee, who have inhabited the valley for thousands of years, have a deep history of relationships with the cultural and biological diversity of the mountains. An intricate web of Cherokee knowledge and ways of thinking once maintained a sense of balance and well-being within existing ecological systems. The arrival of Europeans in the Cherokee world presented challenges in maintaining balance, communicating useful ideas, and establishing functional social and ecological relationships. The Baptists, who established a mission in the Peachtree Valley in 1819, were more successful in navigating Cherokee modes of thinking and communicating than other missionaries. Baptist success was rooted in their eventual willingness to learn from Cherokee systems. Cherokees categorizations of the world and engaged relationships with plants and animals of the landscape came to be connected with biblical ideas and Jesus' morality through the work of Reverend Evan Jones and a small group of Cherokees he baptized and taught. The history of the Valley Towns Baptist mission demonstrates ways that ecological awareness and landscape-based sensibilities classified Christian and Baptist ideas in uniquely Cherokee ways, even as those same ideas simplified diverse Cherokee categorizations of the world.

INTRODUCTION

When I began research for this project, the intent was to focus on Cherokee and pioneer Baptists and their relationships to the rivers of the Western North Carolina mountains. I initially began researching connections between Cherokee preacher Clifford Hornbuckle, who preached until the 1970's, and my grandfather and his ancestors, the Owen and Moore families. As someone who was born and raised in the region by a long line of Baptist ministers, I grew up regularly attending Macedonia Baptist Church in Transylvania county and Hanging Dog Baptist Church in Cherokee county where Cherokee members and preachers were common, and hymns sung in Cherokee were not unheard of. I naively assumed that tracing a continuous history back to early Cherokee Baptists would be possible, and even straightforward.

I had initially planned to discuss the similarities between Cherokee “going to water” rituals and full-immersion baptism, then to explore the differences in Cherokee and white ideologies centered on these same rituals. As research developed, I realized that simply discussing river relationships downplayed the complexity of Cherokee and white Baptist relationships to the landscapes on which they lived. As I delved deeper into the history of western North Carolina Baptists, I discovered Reverend Humphrey Posey, the first American Baptist Board Missionary to the Cherokee, and an associate of my great-great-grandfather, Reverend John Owen.¹ I was then on the trail of the history of the Valley Towns Baptist mission that Posey established in Peachtree Valley in 1819. The story of the first Baptist mission to the Cherokee provided the perfect window into

¹ E. H. Stillwell, *Historical Sketch of Tuckaseegee Baptist Association, 1829-1929*, (Cullowhee, NC: Western Carolina Teacher's College, 1929), 11-12.

the complicated landscape relationships and corresponding ideologies I hoped to discuss and I expanded the research to reflect that complexity.

As I have compiled these pages, discussed ideas with professors and scholars of the region, and presented portions of research at conferences and symposiums, my own relationships with the places under discussion have changed. I have spent almost my entire life in southwestern North Carolina. My father's family traces roots back to at least the Revolutionary War in what is now Transylvania County, and my mother's family traces roots to the 1820's in Clay and Cherokee counties. I grew up, as have generations of my ancestors, gathering arrowheads from freshly plowed fields and eroded creekbanks, wondering what life was like for the Indians. But regardless of my own history in these places, regardless of my own sense of place and belonging in the Blue Ridge and Smoky Mountains, I have come to realize just how shallow my own lifetime and family history in this place are when compared to Cherokee understandings of the same places.

One particularly potent experience was a visit to Judaculla Rock, a large soapstone boulder in Jackson County incised with unique and ancient petroglyphs, a rare artifact in the southeastern United States. The site is less than twenty miles from the 680 acres that were deeded to my ancestor John Owen for his service in the Revolutionary War, when he fought against the Cherokee of the region.² For most of my life Judaculla

² John Owen Deed, Transylvania County, NC, History and Genealogy Project, "Gloucester Township History," http://www.ncgenweb.us/transylvania/home_html/Gloucester-Township.html, (accessed December 3, 2009). The ncgenweb page indicates that 680 acres of Cherryfield were granted to John Owen in 1800 for service in the Revolutionary War, which is consistent with local Silversteen (formerly known as Gloucester Township) community oral history.

Rock was in a farm field, partially buried. I have visited the site dozens of times and, aside from the mysterious representation of a very long history of human activity, the surrounding fields were, for me, a great place to pick blackberries.

In June of 2011, as part of the Cherokee Language Revitalization Symposium at Western Carolina University, I joined Cherokee language instructor Tom Belt and a large group of symposium participants, most of them Cherokee speakers from North Carolina, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Texas, California, and Mexico, for a discussion at Judaculla Rock. One of the symposium participants, an older Cherokee woman from Oklahoma who had never been to North Carolina, told the story of *Tsul kalu* (Judaculla) the slant-eyed giant, in the Cherokee language. My limited understanding of the language made her tale difficult to follow, but from James Mooney's *History and Myths of the Cherokees* I was familiar with the story. As I attempted to follow along I caught certain words and body language that allowed me to keep up. *Tsul kalu's* jump from the nearby mountain top and his touch on the rock resonated in my mind, rattling my constructs of what this place meant.

As the woman finished her tale, I noticed tears in the eyes of many of the Cherokee speakers. I was touched by this moment when time was lost and the connection between many of these individuals and the actual place where they stood was made solid and physical for the very first time. I did not feel out of place or unwelcome, after all I had been to the site many times and I had many stories of my own about the surrounding area. But I was humbled and uplifted by this woman, from a distant place, who had never laid eyes or feet on this area. She had spent her entire life with an image

There are at least three isolated cemeteries with the legible Owen family name and death dates before 1800 in what are now wilderness areas of Pisgah Forest.

of Judaculla Rock recreated by her ancestors who had not seen the place for 170 years, a great length of white-men's time which coincided with the vast majority of my entire family history. To see this woman's mental image of a deeply meaningful landscape finally realized before her was palpable and emotionally powerful for all that were present. The power of her connection to this place, rooted in a very deep history that informed her perspective on life in the world, subsumed everything I thought I knew about Judaculla Rock. As she gestured to mountains and streams with a familiarity I could never have managed, I realized that she was no stranger to this place even though she had never set foot on the ground before.

As I have begun to study the Cherokee language I have come to understand some fraction of the descriptive precision the language is capable of conveying, the immediacy of the physical environment that can be shared in the strings of syllables combined with subtle intonations and expressive inflections. At Kituwah mound in July of 2011, as a National Endowment for the Humanities Scholar, I heard Tom Belt discuss the power of place for Cherokees. Tom's talk helped me make connections and distinctions that I had not considered before and I have since been struck many times by his words about the difference in being "from a place" and "of a place." As I have looked into the history of a particular Cherokee place, the Peachtree Valley in Clay county North Carolina, I have wrestled with ideas of a meaningful place and come to acknowledge the youth of my own history among the equally young poplar and oak forests, rhododendron thickets, and struggling hemlock groves.

While the place I am from is the same range of land the Cherokee inhabited for centuries, the world I came from is thoroughly and entirely different. I have never seen

mature chestnut trees whitening the mountainsides in spring. I have never stalked through miles of river canebrakes. I have never seen a seven-sided council house atop a thirty-foot mound. But I have always lived among the physical, intellectual, and emotional remnants of each. In the process of researching the material presented here, I have attempted to discover and explain a few of the possible reasons for the drastic differences between human worlds and ecological relationships that have existed in the same place. I have also attempted to root out points of mutual communication where vastly differing worldviews found sturdy ground on which to build lasting relationships. Singing, and in particular the singing of hymns, is a point of common ground in historical documents but even here, the differences in Cherokee and white conceptions are evident. Such points of communication are centered in areas that whites categorize as religion, medicine, and song, while Cherokees have an entirely different set of categorizations that make very different distinctions and associations.

The main thrust of the argument presented here is that Cherokees continued to classify ideas and information based on long-standing categorizations of the world even after Valley Towns Cherokee began to convert to Christianity. Cherokee Baptist thinking remained distinctly Cherokee. In the history of the Valley Town Baptists, a dichotomy of cultural persistence and cultural assimilation is less useful than a spectrum of cultural adaptation. Cherokees' deep relationships to their landscape continued to define conceptions of God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost. A total realignment of categorizations was not necessary for Cherokees to construct their own Christian conception of the world, but partial categorical constrictions did occur. Diverse Cherokee ideas about *galunlati* were homogenized to fit Christian ideas of Heaven. Conceptions of *askina*,

which had once included a broad range of spiritually neutral ideas about ghosts, spirits and devils, came to mean simply The Devil. And a wide spectrum of spiritual powers that were perceived through concepts of balance and the harmony ethic were classified through a dichotomy of “light” and “darkness.” At the same time, the perceivable qualities and landscape relationships of spiritual powers remained largely intact. The underworld animal *uktena* came to be classified as “evil,” part of “the Devil’s darkness,” but associations of that animal with caves, deep river pools, and quartz crystals remained part of Cherokee thinking. Cherokees began to acknowledge white categorizations of religion, medicine, and politics at the expense of a more diversified categorization of the world that relied on the tension of maintaining balance and harmony, but the tension did not disappear.

Cherokees saw the world tipping further and further out of balance in the decades before removal and individual Cherokee leaders attempted to make rebalancing maneuvers in diverse ways. Charles Hicks believed that a “civilized” Christian education for young Cherokees was a powerful means of pushing the Cherokee world toward a balanced state. White Path believed that rejecting white ideas and practices was an essential part of returning the Cherokee world to a balanced state. Humphrey Posey rejected any Cherokee conceptions of balance in favor of a stern Calvinist dichotomy of good and evil. And Evan Jones believed Cherokees could only understand good and evil through developing their own understandings of a light and darkness dichotomy. The evident shifts in Cherokee agriculture, architecture, and music, provide windows into complex Cherokee categorizations of the world and the adaptive function of knowledge acquisition traditions during a period of rapid change.

While some discussion of what whites categorized as politics is inherently drawn into the discussion, the much-researched political developments of Cherokee society in the early nineteenth century are not a main focus here until the final chapter. Yet, as is shown in chapter four, after the concession of White Path's Rebellion in the 1820's most Cherokees were in some ways forced to acknowledge the distinctions between white politics and white religion in their own beliefs and practices. But many Cherokee Baptist preachers were also medicine men, *adonisgi*, and political leaders, demonstrating overlapped Cherokee categories of thought. Jesse Bushyhead's work for John Ross, while still pastoring *Amohee* Church and utilizing plant medicine in communities along his preaching circuit, is a perfect example. The methodology utilized here is intended to provide a particular perspective on the tumultuous decades of the early nineteenth century in the Cherokee mountains through analysis of different categorizations of the world applied by whites and Cherokees. The topics and ideas presented here are in no way a comprehensive look at the history of the early nineteenth century in Cherokee country and the Peachtree Valley.

An important element of this historical perspective relies on descriptions of the extensive travel of the main historical characters. Charles Hicks, Humphrey Posey, Evan Jones, and Jesse Bushyhead all traveled constantly through the Cherokee mountains of western North Carolina, east Tennessee, and north Georgia. The development of road networks, the widening of ancient paths for wagons and livestock, and the establishment and expansion of preaching circuits are vital parts of this story. Visible, significant, "civilizing" and Christian influences on the land demonstrate shifts in human thinking about relationships to the landscapes. Cherokee relationships to rivers, which had

previously been the major avenues of transportation and travel, transformed to emphasize spirituality and religion more heavily, just as spirituality became de-emphasized in other parts of the landscape. Hicks, Posey, Jones, and Bushyhead each knew the countryside very well and had their own personal relationships with particular paths and places. The changes in the landscape that all four men witnessed are directly and subtly recorded in the historical documents they left behind. I have attempted to ferret out documented details, along with any clues to how these men thought about the landscape changes they witnessed. The clearing of riverbanks for baptism sites and roads, the construction of churches, schools, and homes, and the clearing of forests for farm and pasture are physical representations of changing ways of thinking on and about the landscape. Historical descriptions of these direct manipulations of the landscape are used here to get at corresponding changes in thinking.

An important documented historical presence on the landscape is the aural presence of humanity among a diverse set of animals and beings with their own aural presences. From songbirds to waterfalls, the sounds of the mountains are distinct from other regions and the sounds of human presence changed immensely during the early nineteenth century. While the era discussed here is before the industrial revolution, before logging, before tourism, and just before the forced removal of the Cherokee, the changes in the landscape were just as immense as the ones brought on by later changes, especially when correlating shifts in ways of thinking and the resulting sounds of that thinking are considered. Changes in ceremony, ball-game, and dance practices, the introduction of whiskey and guns, and the singing of Cherokee prayers and Christian hymns have much to tell us about the sounds that marked this era in the southern

Appalachians. The early nineteenth century is the real beginning of a disengagement from deep, ancient ways of thinking for the Cherokee that were centered on landscape-based relationships. But the influence of European ideas, practices, and goods did not negate genuinely Cherokee ways of thinking.

Language, the interpretation of ideas between English and Cherokee, and the invention of written Cherokee influenced perceptions of place and landscape relationships. The processes of “civilizing” the heathen Cherokee came more easily under Cherokee control through adept manipulations of language and ideas. Sophisticated Cherokee traditions of knowledge sharing and knowledge acquisition fostered adaptive processes that have allowed Cherokees to sustain a distinct society within the context of white political, economic, and social domination. Even considering the tragedy of removal, the adaptability of Cherokee knowledge systems must be deemed successful. Without the sustained presence of Cherokee knowledge systems, the face of the Southern Appalachian landscape would look very different. The revitalization of Cherokee society and traditions that is occurring today can be directed as a positive force for incorporating sustainable relationships between humanity and the diversity of life that has persevered here.

One set of tools I found very useful for exploring the possible ideological changes of this period came out of studying Deep Ecology philosophy. As I began delving into the historiography of Native American and environmental histories, I continually came back to some Deep Ecology ideas. Over the past generation, historians have swept aside the idea that Native American societies were perfect “children of nature” in favor of much more complicated human/ecology relationships. Clara Sue Kidwell’s essay

“Native American Systems of Knowledge” discusses myriad unique knowledge systems among numerous Native American groups. Comparing native knowledge systems, which generally “explained... environments in terms of immanent power,” and European knowledge systems, which “presuppose a nature composed of physical forces acting according to laws,” Kidwell concludes that “in many cases systems of knowledge based on seasonal and religious cycles coexist with modern and changing technology.” Kidwell makes the point that Native systems of knowledge still exist and that reconstruction of historical knowledge systems should revolve around “the essential importance of natural cycles in human life.” In Richard White’s article “Indian Peoples and the Natural World,” he calls for histories that “set the landscape in motion,” with questions that may generate “recovery over an older categorization of the world.”³ Reconstructing probable Native American ways of knowing and interacting with ecological systems requires looking at how native societies talked about and participated, and continue to talk about and participate, in “natural cycles.”

Questions that “set the landscape in motion” are also valued in Deep Ecology philosophy. Norwegian Arne Naess, who coined the term “deep ecology” in the 1970’s, has offered the idea of an eco-centric worldview that suggests “humans are only part of the ‘web of life’...equal with many other aspects of creation, including non-human nature.” Incorporating Deep Ecology ideas into an historical tool set requires a good

³ Clara Sue Kidwell, “Native American Systems of Knowledge,” in *A Companion to American Indian History*, Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, eds., (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 87-88, 98-99; Richard White, “Indian Peoples and the Natural World: Asking the Right Questions,” in *Rethinking American Indian History*, Donald L. Fixico, ed., (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 87, 89, 91-92, 95.

dose of academic caution, but animating landscapes with “web of life” ideas offers a means of balancing scientific research and indigenous knowledge in a historical context.

Deep Ecology philosophy is based in social action and the promotion of fundamental, radical social change in contemporary society. Deep Ecology thinkers have argued that the “modern ecological crisis is partly a crisis of consciousness,” a lack of awareness that human activity is a direct, functioning part of surrounding ecological systems. In working toward shifting social consciousness, Deep Ecology thinkers have studied and explored methods for constructing a new environmental consciousness of eco-centrism, as opposed to anthropo-centrism, often looking to indigenous societies past and present.

In mirroring this philosophical approach by applying Deep Ecology ideas to Native American environmental history, it is necessary to distinguish contemporary social action efforts from the intellectual perspective in which those efforts are based. Applying eco-centric ideas to historical inquiry is entirely different than claiming that Native American societies held genuinely eco-centric worldviews. Native Americans cannot be considered “environmentalists” or “ecologists,” but indigenous societies utilized systems of knowledge that allowed beliefs and behavior to function within the framework of relationships now categorized as “eco-systems.” Native societies cannot be considered genuinely eco-centric thinkers because the categorizations that have constructed the idea of “eco-centric” did not exist in indigenous American systems of thinking and organizing information. But most indigenous American societies did have deeper relationships with the eco-systems in which they lived and culturally infused ways of thinking that presumed a high level of ecological awareness.

In assembling a complete toolbox for recovering “older categorization[s] of the world,” Deep Ecology’s eco-centrism is particularly useful. Eco-centric views parallel a wide variety of Native American beliefs and behaviors. David Cozzo’s work in the Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources (RTCAR), particularly native river cane (*Arundinerea gigantea*) served as a model for historical questioning. By asking how, when, and why native river cane became a scarce resource, and how, when, and why other plants replaced river cane’s traditional Cherokee uses, I was able to develop a methodology for using documented historical details to flesh out the story I am trying to tell. Workable perspectives on historical ecological developments were continually questioned and refined to develop feasible interpretations of the past.⁴

Through developing an eco-centric methodology for historical inquiry, I have set out to write a history that may help explain the modern “crisis of consciousness.”

Historical documents from the Cherokee Missions demonstrate a history of human

⁴ Lisa M. Benton and John Rennie Short, *Environmental Discourse and Practice*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 133; For fundamental ideas in deep ecology philosophy see, Arne Naess, “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements: A Summary,” 151-155; George Sessions, “Ecocentrism and the Anthropocentric Detour,” 158-159, 169-172, 176-177; Fritjof Capra, “Deep Ecology: A New Paradigm,” 19-25; in *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century: Readings on the Philosophy of the New Environmentalism*, George Sessions, ed., (Boston: Shambala, 1995); For critiques of deep ecology see, Arran Gare, “The Postmodernism of Deep Ecology, the Deep Ecology of Postmodernism, and Grand Narratives,” 195-214; Bron Taylor, “Deep Ecology and Its Social Philosophy: A Critique,” 269-299; Mathew Humphrey, “Ontological Determinism and Deep Ecology: Evading the Moral Questions?,” 85-106, in *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*, Eric Katz, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg, eds., (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000); For discussion of methodologies in Native American environmental history see, Richard White, “Indian Peoples and the Natural World: Asking the Right Questions,” in Donald L. Fixico, ed., *Rethinking American Indian History*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997) 87-100; Philip J. Deloria, “Historiography,” in *A Companion to American Indian History*, Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, eds., (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 6-24; William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983) vii-ix.

groups both denying and finding intrinsic value in a richness of biological, linguistic, and cultural diversity. I have uncovered some ways that Cherokees have historically linked diversity with sustainable and healthy living, although Cherokee categorizations have different parameters. Charles Hicks letters to John Ross provided a wealth of Cherokee ideas pertaining to diversity and cultural preservation. William Bartram's *Travels*, and John Nortons' *Journal* also provided a wealth of instances of valued diversity. The works and themes of Deep Ecology thinkers broadened the discussion of diversity, and borrowed three Deep Ecology questions that have proven useful in the research presented here:

- >How does consumer culture consciousness impede understanding of humanity's role in larger diverse ecosystems?
- >What is the relationship between expanding human populations and decreasing biodiversity?
- >How can a "language of eco-centrism" be constructed to facilitate more complete understandings of potential human roles within rich, diverse, and healthy eco-systems?

The corresponding questions for historical research that developed were something like:

- >How did the introduction of white goods and ideas interfere with established Cherokee relationships to the landscape, and the diversity of plants, and animals?
- >What was the relationship between growing numbers of whites and Christians in Cherokee country and the changes in diverse relationships to the landscape, plants and animals?
- >Can a "language of eco-centrism" be seen in the ways Cherokees spoke and thought about their relationships with the landscape, plants, and animals?

Translating questions from Deep Ecology into an historical context also emphasized tensions between ideas about the past and realities in the present. The fact that these three contemporary questions translate to the history of 200 years ago is in

itself a powerful eye-opener, tracing threads of ideological issues through the whole of US History. The actual sense of urgency over America's current social and ecological situation varies according to perceptions of history. These three questions then became some of what Richard White terms "the right questions" for "setting the landscape in motion" across a long time span. These questions were also foundational to constructing a historical interpretation that lends depth, strength, and power to contemporary efforts toward shifting historical perceptions of Cherokee people and Southern Appalachian ecosystems.⁵

Beyond these three particular questions, Deep Ecology philosophy's interrogation of contemporary economics was also useful for historical inquiry. Fritjof Capra writes, "the economy is merely one aspect of a whole ecological and social fabric...[economists] tend to dissociate the economy from this fabric, in which it is embedded, and to describe [economics] in terms of simplistic and highly unrealistic models."⁶ Alan Drengson states that in Deep Ecology,

the word 'deep' in part referred to the level of questioning of [human] purposes and values when arguing in environmental conflicts. The 'deep' movement involves deep questioning, right down to fundamental root causes. The short-term, shallow approach stops before the ultimate level of fundamental change, often promoting technological fixes...based on the same consumption-oriented values and methods of the industrial economy. The long-range, deep approach involves redesigning our whole systems based on values and methods that truly preserve the ecological and cultural diversity of natural systems.⁷

⁵ Alan Drengson, "Deep Ecology Movement," Foundation of Deep Ecology, <http://www.deepecology.org/movement.htm>, accessed December 9, 2010.

⁶ Fritjof Capra, "Deep Ecology: A New Paradigm," in *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century: Readings on the Philosophy and Practice of the New Environmentalism*, George Sessions, ed., (Boston: Shambala, 1995), 23.

⁷ Alan Drengson, "Deep Ecology Movement," Foundation of Deep Ecology, <http://www.deepecology.org/movement.htm>, accessed December 9, 2011.

Taking long-range, “deep ecology” ideas that presuppose the intrinsic value of diversity into the early nineteenth century, when the processes of a consumption economy and industrialization were beginning in America, brought into focus some ways that white and Cherokee societies of the time began to dissociate economic factors from the matrix of ecological relationships. Deep ecology’s discussion of economics also illuminated ways nineteenth century people began to categorize particular Cherokee traditions and ideas in ways that further facilitated dissociations from ecological matrices in other areas of life.

Eco-centric questioning allowed the explanation that Native Americans were impressed with the ways a foreign object supplanted the function and power of a similar native object in their own ecologically embedded, spiritually motivated, “economic” systems. For most Native American groups, landscape and ecology were spiritual *participants* in “economic” systems, active subjects with agency in contingent outcomes. Rattlesnakes and honey locusts were not just static “commodity” objects that filled simple roles in human controlled economic systems, they were each connected to a myriad of other plants and animals and were respected according to deep associations.

Kidwell discusses several ways that different Native American groups used “analogy and metaphor” in adopting “[European] goods when they recognized similarities to things they already used.” Native American societies’ existing systems of thought organized “categories of beings by their relationships to the physical world” and saw “physical phenomena as manifestations of spiritual power.” Glass beads, brass thimbles, copper kettles, and guns were placed into existing social and ecological relationships. Copper kettles replaced clay pots as more durable containers “for a soul”

among the *Mi'kmaq*. Thimbles replaced deer hooves on *Tsimshian* dance aprons because the sound was more resonant and perceived as more powerful. The roles of adopted items were related to the spiritual and social matrix in which their use was embedded. The “willful behavior” of natural forces in Native American’s ecologically embedded systems of knowledge continued to *act* on the ways European goods were used because established knowledge systems were never controlled by white society.⁸

Applying eco-centric perspectives to European “economic” categorizations helped clarify possible Native categorizations that encompassed and overlapped “economics,” “religion” and “nature.” In *Nature’s Metropolis*, William Cronon’s discussion of commodity markets as one of humanity’s “most basic connections to the natural world” hints at the application of eco-centric thinking in Native American and environmental history. It is exactly the commodification of “natural resources” that most powerfully “affects human communities and natural ecosystems.” Shifting historical analysis from a discussion of non-acting “natural resource commodities” to a discussion of non-human lives and powers with agency, as in Cherokee knowledge systems, historical patterns of Cherokee categorizations and ways of thinking were discerned. This approach, rooted in eco-centric thinking about economics, lent explanatory power to Cherokee systems of knowing.⁹

Native American societies were certainly less anthropocentric in their worldview than Europeans, and gathering information about the world around them was an important element of understanding themselves and their own relationships to the

⁸ Kidwell, “Native American Systems of Knowledge,” 88-90.

⁹ William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), xvii.

physical world. It has been shown that numerous Native American societies, including the Cherokee, believed the balanced functioning of the ecological systems into which they inserted themselves was reliant on proper human behavior and responsible participation. For the Cherokee, objects and ideas had to fit into conceptions of balance and responsibility, to be *tohi*, or they were not useful. The landscape and its ecological diversity must be acknowledged as historical agents in order to explore Cherokee perceptions of “economic,” “religious,” and “political” activities.

As the formative and substantial aspect of human thought, language documents ways of thinking and categorizing the world. And again, applying eco-centric thinking to historical inquiry proved useful in analyzing the linguistic elements of this research. Ecologist and linguist David Abram writes of non-literate indigenous societies, “land...is the sensible site or matrix wherein meaning occurs and proliferates. In the absence of writing, we find ourselves situated in the field of discourse as we are embedded in the natural landscape...the two matrices are not separable.” Speech is “attuned in multiple and subtle ways to the contour and scale of the local landscape,” and “to the various nonhuman calls and cries that animate the local terrain.”¹⁰ Anthropologist Julie Cruikshank’s *Do Glaciers Listen?* also points to the role of language in understanding indigenous ways of thinking about landscape and ecology. In ways similar to Cherokee, the “verb rich” Athabaskin languages along the Gulf of Alaska “emphasize activity and motion,” signaling “the power to act on other things or to move, and actions are often

¹⁰ David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 139-140.

attributed to entities, such as glaciers, that English speakers would define as inanimate.” Language has a perceptible relationship with the landscape on which it is spoken.¹¹

Anthropologist Keith Basso’s *Wisdom Sits in Places* discusses the complex layering of social functions in Western Apache language. The “range and versatility” of the Apache practice of “speaking with names” serves many purposes simultaneously. Such complexity of function links “a particular geographic location” with “historical tales and sagas,” “the value and validity of traditional moral precepts,” “charitable concern and personal support,” “practical advice,” “optimism and hopefulness,” and “heal[ing] wounded spirits.” “The expressive force of an Apache utterance” relies on the “number of separate but complimentary functions it accomplishes simultaneously.” The Apache language demonstrates how landscape can be central to ways of thinking and modes of transmitting knowledge.¹² I have attempted to point out a similarly sophisticated relationship between Cherokee language and the Southern Appalachians.

Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine point out that,

There are remarkable overlaps between the areas of greatest biological and greatest linguistic/cultural diversity around the world, allowing us to speak of a common repository of biolinguistic diversity. ...Because language plays a crucial role in the acquisition, accumulation, maintenance, and transmission of human knowledge concerning the natural environment and ways of interacting with it, the problem of language endangerment raises critical issues about the survival of knowledge that may be of use in the conservation of the world’s ecosystems.¹³

¹¹ Julie Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 4-6.

¹² Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*, (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 5-7, 100-101.

¹³ Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine, *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World’s Languages*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 27.

I have attempted to understand historical Cherokee ways of thinking utilizing eco-centric ideas and established methods of anthropological linguistics, although I am certainly a novice linguist. Through an interdisciplinary methodology, landscape features, sacred spaces, and the language used to express relationships and ideas became a form of historical documentation. Adapting the methods and arguments of anthropological linguistics specifically for Cherokee history provided useful possibilities for “setting the landscape in motion.”

American religious historian Catherine Albanese discusses how Christianity among the Eastern Cherokee brought about a “remythologizing [of] their landscape” through the introduction and syncretic adaptation of Christianized ways of categorizing landscape features and “web of life” systems. A Christianized “clear dichotomy between...spirit and...flesh” simplified more ecologically inclusive ways of thinking. Mountain, river, and forest places that had previously been the home of an *ukte’na*, a *Tlanuwa*, or the giant *Tsul-kalu* became “fastnesses of the devil.” At the same time, Baptist Christian ideas allowed the Cherokee “to express some part of their relationship to the place in which they lived” in a “civilized” way that was more accessible to whites, while continuing to use their own language. The diversity of landscape centered powers and mysteries were then attributed to dichotomous good and bad entities, but animate landscape powers remained relatively intact. Evan Jones’ and Arch Skit’s evangelizing at the Cherokee town *Skina* demonstrate this tendency. *Askina* can mean ghost, spirit, or devil, all ideas that were not inherently malevolent in Cherokee thinking. But Georgia Baptists translated *skina* as a heathen and evil idea and assumed the name implied that the place was “the supposed haunt” of the Devil, or named “for the wickedness of those

who dwelt there.”¹⁴ Multiple Cherokee purification rituals that included “going to water” were all linked to immersion baptism. Diverse social gatherings and relationships in Cherokee fell under the Euro-American categorization of “religion” as the traditional social functions of ball-game and dance gatherings were subsumed by church gatherings.¹⁵ Albanese shows how changes in ways of thinking and categorizing the world facilitated and reflected changes in cyclical, social, and ecological relationships. But Cherokee language and place-names documented a history of eco-centric thinking even as those ways of thinking began to fade. Abram, Cruikshank, Basso and Albanese all offer useful discussion of the complex ways language functions to conserve and adapt cultural ideas.

The relatively eco-centric language of the Cherokee animates things categorized as inanimate in an anthropocentric worldview, giving animals, plants, streams, mountains, and other landscape forces the ability to act and to listen. Human actions are then engaged in conversation with the actions of the environment. Abram writes that shamans were intermediaries between the human and non-human worlds, including “spirit worlds.” Abram’s general description of shamans applies to conjurers, witches and *adonisgi* in Cherokee society. But the physical and “spirit” worlds were present and sensual, not distant and removed from contact and interaction. “For almost all oral cultures, the enveloping and sensuous earth remains the dwelling place of both the living and the dead...the ‘body’ [is] the mind’s own sensuous aspect, and at death the body’s decomposition into soil, worms, and dust can only signify the gradual reintegration of

¹⁴ Robert Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, (Washington, GA: Georgia Baptist Historical Society, 1989), 108.

¹⁵ Catherine L. Albanese, “Exploring Regional Religion: A Case Study of the Eastern Cherokee,” *History of Religions* 23, no. 4 (May, 1984): 358-361.

one's ancestors and elders into the living landscape, from which all too, are born."¹⁶

Tiyah Miles, in *Ties That Bind*, mentions that Cherokees did not want to leave their homeland because they would also be leaving their ancestors, whose spirits resided in the landscape. Miles briefly discusses "the relationship between land and identity," as well as the sense of "spiritual death" among the Cherokee, borrowing Cherokee poet Diane Glancy's phrase "we were the land."¹⁷ The dichotomy of mind and body is not a part of Cherokee thinking any more than the separation of man and nature. Categorizations of diverse living forces and landscape relationships defined a complex Cherokee worldview. Histories that acknowledge the viability of a world-view expressed in diverse landscape relationships may truly "set the landscape in motion." In allowing sacred spaces and natural forces to be alive and active in history, aspects of Cherokee ways of thinking took on deeper explanatory power.

James Mooney's "most prevalent errors in regard to the Indian," the analysis of Cherokee culture as an entity separate from the ecology in which it existed, became a marker of Mooney's thinking and methods. Eco-centrism enlivened Mooney's works. The Cherokee idea that plants work to help humans, and animals often work against humans became a means of understanding humanity's potentially functional and sustainable place in diverse Southern Appalachian eco-systems. The Cherokee conception of balance, *tohi*, became a model of social and environmental control on

¹⁶ David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perceptions and Language in a More-Than-Human-World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 15.

¹⁷ Tiyah Miles, *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 156-157.

human behavior in a diverse landscape. The relationship between place and identity was more fully developed through eco-centrism.¹⁸

In 1823, as recorded in the *Payne-Butrick Papers*, Congregationalist missionary J.P. Evans stated, "the worst crime in the eyes of a true Cherokee has, from time immemorial, been that of infidelity to his native land."¹⁹ In July of 1819 John Ross, president of the Cherokee National Council, wrote to Calvin Jones about how the Cherokee might attain a "good American education." The words and metaphors Ross used demonstrate his attempts to portray ideas in a Cherokee way that related directly to the landscape. Ross was only "one eighth" Cherokee and his knowledge of Cherokee culture and history came largely from his work with chiefs Pathkiller and Charles Hicks. Ross wrote, "the seed of education must be sown and replenished by the mists of patience, perseverance & good management, when it has taken root & sprouted it would ultimately bear down the old growth of natural Habits & customs and finally root it out."²⁰ Ross' metaphors of "seed," "taken root," "old growth," and "natural" reflect a Cherokee understanding of living in the world and how those same ideas might translate into a narrative of "civilizing" processes. Ross, immersed in a focused discussion of Cherokee-ness, centered his ideas of forthcoming education in relation to perceptions of the landscape and the Southern Appalachian forests. Pathkiller and Hicks spent considerable time and energy preparing Ross for Cherokee leadership. Pathkiller and Hicks surely recognized that immense societal shifts threatened to overwhelm

¹⁸ James Mooney, "Cherokee Theory and Practice of Medicine," *The Journal of American Folklore* 3, no. 8 (Jan.-Mar., 1890): 44, 46-47; Catherine L. Albanese, "Exploring Regional Religion," 358-361.

¹⁹ Anderson, et. al., *Payne-Butrick Papers*, vol. 6, 431.

²⁰ John Ross to Calvin Jones, July 3rd 1819, in *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, 37.

fundamental aspects of Cherokee culture but patient and persistent patterns of adaptation could succeed in “civilizing” the Cherokee people without sacrificing essential Cherokee-ness. Ross’ letter shows how Cherokee conceptions of living remained embedded in understandings of place.

At the time of Ross’ early leadership, Euro-American influences had already worked to divide the Cherokee into two distinct groups, assimilationists (or acculturationists) and traditionalists (or conservatives). While assimilationists were striving to attain the ostensible aspects of civilization, their cultural perceptions were still linked to a long history of cognition and knowledge acquisition.²¹ Cherokee ways of thinking transmitted relationships with the plant and animal “cousins [that] looked little like what today’s Western mind imagines when thinking of human-animal interactions. The relationships were unique intricate, intimate, and spiritual.”²² As white society pressured the Cherokee toward deeper change, the Cherokee “remythologized” their landscape. But even after two centuries of this remythologizing, core aspects of Cherokee culture remain strong.²³

Each chapter was written with distinct goals while keeping in mind the larger goal of demonstrating relationships between ideology and ways of thinking that shaped the landscape of Cherokee country in general, and the Peachtree Valley in particular. But discussion is restricted to particular topics that serve to strongly demonstrate main points without overstating the content, arguments, and conclusions of other histories.

²¹ Theda Purdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society*, (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1979), xiii.

²² Stacy Kowtko, *Nature and the Environment in Pre-Columbian American Life*, (Westport CN: Greenwood Press, 2006), 31.

²³ Catherine Albanese, “Regional Religion,” 358-361.

Chapter one demonstrates the complexly interwoven associations of Cherokee thinking and landscape relationships largely through the Cherokee's relationship to rattlesnakes. Place-naming and Cherokee relationships with another indigenous Southeastern group, the Natchez, further demonstrate some complex associations and ways of thinking that relate directly to the history of Peachtree Valley. At the same time, discussion in Chapter One is limited and by no means addresses all the landscape-based associations in Cherokee ideology and land-use. Discussion of corn and tobacco agriculture, the corn-mother Selu, and womens' roles and relationships to landscape are not discussed at any length because these topics have been studied at length elsewhere and were not easily tied to historical documents that tell the story of Peachtree Valley and the Valley Town mission.²⁴

Chapter two looks into the life of Charles Renatus Hicks, emphasizing his role as official Cherokee interpreter, early Christian convert, Second Principal Chief, and promoter of missionaries and "civilized education" in Cherokee country. Hicks worked to secure a permanent home for the Cherokee while still promoting Christian ideas. His love of singing hymns and his friendship with Baptist missionary Humphrey Posey are central to the story of Peachtree Valley and the Valley Towns mission. This chapter emphasizes some of the ways the Cherokee language relates to the diversity of the Southern Appalachians.

Chapter three focuses on Reverend Humphrey Posey, his role as missionary to the Cherokee, his friendship with Charles Hicks, and his employment as land agent for the

²⁴ See Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835*, (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), and Charles Hudson, *The Southeast Indians*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1976).

federal government after Hicks' death. Posey was also well-known for his teaching, preaching, and love of singing hymns, and remains a celebrated ancestor of western North Carolina and north Georgia Baptists. Posey's travels through the mountains and the documented content of many of his sermons offer an excellent source for uncovering Baptist ideas about landscape and education.

Chapter four explores the history of the Valley Town Mission after Posey's departure in 1824. The Welshman Evan Jones took over leadership at the mission, learned to speak Cherokee, and began preaching and teaching in Cherokee in the 1830's. His friendship with Cherokee preacher Jesse Bushyhead marks a turning point for the mission and Cherokee Baptists in the Valley Towns and north Georgia settlements. Jones and Bushyhead worked diligently on translating scripture and hymns into Cherokee after the advent of the Cherokee syllabary. Some of the hymns printed in Samuel Worcester's Cherokee hymnbook were very likely translated by Jones and Bushyhead. Jones and Bushyhead were instrumental in keeping Valley Town Cherokees informed about and engaged in John Ross's formal resistance to removal. The two Baptist preachers organized and led several groups of Cherokees on the Trail of Tears and founded a Baptist mission and printing press in Oklahoma. The implications of the actions of these two men in terms of ecological relationships, through language, printing, and Christian influence on ideology, resonate through Cherokee history in the East and West.

While it may seem erroneous to discuss Cherokee landscape relationships through the stories of four men, the particulars of Peachtree history and the available historical documents present the stories of men at the Valley Town mission. Theda Perdue's *Cherokee Women* was referenced regularly when addressing gender concerns, but the

study and issues of gender and women's stories are not a specific focus of this history. While it is acknowledged that a discussion of landscape, ideology, and historical change must include discussion of Cherokee women, the history of the Peachtree Valley, the Valley Towns mission, and the Christianization of Valley Towns Cherokee is best explained through the recorded thoughts and actions of these men.

The points that I hope to emphasize are told through describing changes in the mountain landscape that reflect changes in worldviews and ways of thinking. The most obvious of these points are reflected in farming practices and house construction, combinations of practical living and technological adaptations, and transmission of knowledge between an increasingly dominant white worldview and Cherokee ways of thinking about the world. Aside from the links between ecology and religion, most of this discussion can also be related to the origins of consumption economics and industrialization in American history.

Possibilities of sustainable human and landscape relationships involve a much broader scope of thinking than simple applications of commodification and economic determinism. As ecologists, philosophers, linguists, and scientists increasingly acknowledge the human necessity of recognizing our own place within larger life systems for our own benefit, I have attempted to construct a history that similarly acknowledges human health and human thinking as a vital element of healthy ecosystems. At the same time, I have no intention of decrying past wrongs or calling for reparations for perceived damages, cultural loss, cultural oppression, or religious and racial discrimination. The social and ecological systems of Cherokee history have always been in varying states of flux and I have sought to stress continuity rather than a break in Cherokee history. At the

same time, the ecological world of the early nineteenth century is gone and cannot be remade. The conceptions of Cherokee health, balance, and knowledge systems presented here are constructs based on extensive research and discussion geared toward empowering modes of human living as part of healthy ecosystems. I argue that genuinely healthy modes of human communication, knowledge sharing, living, and thinking found in this history can promote contemporary, healthy, and diverse ecosystems.

Scientific attempts to produce a sustainable chestnut tree population may one day restore one of the foundational beings of healthy southern mountain ecosystems. But the expansion of resource extraction, and urban and real estate development, centered in monolithic “natural resource commodity” thinking, limit the success of efforts to advance diverse modes of thought about landscape relationships. As my father often says, “these mountains are being loved to death,” but ecologically destructive trends are not the only options for human relationships with these mountains.

The Cherokee country of Western North Carolina has always been home for me. My own sense of place, my relationships with the diversity of plants and animals, has grown from this region and my understanding of the larger world will forever be centered on the peaks of the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountains. Through this research I have come to see the entire world differently and as I continue to explore the history of Southern Appalachian places and indigenous groups that have lived there I hope to expand the library of ideas about healthy human ecologies. One of the most important parts of establishing healthy human ecologies is constructing a reliable and viable historical foundation on which to expand.

CHEROKEE COSMOLOGY AND THE POWER OF PLACE IN THE PEACHTREE VALLEY

Cherokee “Ecology”: An Inclusive Society

Human relationships with plants, animals and places were primary forces in Cherokee society prior to Indian Removal, shaping ways of thinking and living on the landscape. Cherokee systems of knowledge were imbedded in landscape relationships through oral traditions of significant places, plants, and animals, just as Europeans’ knowledge was embedded in accumulated written forms. Indigenous oral and experiential traditions transmitted systems of knowledge and correlating ways of thinking that defined and instilled relationships with places, plants, and animals, “natural laws” that bound people and place. Human influence on the landscape was directed by an “encrypted encyclopedia” of Cherokee cultural knowledge maintained through ecological relationships, oral traditions, proper behaviors, and understandings of place. And these knowledge systems included categorizations of mysteries, a result of humanity’s status as “guests in a complex spirit world.” The daily activities of Cherokee people were structured by a worldview that included plants, animals, and natural forces as essential, daily participants in social interactions. Cooking, eating, farming, hunting, building homes and town houses, singing, playing ball, and performing rituals for medicine or conjuring were all understood and enacted through ecologically inclusive social constructs that constituted the Cherokee worldview. The normal state of things in this worldview was *tohi*, “fluid, peaceful, and easy like water flowing.” The concept of *tohi*

was fundamental to attaining and maintaining balance in daily relationships to people, plants, animals, and places.¹

Epochs of plant and animal evolution in the Appalachian Summit region generated diverse ecosystems that interacted to establish and sustain relatively balanced relationships prior to the arrival of humans. The exact processes of ecological development are impossible to observe, but major and minor shifts in ecological balance must surely have occurred continually from the period of the original formation of the Appalachian Mountains. The Peachtree Valley has fostered and sustained the lives of countless floral and faunal species and each of these plants and animals developed interdependent relationships with one another. The arrival of humans into already functioning ecological systems brought drastic changes in established relationships. As populations increased over time, humans observed changes and set out to mitigate ecological balance in favor of their preferences for raw materials, foods, and cosmological and ideological significance. Exactly what the parameters of such human actions were is impossible to know but the eventual characteristics of ecosystems and human ideologies resulted.²

¹ Heidi M. Altman and Thomas N. Belt, “*Tohi*: The Cherokee concept of Well-Being,” in *Under the Rattlesnake: Cherokee Health and Resiliency*, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2009), 13-14, 15; Steven David Swearingin, *A Reassessment of Cherokee Identity Consciousness During the Colonial Era: Myth, Historiography, and Material Culture*, dissertation History, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, (2005), 117; Clara Sue Kidwell, “Native American Systems of Knowledge,” in *A Companion to American Indian History*, Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, eds., (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 87-88, 98-99;

² Bennie C. Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology: A Study of the Appalachian Summit*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 1-12; Frank M. Setzler and Jesse D. Jennings, *Peachtree Mound and Village Site, Cherokee County North Carolina (PMVS)*, Smithsonian Institution Bureau Of American Ethnology Bulletin 131, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1941), 14; James A. Drake, et.

The Cherokees' acquisition of knowledge about plants, animals, and places in the Appalachian Mountains was crucial in establishing balanced human relationships. But the acquisition of knowledge was not purely empirical. As anthropologist Charles Hudson has stated, Southeastern Indians relied on "delicately structured oral traditions, living out their lives in tautly organized social structures, and making their livings in balanced ecological systems worked out over centuries of intensive experience in their home territories." Cherokee systems of knowledge, as with other indigenous social groups, were embedded in culturally transmitted human and non-human relationships. Cultural perceptions were shared through storytelling and a generational legacy of experience interpreted through cosmological beliefs. Cherokees understood that they were inserting themselves into a functional ecosystem and human activity was potentially unbalancing and disruptive to the sustained relationships that had existed long before the arrival of humans. This awareness of intrusion made humanity's central purpose one of maintaining balance through harmonious relationships. But balance and harmony were not goals to be achieved they were baseline norms, "the minimum" for societal participation exemplified by plants' and animals' relationships to one another. Furthermore, interpretation and meaning were reliant on human perceptions of interaction

al., "The Construction and Assembly of an Ecological Landscape," *Journal of Animal Ecology* 62, No. 1 (January, 1993): 117-120; Carl D. Monk, "Relationships of Life Forms and Diversity in Old-Field Succession," *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club* 110, No. 4 (Oct.-Dec., 1983): 449-453; Richard J. Hobbs and Lawrence R. Walker, "Old Field Succession: Development of Concepts," in *Old Fields: Dynamics and Restoration of Abandoned Farmland*, eds. Viki A. Cramer and Richard J. Hobbs, (Washington, Covelo, London: Island Press, 2007), 17-23, diagram figure 2.1.

and communication with the non-human members of shared eco-systems. Beliefs and experiences were equally important in defining human relationships to the world.³

Peachtree Valley Archaeology

The Peachtree Valley, at the southwestern edge of the Appalachian Summit Region of Western North Carolina in today's Clay and Cherokee counties, channels a watershed that flows into what is now east Tennessee and north Georgia. The Peachtree Valley was along a major route of travel and trade that had been established by the Archaic period, around 10,000 years BCE. The rich and fertile land between the Valley River to the north, and the Hiwassee River to the south reached several miles in width, creating a large area ideal for cultivation and human settlement. Prior to the twentieth-century seasonal floods inundated the bottomland, providing rich silt that renewed the fertility of the soil each year.⁴

Extensive material culture from archaeological excavations in the Peachtree Valley, especially the site at the convergence of Peachtree Creek and Hiwassee River known as the Peachtree Mound and Village Site, provide evidence of a dynamic human existence in the valley spanning thousands of years. Analysis of artifacts shows a "continuous [human] occupation" of the Peachtree Mound area...over a long period" that was not interrupted for any "appreciable length of time." Most archaeologists believe that Cherokee speaking peoples were among the earliest humans to permanently inhabit

³ Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 36-37, 44, 97; Altman and Belt, "Tohi: The Cherokee Concept of Well-Being," 13-14, 15; Hobbs and Walker, "Old Field Succession: Development of Concepts," 17-18;" Robert K. Thomas, "Cherokee Values and World View," unpublished paper original in possession of David Cozzo, 5. Altman and Belt state that the Cherokee terms *tohi* and *osi* "can be used to indicate a proper state of being, and...illness is a deviation from that state."

⁴ Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology*, 1-12; *PMVS*,14.

the area.⁵ The Peachtree site is situated along an important “aboriginal Indian trail,” a route probably followed by Hernando De Soto in 1540.⁶ Inhabitants of the site, from the early Woodland period on, cultivated corn and tobacco, gathered wild berries, fruit, and nuts, hunted deer, bear, opossum, turtle, and turkey, and had domesticated dogs.⁷ The ancient trail linked Valley settlements with the Overhill, Out Towns, and Lower Cherokee settlements and facilitated trade and interaction with diverse cultural regions of North America, the Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico. Inhabitants’ deep connections with useful and meaningful resources of the regional landscape spurred different forms of

⁵ *PMVS*, 12. An archaeological excavation at the Peachtree Mound and village site provides extensive material culture and artifacts. Archaeological techniques utilized by the WPA and civilian employees in the 1932 excavation would not stand up to modern methodologies but artifact analysis still provides a wealth of useful information.

⁶ *PMVS*, 13-14; John R. Swanton, *The Indians of the Southeastern United States*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 137, 1946), 47; Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology*, 14; Robin A. Beck, Jr., “From Joara to Chiaha: Spanish Exploration of the Appalachian Summit Area, 1540-1568,” *Southeastern Archaeology* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1997): 162-164. The Peachtree site is 5 ½ miles east of Murphy, NC, “three hundred yards east of the confluence of Peachtree creek and Hiwassee River.” Setzler and Jennings’ 1941 *Peachtree Mound and Village Site* report states that the site was selected for excavation for several reasons, including Swanton’s identification of the site with *Guasili* along De Soto’s 1540 route, the researchers’ own hopes that “some evidence of Yuchi occupation might be encountered,” “an exceptionally good cross section in the heart of the Cherokee country,” and the fact that excavations “could provide legitimate [Works Project Administration] employment for the . . . area.” Based on historical and archaeological reconstructions of De Soto’s route, Beck et. al believe that *Guasili* was actually the Plum Grove site on the Nolichucky River, near the present town of Embreeville, Tennessee, although “Soto-era Spanish trade goods have not yet been reported” there. Records of the De Soto expedition state that the inhabitants of *Guasili* provided De Soto’s men “many dogs and a small amount of corn,” which could have been any number of Cherokee towns. De Soto’s exact route is still debated but Peachtree is not generally considered to be one of the towns the Spanish expedition visited.

⁷ *PMVS*, 29-30. There was a lapse of corn cultivation between 400 A.D. and about 900 A.D. An earlier small-eared corn variety cultivated during the Woodland period was less important than the highland corn varieties cultivated after 900 A.D. that are closely associated with the spread of Mississippian cultural traits. See Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 62-64.

exchange during distinct cultural phases. The Peachtree site provides evidence of Cherokee, Adena, Mississippian, and Hopewell cultural elements, suggesting multi-lingual, multi-ethnic cultural interactions, “a combination of Woodland and Mississippian elements, the same admixture which seems to constitute the nucleus of a general Southeastern pattern.”⁸ Setzler concludes that the “site is Cherokee,” but “no generalizations as to the whole of Cherokee culture” should be made. Evidence supports the assertion that agriculture, trade, and ceremony in the Peachtree Valley were sustained for the duration of habitation until 1830. The Peachtree Valley “was probably occupied by Cherokee during this entire period” and was a cultural center with influence among other Southeastern social groups.⁹

Evidence of ceremonial activity and a ritual complex are evident in burials, fire-pits, and effigy pipes and ornaments. Some Mississippian burials have been found in the valley, but most are identified as Woodland era burials. The main mound at Peachtree, constructed over at least 3 phases during the Woodland and early Mississippian periods, contained numerous burials “of an intrusive nature” made after construction.¹⁰ Several burials demonstrated probable ceremonies in the form of burnt clay from fires built directly over human remains. A ritualized “tobacco complex” seems to have played “a large role in the life of these people” as well. “Dozens of small whole [effigy] pipes and many fragmentary ones” were uncovered in every stratigraphic layer. A large portion of

⁸ *PMVS*, 16-37, 51-52; Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology*, 14, 70, 140.

⁹ *PMVS*, 54-57. Woodland period elements at Peachtree were defined by flexed burials with no grave goods, Mississippian period elements were defined by un-flexed burials with grave goods. Setzler and Jennings’ conclusions suggest that the Peachtree village site and other similar Cherokee sites were important to the whole of southeastern cultural organization throughout its habitation.

¹⁰ *PMVS*, 32-33.

pipes still contained the “carbon or ‘cake’” due to extensive tobacco use. The pipes were “uniformly well carved and modeled” from stone or molded from clay, indicating a tradition of teaching “technical skill [and] artistic execution to make objects of extreme beauty.”¹¹

While no accurate estimation of the valley’s population has yet been possible for any given time period, the number and arrangement of postholes for wooden structures at the Peachtree site suggest a large number of people lived there for the duration of habitation.¹² A significant number of “massive” conch shell beads from the Gulf and Atlantic coasts, “one Siouan calumet, two examples of Micmac type” pipes, “highly polished chlorite” from the continental interior, and European glass and brass beads and buttons demonstrate expansive trade networks.¹³ Local and imported stone projectile points, antler points, stone ax heads, *chungke* game pieces, hundreds of potsherds and types of bowls, pots and bottles, “various bizarre effigy forms,” copper ornaments, and “two examples of ‘bird pipes’” show that the valley had strong ties to Mississippian culture and was probably an important site for Cherokee intercultural relationships.¹⁴

The importance of particular plants and animals can be deduced through gorget decorations, effigy pipe forms of birds, rabbits, serpents, and other representational artifacts and similarities to the imaginative and intellectual historic traditions of Cherokee storytelling, joking, and ceremonial practices. Relationships between these people and

¹¹ *PMVS*, 33-34. Ben Steere, presentation, February 13, 2012, Western Carolina University, notes in possession of author. Mounds further west in the French Broad watershed exhibit more Woodland period attributes than Mississippian. These attributes have proven to be characteristic of North Carolina mounds west of Buncombe County.

¹² *PMVS*, 16-18, 26-27, 29-34.

¹³ *PMVS*, 30-35; Hudson, *Southeastern Indians*, 65-68, 77-78, 91, 314.

¹⁴ *PMVS*, 32-47.

their environment centered on the acquisition and transmission of knowledge that facilitated balanced, functional living with seasonal cycles, plants, animals, and a “mythologized landscape.”¹⁵

Peachtree Places

Place names transmitted information about relationships on the mythologized landscape and the history and ecology of the place. Some places in the Peachtree Valley had special significance to human history and human interaction with the place. Ideas expressed in stories were applied to relationships and behavior at specific places and Cherokee place names usually relate some ways of thinking and knowing about the place. There are dozens of Cherokee named places in the Peachtree Valley today and likely many more that have been forgotten. The particular places discussed here have relevance to the history of Baptists and ways of Cherokee thinking that were applied to relationships with non-Cherokees.

Tusquittee creek, just up the Hiwassee from “Notchee Town,” is an English bastardization of the Cherokee *Tsuwa’uniyetsun’yi*. According to Mooney, at some point in the distant past a lone hunter heard the sound of strange laughter and on further investigation saw two *tsuwa*, water dogs, walking hand in hand down the path laughing. Upon telling this story to his town elders, the creek became known as *Tsuwa’uniyetsun’yi*, “where the water dogs laughed.” *Tsuwa* is the word for ‘water dog,’ identified by Fradkin as either a hellbender or ‘mud puppy,’ two separate species of large salamanders native to the Southern Appalachians. Tusquittee creek is a fast flowing and

¹⁵ *PMVS*, 13, 30-37, 51-57; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 3-5, 8-9; Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology*, 16-19; Catherine L. Albanese, “Exploring Regional Religion: A Case Study of the Eastern Cherokee,” *History of Religions* 23, no. 4 (May, 1984): 346, 353, 371; Thomas, “Cherokee Values and World View,” 4-5.

rocky stream, prime habitat for hellbenders. Several Cherokee settlements have existed along the stream's banks at different periods, and after the Revolutionary era small scattered settlements of Cherokees and probably some Natchez were located there.¹⁶

A Cherokee town along the Valley River on the northern edge of Peachtree Valley was *Tomotley*. The name *Tomotley* appears for two Cherokee villages on a 1721 census list. According to Baden, "the smaller of the two (152 people) appears to be associated with the Lower Towns whereas the larger (357 people) seems to be a Valley settlement. The Valley town appears to have been an important village. Ludovic Grant, the South Carolina trader, made it his home in the 1750's."¹⁷ The Valley town appears on William Bartram's 1765 list as the ninth Cherokee town on the Valley River, "*Tomothle*." This is the town where Charles Hicks was born and lived in his childhood. Mooney wrote of the town, "*Tama'li*- a name commonly written Tomotley or Tomatola,

¹⁶ Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees (HMSFC)*, (Fairview, NC: Historical Images, 1992), 410; Arlene Fradkin, *Cherokee Zoology: The Animal World of a Native People, 1700-1838*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 138-139; James Mooney, "The Cherokee River Cult," *The Journal of American Folklore* 13, no. 48 (Jan.-Mar. 1900): 1-10; John Witthoft, "A Cherokee Economic Botany From Western North Carolina: Man and Nature in the Southern Appalachians," unpublished manuscript copy in possession of David Cozzo, 114-115; Ted L. Gragson and Paul V. Bolstad, "A Local Analysis of early-Eighteenth-Century Cherokee Settlement," *Social Science History* 31, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 435-468. Discussion of Cherokee conceptions of time is an area for future research. The large salamanders that inhabit clear, fast-flowing streams and rivers with rocky bottoms are "hellbenders," while the mudpuppy is smaller with external feathery gills for absorbing oxygen in the muddy, weed-choked waters where it lives. Butrick described both species and suggests that the Cherokee had separate names for them. Fradkin lists both species as *Tsuwa*. In Linnaean nomenclature, the hellbender is *Cryptobranchus alleganiensis alleganiensis*, a name that reflects white conceptions of place in the use of Allegany, and the mudpuppy is *Necturus maculosus maculosus*.

¹⁷ William W. Baden, *Tomotley: An Eighteenth Century Cherokee Village*, Report of Investigations No 36, Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, Prepared under the supervision of Jefferson Chapman, Principal Investigator, (Knoxville, TN: Tennessee Valley Authority, TVA Publications in Anthropology No. 35, November, 1983), 18-19.

[occurs] in at least two places in the old Cherokee country, ...on Valley river, a few miles above Murphy, about the [1890] Tomatola, in Cherokee county, North Carolina...and on Little Tennessee river about Tomotley ford.” Mooney claimed the name could not be translated, and was of Creek origin, “as that tribe had a town of the same name upon the lower Chattahoochee River.” Swanton argued that both towns were “vestiges” of “a northern and southern division of Creek tribes” who had lived along the fringes of ancient Cherokee territory. John P. Brown stated that Tomotley comes from the Creek *Tamaha-tala* meaning “hewed timber town.” If the name does indeed mean “hewed timber town” in Muscogee, this may tell a story of culturally Creek settlements among the Cherokee as well as a Creek diffusion of European influenced construction techniques, as no southeastern Indians were known to utilize hewn log construction prior to European influence. This town name reinforces Charles Hicks’ assertion that Peachtree Valley was the southern edge of the ancient Cherokee homeland and the presence of Creek cultural influence in Peachtree Valley is strongly suggested.¹⁸

¹⁸ Baden, *Tomotley: An Eighteenth Century Cherokee Village*, 18-19; William Bartram, *The Travels of William Bartram*, ed. Francis Harper, (Athens & London: 1998), 236; *HMSFC*, 534; Swanton, *The Indians of the Southeastern United States*, 189-190; Brown, *Old Frontiers*, 545; Rowena McClinton, “Notable Person in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks,” *Journal of Cherokee Studies* 27, no. 1 (Fall, 1981): 24; Witthoft, “A Cherokee Economic Botany From Western North Carolina,” 116. Rowena McClinton notes that “Tomatley is listed on the Hiwassee River on the map of the Grant Expedition, on other maps it is listed on Valley River which flows into the Hiwassee...not the same as the Overhill Town in Tennessee where Attacullaculla, was born.” Bartram’s town lists “9 Tomothle... 12 Clennuse... over the Jore (Nantahala) mountains.” Bartram also lists among the lower Hiwassee towns, “...28 Tamahle ...Overhill towns on the Tanase or Cherokee river 5 towns.” The town of the same name on the Little Tennessee river was where Atakullakulla was chief in what was the western or Overhill section of the Cherokee Nation. On modern maps a Valley River community is still known as Tomatola, a spelling that is also found on older maps.

Another important place along the Valley River is *Tlanusi'yi*, “the leech place.” This is probably the “Clennuse” found on Bartram’s 1765 list, a name he heard spoken enough to recognize as a place, which he listed as the twelfth town along the Valley River. The leech place is “a deep hole” in Valley river with a “ledge of rock running across the stream” used as a bridge. Mooney wrote that “one day some men..saw a great red object, full as large as a house, lying on the rock ledge....they saw it... stretch...out along the rock...[a] great leech with red and white stripes along its body.” When the giant leech sensed the men, it was immediately “out of sight in the deep water.” The leech caused the pool to boil and “a great column of white spray...would have swept them into the water” had the men remained where they were standing moments before. So many other people were washed away, “until the people were afraid to go across the ledge.” Eventually, one “young fellow” who was not afraid “put on his finest buckskin...and [went] out upon the ledge” singing,

Tlanu'si gane'ga digi'gage, Dakwa'nitlaste'sti.

I'll tie red leech skins, On my legs for garters.

The water boiled and a column of spray washed the young fellow into the river, never to be seen again. This tale conveys a kind of moral about boasting and foolish taunting. This tale also shows how singing was perceived as an important means of communicating within the Cherokee world. If an individual had something to say to the non-human world around them or needed to invoke the power that words themselves conveyed, whether he was a trained *Ulistu'li*, a conjurer, or a lay member of society, singing was an effective means of doing so. Cherokee singing was sometimes patterned after bird song and animal mimicry and was a powerful form of language. The tale of

Tlanusi'yi expressed in subtle layers multiple aspects of Cherokee ways of knowing about a particular place associated with an under world animal.¹⁹

Gwal'ga'hi, “Frog Place,” is the Cherokee name for the town where, as Mooney was informed by James Wafford in the 1890's, a group of Natchez families “were all in one place” during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There is no other mention or documentation of a wholly Natchez town anywhere else in the Peachtree Valley. The conclusion that the town *Gwal'ga'hi* was the Cherokee name for what later became known as “Notchee Town” seems likely. The site of “Notchee Town,” which later became the Valley Town Baptist Mission, lies on the north bank of the Hiwassee River, directly across from a deep pool. The name *Gwal'ga'hi* would be fitting for the shallower north side of the river that is excellent habitat for the common pond frog. The name *gwal'ga*, is “probably onomatopoeic” and representative of the “duck-like hoarse clacking sound” made by the pond frog, which is usually active “before the ice has melted off the ponds.” The association of the settlement with the first animal sounds of spring demonstrates an important pattern of seasonal sounds derived from animal habitats in Cherokee place-naming. The particular site of “Notchee Town” also held spiritual significance as will be discussed later.²⁰

¹⁹ HMSFC, 329-330, 435, 468; Bartram, *Travels*, 236; Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 108, 323-324. Fradkin lists *dlanusi* as the Cherokee name for “leech”: Linnean nomenclature, *annelida hirudinea*. Bartram's “Clennuse” is listed in the order of towns where the name would be if it had actually been a town “over the Jore mountains (Nantahala Mountains).” The town of Murphy, where an important iron forge was first constructed, was established near the new Fort Butler in 1836 through a provision in the New Echota treaty. Fort Butler became one of the primary removal forts where Valley Towns and Out Towns Cherokee were forcibly gathered in 1838.

²⁰ HMSFC, 387; Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 137. *Gwal'ga*, the common pond frog, the same species also commonly called the wood frog, is the species *Rana sylvatica*.

These place names delineate some aspects of a practical naming system that demonstrate modes of Cherokee knowledge transmission, seasonal cycles of sound, animal habitat, cultural interaction, and a sacred geography of “mythologized” landscapes where particular sites held specific importance and purpose. Charles Hicks singled out the upper-Hiwassee settlements in *Aquohee* district as the southern edge of the ancient Cherokee homeland. The Peachtree Valley may have always been considered a region where long-standing intercultural activities were important and intentionally maintained. A sustained connection between the upper Hiwassee in Peachtree Valley and the Natchez, who retained elements of ancient Mississippian traditions, seems likely to have been one reason the Cherokee welcomed the Natchez there during the eighteenth century. The Natchez, from the lower Mississippi, and the mountain Cherokee probably had interactions predating by centuries or millennia the arrival of Europeans. Peachtree Valley was an important place where the Cherokee seem to have invited and encouraged cultural diversity as a means of acquiring knowledge, trade connections, and harmonious relationships with non-Cherokees.²¹

Rabbit and the “Encrypted Encyclopedia” of Cherokee Culture

Cherokee social harmony depended on a “system of categories that opposed and balanced one another.” Cherokees inherited categorizations of the world that counted plants, animals, rivers, and mountains as members of a functional system where human behavior was a potentially unbalancing force. Social systems, which included non-humans, were geared toward *tohi*, the proper, balanced state of all life. The health of any member of the system affected the health of every member, connections whites

²¹ *PMVS*, 12; Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology*, 14, 70; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 65-68, 77-78.

categorized as superstition or magic. The Cherokee understood and acknowledged these relationships through prescribed responsibilities of behavior, ritual, and ceremony. The cultural transmission of categorizations and the perceived functions and effects of ritual and daily behavior produced a generational legacy of observation and adaptation that has remained a central element of Cherokee cultural survival. The complex connections between human belief, behavior, and ecological relationships can be understood through what historian Steven David Swearingin has termed an “encrypted encyclopedia” of Cherokee cultural associations.²²

Daily relationships with the unique diversity of plant and animal life in the Southern Appalachians generated patterns of Cherokee thinking and behavior that were transmitted through a culturally “encrypted encyclopedia” of associations. These daily relationships were based on practical experience interpreted through cosmological belief.²³ The Cherokee scattered the seeds of favored wild plants, cultivated crops, and harbored particular animal relationships based on observed behavior, ease of hunting, usefulness of the animal products, the quantity of game, perceived qualities that were

²² *PMVS*, 51-57; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 8-9; Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology*, 18-19; Albanese, “Exploring Regional Religion,” 371; Altman and Belt, “*Tohi*: The Cherokee Concept of Well-Being,” 11, 19-22; Steven David Swearingin, *A Reassessment of Cherokee Identity Consciousness During the Colonial Era: Myth, Historiography, and Material Culture*, (dissertation History, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2005), 117.

²³ Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 97; Albanese, “Exploring Regional Religion,” 352-353, 358-361; Swearingin, *A Reassessment of Cherokee Identity Consciousness During the Colonial Era*, 115-121; Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology*, 16-19; Clara Sue Kidwell, “Native American Systems of Knowledge,” in *A Companion to American Indian History*, Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, eds., (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 87-88, 98-99; Richard White, “Indian Peoples and the Natural World: Asking the Right Questions,” in *Rethinking American Indian History*, Donald L. Fixico, ed., (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 89, 91-92, 95.

believed to transfer to humanity through ingestion and ritualized behavior, and cosmological relationships with non-human beings. The broad range of human activity made humans a major force in ecosystems, especially in fertile river bottoms like the Peachtree Valley where population centers developed. Through successful and effective processes of balancing behavior, Cherokee perceptions of humans, plants, animals, and the landscape shaped larger eco-systems.²⁴

In Cherokee cosmology humans had once overpopulated and crowded the animals, slaughtering them and treating them disrespectfully. “In revenge” the animals came up with “a host of illnesses to thin the number of humans,” and plants created “a remedy for every affliction” sent by the animals. Human and animal relationships were not always negative, but they were a direct result of humanity’s unbalancing behaviors in the past. Historic accounts of Cherokee storytelling serve as a window into the tightly woven web of associations that constitute Cherokee knowledge systems. Some particular relationships with plants and animals relevant to Peachtree Valley involve rabbits, rattlesnakes, deer, honey locust, river cane, and two “mythical,” or “anomalous animals,”

²⁴ HMSFC, 250, 434-442; Barbara R. Duncan, *Living Stories of the Cherokee*, (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 2; William L. Anderson, Jane L. Brown, and Anne F. Rogers, *The Payne-Butrick Papers (PBP)*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 4: 26; William H. Banks, Jr., *Plants of The Cherokee: Medicinal, Edible, and Useful Plants of the Eastern Cherokee Indians*, (Gatlinburg, TN: Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2004), 7; Rowena McClinton, “To Ascertain the Mind and Circumstance of the Cherokee Nation, Springplace, Georgia, 1805-1821,” (master’s thesis, Western Carolina University, 1992), 87-88; Carrie Ann McLachlan, “Cherokee Cosmology,” (master’s thesis, Western Carolina University, 1999), 68-72, 58-59; Altman and Belt, “*Tohi*: The Cherokee Concept of Well-Being,”¹⁴.

ukte'na and *usdadli*. The example of Rabbit in Cherokee storytelling is especially useful in demonstrating the complexity of associations in Cherokee thinking.²⁵

Cherokees made a host of associations with rabbits that were interwoven with other plant and animal relationships, shaping thinking about myriad aspects of daily life. As Swearingin has stated, "for Cherokees past and present, Rabbit is a notational package of cultural understanding that facilitates access into an encrypted encyclopedia of possible behaviors, appropriate and inappropriate, just as the folk stories themselves serve as windows into social explanations for observed phenomena while defining socially acceptable responses to them."²⁶ Rabbit is "always [a] trickster and deceiver, generally malicious, but often beaten at his own game by those whom he had intended to victimize."²⁷ This characterization of rabbits connects the animal's behavior and physical characteristics with perceived powers and Cherokee ways of thinking and behaving. Rabbit was known for being "so tricky that he could usually make the other animals believe" whatever he claimed. The cosmological character of Rabbit is involved in many

²⁵ Altman and Belt, "*Tohi: The Cherokee Concept of Well-Being*," 14; Mooney, "Cherokee Theory and Practice of Medicine," *The Journal of American Folklore* 3, no. 8, (Jan-Mar., 18): 46; Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 455-456, 147; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 165.

²⁶ Swearingin, *A Reassessment of Cherokee Identity Consciousness During the Colonial Era: Myth, Historiography, and Material Culture*, 117, 116-118.

²⁷ HMSFC, 262; T.J. Holland, personal conversation, notes in possession of author; David Cozzo, personal conversation, March 1, 2012, notes in possession of author. In James Mooney's collected Cherokee material, he states that Rabbit (*Tsistu*) is the "first and most prominent" in the animal myths. Holland says there is an order to the myths than convey even deeper information in the proper sequence and Mooney's collection is out of order, losing much of the meaning and significance. A larger species of "swamp hare" existed in lower altitudes of the mountains. This rabbit was reportedly three feet high, very fast, and not inclined to flee immediately from humans. This species was probably extinct in Cherokee country before 1800.

of the origin stories about other animals, including “How the Possum Lost its Beautiful Tail,” “How the Wildcat Caught the Gobbler,” and “How the Deer got His Horns.”²⁸

Stories about Rabbit can subtly express details about Cherokee ideals, such as respect and deference to dance and song leaders who were “well entertained” wherever they went. In “The Rabbit Escapes from the Wolves,” Rabbit escapes due to the wolves’ belief that he was “a great song leader.” Furthermore, Rabbit stories can convey the changing and adaptive nature of Cherokee song and dance traditions, as when the wolves “wanted to learn the latest dance.”²⁹ *Tsistu-yi*, Rabbit-place, was the location of the rabbit townhouse. Cherokees might visit the place for specific purposes, practicing particular behaviors. The strong cultural associations of the cosmological character Rabbit with the actual animal and the place where all rabbits attended council informed proper behaviors when hunting rabbits, when in the presence of rabbits, and when visiting a site associated with rabbits.³⁰

Rabbit characteristics could also be imparted temporarily to humans. Cherokee ball players were forbidden to eat rabbit meat within seven days of a ball game because rabbits were “easily confused in running.” However, ball players might eat a stew of “rabbit sinews” which would imbue players with the rabbit’s leaping ability. In Mooney’s collected version of “What Became of the Rabbit,” his informant stated that “Rabbit did not go up to *Galunlati*, glossed as “up above” and “Heaven,” because he was

²⁸ HMSFC, 262, 266, 269, 275, 448-449; Duncan, *Living Stories of the Cherokee*, 101-102.

²⁹ HMSFC, 274, 450. This tale is from Mooney’s informant in Oklahoma, James Wafford.

³⁰ HMSFC, 407, 431, 448, 449; “How the Wildcat caught the Gobblers,” *Cherokee Advocate*, December 18, 1845. *Tsistu ’yi* is in Swain County North Carolina, and is now known as Gregory Bald,

“too mean to be with the other animals,” possibly explaining why rabbits are so numerous on the earth, while exemplifying the maliciousness of this trickster character.³¹

Mooney commented in the 1890’s that, “it is probable that many myths told now only for amusement are really worn down fragments of ancient sacred traditions.” Cherokee oral traditions, culturally inherited skills, and ways of thinking continuously incorporated new information in specifically Cherokee ways linking a network of new usable ideas and practices with traditions of behavior and daily living.³² Centuries of Cherokees’ knowledge acquisition and understandings of ecological relationships made life experience a valuable resource. When warfare, disease, drought, and other upheavals occurred, Cherokees turned to the experience and knowledge of elders and strong leaders who were usually eloquent speakers and capable moderators. In new circumstances and situations, Cherokees drew on these same repositories of knowledge to understand how best to categorize and incorporate new information. Adapting the encrypted information of cultural understandings embodied by wise members of society was just as much a means of sustaining Cherokee ways of knowing, as it was a means of accommodating new ideas. Some historical changes in Cherokee culture may therefore be understood as

³¹ HMSFC, 262, 452, 234, 467; Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 291-294; Mooney notes that in Creek stories, Rabbit is essentially the same character. Mooney’s version is from his informant in North Carolina, *Suyeta*. After Removal, coyote became a trickster classifier as well.

³² Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 292-293. Fradkin connects animal stories with the transmission of cultural beliefs and practices through “the prankster Rabbit, in comparison with the joking between certain Cherokee kinfolk; theft, e.g., the stealing of fire and tobacco, probably analogous to the strong belief in and great fear of witches, who robbed individuals of their souls and life spans; and conjuration, e.g., conjuring acts of the Terrapin, parallel to the important role of magic.” Some modes of transmitting information may have also been a means of concealing information, denying those from outside the Cherokee community access to culturally derived associations and meaning, rendering outsiders unable to decode the encrypted information

a mode of cultural persistence, rather than cultural declension. Among southeastern Indians, categorizations of the world were usually similar enough to facilitate immediate communication and understanding of newly transmitted ideas. When the Cherokees' generations of accumulated knowledge met European worldviews, categorizations rarely aligned and shifts in categorizations became necessary to facilitate understanding and interaction. Interpretations of new circumstances were directed by trusted and wise Cherokees, men and women, who best understood the complexity of balancing and harmonizing human relationships with plants, animals, and places.³³

Stories about Rabbit are just one example of how important information and ideas were transmitted. Other Southeastern indigenous groups such as the Catawba, Creek, and Natchez had similar conceptions of the world transmitted through their own languages and traditions as a result of sustained interactions. The shared cultural heritage of ancient Mississippian ways of thinking was also an important resource that linked similar knowledge systems and sustained relationships between particular indigenous groups. But Cherokee society's population, geographic location, and success in daily living, medicine, and warfare defined a cohesive social polity that was culturally unified and distinct from other indigenous groups. One result of this distinction was a strongly valued heritage of understandings rooted in specific ecological relationships. In Cherokee society the most "educated" individuals had knowledge of balance and tension between humanity and other living beings, including "spirits," "ghosts," and natural forces. All of these living beings were present and perceptible in the immediate environment if one possessed the proper knowledge. Culturally specific knowledge

³³ *HMSFC*, 250-252; Witthoft, "A Cherokee Economic Botany From Western North Carolina," 129.

delineated proper behaviors, responsibilities, and purpose for every member of society, but elders were consulted in decision-making processes. Specific sets of Cherokee knowledge can serve as a window into Cherokee thinking and broader southeastern cultural connections that shared a Mississippian heritage but varied due in part to geography and distinctions of place. Europeans consistently offended southeastern indigenous peoples with improper behavior, a common situation illuminated by Europeans' reactions to rattlesnakes in the Southeast. A detailed discussion of rattlesnakes demonstrates deeply interwoven aspects of Cherokee, and Southeastern, ways of knowing that were, and are, thoroughly confounding to Euro-American sensibilities. The detailed discussion that follows is intended to illustrate the complex, rich, and far-ranging web of cultural associations that informed Cherokee thought and action.³⁴

Rattlesnakes Weaving Through the Cherokee World

Stories and historical information about rattlesnakes, *utso'nati* or *ujonati*, demonstrate one thread in the intricate matrix of ideas referred to as the encrypted encyclopedia of Cherokee thinking. Cherokees in the Peachtree Valley would have been very familiar with rattlesnakes, and all southeastern Indians had important relationships with snakes, the primary animals of the underworld. Fradkin states that *inada*, the Cherokee classification for snake “constitutes the smallest life form class” in the Cherokee zoological system.³⁵ Two “apocryphal” or “anomalous” *inada* will be

³⁴ Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 244; *PMVS*, 32-47, 51-57; T.J. Holland, personal conversation February 6, 2012, notes in possession of author; Thomas, “Cherokee Values and World View,” 4-5, 11.

³⁵ Fradkin, *Cherokee Zoology*, 455-456. The Cherokee names *utsonati* and *ujonati* come from different dialects, both gloss as “it is rattling” or “it has a bell.” Sub-

discussed in connection with rattlesnakes, *ukte'na*, the “horned serpent,” and *usdadli*, the “White Fawn-Imitator.” Both of these last two creatures, considered mythical by European categories, were as real to the Cherokee as rattlesnakes.³⁶

In the mid-1700's, when a young William Bartram killed a “six-foot rattler,” then dragged the dead animal into the English army camp where Governor Grant had “the snake served up in several dishes,” the Indians present were in an uproar.³⁷ Because European categorizations of the world did not include complex landscape relationships, the Englishmen could not understand the Indians' reaction to the death of a dangerous animal. For Southeastern Indians rattlesnakes were “supreme among all serpents” and “constituted an integral part of beliefs and rituals.” The “magnanimous creature” was the “most powerful animal of the Under World [and] maintained some control over animals

groupings within *inada* were probably not recognized and each of twelve individual snakes were given their own isolated class, defined in zoology as “monotypic generic taxa.” Nine of these snake classifications involve “genuine indigenous animals,” which correspond to ten western scientific species, meaning that two different species of snakes shared a name in the Cherokee zoological system. Three classifications are considered “apocryphal” creatures. The substantially intact and documented ways of knowing and classification systems from 18th and 19th century Cherokee society has allowed historical and anthropological interpretation where most other southeastern systems were subsumed or lost for various reasons, not the least of which was population decline as a result of European introduced disease.

³⁶ Fradkin, *Cherokee Zoology*, 455-456, 147; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 165. Fradkin gives *unajonati* as the plural form of *ujonati* and *utsonati*, and *unaketani* as the plural form of *uktena*, which glosses as ‘far-eyed’ or keen-eyed,” compounded from *akta* ‘eyeball’ or ‘looker’ + *ina* ‘far.’ Other “anomalous creatures included the ‘water cougar,” “and various giant animals such as the giant leech of *Tlanusi'yi*, *Tlanu'wa*, the giant hawk, and giant turtles, most of which are associated with certain deep river pools, rock faces, and specific locations. There is some limited evidence to suggest that rattlesnakes in particular may have grown to immense size prior to the nineteenth century, providing a basis for *uktena* and *usdad'li* stories.

³⁷ Bartram, *Travels*, xviii, 164-165, 169-170, 609. The Indians present in central Florida were Seminoles, a group that shared many aspects of the southeastern cultural complex, especially the reverence for rattlesnakes. These Seminole suggested scratching Bartram and others to release the bad blood contaminated by killing the rattlesnake.

as well as plants of the other realms.”³⁸ Rattlesnakes’ feared ability to hypnotize prey, their associations with rock crevices and under world doorways, and the genuine danger of the venomous bite gave the animal considerable power. But Cherokee beliefs about rattlesnakes were centered in reverent respect and conceptions of kinship and clan affiliations, not just fear. Killing a poisonous snake, the most practical thing to do by European logic, upset harmony and balance that had wide ranging consequences in indigenous southeastern and Cherokee logic.³⁹

In Cherokee thinking rattlesnakes had once been human, and as revered relatives they showed a modicum of respect to humanity by always warning of their presence with a rattle. In 1889, Mooney wrote, “few Cherokee will venture to kill [a rattlesnake] except under absolute necessity, and even then the crime must be atoned for by asking pardon of the snake ghost...according to a set formula.”⁴⁰ Rattlesnakes were “the leaders of the snakes and epitomized the animals of the under world.” To kill one was also to “destroy one of the most prized ornaments of the thunder god.” Rattlesnakes were “regarded with fear and veneration, and strict measures were followed so as to prevent offending or physically harming them.” Certain dances and ceremonies were “performed only in late autumn and winter when the snakes were hibernating” so as not to disturb the snakes with

³⁸ Bartram, *Travels*, 167; Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 333.

³⁹ *HMSFC*, 253, 297-301; Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 335; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 136; T.J. Holland, personal conversation, February 6, 2012, notes in possession of author; James Mooney and Frans M. Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript: Cherokee Sacred Formulas and Medicinal Prescriptions*, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1932) 28, 176-177, 230-231; David Cozzo, “Ethnobotanical Classification System and Medical Ethnobotany of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (ECSEBCI),” (PhD dissertation, University of Georgia, 2004), 270. David Cozzo notes that the Swimmer Manuscript “was predominantly based on Olbrechts’ field work and little of Mooney’s data on the use of plants were included in the finished product.”

⁴⁰ *HMSFC*, 436.

loud songs and dances.⁴¹ Killing a rattlesnake was avoided “except under emergency conditions,” and wearing a rattlesnake skin could be punished with lightning strikes. If such an emergency arose “one was required to recite the proper prayers for obtaining pardon, as a means of placating the snake ghost, so that the relatives of the deceased animal would not seek revenge.”⁴²

Potentially unbalancing consequences did not end with appeasing the snakes alone, as rattlesnakes, deer, and ginseng “were said to be allies,” each with their own exceptional powers. “Any harm to one of them was avenged by all three.”⁴³ If someone who killed a rattlesnake did not perform the prescribed behaviors, the guilty individual or members of his clan would be sought out by snake and deer ghosts for revenge, the efficacy of ginseng medicine might fail him, and the likelihood of success in hunting deer, or utilizing medicine associated with deer would also greatly decrease.⁴⁴

“Emergency conditions” sufficiently dire to require killing a rattlesnake might arise “in times of epidemic” when “a roasted rattlesnake was hung in each household.” The male doctor of the household “would chew a piece [of the roasted snake meat] then mix it with water, which he would spit upon the bodies of the other family members,

⁴¹ Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 333, 335-338; *HMSFC*, 295, 436.

⁴² Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 336; Lisa Lefler, *Under the Rattlesnake: Cherokee Health and Resiliency*, (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama, 2009), 2.

⁴³ Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 165, 341-342, 371, 499; David Cozzo, “Poison in the Tooth: Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Century Accounts of Cherokee Snakebite Remedies,” *Journal of Cherokee Studies* XXVII (2004), 5; Fradkin, *Cherokee Zoology*, 333.

⁴⁴ Mooney and Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript: Cherokee Sacred Formulas and Medicinal Prescriptions*, 28, 176-177, 230-231; ECSEBCI, 394. James Mooney, “Cherokee Theory and Practice of Medicine,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 3, no. 1, (Jan.-Mar., 1890): 45-47; Cozzo, “Poison in the Tooth,” 4; Hudson, *The Southeast Indians*, 128, 414. Rheumatism was commonly believed to have been caused by a deer ghost that had been killed without the hunter “asking pardon” for the act.

thereby ensuring protection from the disease.”⁴⁵ A rattlesnake would also be killed to obtain “essential components of Cherokee materia medica.” A tooth was used “for scratching...scarification, [and] bleeding...preliminary to applying medicine in the treatment of certain illnesses.” Oil extracted from fat in the lower body of an adult rattlesnake was used as a remedy for “rheumatism and sore joints.” Rattlesnake rattles filled important roles in particular rituals and song. Cherokee doctors and conjurers would kill a rattlesnake to procure these important materials only after following strict ritual prescriptions of song and prayer.⁴⁶

A live rattlesnake was employed in some divination rituals. “A person trained for holy office would perform particular [rattlesnake] handling maneuvers” that kept him from being bitten. The snake handler could determine personal longevity and future health based on how “the snake directed his course.”⁴⁷ If an individual was bitten, the Cherokee had “a wide array of remedies” and formulas for snake bites. There are many sacred formulas with “applications of medicinal plant decoctions” for treating snakebites. Numerous plants were included in decoctions such as “old tobacco,” Seneca snake root, white snakeroot, various species called “wild horehound,” Saint Andrews cross, one or more species of sunflower and black-eyed Susan, heal all, lousewort, early meadow rue, rattlesnake master, the roots of yellow poplar, hog peanut, cocklebur, and many others. Dreams of being bitten by a rattlesnake were treated as actual bites, but actual bites were

⁴⁵ Mooney and Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscripts*, 296.

⁴⁶ *HMSFC*, 295-296, 334; Fradkin, *Cherokee Zoology*, 338, 337; Mooney, “Cherokee Theory and Practice of Medicine,” 47-48; James Mooney, “The Cherokee Ball Play,” *American Anthropologist* 3, no. 2, 122; Mooney and Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript*, 70, 202, 212.

⁴⁷ *PBP: Vol. 3*, 242; Fradkin, *Cherokee Zoology*, 337.

commonly spoken of as being “nothing more than a scratch” as a means of downplaying the power and danger of rattlesnakes.⁴⁸

Other animal spirits might be invoked to assist in sucking out rattlesnake venom. One exceptional instance of invoking animal spirits is found in Formula 47 in the *Swimmer Manuscript*, “This is the Medicine if Snakes Have Bitten Them.” The formula was reserved for a physical snakebite, not a dream bite. Formula 47 demonstrates changes in the learned information of Cherokee doctors, as well as changes in medicinal plant use, the powers of apocryphal animals, the healing power of white animals, and the importance of prescribed ritual behavior in effective medicine. Mooney translated the incantation as,

Now then! Ha, now thou hast come to listen, thou White Fawn-Imitator. It was but a snake (which) has advanced its everliving teeth to (bite) him, as it was lying stretched out about the path. The teeth have been broken and made weak. Ha, now Thou White Fawn Imitator, quickly thou hast come to suck it for him.

Now then! Ha, now thou hast come to listen, thou White Lizard, thou wizard. It was but a snake (which) has advanced its everliving teeth to (bite) him, as it was lying stretched out about the path. The teeth have been broken and made weak. Ha, now, thou White Lizard, quickly it has been sucked.

Mooney’s primary informant did not know the meaning of the Cherokee word *gi’na*, the first animal’s name in the formula, but other informants were able to provide deeper explanations. *Gi’na* is an abbreviation of *agi’na ayeli’sgi*, translated as “White Fawn –Imitator.” This was a “mythic kind of serpent,” an apocryphal animal that would imitate “the bleat of a fawn so as to ensnare its mother, [which the] serpent catches...by

⁴⁸ *HMSFC*, 295; Cozzo, “Poison in the Tooth, 3-5, 6-10. The possible and probable plant remedies for snakebites are discussed at length in Cozzo’s article. The common names listed here are an attempt to simplify the ethnobotanical possibilities while still representing the wide array of potential remedies that were utilized historically by the Cherokee.

merely striking out its huge tongue.”⁴⁹ Doctors would appeal to this serpent to “lick or suck the wound.” The Lizard invoked here is probably the common alligator lizard, which puffs its chest in and out, making a sucking sound as it basks in the sun.⁵⁰

Formula 47 also utilizes “ordinary” tobacco juice, as by the time Mooney recorded this formula, “old tobacco,” *Nicotiana rustica*, was scarce and reserved for the “more important” ceremonies or mixed sparingly with “ordinary” *Nicotiana tobaccum*, demonstrating potential variability in particular plant medicines, provided the doctor strictly adhered to other prescribed behaviors. Prescribed behavior, in the form of singing or chanting the proper words, the proper number of times (four), combined with the proper materials, utilized in the proper way all worked together for an effective treatment. Formula 47 also demonstrates how some forgotten reference to the apocryphal serpent, “White Fawn-Imitator,” *gina*, might be retained as an element of an effective

⁴⁹ Mooney and Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript*, 240-241; Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas*, 302-303, 462, 543; Fradkin, *Cherokee Zoology*, 147-148, 475, Table 7-7, 455-456, 235. Fradkin records the name ‘fawn imitator’-*agina ahyelisgi* as a lexical synonym derived from *a* 3 person singular + *gina* ‘young animal’ + ‘*hyel* ‘imitate’ or ‘mock,’ *ahyeli’a* ‘he/she is imitating him/her/it, literally ‘fawn-imitator’. Fradkin also notes the more common name *usdadli* for this apocryphal snake. The “mythical footsnake,” an animal with “peculiar feet, or suckers,” and the “southern hoop-snake, or rainbow snake” *Farancia erytrogamma*, which was a lowland species not present in Cherokee country, are included in the same monotypic generic taxa classification *usdadli*, suggesting that the Cherokee may have exaggerated and conflated characteristics of the hoop snake with other snakes in the form of the “fawn imitator.” Mooney refers to the hoop snake as *ustutli*, and described it as moving by strides or jerks like a measuring-worm. James Wafford was a primary informant for Mooney’s description and translation “White fawn imitator,” and Mooney is in turn the source for Fradkin. Fradkin also notes the special powers for “good” magic and healing attributed to white animals.

⁵⁰ Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 140, 486 Table 7-13, 470 7-10, 235. The alligator lizard ranges from gray-brown to white and is very common in Cherokee country. The puffing and sucking of this animal are a method for heating the blood more quickly. Fradkin notes the reverence of Cherokee for white animals. *Tiyoha’li* is the Cherokee classification for lizard, *aja di*, *atsa’di*, is the Cherokee name for *Sceloporus undulates hyacinthinus*, the common alligator lizard, or northern fence lizard.

formula. The primary informant's lack of knowledge about a particular element of a formula he still used suggests a long history of effective use of the formula as a whole process and also demonstrates the "largely archaic, metaphorical, euphemistic...purposely obscure" language used in sacred formulas. The phrase "it was but a snake" also reiterates the habit of downplaying the potentially lethal danger of a rattlesnake bite.⁵¹

The use of ginseng is notably absent from all of the recorded snakebite remedies and formulas. Neither the cosmological matrix of Cherokee knowledge nor generationally accumulated practical experience of use revealed any efficacy from ginseng in cases of snakebite. This likely reinforced perceptions of the alliance between ginseng and rattlesnakes. Ginseng plants received similarly reverent treatment to that of rattlesnakes. Olbrechts and Mooney noted "there is no other plant that is treated with so much respect by the laity as well as by the medicine men." Just as rattlesnakes were only killed after the performance of proper behaviors and prayers, the "medicine man would often recite a prayer to *Unetlano 'I* (Great Man or the Apportioner) in which permission was humbly begged to gather the plant."⁵² The Cherokee name for ginseng, *a'tali guli*, glosses as "it climbs the mountain," a name which describes the plant's active relationship with its preferred home and transmits knowledge about where this powerful plant could be found.⁵³

⁵¹ Mooney and Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript*, 240-241; Fradkin, *Cherokee Zoology*, 457-458, Figure 7-4; Altman and Belt, "Tohi: The Cherokee Concept of Well-Being," 11.

⁵² Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript*, in Cozzo 210-211.

⁵³ ECSEBCI, 209-210. The name is a simple composite of the words *a tali* meaning "a high mountain" and *guli* meaning "it climbs." There are two native species of ginseng in the Southern Appalachians, the larger rooted *Panax quinquefolium*, which

Mooney recorded several means of processing and using ginseng, including dried root powder, chewed root juice, and hot and cold water infusions “used for headaches, cramps, and female troubles,” fits, apoplexy, stomach problems, and, with other ingredients, for bold hives, “short breath,” a sore side, colic, and “for fainting persons.” Olbrechts stated ginseng was “not only used in curing but also ... in love medicine,” while Henry Timberlake claimed ginseng “never fails curing the most inveterate venereal disease, which, however, [the Cherokee] never had occasion for ... before the arrival of Europeans.” Ginseng was “one of the most important plants in Cherokee medical ethnobotany” and the plant’s association with rattlesnakes, the leader of the under world animals, and deer, the leader of the four-footed animals, supports assertions of a similar status for ginseng among the plants.⁵⁴ In some way, Cherokees perceived the alliance between rattlesnakes, deer, and ginseng through experience, observation, and cosmological connections that may have been more evident at a time when the entire Appalachian Summit ecosystem was in a more diverse, healthy, and balanced state. Whatever the case may be, the power of the three allies was present and perceptible in daily Cherokee life and demonstrates one of the ways Cherokee people attempted to insert themselves into previously existing relationship networks.

has been over harvested and endangered, and the small, round rooted *Panax trifolium*. Both species are given the same characteristics and usefulness in Cherokee plant lore.

⁵⁴ ECSEBCI, 210; Lt. Henry Timberlake, *The Memoirs of Lt. Henry Timberlake: The Story of a Soldier, Adventurer, and Emissary to the Cherokees, 1756-1765*, ed. Duane H. King, (Cherokee, NC: Museum of the Cherokee Indian Press, 2007), 24; William Banks, *Plants of the Cherokee: Medicinal, Edible, and Useful Plants of the Eastern Cherokee Indians*, ed. by Steve Kemp, (Gatlinburg, TN: Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2004), 81-82. Cozzo cites James Mooney, “The Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees,” *Seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1891), 326.

***Ukte'na*: Mysteries, Knowledge and the “Mythologized Landscape”**

The ecological relationships established prior to humanity’s presence in the mountains defined the character and willful behavior of non-human elements in the Cherokee worldview. Every human action was laden with potential, probable, and definite consequences that might push all relationships out of balance.⁵⁵ Complex associations were a part of daily Cherokee life, shaping behavior, thought, and actions. Catherine Albanese discusses a “remythologizing” of the Cherokee landscape as Christianity and other European influences exerted social pressures that further complicated balancing systems. Remythologizing the landscape was a means of incorporating European’s Christian and scientific categories into Cherokee ways of knowing, while retaining social functionality within the parameters of Cherokee ways of thinking. Associations between rattlesnakes, deer, and ginseng, as with other networks of thinking, may have become less powerful as “remythologizing” shifted cultural categorizations. In other words, new aspects of daily life (relationships with Europeans) were emphasized as older ways of thinking (relationships with ginseng and deer) were marginalized or altered. Some series of associations became more subdued in the face of Christian thinking, but they by no means disappeared. Stories of the apocryphal animal *ukte'na* show the complexity of the mythologized landscape, the ways Cherokees shifted information sharing to adapt to relationship changes, and further illustrates the complex network of ideas associated with rattlesnakes.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ *HMSFC*, 370, 296, 452, 456; Kidwell, “Native American Systems of Knowledge,” 88-90.

⁵⁶ Albanese, “Exploring Regional Religion: A Case Study of the Eastern Cherokee,” 358-361.

Cherokees believed that Rattlesnake “was once a man...transformed to his present shape that he might save the human race from extermination by the Sun, a mission which he [Rattlesnake] accomplished successfully after [the *Ukte'na*] failed.” The rattlesnake succeeded in saving humanity first and the *Ukte'na*, “jealous and angry,” hated the people, determining to kill humans whenever he saw one. *Ukate'ni* continued to hide “in deep pools in the rivers and about lonely passes in the high mountains,” places often believed to be openings to the underworld, “places which the Cherokee call ‘Where the *Ukte'na* stays.’” As noted by Charles Hudson, the *ukte'na* “was quite real for the Cherokees.” The Cherokee spoke about *ukate'ni* in “such vivid terms” in the mid-eighteenth century that traveler James Adair was convinced *ukate'ni* existed. Missionary Daniel Butrick, in a discussion of Cherokees’ emphasis on dreams, wrote, “on starting a journey [in a dream or actually] should one see a snake called *u-ka-te-ni*, it was a sure sign of death in the family before his return.”⁵⁷

Ukate'ni were “great snake[s], as large around as a tree trunk, with horns on [their] head[s], and a bright blazing crest like a diamond upon [their] forehead[s], and scales glittering like sparks of fire...[and] rings or spots of color along [their] whole length. [They] cannot be wounded except by shooting in the seventh spot from the head,” where the monster’s heart is.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ *PBP*, 4: 103. Under world animals had an especially powerful presence in Cherokee dreams, as did water. *Ukateni* is the proper plural of *ukte'na*. Although this form has fallen out of modern usage, historical sources record the plural term often.

⁵⁸ *HMSFC*, 253, 297-301; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 166, 146-147, 356, 514; James Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968, original printing in 1775), 237-238; *PBP*, 4: 103; Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 336-337.

Mooney recorded *ukte'na* stories concerning two specific sites on the Tuckaseegee River, *Ukte'na-Tsuganun'tatsun'yi*, “where the *ukte'na* got fastened,” and *Ukte'na-Utansi'nastun'yi*, “where the *ukte'na* crawled.” The first site is where an *ukte'na* became stuck and, struggling to carry on, “pried up some large rocks,” leaving “deep scratches upon other rocks along the bank.” The second site refers to “wavy depressions said to have been made by an *ukte'na* in going up the river.”⁵⁹ Both sites lie in a gorge where the river has eroded through the high metamorphic grade granite, linking *ukte'na* to distinctive granite features and demonstrating the animal’s long history in the places that came to be inhabited by Cherokees.⁶⁰

The relationships between rattlesnakes, *ukate'ni*, and humanity were another important set of spiritual, landscape-based associations in Cherokee thinking. The importance of *ukte'na* stories to Cherokee systems of knowledge becomes evident through looking at historical accounts of the Cherokee divining crystal, or *ulunsu'ti*.⁶¹

⁵⁹ HMSFC, 410, 458-459. Cherokee speaker, scholar and language instructor, Tom Belt calls the site “about 2 miles above Deep creek, near Bryson City, in Swain county” by a Cherokee name meaning “where the *ukte'na* fought,” giving different details about events at the site. The second site was “a large rock on the Hyatt farm, on the north bank of Tuckaseegee river, about four miles above Bryson City, in Swain county” that was destroyed when the railroad was blasted on the north bank of the river in the 1870’s.

⁶⁰ Hubbard Scientific Inc., “Knoxville, Tenn.; NC; SC; GA. NI 17-1,” relief topographic map, 2002.

⁶¹ Bartram, *Travels*, 168; HMSFC, 295; Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 335, 290-295; Cozzo, “Poison in the Tooth,” 3-5; *PBP: Vol. 1*, 28, 66; Durbin Feeling, *Cherokee-English Dictionary*, 208, 203; Margaret Clelland Bender, “Reading Culture: the Cherokee Syllabary and the Eastern Cherokees,” (dissertation in Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1996), 6-7, 71; Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, 28, 37, 39; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 136-9, 144-8, 166-8, 244, 356, 357, 358, 370, 514. Belt provided the pronunciation *Ulunsuhdi* and included the definition “drinking glass or crystal.” Butrick gives the pronunciation “Ooh-lung-sah-tah, which signifies, Light that pierces through; as through a glass.” Butrick also recorded that divining crystals were sometimes referred to as “Light,” *I-ka-ka-ti*, or “Word of Wasi,” for which he provided

Henry Timberlake described the *ulunsu'ti* as the “great talisman” of the Cherokee. *Ulunsu'ti* were “grown on the head” of an *ukte'na*, or were scales from the seventh ring of golden spots on the serpent’s body. Having possession of an *ulunsu'ti* insured “success in hunting, love, rain making, and all other undertakings,” especially “life divination.”⁶² Hudson points out “the Cherokee seized upon that which was most horrible as an important source of power.” Thus, the *unlunsu'ti*, derived from *ukte'na*, were powerful, dangerous, and “formed a very essential part of the apparatus of the Ancient Cherokee Priest,” much like particular parts of a rattlesnake for doctors and conjurers. *Ulunsu'ti* were handled with great care only by a priest, called an *Ulistu'li*, who was “devoted in infancy or childhood” to the important societal role. *Ulistu'li* priests wore an *ulunsu'ti* “suspended by a string...wrapped in [deer] skin” as they traveled seasonally to towns “throughout the nation...preaching...all moral duties, and exhorting the people to avoid all evil conduct.” *Ulistu'li* were mediators between humans and the non-human beings in the world, promoting harmony and balance within all relationships.⁶³

Some *ulunsu'ti* were reverently wrapped in seven deerskins, stored in “cane basket[s] curiously wrought” or “a cane vial,” and kept in “a private house” used only for

no gloss in Cherokee. Feeling gives the translation *ajvysdi* for light, and *ulvsa?di* for glass. Bender provided the pronunciation “*u:lvhsati*,” and made the comparison that the *ulunsu'ti* was the talismanic power of the Indian, just as money is the talismanic power of whites. *Ulunsu'ti* glosses as “light that passes through,” or “transparent.”

⁶² Timberlake, *Memoirs*, 24; *HMSFC*, 459, 460-461; *PBP*, 4: 208. Mooney states that in discussing the *ulunsu'ti* in the late 1880’s, many Eastern Cherokee claimed to have made their decision to join the Confederacy based on divinations using the single *ulunsu'ti* that was known in North Carolina at the time.

⁶³ Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 136; *PBP*, 1: 28-29, 4: 97-98, 109-113, 160; David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 86.

storing powerful ceremonial objects. Butrick recorded that *ulunsu'ti* used by “civil priests were of a size smaller” than ones used in “divinations regarding war,” probably corresponding to the origin from the head or scales of an *ukte'na*. All members of the community were assembled for seasonal divining ceremonies such as the Green Corn ceremony, or the autumnal Great Moon ceremony. Community divination ceremonies also included fasting, ritual bathing and “hot house” meditation, as well as food offerings and animal sacrifice, most often consisting of a deer tongue. Each ceremony had a set of corresponding songs and dances that applied only to the specific season or ritual. The specificity of dances and songs presented a unique aural signature that, along with other ceremonial events, marked seasonal changes and lent purpose and meaning to daily life. Seasonal ceremonies connected human activity with plant and animal behavior, keeping Cherokee society in harmony.⁶⁴

Other ceremonies utilizing *ulunsu'ti* might be more arbitrarily timed, as when warriors were selected for war parties. War parties were chosen during all-night rituals in which the “diamond” shone on those who “would return safe...[and] did not shine” on those warriors who “would not return,” prophetic knowledge transmitted to humanity through the powerful relationships with *ulunsu'ti*. *Ulunsu'ti* centered ceremonies generally climaxed with the reflection and refraction of the sunrise, sunset, or sacred fire through the prismatic crystals, demonstrating relationships between divination powers

⁶⁴ *PBP*, 4: 95, 96-97, 111-113; Altman and Belt, “*Tohi*: The Cherokee concept of Well-Being,” 11, 12-14; Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 86; Nettle and Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, 87, 166-170.

granted to an *Ulistu'li*, humanity's ceremonial responsibilities, *ulunsu'ti* themselves, *ukate'ni*, sacred fire, and the sun.⁶⁵

Ukate'ni and other anomalous animals “occurred on the margins of the known world of the Cherokees.”⁶⁶ Beliefs about *ukate'ni* incorporated human relationships with the Appalachian Summit Region's granite gorges and spaces where the underlying geology dominated the landscape, such as deep river pools and exposed rock faces. *Ukte'na* stories, as a collection of encrypted cultural knowledge, exhibit a connection between this anomalous under world animal and the highest-grade geology in the Southern Appalachian region, not just in a site-specific sense, but also in the perceived power of rare high-grade quartz crystals pure enough to exhibit the characteristics described in historical accounts of *ulunsu'ti*. Mooney relates tales of the discovery of two different *ulunsu'ti* at sites where an *ukte'na* had been killed and then eaten by other animals, leaving only the *ulunsu'ti* and a few bones or antlers.⁶⁷ The discovery of a high-grade quartz crystal in the vicinity of some few animal remains was probably a distinguishing characteristic that defined an exceptionally powerful *ulunsu'ti*. Ideas about *ukate'ni* encompassed more than just the animal itself, but were interwoven with the cultural complex that intimately linked the Cherokee with the landscape.⁶⁸

Ukte'na stories also reflect knowledge and practical understanding of rattlesnakes and their habitat. The native Appalachian timber rattler is a thick-bodied snake up to six

⁶⁵ *PBP*, 1: 28-29, 3: 246-257, 254, 4: 194, 97, 160, 115-116, 118, 119, 208, 126; Frank G. Speck and Leonard Broom, *Cherokee Dance and Drama*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), 62, 63, 55; Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology*, 140-142.

⁶⁶ Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 292, 291; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 129, 166, 356, 146-147, 514; Adair, *The History of the American Indians*, 237-238.

⁶⁷ *HMSFC*, 460-462.

⁶⁸ *HMSFC*, 460-462.

feet long and four inches in diameter, although Bartram states that much larger rattlesnakes had once been common. In the mountains, these snakes are often colorful, with patterned scales that range from gold to yellow to brown and black bands and wave-like shapes, similar, if less dramatic, than descriptions of *ukate'ni* coloring.⁶⁹

Rattlesnakes den through the winter in deep caves and rock crevices, often near cliffs and exposed granite riverbanks, all places the Cherokee associated with the underworld. Some winter snake dens house hundreds of snakes that make a mass exodus from the den in spring. As a result, places near south facing granite exposures may be overrun with the venomous snakes in early spring, a biological phenomenon that models Cherokee ideas of solidarity and group response among rattlesnakes.⁷⁰ In Cherokee thinking, if a person killed a rattlesnake without adhering to proper behaviors, he would find himself “in the midst of a whole company of rattlesnakes” who warned that the “Black Rattlesnake” was being sent to avenge the unjustified death.⁷¹ Granite exposures of high metamorphic grade exist in abundance in the Southern Appalachian regions where *ukte'na* and rattlesnake stories are geographically centered. It is perhaps through long-term, intensive experience interpreted through cosmological beliefs that understandings of rattlesnake habitat and lifecycles reinforced the “apocryphal animal,”

⁶⁹ Jennifer Frick-Ruppert, *Mountain Nature: A Seasonal Natural History of the Southern Appalachians*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 114-115; Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 147; Bartram, *Travels*, 169-170. In Linnean nomenclature, the Southern Appalachian Timber Rattler is *Crotalis horridus horridus*, literally “horrible castenet.”

⁷⁰ Nancy Stranahan, “Nature Notes From the Eastern Forest,” Arc of Appalachia Preserve, <http://www.highlandssanctuary.org/nature.notes.9.rattler/nature.notes.htm>, (accessed Jan. 23, 2011); The author has on several occasions seen numerous rattlesnakes from a single vantage point near Looking Glass Rock and along the banks of the Davidson River.

⁷¹ *HMSFC*, 305-306.

ukte'na, which embodied real connections between geology and biology. It is also plausible that in the distant past rattlesnakes were positioned differently in mountain ecosystems and exhibited characteristics similar to *ukate'ni*, making them less an apocryphal animal and more a generational legacy of an actual ecologically dominant beast.⁷²

Ukate'ni, the most powerful creatures in Cherokee cosmology, existed in a web of cultural knowledge, associations that bound the Cherokee to balancing relationships with plants, animals, land, and each other. All beings had special knowledge of specific roles, responsibilities in maintaining harmony and balance. Each role named specific places, plant and animal powers, and times. The interactions along this web of processes constituted the fabric of the knowable world within a larger world of mysteries where behavior had potentially powerful or disastrous consequences, what anthropologists Peter Nabakov and Kirstin Erickson have called “the enchanted world.” At the limits of cultural knowledge, where physical and spiritual spaces such as the underworld dominated the web, Cherokee categorizations utilized “enchanted world” mysteries to define unknowns. These same blurred boundaries were prime ground for new knowledge acquisition. Humanity was not the ultimate ecological presence, and maintaining adaptive processes generated best ways of communicating, understanding, and categorizing.⁷³

At the same time, humanity was responsible for a central role in the tense cosmic power structure that was potentially unbalanced because of human intrusion. The

⁷² Hudson, *The Southeast Indians*, 145-146.

⁷³ Peter Nabakov, *Where the Lightning Strikes: The Lives of American Indian Sacred Places*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 112-115; Thomas, “Cherokee Values and Worldview,” 1-4; Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 82-88.

Ulistu'li were one of the human vessels of powerful knowledge about humanity's role in this cosmic power structure. *Ukte'na* and *utsona'ti* were only two of the many sources of spiritual power associated with secret knowledge and mysteries. By the nineteenth century, as Cherokee traditions adapted to Christianized categorizations and ways of thinking, *Ulistu'li* roles shifted to “Jugglers and Doctors,” who became the repositories of “more knowledge of [Cherokee] Traditions than any others.”⁷⁴

Thunder's Necklace, Lightning, Honey Locust, and Ball Play

Rattlesnakes were also known as “the thunder's necklace,” an “enchanted world” association that links rattlesnakes with lightning and thunder, the honey locust tree, and the ball game. Mooney's collected story “Thunder's Necklace” tells of the third son of Thunder who was born “in the east” and suffered from scrofula, which caused sores all over his body.⁷⁵ The boy headed west, to find his father, “a great doctor.” When he finally arrived at Thunder's house, he was invited inside and shown to a seat with “long, sharp thorns of the honey locust, with the points all sticking up.” But when the boy sat

⁷⁴ Hudson, *The Southeast Indians*, 145-146; *PBP*, 1: 28-29, 3: 246-257, 4: 194, 97, 160, 115-116, 119, 208; Charles Hicks to John Ross, March 1, 1826, in *The Papers of Chief John Ross: 1807-1839 (PCJR)*, ed. Gary Moulton, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 1: 115-116; *Ulistu'li* powers and secret knowledge varied from place to place, usually linked with the individual's clan affiliations, but all *Ulistu'li* utilized powers derived from *ukte'na* and *utsona'ti*.

⁷⁵ George P. Wood M.D., and E.H. Ruddock, M.D., *Vitalogy: or Encyclopedia of Health and Home Adapted for Home and Family Use*, (Chicago: Vitalogy Association, 1919), 295-297; ECSEBCI, 392-392, 391, Table 11.2, “Numbers of Remedies Used for Cherokee Diseases.” Scrofula is a tuberculosis infection of the lymphatic system that causes “kernels” and sores around the lymph nodes. This type of infection was relatively common among the Cherokee during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. The disease was referred to as “King's Evil” by Europeans. *Vitalogy* lists Oregon grape-root (*Berberis Aquifolium*), an infusion of walnut leaves (*Juglans nigra*), and “a preparation of acetate of copper” as effective remedies. Charles Renuus Hicks suffered from scrofula throughout his life and eventually died from complications at age 60.

down, the seat was comfortable and did not hurt him. Thunder then recognized the boy as his son and had his wife put the boy in a pot of boiling roots, then after a while dump the whole pot into the river. The boy's skin was clean, cured of the scrofula. Thunder gave the boy new clothes and offered him ornaments from a box of snakes. The boy reached fearlessly into the bottom of the box, as he had been advised to do by Thunder's wife, and pulled out a rattlesnake, which he put on for a necklace. He then pulled four copperheads from the box, which he put on his wrists and ankles. These ornaments made the boy appear fierce for the ballgame his father required him to play, a fight for his life against the two young Thunders, his elder brothers. The boy himself discovered that he was "Lightning." When he had nearly worn himself out in the fight, the boy struck at his father's treasured honey locust tree in front of the house, just as Thunder's wife had told the boy to do. Thunder stopped the boy, seeing that his youngest son was "brave and strong," and ended the game. The wise words of Thunder's wife, the ways Lightning came to understand his own powers, the brutality of the ball game, ideas about snakes and honey locusts, and the powers of Thunder himself are all broader connections between this story and a web of social, ecological relationships.⁷⁶

The boiling roots that cured the boy's scrofula are not mentioned in Mooney's version but it is likely that some older versions, or the context of properly ordered stories, included information about Thunder's cure. Jean Blanton states, "We do not know what many of the formulas are anymore." Formulas were not just recipes for making a medicine. Formulas included songs, prayers, chants, words, and behaviors that were essential elements with particular powers that could be understood through the complex

⁷⁶ *HMSFC*, 311-314.

webs of the Cherokee world. The context of information transmitted through stories provided the tools for translating knowledge systems into proper behavior. Intensive experience, ecological relationships, and a cosmology that was transmitted through stories, seasonally timed ceremonies, and community behavior were all linked through Cherokee knowledge systems.⁷⁷

Thunder's knowledge of "doctoring," and associations with rattlesnakes and honey locusts suggest a relationship between the three that has been buried in generations of Cherokee adaptations to changing circumstances and ecology. Scrofula was a common affliction of many Cherokee men in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and honey locust medicine may have contained an effective treatment.

Thunder's doctoring abilities, bravery, strength, and associations with the ball game also suggest complex sets of associations between Thunder, honey locust, and rattlesnakes that have been buried.⁷⁸ The curious tales that include the honey locust thorn bench suggest drastic change in a once very important relationship between Cherokee people

⁷⁷ Duncan, *Living Stories of the Cherokee*, 179, 180-181.

⁷⁸ HMSFC, 311-314, 344, 465, 481; Duncan, *Living Stories of the Cherokee*, 179, 180-181; ECSEBCI, 60; Banks, *Plants of the Cherokee*, 71, 72. Mooney mentions an interesting parallel that the honey-locust tree and the seat with thorns from the same species in the home of Thunder may indicate that in Cherokee as in "Aryan thought there was an occult connection between the pinnated [sic] leaves and the lightning, as we know to be the case with regard to the European rowan or mountain ash." Another story recorded by Mooney that includes the same honey locust thorn bench is of the hunter *Tsuwe'nahi* in the *Tsuwa'tel'da* townhouse. The story includes other unusual elements, such as two women with wolves' paws for feet, and the impossibility of locating the town *Tsuwa'tel'da*, where *Tsuwe'nahi* took a group of townspeople and they were never seen again. In personal conversation, David Cozzo has suggested some connection between the idea of rattlesnakes as "thunder's necklace" and the "necklace" rash that is symptomatic of pallegra, resulting from an unbalanced high-corn diet.

and the honey locust tree since European contact.⁷⁹ *Kulsetsi* is the Cherokee opaque proper name for honey locust, having no other meaning or gloss in English, which in itself suggests some level of importance in Cherokee thought. The seed-pods, thorns and bark were used extensively in Cherokee medicine and ritual, especially pertaining to the ball-game.⁸⁰ Honey locusts were likely common along riverbanks in the Peachtree Valley, but are now uncommon throughout the region. Honey locusts are still used by Cherokee people, but many known uses have been replaced by other resources such as honey, and cane or processed sugar.

Rattlesnakes and honey locusts were both important in rituals pertaining to ball play and war. Ball players wore rattlesnake rattles on their heads and “consumed [rattlesnake] flesh to render themselves more terrifying to their adversaries” in important games. Rattles were also placed in gourds as musical instruments for certain dance songs before ball games and war, pointing to the sound of rattlesnakes as a source of power. In preparation for ball play, medicine men “took the contestants to water and prayed to the

⁷⁹ Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas*, 395-397; Mooney and Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript*, 33.

⁸⁰ ECSEBCI, 60-61, 391, Table 11.2; Mooney and Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript*, 239, 249; Ulmer and Beck, *Cherokee Cookery*, 48,58; Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 309; Banks, *Plants of the Cherokee*, 71, 72; Mooney and Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript*, 249, 239; Mooney, “The Cherokee Ball Play,” 105-112, 122-132; Cozzo also cites Payne n.d. 157-158. Honey Locust is *kulsetsi* in Cherokee, *Gleditsia tricanthos* in Linnaean nomenclature. The large, bean-like pods were used “to sweeten unpalatable medicines,” crushed into a paste and mixed with water to make a sweet drink, for their medicinal properties in “*unitseno ’ise ’oi* ‘when a person has stomach trouble’ and *uyosoci e ’isti tsananctatia* ‘when they suffer painful remembrances of the dead,’” combined with other plant medicines as an emetic “to throw off spoiled saliva,” and in a hot tea for measles. A hot tea of the bark, mixed with other plant medicines, was used for whooping cough.

Rattlesnake for a victory in the game.”⁸¹ *Kulsetsi* had several uses to prepare ball players for games. Honey locust wood burnt with that of a tree that had been struck by lightning but did not die was used to paint designs on the player to “make the ball player’s flesh as hard and firm... as the wood of the honey locust.” A bark and thorn tea was used to “help repel tacklers,” the characteristics of the sharp spines being transferred through the tea.⁸² The common use of both *kulsetsi* and *utsona’ti* in ball play medicine may point to other connections between the two in Cherokee thinking that have been buried or forgotten as the transmission of specific information has become marginalized over time.

A discussion of Cherokee ball play illuminates the working of knowledge systems as part of daily life in the Peachtree Valley, the ways and reasons Cherokees physically shaped spaces on the landscape, and the intricacies of Cherokee thinking. John Norton noted with some surprise that in the Cherokee Nation “they think nothing of going sixty

⁸¹ Raymond Fogelson, “The Cherokee Ball Game: A Study in Southeastern Ethnology,” (dissertation in Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, 1962), 21, 67-68, 69, 70-73; Raymond Fogelson, “The Cherokee Ballgame Cycle: An Ethnographer’s View,” *Ethnomusicology* 15, no. 3, (Sep., 1971): 335, 337-338; Mooney, “The Cherokee Ball Play,” 126, 122, 124; Jack Frederick Kilpatrick, *The Wahnenuhi Manuscript: Historical Sketches of the Cherokees Together With Some of Their Customs, Traditions, and Superstitions*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1966), Bulletin 196, Anthropological Papers, No. 77, 193; Frank G. Speck and Leonard Broom, *Cherokee Dance and Drama*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), 62, 63, 55; Mooney, “Myths of the Cherokee,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 1, no. 2 (Jul. –Sep., 1888): 98, deer 100-103, 106-108, Selu 102-106; Fradkin, *Cherokee Folk Zoology*, 336-337; John Norton, *The Journal of Major John Norton, 1809-1816*, (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1970), 63-64. A “War (or Snake-Mask) Dance” was sometimes performed before war parties set out as a means of dramatizing the warriors’ “fearlessness and defiance of enemies.” A rattlesnake tooth, called a *kanuga*, was employed in scratching ball players’ arms, back, chest, and legs to toughen their bodies during the game.

⁸² ECSEBCI, 60-61; Fogelson, “The Cherokee Ballgame Cycle: An Ethnographer’s View,” 333-337.

to seventy miles to see a Ball-Play at which they bett [sic] high.”⁸³ Creating the proper space for ball play involved an intentional manipulation of the landscape. A ball field was “either a level plain, or a smooth place in a hollow about which the land rises gradually so as to afford the spectators a fair opportunity of witnessing the scene.” The area was cleared of stones, logs, and debris, boundaries were marked with stakes, and “the middle ground [was] selected & a stake struck.” In the Cherokee mountains ball fields were often made in “a pleasant open wood” where “the branches of the trees shaded, without incumbering the ground.” Ball fields were located near rivers so that players could “go through the ritual of ‘going to water’ before and after the game.” As Fogelson notes, “the spiritual significance of water looms large in the behavioral environment of the Cherokee.” The “long man,” *Yu wi Gu na hi ta*, the river was central to divination, cleansing, protection from illness and witchcraft, and purification for ball players and all Cherokees. Ball players often performed the “going to water” ritual twice a day during the seven days leading up to important ball play. The importance of the “long man” in protecting members of society through healing, purification, and divination cannot be overstressed.⁸⁴

⁸³ *PMVS*, 12-16; Norton, *The Journal of Major John Norton*, 57. In the Peachtree Valley there is evidence of both the Mississippian game *chunkey*, and the more traditional Cherokee stick ball-play. By the seventeenth century, *chunkey* was rarely played in the mountains, but the same spaces were probably used for both games.

⁸⁴ *PBP*, 4: 62; Norton, *The Journal of Major John Norton*, 53, 63-64; Fogelson, “The Cherokee Ball Game,” 21-22, 67-69, 70-73. Fogelson, “The Cherokee Ballgame Cycle,” 333-337; Fogelson, Olbrechts and Mooney, *The Swimmer Manuscript*, 38. The importance of “going to water” in traditional Cherokee systems, as well as other parallels between Cherokee traditions and Christian faith, made Baptist ideology relatively sensible and attractive to Cherokees. Such parallels also gave Cherokees a means of maintaining some traditional practices while being nominally Christian after the 1820’s. These ideas are developed further in Chapter Two.

In preparation for the “violent exertions” of the game, players would “abstain from spirits, from associating with women, and... dance all night.” In a dance specific to ball-play preparation players “stripped from the waist upwards, and [carried] the bats in their hands [as they danced] in a circle round a fire.” Norton noted that Cherokee ball-play was “a more athletic exercise” than in the North.⁸⁵ The Cherokee also had “their Conjurers who pry into futurity and predict” the outcome of a game. The outcome of each game was believed to result more from the powers of each team’s conjurer than on the performance of the players themselves. Ritual scratching of each player might happen anywhere from seven to two days before a game, if not immediately before players took to the field. Scratching rituals were elaborate and involved prescribed behaviors in the form of songs, medicines and “going to water.” *Kanuga*, the implements for scratching, included turkey quills, turkey leg bones, red fox bones, a bear’s claw, bear teeth, “the bones of seven different animals or birds,” and often a rattlesnake tooth.⁸⁶ Associations with thunder and snakes, as well as birds, were the primary connections linking the proper behaviors for ball players with the plants and animals of the Cherokee world.⁸⁷

Communities associated with particular teams would also perform ceremonies such as the “wa hi ie” song, in which

each party ... selected an elderly man to direct the dance, another person to sing for the players, another to whoop, and a musician for the seven

⁸⁵ Norton, *The Journal of Major John Norton*, 63.

⁸⁶ Fogelson, “The Cherokee Ball Game,” 61-67.

⁸⁷ Fogelson, “The Cherokee Ball Game,” 10-12. During the colonial era, the ballgame cycle became more ritualized as ball play, “the little brother of war,” began to more frequently replace actual warfare. Fogelson argues that the ritual cycle, which safely transformed players from “White” (peace) to “Red” (war), put players into an altered state of consciousness. Without the proper ritual transformation, players could endanger their towns and families through spiritual contamination and attacks by other town’s conjurers.

women...[to]dance on the seventh night. An open place in the woods having been selected, and a fire prepared, the party assembled about dark, and seated themselves some distance from the fire.

The seven women began to chant “wa hi ie” and sway back and forth from their left to right foot, the woman on one end stamping her foot on a stone representing the opposing teams conjuring power. In such a way, the community ritual hoped to offset the opposing teams powers and win the ball game.⁸⁸ The ball game was an incredibly important element of Cherokee life, sometimes settling disputes between opposing towns, both from Cherokee groups and neighboring tribes. But ball games were much more than just political conflict resolution. The outcome of ball games also demonstrated to local communities the success and effectiveness of their *Ulistu’li*, conjurers, doctors, and overall communal roles in maintaining harmony and balance. The point of all this discussion is to demonstrate the deep, intimate interactions of Cherokee thinking with an awareness of the ecology and spiritual presences of the immediate environment. Cherokee ways of thinking considered consequences and reactions of the contemporaneous diversity at all times.⁸⁹

River Cane and Southeastern Social Ecology

The interwoven nature of Cherokee thinking that resulted from generations of intensive experience in the Southern Appalachians demonstrates a deep set of relationships between human society and place, relationships that are now difficult to understand because many of the prime elements of the ecosystem in which those relationships functioned no longer exist. “Ani-Kituwah” - the People of Kituwah, were a

⁸⁸ *PBP*, 4: 43; Fogelson, “The Cherokee Ballgame,” 87-90.

⁸⁹ Fogelson, “The Cherokee Ball Game,” 197-200, 238, 15-19; *PBP*, 1: 28-29, 4: 97-98, 109-113, 160, 208; Mooney, “The Cherokee Ball Play,” 126, 122, 124.

distinguished and powerful group well before the arrival of Europeans. Cherokee culture was in part distinguished by the distinct ecological relationships of the Appalachian Summit region. But Cherokee ways of thinking also applied elements of a larger southeastern cultural complex and related ecology. Cherokee towns, as relatively autonomous political bodies, shared traits with their non-Cherokee neighbors. The introduction of corn exemplifies Mississippian cultural traits, and was accompanied by a particular religious architecture that defined Mississippian cultures. The relationship to corn was of primary importance to the Cherokee and is detailed in numerous monographs. But another important, if less discussed, plant relationship in the southeast was with river cane.⁹⁰

River cane was one of the most important resources for the Cherokee. Cane breaks were once common throughout southeastern river bottoms and the “best canebrakes were famous far and wide” among the Cherokee, who would often travel great distances to procure good cane. Cane was used in making fishing rods, blowguns,

⁹⁰ Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 80-82, 148-160, 293, 294-295, 298-299 gourds as bird houses; *PBP*, 1: 23-25, 4: 119-124; *HMSFC*, 99-101, 293; ECSEBCI, 349, 345; Fogelson, “The Cherokee Ball Game,” 203-204. Woodland agriculture included the cultivation of gourds and squash, as well as sunflowers, sumpweed and chenopodium (lamb’s quarter). With the arrival of corn and beans “the cultivation of old native plants-sunflower, [etc]-apparently declined,” but did not disappear. Woodland peoples, as part of “an old ‘Eastern Agricultural Complex,’” cultivated a small eared tropical corn that required a dry and long growing season between “about 200 B.C. and A.D. 400,” after which time corn became “exceedingly scarce” in the southeast. The early Mississippian period is defined by a resurgence of corn cultivation around 900 A.D., the spread of which is fundamental to archaeological analysis of Mississippian sites. The new eastern flint corn variety thrived in a moist, cool climate, was probably domesticated in highland Guatemala, and “spread northward to the Southwest and thence to the Southeast.” Along with corn (and probably beans) came a particular Mississippian “religious architecture.” For more on corn, gender, and religion see Ramon A. Gutierrez, *When Jesus Came, The Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991) and Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, 13-14, 136.

baskets, sieves, floor mats, musical instruments, furniture, tools, weapons, homes, and town houses.⁹¹

Artifactual evidence from the Peachtree Mound and village site included “an occasional fragment of burned clay [with] the imprint of cane wattle work,” imprints and material remains of “houses...made of poles, with thatched roofs and walls of wattle and daub,” and household furnishings made of wood and cane.⁹² Europeans who visited Cherokee towns in the region during the eighteenth century described Cherokee construction techniques that utilized river cane extensively. Cherokee townhouses were generally “raised with wood, and covered over with earth, with all the appearance of a small mountain at a little distance...built in the form of a sugar loaf, and large enough to contain 500 persons.” Tiered benches inside the townhouse were woven from cane strips, much as baskets were made, with whole cane legs and frames. The appearance inside was similar to an amphitheater with a specified hierarchical seating arrangement for headmen and great warriors.⁹³ “The west end...was holier than the other part...and the space back of three sacred seats, about the seventh post, was holier than all.”⁹⁴ Wattle and daub walls for the townhouse and individual homes were woven cane covered in clay. The steep thatched roofs were held in place by cane slats. In the center of the

⁹¹ ECSEBCI, 318; Sarah Hill, *Weaving New Worlds*, 40; Witthoft, “A Cherokee Economic Botany From Western North Carolina,” 96; *HMSFC*, 490; *PBP*, 1: 22, 180; Hudson, *The Southeast Indians*, 385, 215-216.

⁹² *PMVS*, 16-18, 26-27, 29-30, 34.

⁹³ Timberlake, *Memoirs*, 85.

⁹⁴ *PBP*, 4: 99. Butrick goes on to state, “The towns of refuge were holier than other towns. No blood must be spilt in them. Mountains were more sacred than low ground, and two mountains (they tell where) are more holy than any others. The ground on the banks of rivers, and on the seashore is more sacred than that farther from the water, and the ground under rivers &c. is holier still. All houses of worship and places for sacrifice & prayer must be near the water.”

townhouse was the council fire, surrounded by an open space where the ground was often covered with woven cane mats, as were the interior walls. Community members and guests, mostly the men, “would sit & talk & smoke & dance sometimes all Night” in the townhouse.⁹⁵

Cane also played a prominent role in ritual and ceremony. River cane baskets for storing *ulunsu'ti* were described as “vials,” and as “curiously wrought,” suggesting some sort of special power was perceived in either the shape and pattern of the vessels, or in the cane itself. Butrick described a ceremony of “perpetual friendship” between a man and woman who could not marry in which exchanging a cane sieve played a central role. Cane was given a special role in transferring the sacred fire from its place in the council house to other sites for strictly ritual use. River cane was the resource for flutes used in ceremonies and celebrations.⁹⁶

The many uses and beliefs about cane link cosmological and practical understandings, further demonstrating how Cherokee systems of knowledge perpetuated intellectual adaptation and intensive experience through a holistic cosmological system. “Ancient doctors were called *Kv-ni-a-ka-ti*, from *Kv-ni*, an arrow, and *a-ka-ti*, [following] a straight course; because these doctors followed the course of the arrow in healing.” In descriptions of doctoring and some of the sacred formulas, Mooney and Butrick recorded

⁹⁵ Timberlake, *Memoirs*, 85; *PBP*, 4: 84-85; Swanton, *The Indians of the Southeastern United States*, 402, 403-404; Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology*, 70. Timberlake described the townhouse as “extremely dark” while Bartram described a townhouse with a waist high wall around the exterior leaving the rest of the wall open between support posts.

⁹⁶ *PBP*, 4: 24, 42, 3: 194, 101, 224. There are numerous eighteenth and nineteenth century descriptions of two distinct types of cane flutes, one “three or four inches long,” and another “a foot or more in length, having six holes in the side, [that] was blown at the end.”

instances where chewed root juices were “spirited...to the bottom of the wound, by means of a small cane tube, about a foot long.” Butrick also states, “There is a kind of small cane growing on the mountains, heavy & of a hard texture called *Kv-ni*, and arrows generally were made of this, [arrows] were also called by the same name.”⁹⁷

Bartram, Norton, and Mooney all mention cane shoots and leaves as a common source of wild nourishment for cattle and livestock, and other sources suggest that cane flour was a “famine food” for people. David Cozzo has recently noted that cane as a nutritional resource for the Cherokee was much more important than previously thought.⁹⁷ The geographic range of cane was an ecological factor that subtly unified the Southeastern cultural complex. Cane also demonstrates how larger shifts in the encrypted encyclopedia of Cherokee knowledge were delineated by the availability and “civilized” conceptions of new materials and construction methods that replaced many cane uses, marginalizing the human relationship with the plant. Changes in Cherokee society also contributed to the degradation of cane habitat through the adoption of keeping livestock such as cattle, pigs, goats, and sheep.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ *PBP*, 4: 180, 220-221, 222; ECSEBCI, 318; Hill, *Weaving New Worlds*, 46; Banks, *Plants of the Cherokee*, 23-24; David Cozzo, conversation with author, January 24, 2012, notes in possession of author; Mississippi State University, “Rivercane Propagation,” Mississippi State University Rivercane Conservation Fund, www.rivercane.msstate.edu/research/propagation/, (accessed January 12, 2012). River cane is *ihya* in Cherokee, *Arundinaria gigantea* in Linnaean nomenclature. Butrick writes that when Cherokee warriors became “acquainted with lead” they extended the name *kv-ni* to musket balls “as they were heavy and used in shooting.”

⁹⁷ Bartram, *Travels*, 238; *HMSFC*, 490; Cozzo, conversation with author, January 24, 2012, notes in possession of author.

⁹⁸ Bartram, *Travels*, 238; *HMSFC*, 490.

***Kwa'na*, The Peach-Plum Naming Switch: An Early European Influence**

When Europeans arrived and began to interact with established cultural and ecological relationships, the Cherokee, by virtue of their geographical location, were insulated from direct European influence longer than many southeastern natives. Even so, the European influence was felt in Cherokee country before there was an actual sustained presence of Europeans in Cherokee country. A discussion of peaches demonstrates how the arrival of Europeans was not a complete break in cultural patterns, simply a powerful force to which the Cherokee applied culturally embedded processes of classifying and understanding.⁹⁹

Cherokees were harvesting peaches and cultivating peach trees before the eighteenth century. The Cherokee name *kwa'na* was originally the name for the native plum. As the peach came to “surpass its native counterpart in cultural significance,” both as food and medicine, the plum became known as *kwanun'sdi*, meaning ‘little peach.’ Europeans recorded southeastern cultivation of peaches as early as 1698, some describing exceptionally large fruit which indigenous groups claimed as a native plant. Mooney records that “the peach was cultivated in orchards a century before the Revolution, and one variety, known as early as 1700 as the Indian Peach, the Indians claimed as their own, asserting that they had had it before the whites came to America.”¹⁰⁰ There is no known evidence to support this assertion. It is possible that De Soto’s expedition

⁹⁹ Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*, 435; *HMSFC*, 31.

¹⁰⁰ *HMSFC*, 214; W.R.G., “The Indian Peach,” *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club* 12, no. 8, (Aug., 1885): 84-86; Cecil H. Brown, “A Widespread Marking Reversal in Languages of the Southeastern United States,” *Anthropological Linguistics* 38, no. 3, Fall, 1996): 440, 439-460; Anthropological linguist Cecil Brown argues that this “marking reversal” occurred for the entire indigenous southeastern cultural complex where peaches were a viable fruiting tree. Mooney speculated on this same idea in the 1880’s.

introduced peaches directly to the Cherokee, but far more likely that Spanish settlements along the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts introduced peaches to local indigenous groups, who then disseminated the fruit trees to the continental interior through indigenous trade routes, arriving in Cherokee country before a sustained presence of white people.¹⁰¹

Peaches were used medicinally with other plants to treat scrofula and alone for a type of heartburn “attributed to ‘the insects living in the water.’” A peach-bark tea was used for “sick stomach,” “the pain of piles,” “to stop vomiting,” and as a cough medicine. Directions for the preparation of each medicine were so specific as to include the direction for cutting the bark, up or down, depending on “the direction of movement of the condition.”¹⁰² Peaches were also an important food, most often dried, pounded, and formed into cakes or mixed into cornbread. Peaches were important in the lower southeast by the early seventeenth century, notably so to the Natchez, whose fifth “moon,” July, was known as the Peach moon by the 1710’s.¹⁰³ Peaches demonstrate a successful adaptation of a European plant into Cherokee categorizations, just as honey locust exemplifies a marginalization of Cherokee associations as a means of adapting to European goods and understandings of the world.

¹⁰¹ Bartram, *Travels*, 227.

¹⁰² ECSEBCI, 391-393. Scrofula is a lymphatic tuberculosis infection. According to Cozzo, scrofula has 18 recorded remedies, at least two of which include peaches. Treatments for pulmonary tuberculosis would be included as treatments for cough, which included peaches for at least 5 of 44 treatments.

¹⁰³ W.R.G., “The Indian Peach,” 84-86; Brown, “A Widespread Marking reversal in Languages of the Southeastern United States,” 440, 439-460; ECSEBCI, 64-65; Mooney and Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript*, 29, 279; Cozzo also cites Gary C. Goodwin, “Cherokees in Transition: A Study of Changing culture and Environment Prior to 1775,” research paper no. 181, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Department of Geography, 1977), 127, and John Howard Payne, “traditions of the Cherokees,” filed in “Papers Concerning the Cherokee Indians,” vol. 3, (Newberry Library, Chicago: n.d. a.), 156.

The Peachtree Valley was one of the most northerly areas where peaches could be grown in the Cherokee mountains, and the most accessible peach crop for the whole of the Valley Towns. Cherokee traditions of practical adaptation flourished as new opportunities and circumstances arose from European sources. The full scope of Cherokee history is best understood as a continued story of adaptation based on intensive experience rather than a static way of life that was disrupted or broken by the arrival of Europeans.¹⁰⁴

The Cherokee and The Natchez: Mississippian Culture on the Upper Hiwassee

Mooney states that among the Cherokee, the Natchez “developed a reputation as dance leaders,” they were thought of “as a race of wizards and conjurors... due in part to their peculiar religious rites and in part ... as the remnant of a broken tribe.” The Cherokee referred to their southeastern neighbors as the “Ani-Na’tsi,” the Natchez People.¹⁰⁵ All of Mooney’s informants noted that the Natchez were known as great dance leaders, both in the West and East, and among the Cherokee they had a traditional reputation for ceremonial and secret knowledge. The Natchez went west with the

¹⁰⁴ Mooney and Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript*, 75; Witthoft, “A Cherokee Economic Botany, 2-5.

¹⁰⁵ James F. Barnett Jr., *The Natchez Indians: A History to 1735*, (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 2007), 131-132; James Mooney, “The End of the Natchez,” *American Anthropologist* 1, no. 3 (Jul., 1899), 517, 510-521; John Swanton, *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley*, 252; Swanton, *Indians of the Southeastern United States*, 160; Daniel H. Unser, *American Indians in the Lower Mississippi Valley: Social and Economic Histories*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 29-30, 31. Unser cites a Natchez informant, George Stiggins from Oklahoma, who stated that the “main body of the Natchez associated with the royal family” made a pact to join the Creeks at Abekas, a town in northern Alabama. The Natchez families that traveled to Cherokee country split off from this group, possibly so as not to outnumber the Creeks in that town.

Cherokee on the Trail of Tears and were instrumental in Southeastern cultural revitalizations there from the 1840's on.¹⁰⁶

In the 1730's, when the Natchez were nearly wiped out by the French, "a party of them came up the Tennessee, and took shelter among the Cherokee."¹⁰⁷ Charles Hicks wrote to John Ross that "the Cherokees were disposed to treat [the Natchez] as enemies" but "the first white trader" among the Cherokees, Cornelius "Doherty of Hiwassee," convinced the Cherokees to "adopt the Natchees as apart of their nation." According to Hicks, Doherty explained that "altho' [the Natchez] were few in numbers, yet they would add strength" to the Cherokee Nation, "and accordingly the natchees [sic] settled at Ah, quo, hee," probably referring to a Cherokee settlement, *Aquonetuste*, near the site later known as "Notchee Town" in the Peachtree Valley.¹⁰⁸ The Natchez probably did not settle in the Valley Towns until after 1743, when they were "driven out of the Overhill settlements for being bad guests," and the first Natchez settlement in Peachtree Valley was at Little Hiwassee, the Peachtree Mound and Village Site.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ *HMSFC*, 386-388.

¹⁰⁷ Norton, *The Journal of Major John Norton*, 46-47; Swanton, *Indians of the Southeastern United States*, 160; Swanton claims the Natchez arrived in Cherokee country sometime before 1738, stating, "Gradually, however, they [the Natchez refugees] withdrew among the Chickasaw, who had always been in the British interest, and later separated into two main bands, one of which settled among the Upper Creeks while the other long maintained an independent existence in the territory of the Cherokee."

¹⁰⁸ Charles Hicks to John Ross, Fortville Cherokee Nation, May 4, 1826, in *PCJR*, vol. I, 118; John P. Brown, *Old Frontiers: The Story of the Cherokee Indians from Earliest Times to the Date of Their Removal to the West, 1838*, (Kingsport, TN: Southern Publishers, 1938), 47, 94-96. The English trader Cornelius Doherty arrived in Cherokee country by 1698. One historian credits Doherty with having taught the Cherokees "to steal horses from Virginia, which were the first horses they owned." "The trader Doherty of Hiwassee" had also taken "four head of cattle" through to the besieged English at Fort Loudoun in June of 1760.

¹⁰⁹ Brett Riggs, e-mail message to author, February 14, 2012; *PMVS*, 12.

Although Charles Hicks argued for the intervention of a white man on behalf of the Natchez, it seems just as likely that the Cherokee would have welcomed this group of Natchez families on their own. Mooney, relying on his informant James Wafford, asserted “the two tribes [Natchez and Cherokee] had communication with each other long before the period of the Natchez wars [1710’s to 1730’s].” Mooney also asserts a long history of “contact more or less intimate and continued” between the Cherokee of southwestern North Carolina and Natchez, Creek, Catawba, Yuchi, Shawnee, and Iroquois groups, among others. All of these indigenous groups suffered the common fate of slavery prior to the Revolution, which may have revitalized cultural exchange and encouraged a fresh sense of solidarity between southeastern cultural groups. After being driven out of the Overhill settlements the Natchez traveled to a region of the Cherokee Nation where they were more confident of being welcomed while still being able to maintain their own cultural sovereignty. The particular spot where “Notchee Town” was located was probably not coincidence or happenstance.¹¹⁰

According to Wafford, the refugee Natchez families built a small settlement, “Notchee Town,” “on the north bank of Hiwassee, just above Peachtree creek, on the spot where a Baptist mission was established.” The site of “Notchee Town” was directly across from a deep pool with an unusual petroglyph carved into a hard granite boulder on the bank, all suggesting Cherokee associations with underworld forces. This petroglyph is of Mississippian or older origin, and probably depicts serpents or other under world symbolism. The Natchez, “a race of wizards and conjurers,” were recognized for having retained strong connections with ancient Mississippian social structures and religious

¹¹⁰ *HMSFC*, 234, 233, 386-388; T.J. Holland, phone conversation Feb. 12, 2012.

architecture. The presence of the petroglyph suggests a level of importance for the site and the possibility that the Natchez settlement near the petroglyph was intentional and meaningful.¹¹¹ Mooney speculates that by 1755 the Natchez had been in the “Notchee Town,” probably the same site known as *Gwal’ga’hi*, “Frog place,” “so short a time [12 to 15 years] that only one or two spoke any Cherokee.” In 1819, when William Henson, who held the reserve that encompassed “Notchee Town,” leased the land to the Baptists, the Natchez moved their settlement, presumably off of Henson’s illegally filed land reserve.¹¹²

In 1824 James Wafford participated in taking a Cherokee census in the Peachtree Valley and “found the Natchez then living jointly with the Cherokee in a town called *Gu’lani’yi* at the junction of Brasstown and Gumlog creeks, tributary to the Hiwassee,

¹¹¹ T.J. Holland, conversation with author, Junaluska Museum, Robbinsville, NC, February 6, 2012. T.J. Holland, “Valley Town Mission Petroglyph,” photograph, 2008, photograph in possession of Mr. Holland. Holland displayed a photograph and related specific information about the petroglyph stone on the south bank of the Hiwassee River directly across from “Notchee Town.” The author personally inspected and sketched this petroglyph on a visit to the site, February 13, 2012. The petroglyph depicts four swirls, two on either side of a diagonal line, and crossing this line are a series of wavy lines with “heads” on one end.

¹¹² *HMSFC*, 386-388; Brett Riggs, personal e-mail to author, February 14, 2012. One of Mooney’s primary informants in Oklahoma was James D. Wafford, sometimes spelled Wofford, who spent a great deal of time among the scattered Valley Town settlements along the upper Hiwassee River in Peachtree Valley. Wafford claimed “he had himself a strain of Natchez blood” on his mother’s side. Wafford was a student at the Tinsawatee school in the southern section of the Cherokee nation during the 1810’s. His teacher was Thomas Dawson, one of the original teachers at the Valley Town Mission. Wafford is known to have had a “fine voice” for singing and loved Baptist Hymns. Jesse Mercer recorded at least one instance of Wafford singing with Rev. Humphrey Posey, who originally established the Valley Town Mission. James Wafford was “a special messenger from the Cherokees of Taquoe and Aquohee Districts” for Chief John Ross, worked closely with Evan Jones and Jesse Bushyhead, and personally led one of the last groups of Cherokee from the Valley Towns to Oklahoma territory in the winter of 1838-1839, leaving within two weeks of the Evan Jones-Jesse Bushyhead contingent, but following a different route.

some 6 miles southeast of their former location and close to the Georgia line.” They lived in a large settlement consisting of people “about equally from the two tribes.” Eighty years after settling in Peachtree Valley, the Natchez “were not distinguishable in dress or general appearance” from Cherokees, but nearly all spoke Cherokee while retaining their own language. Most of the Indians had come under Christian influences “so far as to have quit dancing, there was no townhouse.” Another informant, *Suyeta*, told Mooney that in the early nineteenth century the Natchez “were scattered among the Cherokee settlements along the upper part of Hiwassee, extending down into Tennessee...some of them, at least, had come up from the Creeks, and spoke Creek and Cherokee, as well as their own language.”¹¹³

After the Natchez Wars, the survivors had scattered and settled among several southeastern groups, learning their languages and probably sharing some of their own knowledge as well. Daniel Butrick observed a Natchez ceremony in which he described the Natchez using “cane leaves” as part of a ritual for sowing “rye seed.” David Cozzo concludes that the ritual Butrick described is actually a ceremony centered on the river cane seed, which Butrick mistook for rye. In light of Cozzo’s research, the ceremony described by Butrick suggests that the Natchez had a long history of processing cane and cane shoots for food, and may have retained knowledge about river cane that was once more widely known among Southeastern Indians. The Natchez’ knowledge of plants and animals combined with the reverence surrounding the Natchez presence among the Cherokee provide some evidence that the Peachtree Valley was and had long been a multicultural, multilingual place and very likely experienced a sort of Mississippian

¹¹³ *HMSFC*, 386-388; *PCJR*, 1: 386, 409, 674, 676 689-690, 692, 695-696.

revitalization during the mid and late eighteenth century. Sharing and acquisition of knowledge were important aspects of cultural commonality and place among Southeast Indians.¹¹⁴

The Cherokee World Viewed From Peachtree Valley

By the time Europeans “discovered the New World,” the human presence in the Peachtree Valley had already been one of the most formative elements of the ecosystem for thousands of years. Trade networks that linked the area with the Ohio River Valley, the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, the central continental plains, the Caribbean, and Central America remained cultural conduits for European input. Pathways and roads worn into the landscape brought Europeans directly to the same important places that ancient Native Americans had once discovered and learned to share with inhabitants who had found those places before them. The roles of Cherokee men and women, doctors, conjurers, priests, warriors, farmers and hunters, were all aligned through grand and complex relationships between people, plants, animals, and the landscape. The cultural context that ensconced these relationships transmitted layers of knowledge that delineated proper behavior and understanding of humanity’s place in a larger, mysterious world. Knowledge came with particular responsibilities that served the greater harmony and

¹¹⁴ *PBP*, 4: 204; ECSEBCI, 318; Hudson, *Southeastern Indians*, 65-68, 91; David Cozzo, personal conversation, January 24, 2012, notes in possession of author; Mississippi State University, “Rivercane Propagation,” Mississippi State University Rivercane Conservation Fund, www.rivercane.msstate.edu/research/propagation/, (accessed January 12, 2012); Sarah Hill, *Weaving New Worlds*, 40. For reasons that are unclear, Butrick claimed the ceremony he witnessed dated back to a time “before introduction of corn” in the Southeast. Cane only seeds about every 25 years so few Europeans had ever taken notice of the cane seeds themselves. David Cozzo has shown that river cane seeds look nearly identical to rye seed, but are about twice the size. River cane seed remained virtually unstudied until the river cane-seeding event across the southeastern United States in the summer of 2007.

balance of all life. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the arrival of Europeans' new goods, ideas, disease, and violence complicated but did not destroy, balanced relationships. Disease and warfare devastated Native American populations, causing gaps in traditional knowledge, but knowledge systems persevered in places like the Peachtree valley.¹¹⁵ With the relentless arrival of more and more whites in Cherokee country, certain aspects of information sharing were adapted to the most pressing issues, while other aspects of information sharing became more subdued, apparent only to those who knew where to look and how to listen. By the American Revolution “many Cherokees had become acquainted with most phases of European agriculture. Cherokees interested in the European approach to agriculture found that they were as dependent upon the trader for their tools and livestock as their hunting fellows were for firearms and traps.”¹¹⁶

The ecologically embedded knowledge systems of the Cherokee encouraged knowledge acquisition, and adapted to new modes of understanding and communicating. By the late 1820's, Cherokees had developed a written syllabary, a Constitution, and sets of laws that dictated legal behaviors and relationships. Traditionalist, conservative Cherokees such as White Path sought to resist cultural shifts in the centralization of government, the adoption of “white” farming practices and gender roles, and ways of thinking that came from Christian ideas. Others, such as Charles Hicks, determined to introduce acculturating habits and “civilizing” ideas as a means of acquiring knowledge that could be useful in resisting white intrusion and the forced removal of the Cherokee

¹¹⁵ Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology*, 14; *PMVS*, 57.

¹¹⁶ Douglas C. Wilms, *Cherokee Indian Land Use in Georgia, 1800-1838*, (dissertation in Geography, University of Georgia, Athens, 1973), 18.

from their homeland. Both relied on Cherokee systems of knowledge acquisition to different degrees, but the importance of place, and methods of communicating with non-human beings never faltered for either.

CHARLES RENATUS HICKS: LANGUAGE, RELIGION, AND LANDSCAPE
DURING CHEROKEE TRANSITION.

The early nineteenth century was a period of transition for the Cherokee Nation. One of the prime players in the period just before Removal was Charles Renatus Hicks. Hicks had grown up speaking English and Cherokee and an examination of his life provides an excellent means for analyzing the ways in which Cherokee landscapes and Cherokee language changed during the early nineteenth century. The changes in agricultural practices, the centralization of politics, the growth of Christianity, and the introduction of a written Cherokee syllabary all demonstrated and empowered shifts in Cherokee categorizations of the world that occurred between the Revolutionary War and Removal. Charles Hicks played pivotal roles in each of these areas as translator, Christian convert, and Second Principal Chief. But Charles Hicks' roles in transitions are in some ways less important than how his story demonstrates that language and landscape relationships were definitive of categorizations of the world for Cherokee society.¹

Charles Hicks was born in the Cherokee town of *Tomotley*, just north of "Notchee Town," along the Valley River in 1767. The oaks, birches, poplars, chestnuts, and honey locusts along the river, the cane breaks, peach and apple orchards, and tobacco and cornfields of the Peachtree Valley were all a part of the landscape of Hicks' childhood.

¹ Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine, *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 27; David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 86; Margaret Clelland Bender, "Reading Culture: the Cherokee Syllabary and the Eastern Cherokees," (dissertation in Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1996), 6-7. Indigenous societies are defined here as social groups whose world views have developed on the landscape that they inhabit. The approach applied here is intended to be an historical analysis of changes in Cherokee systems of knowledge and language use as seen in the life of Charles Hicks, although a discussion that delves into anthropological linguistics is necessary to fully explain how Hicks life demonstrates linguistic and intellectual change.

His father was a Scottish trader, Nathaniel Hicks, and his mother, Nancy Broom, a respected Cherokee woman and daughter of Chief Broom. Hicks suffered from a “scrofulous condition” for most of his sixty years. After 1821 his scrofula grew much worse, keeping him mostly confined to his home near Springplace and Oostanuala in the southern part of the Cherokee Nation claimed by Georgia.² Hicks had been present at many Cherokee Council meetings since childhood, where he was immersed in the oratorical and ceremonial traditions of late eighteenth century Cherokee life. Charles

² Rowena McClinton, “Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks,” in *The Journal of Cherokee Studies* 17, no. 1, (1996): 16, 23-24; William Bartram, *The Travels of William Bartram*, ed. Francis Harper, (Athens & London: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), 235-236; Charles Hicks, “The Memoir of Charles Renatus,” in *The United Brethren Missionary Intelligencer*, Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 2 (First Quarter, 1827), 400-402; Dan Martini, *Southern Indian Notebook: A Biographical and Genealogical Guide to the Five Civilized Tribes, 1685-1865*, (Ripley Mississippi: Ripley Printing Company, 1986), 65; Joyce B. Phillips and Paul Gary Phillips, *The Brainerd Journal: A Mission to the Cherokees, 1817-1823 (BJ)*, 506-506, 230-231; Sara Gwenyth Parker, *The Transformation of Cherokee Appalachia*, (PhD dissertation in History, University of California, Berkeley, CA: 1991), 45-46; William W. Baden, *Tomotley: An Eighteenth Century Cherokee Village*, Report of Investigations No 36, Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, Prepared under the supervision of Jefferson Chapman, Principal Investigator, (Knoxville, TN: Tennessee Valley Authority, TVA Publications in Anthropology No. 35, November, 1983), 18-19; Charles O. Walker, *Cherokee Footprints... Volume II: Home and Hearth*, (Canton, GA: Industrial Printing Service, Inc., 1989), 189-190. *Tomotley* in North Carolina should not be confused with *Tomotley* in Tennessee, the hometown of *Attakullakulla*, the “Little Carpenter,” whose work at Fort Loudon gave him his name. *Tamaha-tali* is a Creek word which translates to “Hewed Timber Town” which suggests that *Tomotley* consisted of some hewn log cabins, not the traditional waddle and daub construction of older Cherokee town sites. Hicks probably never lived in a waddle and daub structure, as his father was a white trader, among the first whites to bring hewn log constructions techniques into Cherokee country, and Creeks and other southeast neighbors probably also transferred hewn-log construction techniques before a sustained white presence. Hicks’ mother was the daughter of Chief Broom who signed the Treaties of 1798, 1804, 1805, and 1806. Scrofula is a tuberculosis infection of the lymphatic system, fairly common among Cherokee men in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including Hicks and Major Ridge.

Hicks life shows how Cherokee traditions of knowledge acquisition were crucial in sustaining a distinct Cherokee society on a rapidly changing landscape.³

Charles Hicks was frequently sought out by other Cherokees for his assistance in their education, Christian conversion, and anything connected to acculturation or correspondence with whites. He was an early proponent of “civilizing” the Cherokee and introducing white ways and education to “better the Cherokee Nation.” Charles Hicks understood that plowing fields, building log cabins, raising livestock, and establishing mission schools would raise the prospects of Cherokee sovereignty, and put a more acceptable face on Cherokee society in the eyes of white America. Hicks also understood the history of Cherokee culture, and in the face of contact with Europeans, the pressing need to secure a place in the emerging new world. His efforts were directed toward promoting elements of Cherokee culture that exhibited parallels to Christian ideas, presenting new developments that displayed a high level of “civilization,” and subduing cultural elements that most offended Christian whites, all in the interest of maintaining the Cherokee homeland. By 1817, when Hicks was elected Second Principal Chief, he was known to be a trusted Cherokee leader and “an excellent Christian,” one of the few converts among the Cherokees.⁴

Charles Hicks’ influence cannot be understood without first describing his knowledge of both the English and Cherokee languages. Hicks learned English as a child

³ Charles Hicks, Letters to John Ross, in *The Papers of Chief John Ross (PCJR): 1807-1839*, ed. Gary Moulton, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 1: 112, 117. Hicks describes memories of seeing Chief Little Turkey speak and describes *Attakullakulla* as “much younger in appearance” than *Oconostota*, both of whom he had seen “when quite a boy.”

⁴ Charles C. Dean, “Memoir of John Arch,” reprinted in *The Journal of Cherokee Studies* 26, (2008): 33-35; McClinton, “Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks,” 16-18.

from his father and communication with white traders, travelers, government agents, and emissaries throughout his life. By his early twenties Hicks was regularly interpreting for white visitors to the Cherokee Nation from the Connesauga to the Valley River. During the 1790's Hicks gained rich insight into the thinking of many whites by learning to express and moderate their ideas, intentions, and motivations in the Cherokee language. The different categorizations of the world that Europeans and Cherokees understood made sensible expression of some European concepts very difficult but Hicks relied on his own judgement in translating during the decades before Sequoyah's syllabary allowed Cherokee to be recorded in writing.⁵

In September of 1800, Charles Hicks was the interpreter for Col. David Henley, as he tried to convince the Lower Cherokee chiefs of the advantages that “would accrue to them and their children from the religious instruction of the (Moravian) brethren.” By November, Henley and Hicks had won the solid favor of the Lower town chiefs. Hicks served as interpreter for Moravian missionaries, Abraham Steiner and William de Schweinitz at the October, 1800, Cherokee Council meeting at Oostanula. This first encounter with the Moravian brethren made a lasting impression on Hicks. On November 12, Hicks gave Steiner and a group of the brethren a tour of “the surrounding country upon the Oostenally & several other portions of the Country,” one day after examining “Mr [Robert] Brown's plantation which had been offered to them.”⁶ The

⁵ Willard Walker and James Sarbaugh, “The Early History of the Cherokee Syllabary,” *Ethnohistory* 40, no. 1, (Winter, 1993): 90, 91; William McLoughlin, “Cherokee Anti-Mission Sentiment, 1824-1828,” *Ethnohistory* 21, no. 4, (Autumn, 1974): 363-364.

⁶ John Howard Payne and Daniel Butrick, *The Payne-Butrick Papers (PBP)*, eds. William L. Anderson, Jane L. Brown, and Anne F. Rogers, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), vol. 5: 274, 276-279.

Moravians hoped “to establish a mission school at [the Brown plantation,] Springplace, Georgia...on the east side of Connesauga [River]” adjacent to the Vann plantation. James Vann and Hicks urged the National Council to allow the missionaries to make “a trial” of their school. Representatives from the Upper and Lower Cherokee towns, Gentleman Tom and Doublehead, along with Principal Chief Little Turkey of the Middle towns, agreed that the missionaries’ intention “appears to be good, to instruct us and our children and improve our and their minds and nation.”⁷ Hicks’ “warm feelings” toward missionaries influenced his interpretations, putting the best light on missionary’s motivations. Historian Rowena McClinton discusses some examples of Hicks’ friendly translations, such as the word “heathens,” which Hicks simply glossed as the Cherokee equivalent of “Indians.” Rather than laboriously explaining the underlying European assumptions embedded in the lengthy title “The United Brethren of Moravians’ Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Heathen,” Hicks simply explained that the missionaries wanted to impart new knowledge to the Indian’s children.⁸

Cherokee leaders surely never intended for Cherokee children to abandon their language and culture, they were instead envisioning acquisition of valuable knowledge that would improve the Cherokee Nation while maintaining the distinctions of Cherokee society. Hicks’ strongest influence was in facilitating a grand scale of knowledge acquisition that was useful for empowering Cherokee understandings of a developing world in which American whites would become the dominant power. Hicks’ bilingual

⁷ Edmund Schwarze, *Moravian Missions Among Southern Indian Tribes of the United States*, (Bethlehem, PA: Time Publishing Company Printers, 1984), 35-38; McClinton, “Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks,” 17, 25.

⁸ Schwarze, *Moravian Missions Among Southern Indian Tribes of the United States*, 35-38; McClinton, “Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks,” 17, 25; *BJ*, 88-91.

skills and unique interpretations of ideas were a powerful force in the dealings of the day. Charles Hicks was not the only Cherokee translator, but he was acknowledged by both Cherokees and whites as an important translator in his official and un-official capacities in government and economics.⁹

Charles Hicks' interpretations relied on his own perceptions of whites and the desires of the Cherokee to remain a distinct society on their own land. The political and economic needs of the day also influenced how Hicks translated ideas from one worldview to another. Hicks tempered the concerns of both groups, remaining on the side of Cherokee government but aligned with the work of Christian missionaries, often putting him at odds with the most conservative Cherokees as well as land hungry whites. The Cherokee worldview was deeply rooted in ancient landscape relationships, represented in the concepts of *tohi* and *osi*, that included ideas that Europeans categorized as "economics" and "politics." The Euro-American worldview explicitly set out to change Cherokee thinking about land and land-use, but Cherokee traditions of knowledge acquisition took up the challenge of the new categorical conceptions of "economics" and "politics" with interest and success.¹⁰

Cherokee: A Language Aligned with Well-Being on the Landscape.

Pre-literate Cherokee conceptions of the world utilized systems of knowledge that were deeply enmeshed in the matrix of Cherokee language and relationships to the

⁹ McLoughlin, "Cherokee Anti-Mission Sentiment," 363; Moulton, *John Ross*, 31.

¹⁰ Heidi Altman and Tom Belt, "*Tohi*, the Cherokee concept of Well-Being," in *Under the Rattlesnake: Cherokee Health and Resiliency*, (Tuscaloosa, AL: the University of Alabama Press, 2009), 12-13; Nettle and Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, 95-96; Claudio Saunt, "The Political Uses of Myth and History in the Cherokee and Creek Nations," *The Journal of American History* 93, no. 3 (Dec., 2006), 674-676.

natural cycles and biodiversity of Cherokee ecosystems, what scholar Einar Haugen has termed the “ecology of language.” Cherokee words for particular plants, animals and places could transmit meanings or stories of that plant or animal or place that did not translate into Euro-American thinking. The categorizations of the white’s world contracted the scope of Cherokee language just as those categorizations contracted the scope of diversity on the landscape. Spoken language was a powerful human presence in the larger world that could potentially cause deviations from “the proper...centered, balanced, and neutral” state, *tohi*, if not presented properly through prayer or song.¹¹

Animal spirits could understand and would respond to proper language, and were often invoked in healing ceremonies. Birds, as especially communicative animals, might sometimes convey prophetic information to humans. An owl “making an uncommon noise” tells that a death in the family is immanent, to “hear a little bird called *tso-wi-sku* singing very fast and loud, *Tsu wi, tsu wi*” meant the enemy “was just about the town,” if one saw an owl “light on a Peach, or other trees among the houses in a town, and sing, it foretold the approach of the enemy in a few days.” Cherokee ways of knowing and communicating that acknowledged mysteries and layers of knowledge attributed to all living beings, made knowledge acquisition an invaluable element of communication and transference of ideas in a diverse world.¹²

¹¹ Altman and Belt, “*Tohi: The Cherokee Concept of Well-Being*,” 22; Nettle and Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, 78; David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 144, 181-182.

¹² Altman and Belt, “*Tohi: The Cherokee concept of Well-Being*,” 11, 19-22; Nettle and Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, 79, 110-111, 87; *PBP*, 4: 102-103; Peter Nabakov, *Where the Lightning Strikes: The Lives of American Indian Sacred Places*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 112-115.

The encrypted system of Cherokee cultural knowledge, enmeshed in the language and landscape, was linked to the particular ecology in ways completely alien and incomprehensible to white ways of thinking.¹³ Cherokee language scholar Durbin

Feeling states,

A great challenge which confronts the person who wishes to learn Cherokee is the need to learn to think and to perceive the world as do Cherokee. Cherokee culture is intimately interwoven with its beautiful and expressive language. The language reflects traditional Cherokee culture and its view of the world, and is very different from the language of the dominant society. Therefore perpetuation of the language is essential for the survival of the Cherokee people and culture.¹⁴

The complex verb structures in Cherokee include information about physical objects, whether they are animate or inanimate, long and rigid, flexible, solid forms, or liquids. Many verbs have up to 26,000 possible forms, a level of subtlety and complexity not possible in English. Particular prefixes can denote whether the person being spoken of is beside the speaker or has their back to the speaker. Other prefixes can denote distance, near, far, or “right there.” Still other pronominal prefix forms denote particular groupings of people, you and I but not them, everyone but you, all of us, you and him but not the rest, etc. A series of prefixes, in the proper order, can carry information in one word that would take several sentences in English. Cherokee is a very precise language that is grounded in physical relationships such as distance and direction, as well as groupings of people. Every syllable and breath carries meaning, but pauses and silence also have implications and importance.¹⁵

¹³ Nettle and Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, 78-80; *HMSFC*, 339, 340-342.

¹⁴ Durbin Feeling, “A Structured Approach to Learning the Basic Inflections of the Cherokee Verb,” (masters thesis, Irvine, CA: University of California, 1977), V.

¹⁵ McClinton, “Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks,” 17; Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, 11-12; Margaret Bender, “Language Revitalization,” (lecture, Western Carolina University Cherokee Language Revitalization

Prior to the Cherokee syllabary, thoughts were not represented by arbitrary symbols, but by direct interaction with physical objects that served as mnemonics, signifiers, and associative sets of information networks and classifications. There were no books that gave meaning to abstracted words, but balancing processes, stories of significant events, important places, and relationships with physical objects in the world expressed through the sounds of spoken language.¹⁶

The physical reverberations of tones generated through air movement and resonant cavities of the body carried meaning and power within animal communities just as in human communities. Speaking was understood, in part, as direct and powerful interaction, not as abstracted ideas.¹⁷ Charles Hicks related some physical aspects of the language to Moravian missionaries, saying, “some of the Cherokee words and syllables are pronounced through one’s nose, and some syllables get stuck in one’s throat.” Depth of meaning and urgency varied with subtle expression, the length of vowel sounds, and the rise or drop in pitch. Speaking Cherokee was a valued form of social capital that distinguished residents of multilingual places such as the Peachtree Valley. Cherokees were aware of many different languages, and dialects and bilingualism among Southeast Indians were common, especially prior to the nineteenth century. The Cherokee

Symposium, Cullowhee NC, June 23); Hartwell Francis and Tom Belt, “Cherokee Verbs: Classificatory Verbs, Pronominal Prefixes, Directive Prefixes,” (class discussion, Cherokee Language 232, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee NC, February 16, 2011); Hartwell Francis and Tom Belt, conversation with author, March 7, 2011; *PBP*, 4: 93.

¹⁶ Nettle and Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, 79, 85-87, 89; Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 139-140; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London and New York: Verso, 1983), 34-35.

¹⁷ Robert K. Thomas, “Cherokee Values and Worldview,” unpublished paper copy in possession of David Cozzo, (n.d.), 6-7.

associated different languages and rhetorical forms with particular purposes, ways of thinking and behaving, and sets of knowledge.¹⁸

Charles Hicks spoke of different forms of Cherokee language in a letter to John Ross. Cherokee traditions were,

related in two forms: *One* is like in a sacred discourse, in a kind of poetic style, with a long breath to each word, which constituted their orationary, addressed to assembled audiences which relates to [Cherokee] immigration to this country; and *the Other Part* are related as in conversation.¹⁹

Hicks also wrote about a ceremonial language used by Cherokee priests on certain occasions, “though few if any now understand the meaning of the words used.” The language of sacred formulas was “largely archaic, metaphorical, euphemistic, [and] at times purposely obscure.” Certain sacred formulas, healing chants, and warrior verses were “considered dangerous for common people to repeat.” And during healing and warriors’ ceremonies “speakers of course while speaking faced the east,” adding another layer of attentiveness, purpose, and power to public oration and ceremonial speech that was directly oriented with the landscape. Butrick wrote, “during all... ceremonies the whole company must be solemn and still. Any rude & light behaviour was punished.” In

¹⁸ John Gambold, Abraham Steiner, and Anna Rosina Gambold, “Minutes of the Moravian Conference Held at Springplace, 1819,” translated by Bishop Kenneth G. Hamilton, (Winston-Salem, NC: Moravian Archives, September, 1968); James Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees (HMSFC)*, (Fairview, NC: Historical Images Bright Mountain Books, 1992), 329-330; Altman and Belt, “*Tohi: The Cherokee Concept of Well-Being*,” 11; Frank M. Setzler and Jesse D. Jennings, *Peachtree Mound and Village Site, Cherokee County North Carolina (PMVS)*, (Smithsonian Institution Bureau Of American Ethnology Bulletin 131, Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1941), 30-35; Nettle and Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, 110-111, 87; *PBP*, 4: 102-103; Nettle and Romaine associate language diversity with biodiversity and the spread of languages with the spread of similar agriculture and animal husbandry practices. Cherokees commonly spoke Creek and Shawnee in the eighteenth century.

¹⁹ Charles Hicks to John Ross, February 1, 1826, *PCJR*, 1: 112.

his letters to John Howard Payne discussing the Cherokee language, Buttrick stated “the seven counselors to the great war chief were called *Ka-tu-gi-a-ni-gv-sta*, *Ka-tv-gi-a* means ‘I am listening,’” which suggests a strong connection between the power of speech and the importance of attentively listening to others. All these examples demonstrate the importance of a diverse linguistic landscape in Cherokee society.²⁰

The continual acquisition of knowledge on individual and societal levels was a deeply rooted aspect of Cherokee life. The power of spoken words and different rhetorical forms was an important and respected power in Cherokee society. Old stories of the ancient Cherokee migration to the southern mountains, the annihilation of the *Ani-Kutani*, the adoption of new crops such as peaches, creasy greens, cucumbers, water melons, and sweet potatoes, and the increasing reliance of the Cherokee economy on direct trade with Europeans all demonstrate a long history of change and adaptation and suggests a flexible set of categorizations of the world. Cherokee social organization included processes for maintaining balance through knowledge acquisition. *Ulistu’li* priests replaced the hierarchical *Ani’Kutani*, peaches superceded plums, copper kettles and iron pots marginalized the use and creation of ceramics, but cultural adaptations always remained infused with Cherokee-ness.²¹ Change was shaped and controlled by Cherokee conceptions of *tohi* centered on place and place-based relationships. Cherokees chose to resist whites’ claims to superiority, but accepted white tools and attitudes that

²⁰ *BJ*, 56, 88-91, 181; *PBP*, 4: 93, 94, 114-115, 465 note 145; Altman and Belt, “*Tohi: The Cherokee concept of Well-Being*,” 11; McClinton, *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees (MSMC), 1814-1821*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 2: 74.

²¹ Charles O. Walker, *Cherokee Footprints... Voume II: Home and Hearth*, (Canton, GA: Industrial Printing Service, Inc., 1989), 27; Raymond D. Fogelson. “Who Were the Ani-Kutani? An Excursion into Cherokee Historical Thought.” *Ethnohistory* 31, no. 4 (Autumn, 1984), 255-263.

could be balanced with relationships to the larger ecology. The acquisition of some white knowledge brought successes in daily balance, fitting new technologies, ideas, and attitudes with Cherokee categorizations. But by the beginning of the nineteenth century, Cherokee systems of knowledge were beginning to incorporate white ideas in ways that affected fundamental Cherokee traditions, eventually undermining some cultural distinctions.²²

The Cherokee language is incredibly rich, precise, and engaged with the physical surroundings of the speaker. The pre-literate language was a form of physical interaction that required skill and talent, and also had real power in the world. As such, it was important to consider words and meaning before one spoke, to listen attentively when someone was speaking, and to align the power of speaking with concepts of *tohi*. Speaking, singing, and public and ceremonial oration, as sources and expressions of knowledge and power, were therefore highly valued and respected leadership abilities in Cherokee society.²³

²² Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 86; Catherine L. Albanese, "Exploring Regional Religion: A Case Study of the Eastern Cherokee," *History of Religions* 23, no. 4 (May, 1984), 358-361; Clara Sue Kidwell, "Native American Systems of Knowledge," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 88-90; Nettle and Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, 87, 166-170; Bender, "Reading Culture," 6-7, 71; Altman and Belt, "*Tohi*, the Cherokee concept of Well-Being," 12-13; Hartwell Francis and Tom Belt, conversation with author, March 16, 2011; *PBP*, 4: 93. Romaine and Nettle refer to the use of language in maintaining cultural and social distinctions as "social capital," arguing that social capital was an important element of aboriginal economies.

²³ McClinton, "Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks," 17; Nettle and Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, 11-12; Margaret Bender, "Language Revitalization," (lecture, Western Carolina University Cherokee Language Revitalization Symposium, Cullowhee NC, June 23); Hartwell Francis and Tom Belt, "Cherokee Verbs: Classificatory Verbs, Pronominal Prefixes, Directive Prefixes," (class discussion, Cherokee Language 232, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee NC, February 16, 2011); Hartwell Francis and Tom Belt, conversation with author, March 16, 2011; *PBP*,

Charles Hicks: A Respected Cherokee Voice

Charles Hicks was a respected orator who translated the words of powerful whites and Cherokees. In the 1810's, Cherokee leaders, counseled by Hicks, were moving to grab the reigns of their own future without offending or falling prey to the rhetorically clever patriarchs in Washington City. Charles Hicks' key position as translator and mediator was crucial in keeping Cherokee chiefs clearly informed about what was happening while softening the presumptions, ignorance, and potentially offensive thinking of Christian missionaries, military officers, and foreign diplomats. But Hicks also believed that Christianity would better the lives of Cherokees and he became a devout Moravian convert, similarly softening missionary ideas for Cherokee ears and minds.²⁴

Whatever particular Cherokee notions Charles Hicks utilized to explain who the Moravians were and what they intended to do for the Cherokee, his own beliefs and preferences colored his interpretations. Many of the ideas missionaries hoped to convey were fit into Cherokee categorizations in a positive way by Hicks' interpretations. The patronizing label "heathens" became "Indians," and mission stations were simply schools

4: 93; Cherokee concepts of speaking and oration were directly linked with spiritual power.

²⁴ Gary E. Moulton, *John Ross: Cherokee Chief*, (Athens and London: Brown Thrasher Books and The University of Georgia Press, 1978), 31-34; Charles Hicks to Sa-la-wa & Situwegi, August 10, 1826, in *PBP*, 4: 9-10; John R. Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees: 1819-1900*, (Knoxville: The University Tennessee Press, 1984), 26-30; Tom Belt, conversation with author, Oct. 18, 2011. Belt stated that he believed the Cherokee were planning "legal" ways to maintain a cultural presence in their mountain homeland, even as early as 1817. Research here bears this out, presenting the likelihood that before Removal was a real threat but voluntary immigration to Arkansas had some Cherokee supporters, the Cherokee leadership had taken steps to show a strong political resistance to forced removal and had begun to establish means for a sustained Cherokee presence in the oldest districts of the Nation.

that taught “better” ways of thinking and living. Hicks lived during a tumultuous period when Cherokee ways of knowing were being adapted and fractured, a time when the landscape was undergoing similarly drastic changes. The “messy” appearance of Cherokee gardens, while more ecologically sound in practice, was commonly becoming the neatly plowed, soil-depleting rows of whites’ gardens. Wattle and daub huts, made with stripped saplings, woven cane, and river clay were being replaced by hewn log cabins with board floors and mud-brick fireplaces. Ancient paths were being widened for wagons and livestock drovers. Forested lands were being cleared for pasture and crop fields, and riverbanks were being cleared of cane by growing populations of livestock.²⁵

²⁵ M. Thomas Hatley, “The Three Lives of Keowee,” in *Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, eds. Peter H. Woods, Gregory A Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 227; Thomas R. Vale, “The Pre-European Landscape of the United States: Pristine or Humanized?” in *Fire, Native Peoples, and The Natural Landscape*, (Washington and London: Island Press, 2002), 9, Box 1.1; Sarah H. Hill, *Weaving New Worlds: Southeastern Cherokee Women and Their Basketry*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997). xvii-xx; William G. McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870: Essays on Acculturation and Cultural Persistence*, ed. Walter H. Conser, (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), 16-18; Donald Edward Davis, *Where There Are Mountains: An Environmental History of the Southern Appalachians*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2000), 11-14; Timothy Silver, *Mount Mitchell & The Black Mountains: An Environmental History of the Highest Peaks in Eastern America*, (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 38-46, 78-83; Henry Timberlake, *The Memoirs of Lt. Henry Timberlake: The Story of a Soldier, Adventurer, and Emissary to the Cherokees, 1756-1765*, ed. by Duane H. King, (Cherokee, NC: Museum of the Cherokee Indian Press, 2007), 9-12, 31-33; Bartram, *Travels*, 377, 228, 229-230, 235-236; Charles Fenton Mercer Noland, *Noland’s Cherokee Diary*, ed. Mildred E. Whitmire, (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1990), 18-19, 12; Bennie C. Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology: A Study of the Appalachian Summit*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 33-34; Max E. White, “An Ethnoarchaeological Approach to Cherokee Subsistence and Settlement Patterns,” (PhD dissertation, Indiana University, March, 1980), 181-213; Sara Gwenyth Parker, “The Transformation of Cherokee Appalachia 1755-1808,” (Phd dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1991), 213-220; Hubbard Scientific Inc., “Knoxville, Tenn.; N.C.; S.C; GA: NI 17-1,” map, 2002 revision; Norton, *Journal*, map, 34.

The Cherokee world, a presence on the landscape for millennia, had been changing fast for a century under the pressures of white settlers and Euro-American expansion. Cherokee people recognized the need to adapt and continued taking steps dependent on knowledge acquisition and learning to do so. Different districts of the Nation, experiencing different pressures, responded in their own ways. The Overhill Cherokees, especially in the Chickamauga district, had suffered under the violence and pressures of whites more often than other regions, and they continued to maintain a state of militancy unlike the mountain towns. The Lower Towns, generally more affluent by white standards, had the longest history of relations with Europeans and more commonly adopted white practices such as slavery and plantation style agriculture. The Valley and Out Towns, the oldest parts of the Nation, generally held to traditional ways of thinking, but still recognized that change was immanent. Changes in the ways Cherokees thought about land and landscape relationships were reflected in the way they talked about and used land, presenting changes in the aural and visible Cherokee presence on the landscape.²⁶

The usefulness of age-old Cherokee wisdom was not abandoned, but categorizations of reality were realigned to fit changes in thinking. The conservative Cherokees, which included the Valley and Out Towns, were two-thirds of the Nation in the early nineteenth century, most of them did not speak English and were skeptical of white ways of thinking. Talented and skilled speakers and bilingual rhetoricians such as Charles Hicks had influence among conservative Cherokees. The power of language in

²⁶ HMSFC, 96-107; Moulton, *John Ross*, 8-11, 16-18; Nettle and Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, 78-79, 87.

relating knowledge and empowering cultural distinctions went hand in hand with Cherokee's respect for accomplished speakers.²⁷

Missionaries noted Cherokee's respect for orators at sermons, council meetings, and ceremonies. Cherokee mission journals consistently note that Cherokees "all appeared attentive," they listened "with great solemnity," and were "solemn and still" during sermons. One Brainerd missionary wrote that he "preached twice on the sabbath to a very attentive [Cherokee] audience." Missionaries also recorded with some surprise how "many [Cherokee] people gathered, [with] no disorder or tumult" at council meetings. Charles Hicks and others translated for many sermons, but Cherokees were attentive even when preachers spoke only in English, especially in the early decades of mission work in Cherokee country.²⁸

During many of the early missionary sermons, Charles Hicks would translate. On April 23, 1818, Daniel Butrick "was accompanied by [Hicks] and some of [Hicks'] family to the place of preaching on the Sabbath. After the sermon the substance of what had just been said, Brother Hicks repeated in his own language for the benefit of those who did not understand English. All appeared attentive." Brainerd missionary Ard Hoyt recognized that "the warm feelings of Br. Hicks gave an affecting pathos to the interpretation: which was given sentence by sentence as I spake."²⁹

The shift of Cherokee ways of knowing from an ecologically embedded understanding toward European influenced knowledge systems required not only

²⁷ McClinton, "Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks," 19-20; Moulton, *John Ross*, 24, 34; Kidwell, "Native American Systems of Knowledge," 88-89; *PBP*, 1: 218-219, 2: 89-91.

²⁸ *BJ*, 56, 88, 91, 181; *PBP*, 4: 93, 114-115, 465 note 145.

²⁹ *BJ*, 56.

physically changing the landscape, but also a level of intellectual disengagement from the surrounding environment, a process that needed new, non-landscape, focal points, two of which were Christianity and writing. Sequoyah's ingenious invention of the syllabary, and conservative Cherokees' syncretic adaptation of Christian beliefs and practices allowed Cherokees to maintain control of realigning categorizations. When Charles Hicks was born in 1767, these processes were just beginning to build momentum. By the time Charles Hicks died in 1827, these shifts were well underway, but Charles Hicks never learned to write well in Cherokee and his handwriting in English was "atrocious."³⁰ The shift to European dominated ways of knowing from the Cherokee's "older categorization of the world" during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was directly tempered through Charles Hicks' oratorical skills and relationships based on his bilingual abilities, yet his particular interpretations remained largely unrecorded in writing.³¹

Charles Hicks told missionaries in 1819 that "he had heard only one white man speak the Cherokee language perfectly, John McDonald," John Ross's grandfather. This implies that John McDonald, and some few other whites, had at least a reasonable understanding of Cherokee worldviews and ways of knowing that were inherent in Cherokee language. Hicks and Path Killer trusted that John Ross had inherited similar understandings through growing up with Cherokee language being spoken around him,

³⁰ Kidwell, "Native American Systems of Knowledge," 98-99; Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 139-140; Walker and Sarbaugh, "The Early History of the Cherokee Syllabary," 85; Abram discusses how speech is "attuned in multiple and subtle ways to the contour and scale of the local landscape," and "to the various nonhuman calls and cries that animate the local terrain" in indigenous social structures.

³¹ Kidwell, "Native American Systems of Knowledge," 87-88, 98-99; Richard White, "Indian Peoples and the Natural World: Asking the Right Questions," in *Rethinking American Indian History*, Donald L. Fixico 89, 91-92, 95.

although he lacked a deeper involvement in Cherokee oral traditions.³² Hicks hoped to transmit deeper understandings of Cherokee-ness through involving Ross in Cherokee government and coaching him on Cherokee history. But Hicks also hoped that promoting Ross' role in Cherokee leadership would direct the Nation toward "civilization" that was still distinctly Cherokee but on par with whites.³³

Together, Charles Hicks and John Ross laid out a vision of a new categorization of the Cherokee world "when the red children of the forest will embrace the knowledge of civilization, religion & law and the rudiments of arts and sciences."³⁴ In working toward a new understanding of the world, Hicks and Ross appealed to Cherokee traditions of knowledge acquisition through European categorizations. These two men were leaders among those who wanted to push the Cherokee toward a distinctly Cherokee version of civilization, religion, law, arts, and sciences, a synthesis of Cherokee and European ways. But the processes Hicks and Ross promoted directly and subtly facilitated disengagement from ecological relationships and *tohi* concepts that had previously defined Cherokee society. Hicks' and Ross' plans were in many ways a success. The processes of "civilization" accelerated during the last years of Hicks' life, and the deaths of Pathkiller and Charles Renatus Hicks marked a sort of clean slate in

³² McClinton, "Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks," 17.

³³ Moulton, *John Ross*, 23; Charles Hicks to John Ross, February 1, 1826 and March 1, 1826; Hicks to Ross, May 4, 1826; Charles Hicks, John Ross, et. al., to John C. Calhoun, February 22, 1819; Charles Hicks and John Ross to Samuel Worcester, March 16, 1819, in *PCJR*, 1: 33-36, 111-121.

³⁴ Charles Hicks and John Ross to Samuel Worcester, March 6, 1819, *PCJR*, 1: 35-36.

Cherokee government when links to older leadership traditions were weakened just as the Cherokee Constitution went into effect.³⁵

Charles Hicks was the official interpreter for the Cherokee Nation during the last era before the increasingly dominant culture of whites overtook southeastern North America. Hicks' understanding of the world and his loyalty to his-own Cherokee-ness shaped the unfolding of events well past his lifetime. Hicks intermediary role between Cherokee leaders, pioneer missionaries, and the U.S. government gave him unique access to the distinct understandings of each group and allowed him to shape those understandings toward what he felt was the greatest good. Hicks understood that presenting certain aspects of Cherokee culture in a particular light, depending on the audience, could be a powerfully useful influence on eventual outcomes. Hicks was a "real Christian," but his loyalty to his people, their land and many core aspects of Cherokee culture kept him close to older Cherokee leaders as well as missionaries who were sympathetic to the Cherokee people.³⁶

Charles Hicks traveled almost constantly throughout the Cherokee Nation during the 1790's and the first two decades of the nineteenth century. He knew the paths, roads, terrain, and towns well. His familiarity with fords and ferries along the rivers of the Cherokee Nation, his assistance in laying out federal roads and offices, and his knowledge of how and when to cross, or not cross, high waters, and direct other travelers

³⁵ Moulton, *John Ross*, 19-21; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 39-46; Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, 139-141. Anderson discusses similar developments pertaining to Latin, print capitalism, and "administrative vernaculars" in sixteenth century Europe. Abram discusses how non-written language utilizes knowledge systems embedded in the physical landscape and environment in which language is spoken.

³⁶ Bender, "Reading Culture," 6-7, 71; *BJ*, 53-55, 73-74. Hicks' position as first official translator for the Cherokee Nation was turned over to Cherokee *Atsi* also known as Arch Skit and John Arch in 1824.

to the best routes are all testament to his knowledge of the landscape of the districts of the Cherokee Nation.³⁷ One of many examples from mission journals shows that in the spring of 1818, when the weather was still “raw and cold, “Brother Hicks could only cross the high waters [of the Connasauga River] with great trouble” while many others could not cross at all.³⁸

As interpreter for the Cherokee Nation, Hicks was paid a salary through the Indian Agent Return J. Meigs. Meigs daybook records dates and amounts paid directly to Charles Hicks over the span of 12 years, demonstrating that Hicks was frequently traveling through the agency on official and unofficial business. Hicks traveled with the Commissioners who laid out the first federal road through the Nation during 1804, which ran from Vann’s Ferry on the southeast border to just north of Rossville on the western border, passing through the Springplace and Brainerd missions. Hicks also traveled to Washington City on a number of occasions before he was Second Principal Chief, familiarizing himself with the Great Wagon Road and the country along the Holston River and into Virginia and Pennsylvania. Until about 1820, when his “scrofulous” leg grew worse, Charles Hicks was continuously on the move throughout the Cherokee Nation. While the Vann home place, Springplace and Brainerd, and Coosawatie town were all along the federal road, other sites Hicks frequented such as Meigs’ agency at Tellico, and the Valley Town mission in Peachtree were on narrow and sometimes ancient paths where a deep knowledge of the landscape was even more critical. Hicks was undoubtedly closely acquainted with the face of Cherokee land. But his close relationships with whites, especially missionaries, colored his perceptions of Cherokee

³⁷ *BJ*, “Map of the Cherokee Nation, 1817-1823,” xiii.

³⁸ McLinton, *MSMC*, 2: 463, 210-211.

culture and the landscape. The world Charles Hicks traveled through was complex and ever-changing, both ecologically and intellectually.³⁹

A Cherokee Christian

Hicks often spoke about Cherokee customs with white missionaries, emphasizing elements that led him to conclude that the Cherokee had once been “neighbors of the children of Israel.” Missionary Daniel S. Butrick, a close friend of Charles Hicks, often discussed parallels between Jewish and Cherokee practices and beliefs in letters to John Howard Payne.⁴⁰ One of the primary parallels that Daniel Butrick recorded, and Hicks suspected might be true, is the idea that Indians’ “red skin” originated in the descendants of Adam. Cherokee tradition stated that all Cherokees were “direct and unadulterated descendants from the first man, who... was red, made of red earth.” Butrick wrote that the name Adam, “in the Hebrew tongue signifies one that is red, because he was formed out of red earth...for of that kind [of earth] is virgin, and true earth.” Jewish peoples had lost their red skin through the incorporation of other nations, as detailed in Biblical scripture, but Indians had retained the redness of “virgin, and true earth.”⁴¹ “The Indians and Jews agree,” according to Butrick, “in asserting that as their ancestors were not engaged in building the tower of Babel, therefore their language was not affected at that time but continued the same.”⁴²

³⁹ Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs, *Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs Day Book Number 2*, transcribed by James L. Douthat, (Signal Mountain, TN: Mountain Press, Institute of Historical Research, 1993), 37-38; *BJ*, “Map of the Cherokee Nation, 1817-1823,” xiii.

⁴⁰ *PBP*, 4: 26, 103.

⁴¹ Charles Hicks to John Ross, March 1, 1826, in *PCJR*, 1: 115-116; McClinton, “Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks,” 19; *MSMC*, 1: 566; *PBP*, 4: 106-107, 169-170.

⁴² *PBP*, 4: 100.

Charles Hicks portrayed these ideas as linking the purity and superiority of Cherokee descent and language with Judeo-Christian sensibilities, arguing that the Cherokee already understood some elements of biblical teachings better than whites did. Some other important parallels between Cherokees and biblical Jews noted by Butrick, and very likely shared by his friend Charles Hicks, related to specific customs such as towns of refuge, the significance of seven day cycles, beliefs about “the great flood,” the separation of clans, the virtue and dress of priests, the holiness of winter months, the sacredness of fire, the ripe state of fruit at creation, and the recitation of prayer at dawn and sunset. Butrick wrote, “In comparison of the Indian with Jewish customs respecting warfare, mourning, religious feasts &c. we find a very astonishing resemblance, and cannot well believe that they have been taught any of these things by the whites.”⁴³

⁴³ *PBP*, 4: 9, 99-103, 108, 109; William G. McLoughlin and Walter H. Conser, Jr., “‘The First Man Was Red’: Cherokee Responses to the Debate Over Indian Origins, 1760-1860,” *American Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (Jun., 1989): 256-258. Butrick stated, “According to Maimonedes all the forty eight cities of the priests and Levites were cities of refuge: so among the Indians the habitations of every priest was a refuge to the man slayer....cities of refuge were free for strangers and captives as well as for any of the tribe who should visit them;” “when Jews apostasized from Him, they disregard the sabbath...worshipping the calves of Jeroboam, they turned to worshipping the sun and moon...and when scattered among he Medes and Persians would naturally imbibe their ideas respecting fire. All this idolatry, with individual exceptions, the Indians evidently still retain. And while [the Indians] continue in the same apostasy which first caused them to disregard the Sabbath....yet, would it not seem that the seventh day has been a peculiar day to the Indians? Their fasts on almost all important occasions are continued seven days; and at their national festivals how many of the most important transactions occur on the seventh day....the general day for their most important and sacred duties;” “The Cherokee agree with Josephus in saying that before the flood, there was a prediction that the world should be destroyed by water and by fire....water gushed out of the ground, at the time of the flood, as well as come down from the clouds....the world was created with the fruits all ripe, and that therefore the first new moon in the fall begins the year....that in passing through the wilderness, not only the tribes, but also the clans kept distinct in the their marches and encampments.... The Jews say that God on the mountain commanded them to repeat their phylactery sentences at day light & at night, and the Indians say that when on the mountain, soon after giving the law, God directed them to

But one particular parallel noted by Butrick presents another possibility.

According to Butrick, the Cherokee,

as far back as their history can be traced,....divided into at least two sects... one idolatrous and the other set embracing but few, comparatively, say that there ever existed Three Beings above, always together, and of the same mind first *U-ha-lo-te-qa*, second *A-ta-nv-ti*...third *U-sqo-hu-la*...These Three are said to sit on three white seats above; and all prayers are to be directed to them. They have messengers or angels who come to this world and attend the affairs of men.⁴⁴

The similarities to the Christian Holy Trinity are striking, even more so when it is considered that the first, *Uhalote'qa*, was “the Summit of Greatness,” the second, *Atanvti*, “The Reconciler,” and the third, *Usqohu'la*, “something like affection of the mind,” all correspond closely to “The Father,” “The Son” or messiah whom the “Jews speak of as making reconciliation,” and the “Holy Ghost,” a conception of spirit that is difficult to explain. Given the evidence for communication and dissemination of knowledge between the Cherokee and other Southeast Indian groups, it is possible that this Trinity, held by a small “sect” of Cherokees prior to their communication with whites, was an adaptation of the Holy Trinity transferred across lines of communication with early Catholic convert groups from French and Spanish regions of the Americas.⁴⁵

repeat at day break and at night the prayer they sing at those seasons. Josephus says that Aaron was made priest on account of his virtue; and the Cherokee say that their first great priest was chosen of God for his piety & for that reason the priesthood was to continue in his family.....had both the yellow and the white dress. They must bathe all over before putting on their priestly garments, and must wash their hands before offering sacrifice. Their wives in both nations must be not only virgins, but women of unblemished character. What we render a witch, according to our ideas of witchcraft, Josephus and the Indians understand of a poisoner, of one who attempts by secret and unlawful drugs or philtra to take away the senses or the lives of men. Among the Jews, the winter months were holy, and so with the Cherokee are December and January.”

⁴⁴ *PBP*, 4: 132-133.

⁴⁵ *PBP*, 4: 99, 108-109.

At the same time, it seems unlikely that all these parallels were adoptions of European ideas and any one, or all, may have been coincidental indigenous ideas. Nineteenth century European categorizations of the world allowed Butrick and Hicks, and many other early missionaries, to take such similarities in cultural practice as signs of ancient links between Cherokees and the Ten Lost tribes of the Israel, re-envisioning Cherokee history. Hicks promoted these ideas as demonstrating that Cherokees had been apart from the rise of Christianity in their “apostasy” from the dictates of “Jehovah,” and Christianity was a part of Cherokees’ lost inheritance, not some new, monumental way of thinking that was opposed to Cherokee traditions. Many early Cherokee converts came to hold similar beliefs about Cherokee history, and the acquisition of Christian knowledge became a part of restoring the Cherokees to their ancient place in the cosmos. Such beliefs had resounding effects on perceptions of land and landscape relationships.

Charles Hicks seized every opportunity to show other Cherokees the “light of Jesus” and Christian ways of thinking. The earthquakes of 1811 and 1812 “which caused great consternation among the Indians,” were for many a sign that Indians needed to quit “white ways”, but for Hicks the earthquakes were an opportunity to promote Christian ideas. Hicks sent worried Cherokees to Springplace. A December 1811 Springplace diary entry states, “Many [Cherokees] came to the mission and asked the cause of these commotions, which gave the missionaries a desirable opportunity of speaking to them of Him, the Rock of Ages, upon Whom His people stand firmly built though heaven and earth should pass away. Several Chiefs begged earnestly to know more about God.” Hicks’ Christianized ideas about the earthquakes were not necessarily a subversion of traditional Cherokee ideas, but an affirmation that the Cherokees should hold to the

beliefs of the ancient Jews, once their neighbors, if not their ancestors because those beliefs were a part of lost Cherokee heritage. Charles Hicks belief that the Cherokee shared a religious heritage with Christians shaped his perceptions of Cherokee history and relationships to the landscape of the Cherokee homeland.⁴⁶

Hicks' discussions with Cherokee leaders, such as Path Killer, were often geared toward the Gospel, the nature of sin, and Cherokee history attuned with Christian ways of thinking. Hicks was told by many Cherokees that they did not understand Christian ideas, that perhaps "if repeated enough times" they may come to understand, but until that time many Cherokees preferred to "remain with [the beliefs of] the ancients," beliefs that included explicit views of humanity's place in tension and balance with plants and animals on the landscape. Hicks' discussions with whites, especially government officials, were aimed at justifying and defending Cherokee rights and landscape relationships, although tempered by European conceptions of ownership and a Christianized sense of history and place.⁴⁷

Hicks was just as often a sort of moderator, balancing communications between vastly different understandings of the world. Charles Hicks was the primary link between

⁴⁶ *PBP*, 4: 9; *BJ*, 358, 158, 134, 109, 56; *MSMC*, 1: 365; William G. McLoughlin, "Ghost Dance Movements: Some Thoughts on Definitions Based on Cherokee History," *Ethnohistory* 37, no. 1 (Winter, 1990): 25-44; Alice B. Kehoe, "On McLoughlin's 'Ghost Dance Movements,'" *Ethnohistory* 38, no. 1 (Winter, 1991): 73-74; Michelene E. Peasantubbee. "When the Earth Shakes: The Cherokee Prophecies of 1811-12," *American Indian Quarterly* 17, no.3 (Summer, 1993): 301-317; Russell Thornton, "Boundary Dissolution and Revitalization Movements: The Case of the Nineteenth-Century Cherokees." *Ethnohistory* 40, no.3 (Summer, 1993): 359-383. All of these authors reference Hicks' as a Christian leader during the troubled months of December 1811 and January 1812, as well as whites' fears of Indian magic and derision of Cherokees "ignorant superstitions."

⁴⁷ Charles Hicks to John Ross, March 1, 1826, in *PCJR*, 1: 115-116; McClinton, "Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks," 19-21; *MSMC*, 1: 566.

later Cherokee leaders, such as John Ross and William Penn Adair, and the more conservative “traditionalists,” such as Little Turkey and Path Killer, whose leadership of the Nation centered almost entirely on a non-European world-view. As historian Gary Moulton states, “Pathkiller [was]...in many ways...a figurehead after the Creek War [1814]. Hicks became the real power and was *the first transitional figure* in Cherokee history” (emphasis added).⁴⁸

Hicks was often asked by missionaries about Cherokee customs, discussing the seven clan system, matrilineage, the green corn ceremony, ball play, and the “ceremonial language,” knowledge of which was rare by Hicks’ lifetime. In April of 1818, Hicks left “written accounts of some Cherokee customs” for the Brainerd missionaries, noting elements that were “in decline,” including “making rain” and ritual bathing. Hicks also took time to point out customs that persisted such as the “eagle tail dance,” and the strictness of Cherokee doctors’ prescriptions of behavior as central to effective medicine.

In 1818 Hicks and US government representatives discussed the “experiences of the last 20 years” in which the Cherokee people had “turned their attention more to agriculture & less to hunting.” The Cherokees, especially the Lower and Overhill towns, had become convinced that they could live “much more comfortably by tilling their land & raising livestock than they can in their old way. They find also that their new way of living tends to increase their population.” These attitudes were attributed to the more “civilized” Cherokees, while the Valley and Out Towns, the oldest and most conservative

⁴⁸ Moulton, *John Ross*, 31; *MSMC*, 2: 374-375; *BJ*, 53-55; Andrew Denson, *Demanding the Cherokee Nation: Indian Autonomy and American Culture*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 12-13, 19-20;

part of the Nation's settlements, were considered "the most uncultivated portion of the tribe."⁴⁹

The Cherokee population was experiencing growth on a scale not seen since the arrival of European diseases in the 16th and 17th centuries, having an increasing impression on the landscape just as Christian ideas were being genuinely introduced. At the same time, the links between the life of the landscape and the minds of the people on that land were made explicit. The oldest districts of the Cherokee Nation were "uncultivated," culturally and literally, and they carried an "older [Cherokee] way of categorizing the world." Hicks was keenly aware of the importance of sustaining Cherokee values through this "older way," even as he believed new Christian categorizations were the only hope of allowing the Nation to remain and grow as Cherokees fought to control their future.

Charles Hicks' letters to John Ross, who became president of the National Council and was expected to be Hicks' successor, demonstrate the complex weaving of cultural adaptation and continuity that accompanied knowledge acquisition and categorical re-alignment. In the first half of 1826, Hicks wrote a series of letters to John Ross on Cherokee customs and history, influencing Ross' attitudes toward traditional, "uncultivated" Cherokees in a largely positive way while still promoting modes of

⁴⁹ Hicks to Ross, Mar. 1, 1826, in *PCJR*, 1: 114; Christopher C. Dean, "Memoir of John Arch, A Cherokee Young Man, Compiled From Communications Of Missionaries In The Cherokee Nation," (Boston Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1838), reprinted in *Journal of Cherokee Studies* 26, (2008), 34; Roy S. Dickens, Jr., *Cherokee Prehistory: The Pisgah Phase in the Appalachian Summit Region*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 21-45. Hicks wrote that the "Highwassee old towns...were the lowest settlements [made by the ancestral Cherokee] that composed the whole nation...the Uchees [Yuchis] became their nearest neighbors" south of the Hiwassee River

“civilization.” In the first of these letters, Hicks discussed the impossible nature of recounting the complete history, institutions, and customs of their Cherokee forefathers, especially in light of the “decline” of the original culture once “intercourse commended with the whites.”⁵⁰ In the letters, Hicks focuses on long held traditions that persisted and historical events that precipitated cultural change and shifts in modes of living after the Revolution, including the scattering of settlements known as the Valley Towns. The final letter of the series relates events up to the general peace established by Oconostota in the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix between the Cherokees, their Indian neighbors on all sides, and English colonists. Hicks ends the letter by stating, “the manners, customs & Government of this nation will be necessary to be noticed down to the last period.” In the context of the series of known letters, the final line seems to show how closely Hicks and Ross had come to know each other and work together toward a greater plan for the Cherokee nation. Hicks intended Ross to become Principal Chief, cultural historian, and mediator, an influential agent of both change and cultural preservation. Ten years before Hicks’ death, missionary Daniel S. Butrick wrote, “Mr. Ross is rising highly in the opinion of the Nation. He is not in point of influence inferior to any except Mr. Hicks, these men walk hand in hand in the Nation’s Council and are the hope of the Nation.”⁵¹

Hicks’ commitment to preserving the culture of the Cherokee Nation, and necessarily the land as a part of that same effort, coupled with the faith that many

⁵⁰ *BJ*, 53-55; *PCJR*, 1: 3; Charles Hicks to John Ross, February 1, 1826, Hicks to Ross, March 1, 1826, May 4, 1826, and July 15, 1825, in *PCJR*, 1: 111-125, 112; Hicks emphasized that doctors’ cures must take place in seven nights if they were to succeed; Daniel S. Butrick and John Howard Payne sought out John Ross and asked about these letters in the 1820’s. The content of these letters are discussed at length throughout *The Payne-Butrick Papers*.

⁵¹ *PCJR*, 1: 125; Moulton, *Chief John Ross*, 31, footnoted “miscellaneous notes, Payne Papers, Newberry Library,” no date given.

Cherokees had in his leadership, overshadowed his personal dedication to prayer and Christian studies. Hicks' friendship with the Moravians at Springplace allowed him an open dialogue with these pacifist Christians only a few short weeks after the unsettling experiences surrounding negotiations of an 1819 Treaty. Long conversations took place on May 12, only a few days after Hicks had learned of a failed attempt on his and John Ross' life by a "prominent half-blood" Cherokee who opposed their dealings with the government in Washington City.⁵² After yet another forced land cession and haggling over annuity payments, property boundaries, and land improvements, Hicks was confident that his delegation had secured the Cherokee a homeland "forever." In early May of 1819 Charles Hicks spoke candidly with the Moravians at Springplace, as recorded in the mission diary.

He explained that his office is becoming very difficult for him and that he is very much in need of our prayer, he yearns for freedom from the bonds, because his own heart often suffers under this. He knows he still has much to learn in the Savior's school, and instead of sitting at His feet and *learning* and *enjoying*, his soul is daily burdened with so many unpleasurable national misunderstandings and so on that he himself does not know what to do. His duty in the meantime is to be obedient if it is the Savior's will for him at this time.⁵³

This brief passage illuminates many of the deepest issues that occupied Hicks heart and mind. His desire to learn and enjoy Christian studies was barred by what he felt was his God-given responsibility of attending to the painful growth and changes of

⁵² *MSMC*, 2: 290-291, 308; Charles Hicks, John Ross, et. al, to John C. Calhoun, February 22, 1819, and Charles Hicks and John Ross to Calvin Jones, July 3, 1819, in *PCJR*, 1: 33-35, 36-37; White intruders on Cherokee land had spread a rumor that Hicks, Ross and other members of the delegation were receiving personal payments from the federal government for every Cherokee that immigrated west.

⁵³ *MSMC*, 2: 290-291; See also Tiyah Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 54, 110, 121-122, 149. Hicks was seen as the Cherokee patron of the Moravians after the death of James Vann in 1809.

Cherokee society, and the burden of attempting to bridge the gap where “unpleasurable . . . misunderstandings” occurred. On April 4, 1819, a month before he pled his grievances to the missionaries, the Brethren at Springplace had received a letter from Hicks. He stated that it had taken 17 days to get home from Washington “after encountering Difficulties of various Nature, by traveling Day & Night in Mud & Snow to counteract speculative Views, & to soothe Party spirit, & keep it from being injurious to the Mission. I am charged secretly with being in Favor of Emigration, & that I was more mindful of Prayer meetings than my national Duty required.” Hicks goes on to discuss the “definitive arrangement entered with the United States; & *more than 2 thirds of our Lands* secured to the Cherokee East of the Mississippi.”⁵⁴

On April 12, soon after the delegation dispersed to their homes, Hicks made a visit to the mission at Brainerd. Hicks confided in the missionaries there that he believed the delegation had succeeded in getting part of their homeland “guaranteed to [the Cherokee] anew, & so many Christian people are engaged for their instruction, that hope which is almost expiring is raised to confident expectation. [Charles Hicks] heart [was] overflowing with joy, gratitude, and praise to God.”⁵⁵ Hicks left for home the next day. Along the way, heading south on the federal road, Hicks sat on his horse, sometimes alone, sometimes in the company of other travelers, noting the evident changes in the landscape. The expanding roads and fields, the new cabins and signs of “industry” among Cherokees, juxtaposed with shrinking cane breaks and forests, may have brought mixed feelings of sadness and hope. Regardless of his conflicted emotional state he did have a sense of accomplishment, a sense that his trials and the struggles of the Cherokee

⁵⁴ *MSMC*, 2: 276-277.

⁵⁵ *BJ*, 112.

culminated in the successful guarantee of their ancient homeland. For Hicks, this success, however short lived, showed that he was fulfilling the duties given to him by God.⁵⁶

Hicks and Posey: A Shared Voice On a Changing Landscape

On a visit to Springplace, May 28-30, 1819, Charles Hicks attended a sermon by a Baptist preacher, Reverend Humphrey Posey. Posey had met Hicks at his home and accompanied him on the few miles to the mission. Posey intended to discuss a site for a new mission school, as the one he had established in the “heathen wilderness” the previous year was on land ceded to whites in the recent treaty. That Saturday evening the two men sang hymns “in a clear voice” from the Moravian hymnal together with the missionaries, Vann family slaves, and a few other Cherokees. One of the hymns was “Come Holy Ghost, Lord God.” This hymn, credited to Martin Luther himself, was a favorite of the Moravians, and one that held a special place for Charles Hicks. This hymn had been sung at Hicks’ niece Peggy Vann’s baptism nearly a decade earlier, the day he himself decided to “seek salvation.”⁵⁷

“The first fruit of the Cherokee Nation... dear Peggy [Vann]” was given her Christian name Margaret Ann Vann at her baptism in the barn at Springplace on August 13, 1810. This had been a powerful experience for Charles Hicks. Immediately following the ceremony, Hicks had confided in Moravian Brother Gambold “that he could not describe the feeling that he had experienced during this baptismal service...he hoped that the impression of what he had enjoyed” that day “would stay with him the rest

⁵⁶ *MSMC*, 2: 290-291, 308.

⁵⁷ *MSMC*, 1: 375-376, 2: 289-290, 634. McClinton notes the title “Come Holy Ghost, Come Lord Our God!” is in English in the German manuscript, demonstrating the popularity of this hymn in England and America.

of his life.” Hicks asked Brother Gambold “a number of questions” about baptism and set the course for his own Christian life on that day. Later that same year he formally requested to be baptized.⁵⁸

Almost three years later, on Good Friday, April 16, 1813, after an eventful week of hailstorms, an aftershock earthquake, and a raucous Cherokee ballgame in the neighborhood of Springplace, the missionaries were relieved to participate in the good, Christian act of giving Charles Hicks his baptismal name “Renatus,” “the Renewed.” After his baptism the Moravians celebrated by a singing of the Passion songs, including “Come Holy Ghost, Lord God.” Charles Renatus Hicks then proclaimed to the Moravians, “Your cause is now my cause, it will be a joy to me to help you whenever it is in my power.”⁵⁹ Return J. Meigs commented in a letter to Indian Affairs officials,

Mr. Charles Hicks’ being added to the Church of Christ is an acquisition and will have an effect to strengthen your hands. His example will, I hope, be followed. The enemies of religion cannot say that the weak and ignorant only are made converts; for it may with truth be said that the most intelligent of both sexes have been added to the flock of the Redeemer in the Cherokee Nation.⁶⁰

“Come Holy Ghost, Lord God” was important in Hicks’ Christian life. Hicks, was noted for always singing at the church services he attended. The group singing of this hymn at communion in May of 1819 demonstrates the denominational tolerance and sense of solidarity among missionaries in Cherokee country. On this particular occasion Charles Hicks and Humphrey Posey shared what is often a powerful experience of

⁵⁸ McClinton, “Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks,” 18; *MSMC*, 1: 375-376.

⁵⁹ *MSMC*, 1: 528-529, 2: 289.

⁶⁰ Edmund Schwarze, *Moravian Missions Among Southern Indian Tribes of the United States*, 106, 116-119; McClinton, “Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks,” 18;

vocalizing in spiritual praise. The reverence and piety of the service, combined with the associations of the hymn for Hicks, set the tone for their discussion afterward. It was on this day that Hicks and Posey finalized a plan to establish a Baptist mission and school in “the valley called Peachtree,” an important place for all Cherokees, near Hicks’ birthplace.⁶¹

Throughout the warm months of 1819, Hicks and Posey spent “a great deal of time” in conversation about “civilizing” the Valley Towns Cherokee. The two men met at Springplace on a number of occasions and very likely met at Brainerd and Peachtree Valley as well, since both men frequently traveled through the area at the same times that spring and summer. Posey explained in a letter to the Baptist Foreign Mission Board (BFMF) that the Valley Towns Cherokee wanted a mission school, funded by the sale of some of their lands, and directed by Christians, “their only friends, whose example they wish the rising generation to follow.”⁶² The Valley Towns Cherokee were more interested in acquiring useful knowledge through whites’ education for their children than any new religion. Hicks seemed to believe that conversion might come as a part of such an education, while Posey felt conversion was the first step, not an eventual outcome. These two men were often riding together through the mountains, viewing the same

⁶¹ *MSMC*, 1: 374-375; Tiyah Miles, *The House on Diamond Hill*, 139; McClinton, “Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks,” 17.

⁶² Humphrey Posey, “Cherokee Indians: Extract of a Letter From Elder Humphrey Posey, To the Corresponding Secretary,” *Boston Recorder*, September 4, 1819; Evan Jones and Thomas Dawson, “Valley Towns Station: Letter from the Reverend Evan Jones and T. Dawson to the Cor. Sec.,” *The Latter Day Luminary*, May 1, 1825; Sadie Smathers Patton, *The Story of Henderson County* (Hendersonville, NC: Miller Printing Company, 1947), 65; Robert Fleming, *Sketch of the Life of Elder Humphrey Posey: First Baptist Missionary to the Cherokee Indians, and Founder of Valley Town School, North Carolina*, (Newnan, GA: Western Baptist Association of Georgia, 1852), 57-58.

forests with very different perceptions of human relationships to the plants, animals and places they passed. Still, both these men met at a crossroads where Christian ideals defined their actions and directed their thinking.⁶³

During the spring and summer of 1819, Charles Hicks made involvement with missionaries a large part of his official Cherokee business. He sat with the Moravians late one evening listening to the Brethren read German news reports' of "difficult experiences and divine rescues from the miseries of war." Hicks "could not hear enough." He "interrupted the reading often! [Hicks'] compassion for the dear suffering ones and... gratitude toward the dear Savior for His merciful help" reflected Hicks' growing Christian faith. Charles Hicks seems then to have whole-heartedly put his energies toward bringing missionaries and their ideas to the Cherokee. Hicks hoped to promote Christianity as a balancing influence in an increasingly unbalanced world, a means of acquiring new and necessary knowledge. The political negotiations of the previous winter could not have been far from his mind. He wanted to bring the relief he found in the Gospel to the rest of his nation as a means of resolving some of the social and political struggles around him.⁶⁴

⁶³ *MSMC*, 1: 124, 285, 303, 306, 374-375, 452; Humphrey Posey, "Cherokee Indians: Extract of a Letter From Elder Humphrey Posey, To the Corresponding Secretary," *Boston Recorder*, September 4, 1819; Patton, *The Story of Henderson County*, 65; Fleming, *Sketch of the Life of Elder Humphrey Posey*, 57-58.

⁶⁴ *MSMC*, 1: 374-375. The Moravian Diary makes note of the frequent comments by Hicks concerning the comfort he found in Moravian publications such as *Daily Scriptures* and *The Harmony of the Four Gospel*. Humphrey Posey was noted for studiously writing the names of publications, news, Bible verses and hymns while visiting Springplace. The Hicks and Posey shared the common goal of easing the lives of the "suffering Cherokees" in the Valley Towns and very likely influenced each others thinking on these matters.

Categorizing Land Ownership

Many Cherokee headmen agreed to the 1819 land cession only because of an article in the 1817 treaty that clearly stated if the Cherokee only kept what land they utilized, they might establish “a permanent and lasting home without further cessions,” and the federal government would protect this land from white intrusion. However, “should a larger quantity [of land] be retained, it will not be possible by any stipulation of the treaty, to prevent further land cessions.” To many Cherokees, this treaty was only the newest example of whites’ clever rhetorical trickery that demonstrated unbalanced, irresponsible relationships with the landscape. The knowledge that the Cherokee themselves might “become extinct as a people” if separated from their homeland presented a frightening possibility to Cherokee leaders like Charles Hicks.⁶⁵

The main issues with General Jackson’s 1817 Treaty were stipulations that for each family that emigrated west, their proportion of land was to be ceded to the US government in exchange for equal acreage in the Arkansas Territory. The annuities of cash and goods agreed to in previous treaties were to be divided between the Western and Eastern Cherokees, one-third and two-thirds respectively. During the two years leading up to the 1819 meetings, “lands and annuity...far beyond their just proportion” in Eastern Cherokee country were surrendered to the United States. Charles Hicks, Pathkiller, and Ross stated “this fact is apparent in the Enrolement [sic] of the Emigrants which have

⁶⁵ “Articles of a Convention Between J.C. Calhoun and Cherokee Delegation,” *American Mercury*, July 20, 1819, edition number 1829.

been entered twelve and thirteen in numbers in families where there was only seven & eight to the families.”⁶⁶

Dealing with these funds and the separate reserves of land allotted for individuals occupied much of the discussion between the Cherokee and United States governments until 1835, demonstrating shifts in ideological relationships to land and landscape among Cherokee leadership. “The distinction of rights to land” for individuals was previously unknown among the Cherokee. Cherokee lands had previously always “been enjoyed in one common right among” them. This was a drastic change for Cherokees, an idea that did not translate easily into the cultural vernacular of Valley Towns people and was probably not truly understood or appreciated by many until their forced removal in 1838. Cherokee connections to place, expressed in the complex of *tohi* relationships, were assumed by United States treaty stipulations, to shift toward “civilized” expressions of religious, economic, and social categorizations applied to private land plots. Hicks’ and Ross understood the misalignment of categorizations and the treaty pressures toward ideological shifts, and the two men hoped to facilitate Cherokee understandings through spreading the Gospel and a remythologizing of the landscape.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Charles Hicks, John Ross, and Pathkiller to President James Monroe, November 2, 1819, in *PCJR*, 1: 37-40.

⁶⁷ McClinton, “To Ascertain the Mind and Circumstance of the Cherokee Nation, Springplace, Georgia, 1805-1821,” (master’s thesis, Western Carolina University, 1992), 87-88; Carrie Ann McLachlan, “Cherokee Cosmology,” (master’s thesis, Western Carolina University, 1999), 68-72, 58-59; Albanese, “Exploring Regional Religion,” 346; Moulton, *John Ross*, 7-8; Brett Riggs, e-mail to author, February 14, 2012. Although John Ross was “never deeply religious,” and expressed no interest in Christianity until 1829, he recognized the usefulness of Christian ideas in promoting “civilization.” Archaeologist Brett Riggs stated that a Cherokee named William Henson had “enrolled a reserve there in 1817 (although it was outside the area of Jackson’s treaty)” that included the 80 acres of “Notchee Town” leased to the Baptists in 1819 where the Valley Towns mission was established.

In 1819, John Ross wrote letters to military officials and agents discussing splitting funds with the Arkansas Cherokee and a particular condition of the 1817 Treaty. The condition stated that those who had been “granted special reservations” intended “to continue to occupy & enjoy permanently the land reserved” for them in the treaty, the very same points emphasized by Hicks in a letter to John C. Calhoun [Secretary of War] during their February meetings. The issues surrounding land reserves would become an increasingly contentious point over the next decade, and one that serves to demonstrate the power of Charles Hicks role in Cherokee politics. Ross discussed the hopeful and oversimplified process of realigning Cherokee thinking as an example of Indian potential. “I trust the period is not very far distant when the Cherokees will evince to the world, that American Indians, are capable of civilization and improvement in the highest degree – time and good management will realize this fact.”⁶⁸

Almost twenty years later, Hicks, Ross, and many others from the Lower Towns, had begun to push the processes of “civilization and improvement” among Cherokee communities throughout the Nation more aggressively as a means to maintain a sovereign home and balanced society in the eastern homeland. The complex layers of Christianizing, civilizing, and educating the Cherokee blurred with the equally complicated rhetoric and diplomacy of presenting Cherokee “progress” to white America. Hicks’ Christian faith and interactions with the U.S. government made many Cherokees suspicious of, if not outwardly opposed to, his motivations. The tedious straddling of two worldviews that Hicks had managed to cultivate over previous decades sowed doubt

⁶⁸ John Ross to Colonel Return J. Meigs, June 17, 1819, Charles Hicks to John C. Calhoun, February 22, 1819, and John Ross to General Calvin Jones, July 3, 1819, in *PCJR*, 1: 33, 36-37.

among many in his troubled nation, but these same Christian traits brought praise from whites in government positions. Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Thomas L.

McKenney, wrote “in conversation at Mr. Calhoun’s the other evening, I adverted to the successful efforts now being made to improve our natives; when Mr. Calhoun replied: ‘We need never despair when we can show such and evidence as Charles Hicks.’”⁶⁹

In October of 1819, Hicks arranged for a number of missionaries to attend the General Council meeting on the 26th and 27th. Four of the Moravians from Springplace set out on the 23rd to the “Council below Oostanaula [first called New Town and later New Echota], where the Councils are supposed to be held in the future.” At “Brother Charles Renuus Hicks’s request” Brother [Abraham] Steiner preached a “dedication sermon” to “a large and attentive audience at the place where the Council was held for the first time.” Brother Steiner spoke of the good done by the Springplace mission and plans for new buildings so more Cherokee children could board at the school. Daniel Buttrick from Brainerd spoke of the ABCFM’s Prudential Commission communication “respecting the help that is coming on... Respecting the local schools” in the form of teachers, farmers, and craftsman, especially noting a blacksmith. Humphrey Posey was also present, speaking of his plan for a mission school in the mountains and his hopes to bring the progress shown by other missionaries into the Valley Towns of the *Aquohee*

⁶⁹ John Ross to Colonel Return J. Meigs, June 17, 1819, Charles Hicks to John C. Calhoun, February 22, 1819, and John Ross to General Calvin Jones, July 3, 1819, in *PCJR*, 1: 33, 36-37; Schwarze, *History of the Moravian Missions Among the Southern Indian Tribes*, 119; *BJ*, 220-221. The Moravian brothers heard rumor that some Cherokee believe Charles Hicks received “a sum of money” for every Cherokee child that was sent to school and “the boys would be sent away among the white people and never be returned.”

district. Hicks proposed the site of “the old Natchez town” near *Tlanusi’yi*, “the leech place,” and the confluence of the Valley and Hiwassee rivers. By the end of the meeting, the Cherokee Council agreed to Hicks and Posey’s plan and Cherokee William Henson agreed to lease the Baptists 80 acres of land along the Hiwassee “in a valley called Peach Tree.” Humphrey Posey set out immediately to procure funds and support for the new mission.⁷⁰

The October 1819 General Council also established a new set of laws, most of which dealt with white incursions and employment on Cherokee lands. On November 12, 1819 Hicks wrote the Brainerd missionaries, stating, “the late council forbid [Cherokee] people to employ white men to till their land, or oversee their farms, but that missionaries may employ what help they need. The chiefs in council were well pleased that farmers & mechanics were coming to [their] assistance at Brainerd.” Missionary Daniel Butrick was “relieved from the temporal concerns” at Brainerd and with the council’s blessing, began to focus on “the study of the Cherokee language” and traditions.⁷¹ The October 1819 council was the first time many of the chiefs had truly

⁷⁰ *MSMC*, 2: 319-320; *BJ*, 134; *PBP*, 6: 359, note 8; Humphrey Posey, “Cherokee Indians: Extract of a Letter From Elder Humphrey Posey, To the Corresponding Secretary,” *Boston Recorder*, September 4, 1819; Evan Jones and Thomas Dawson, “Valley Towns Station: Letter from the Reverend Evan Jones and T. Dawson to the Cor. Sec.,” *The Latter Day Luminary*, May 1, 1825; Patton, *The Story of Henderson County*, 65; E. H. Stillwell, *Historical Sketch of Tuckaseegee Baptist Association, 1829-1929*, (Cullowhee, NC: Western Carolina Teacher’s College, 1929), 1-2; Fleming, *Sketch of the Life of Elder Humphrey Posey*, 57-58. The Natchez were allowed to live in a small town at this site after being forced to flee their home along the Mississippi by the French in the 1730’s. When the land was leased to the Baptists, the Natchez living there dispersed close by to other Cherokee settlements but maintained many cultural distinctions.

⁷¹ *BJ*, 138-139.

understood what the missionaries intended. The Boot, a close friend of Path Killer, told missionaries at Brainerd months later that,

neither he nor the Path killer understood what the motives of the missionaries were until they visited us last season, that when [the chiefs] found [the missionaries] were teaching the children about the things of another world they were very glad & from that time they had both been convinced that the motives of the missionaries were good, and he hoped their children would all grow up in the knowledge of these things which he had been hearing...On the subject of children leaving school [at Brainerd]before they had received their education, [the chiefs] said it was a loss to the nation & to the society, to have children go to school a while and then leave it, before they were sufficiently instructed to be useful to themselves & others.⁷²

The Cherokee clearly understood that their children were being taught new ways of thinking and categorizing the world, and they largely supported the missionaries' efforts at the time. But Cherokee leaders like Pathkiller and The Boot neither expected nor approved an education that *opposed* Cherokee ways of thinking. The missionaries' talks at the 1819 council, organized by Charles Hicks, affected almost immediate changes across the Cherokee Nation, one of the most significant results was the first mission and school for the conservative Valley Towns.⁷³

The 80 acres allotted for the Valley Towns mission included a few scattered settlements and town sites, including *Gwalga'hi*, or "Notchee Town." The Valley Towns were scattered small settlements, not actual towns, and much of the Peachtree Valley was old fields and settlement sites that had been untended since the violence and devastation

⁷² *BJ*, 181-182.

⁷³ *BJ*, 138-139; *Laws of the Cherokee Nation: Adopted by the Council at Various Periods. Printed for the Benefit of the Nation.* (Tahlequah: OK, Cherokee Advocate Office, 1852, reprint Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1973), 6. Daniel Butrick began the collection of correspondence now known as the *Payne-Butrick Papers* after this arrangement with the ABCFM and the Cherokee Council.

of the Revolutionary period. The rich soil of the valley flood plain had always been ideal for cane breaks, honey locust, peach trees, corn, tobacco, and other Cherokee agriculture. Now, white missionaries were being given a turn at living on the rich land.⁷⁴

Hicks may have suggested the mission site for several reasons. The riverside location in a valley had a long tradition of cultural diversity and presented an excellent opportunity to introduce Baptist Christians to the Valley Towns Cherokee while holding to a place based tradition. Hicks was also aware that the Natchez had been allowed to settle at “Notchee Town” nearly one-hundred years before and, as culturally distinctive guests, they were probably more easily displaced. Hicks possibly felt the significant deep river pool and petroglyph at the site was best in Christian hands, rather than Natchez wizards.⁷⁵

Turning the site over to the Baptists provided an established town site to start with. The fields and buildings in the Baptist mission plan, as with Brainerd and Springplace, required a large area of cleared land, on a much grander scale than Indian towns. Clearing the land for a European style settlement would have been hard work, but viewed as necessary for a functioning mission and school. A gristmill, sawmill, school, boarding houses, homes for teachers, a church, and acres of cleared fields for neatly rowed agriculture, were all part of the planned mission grounds that required the entire eighty acres. The mission grounds plan demonstrates a way of thinking about land and

⁷⁴ *HMSFC*, 234, 387; *PMVS*, 14, 33-35.

⁷⁵ *PMVS*, 14; *HMSFC*, 329-330; Charles Hicks to John Ross, May 4, 1826, in *PCJR*, 1: 118; T.J. Holland, conversation with author, Feb. 6, 2012.

land use that was immensely different from traditional, conservative Cherokee ways of thinking that were prominent in the Valley towns.⁷⁶

European ways of thinking about settlement spaces had expanded in America and became partially reliant on slave labor as a means of “conquering” the heathen wilderness.⁷⁷ It is very likely that Posey used slave labor for the difficult work of clearing the eighty acres. The Hicks and Vann families, among others, frequently hired out or loaned their slaves to other missionaries, especially during construction projects. But the distance between the Valley Towns site and slave-holding Cherokees was significant and records from the early stages of the Valley Towns mission are practically non-existent. Whites could have been legally hired by missionaries, as noted in Hicks letter to Brainerd, but this seems unlikely due to the expense and the rough, un-Christian nature of most whites on the border of Cherokee country. Given the time and the difficulty of work, it is likely that slave labor was important in the initial stages of building the mission.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ *PMVS*, 14; *HMSFC*, 329-330; Charles Hicks to John Ross, May 4, 1826, in *PCJR*, 1: 118.

⁷⁷ *HMSFC*, 234, 233, 386-388; Charles Hicks to John Ross, May 4, 1826, in *PCJR*, 1: 118; John P. Brown, *Old Frontiers: The Story of the Cherokee Indians from Earliest Times to the Date of Their Removal to the West, 1838*, (Kingsport, TN: Southern Publishers, 1938), 47, 94-96.

⁷⁸ Schwarze, *Moravian Missions Among Southern Indian Tribes of the United States*, 64; Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs, *Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs Day Book Number 2*, 61; *MSMC*, 2: 100-101, 240, 374-374, 466; *BJ*, 56, 101; *PBP*, 5: 276, 296. At Brainerd and Springplace a number of slaves attended Sabbath services regularly. Moravian “Mr Steiner preached regularly every Sunday, to white, black, & red people & half breed Indians & Missionaries met there with kind & hospitable treatment. Mr. Vann directed his negroes to assist the brethren in building a Cabin, upon the land appropriated for the use of the mission to which they removed” on July 13th, 1800. By April of 1818 Hicks had pledged to “build a spacious building that would serve as both meeting room and schoolhouse for the Sunday school for the Negroes” at Springplace. Springplace had from the beginning utilized borrowed slave labor, mostly belonging to the Vann’s or

The Cherokee Syllabary: Charles Hicks, Sequoyah, and a New Social Capital

A brief discussion of Sequoyah provides a foundation for discussing Charles Hicks' relationship with the Cherokee syllabary. According to Sequoyah's friend The Bark, Hicks was instrumental in Sequoyah's inspiration to devise the syllabary. In October of 1835 Daniel Butrick recorded a narrative of Sequoyah's life that had been dictated by The Bark, written in Cherokee by "native preacher" John Huss, and translated for Butrick by a room "full of Indians," many who were friends and relatives of Sequoyah. According to the narrative, Sequoyah, whose English name was George Gist, was brilliantly creative and productive, and "took it into his head that he would make earrings, bracelets, gorgets, crosses, spurs & such things [from silver]." After he "became very ready in the [silver] business"⁷⁹ he then,

called on Mr. Charles Hicks, to write [Sequoyah's] name for him on paper in English; and upon his silver ornaments he would engrave the copy; especially upon the gorgets & arm bands that they might be known as his work. With a piece of pointed brimstone he imitated the writing of Mr Hicks on the silver & then cut it in with a sharp instrument. He followed this occupation until he grew very perfect in it, and became very famous. But weary of so long doing the same thing, he now turned his attention to sketching upon paper. He could draw horses, persons-in short, whatever chanced to strike his fancy. His success in this new undertaking got his name up still higher among his countrymen, and they thought him a man of genius, capable of anything he should choose to undertake.⁸⁰

Here Butrick interjected to note that "a part of the manuscript was missing," and upon finding The Bark close by, the missing part was retold and copied. Butrick went on to say, "It is remarkable that when the fragment was afterwards found, it was almost

Hick's, and always allowed any of the slaves to attend services. Many of the Vann family slaves were at Springplace just as often as the Vann plantation, and Posey was certainly aware of the use of slave labor in constructing and keeping up the Springplace mission.

⁷⁹ *PBP*, 2: 132-133.

⁸⁰ *PBP*, 2: 133-134.

verbatim what The Bark repeated and no correction was thought necessary.” The narrative continued, relating how The Bark, in conversation with Gist, mentioned how the whites wrote down “what was passing in their minds so that it would keep upon papers after it had gone out of their minds.” Gist said he saw “nothing in it so very wonderful & difficult,” arguing he could find a way “by which the Cherokee could detain and communicate their ideas just as well as the white people could.”⁸¹

Through Butrick’s recorded narrative, several important ideas and aspects of Cherokee culture and systems of knowledge are made apparent. First, the tale, whether true or not, that the respected orator Charles Hicks wrote Gist’s name to be copied onto silver pieces and inspired work on the Cherokee syllabary, connects through oral tradition Hicks’ knowledge with a new mode of knowledge sharing. This story may also be part of a tradition of honoring the memory of a respected elder by associating that person with significant events. Second, the fact that The Bark was rounded up to recount the missing part of the manuscript, and then did so “almost verbatim,” demonstrates the sharpness of mind that allowed Cherokee society to maintain precise oral traditions. And finally, as George Gist became “very famous,” he endeavored to get “his name up still higher among his countrymen,” just as Cherokee traditions reserved pride and fame only for warriors, ball-players, orators, and other “great men.” Taken together, this narrative of Gist’s life shows how the development of the syllabary followed elements of long-standing Cherokee traditions even though the syllabary itself was directly influenced by the information sharing of whites.⁸²

⁸¹ *PBP*, 2: 134.

⁸² Fogelson, “The Cherokee Ball-Game,” 156-158; *PBP*, 2: 132-134; *HMSFC*, 170, 262; Thomas, “Cherokee Values and Worldview,” 5, 8, 9-10.

The rise and spread of the Cherokee literacy utilized traditions of landscape based knowledge systems. Prior to Cherokee writing, the Cherokee “needed legends to teach people,” oral traditions that included precise and detailed information about places, plants, and animals and transmitted cultural values and a unifying Cherokee worldview. The rapid adoption and spread of Cherokee writing and literacy was a success because Cherokees were acquiring the knowledge of writing from whites without learning English. Medicinal formulas came to be commonly written down by Cherokee doctors and the written formulas were considered powerful, just as spoken formulas were. The power and social capital of the Cherokee language were not necessarily diminished by taking on a written form.⁸³

Cherokee conceptions of a unified but expansive community pre-dated literacy and print capital. The newly literate used the syllabary to record sacred formulas and ancient traditions as well as new knowledge from Christian whites. Very few whites could read Cherokee and the written language became a new form of social capital for Cherokees, an important means of promoting Cherokee culture under increasing white domination. Sequoyah’s invention of the syllabary promoted Cherokee traditions of knowledge acquisition and transmission while simultaneously demonstrating the “civilized” status and sophistication of Cherokee society. The spread of Cherokee literacy served to unify the Cherokee Nation in a “civilized” manner that whites could not deny. But “civilized” status required a certain level of disengagement from the “heathen

⁸³ Kathi Smith Littlejohn, “The Origin of Legends,” in *Living Stories of the Cherokee*, collected and edited by Barbara Duncan, (Chapel Hill and London: the University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 32; Altman and Belt, “*Tohi: The Cherokee Concept of Well-Being*,” 11-12; Walker and Sarbaugh, “The Early History of the Cherokee Syllabary,” 70-72, 90, 91.

wilderness,” the ecology of language in which Cherokee thinking had previously been thoroughly enmeshed. The introduction of written Cherokee certainly did not remove the Cherokee worldview from ecology, but it signifies a movement toward a disengagement of Cherokee knowledge systems from ecological relationships that had been previously unavailable. Yet written Cherokee was still thoroughly and proudly Cherokee and therefore had power and status that resisted white control. After the introduction of the syllabary, Cherokee ways of thinking and landscape relationships could genuinely be written down for the first time, but the process of writing and reading altered those very relationships.⁸⁴

Charles Hicks’ Scrofula

After 1821 Hicks’ scrofula grew much worse, keeping him mostly confined to his home near Springplace and Oostanuala in the southern part of the Cherokee Nation claimed by Georgia. On June 3, 1821, one of the Brainerd missionaries wrote in the mission journal, “bro. Hicks afflicted with excarius [scrofula] of the thigh bone, & the first symptoms of the Hectic fever, sent for br. Butler to visit him. He has long been afflicted with lameness,-has applied to many physicians, & from time to time obtained a

⁸⁴ *MSMC*, 2: 463; Charles R. Hicks to Thomas L. McKenney, January 14, 1825, Letters received by Office of Indians Affairs, (1824-1821, Washington, DC: National Archives, Bureau of Indian Affairs), RG 75, M-234, roll 71, frames 553-558; “Instructions to the Cherokee Deputation,” Sept. 19, 1817, Houghton Library, ABC, 18.3.1, II: 97; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 80-81. In a certain sense the rapid development of literacy in Cherokee society aligns with Benedict Anderson’s “model’ of ‘the’ independent nation state” that was available by the second decade of the nineteenth century. This independent nation model relied on “marginalized vernacular-based coalitions of the educated” who formed “imagined communities” in which individuals shared a literacy system, but often little else.

temporary relief, but is at present nearly confined.” By July, Hicks had told the missionaries he believed that he might never enjoy “sound health.” On August 2, the Brainerd Journal entry states “br. Hicks’ lameness confines him at home entirely...exercised with much pain.” Hicks grieved that he could not ride among the people and “guide them in the right way.” As a devout Moravian, it is unlikely that Hicks had made any attempt to procure the assistance of a Cherokee doctor, other than utilizing some well-known plant remedies.⁸⁵

After the summer of 1821, Hicks’ home became a “preaching place” so that the aging and ill Charles Renatus could still hear sermons and talk with missionaries and the slowly growing numbers of Cherokee Christians. Missionaries often “traveled circuitously” to visit Hicks, to attend a preaching at his home, to “get an interpreter,” and to discuss official business about the various missions. Hicks’ communications with Springplace and Brainerd came in the form of letters or by messenger.⁸⁶

At this same time, the Cherokee populations’ distrust of the missionaries, and by extension Charles Hicks himself, began to grow. On June 13, 1821 the Brainerd missionaries heard a rumor that some Cherokee believed Hicks received “a sum of money” for every Cherokee child that was sent to school and “the boys would be sent away among the white people and never be returned.”⁸⁷ Later that summer, Brainerd missionaries wrote that Hicks had

great difficulty in counteracting the influence of a certain class of white men who are persuading the more ignorant class of natives that the missionaries

⁸⁵ McClinton, “Notable Persons in Cherokee History: Charles Hicks,” 16, 23-24; Charles Hicks, “The Memoir of Charles Renatus,” 400-402; *MSMC*, 2: 409; *BJ*, 216, 227, 230-231, 506-507.

⁸⁶ *MSMC*, 2: 409; *BJ*, 231, 268, 286, 297, 358;

⁸⁷ *BJ*, 220-221.

are about to take large tracts of land as pay for teaching the children...and that soon the President will compel their payment in lands. Mr. Hicks thinks it necessary to proceed with great caution, & that all persons who come in as missionaries or assistants should be named to the council, & the reason for their coming particularly stated.⁸⁸

While similar rumors had circulated about Hicks' involvement with Christian missions, the timing of Hicks' confinement to home and a wave of anti-mission sentiment made the new rumors more worrisome.⁸⁹

Scrofula, a tuberculosis infection of the lymphatic system, would have been considered *uwehi* by Cherokees, a "disease that lives in the body," a long-term deviation from the "normal/neutral" state of *tohi*. Such a deviation from *tohi* was perceived as being *ahyugi*, "the resentful act of a living cosmos," a consequence of deviating from "appropriate behavior."⁹⁰ Many Cherokees, especially conservative traditionalists, probably believed that the increasing severity of Charles Hicks' illness was a result of his Christian conversion, a deviation from balanced and appropriate behavior. Hicks' illness would have been considered a sign that the intent of missionaries to convert Cherokees was an unbalancing force, reinforcing Cherokee anti-mission sentiments and suspicion of Hicks' efforts. Such general suspicion of Hicks is mentioned by Mooney in Hicks' attempts to promote coffee drinking among the Cherokee, even though many "still considered it [coffee] poison."⁹¹

⁸⁸ *BJ*, 230-231. For a discussion of rumors and gossip as social control in Cherokee society see Thomas, "Cherokee Values and Worldview," 2-5. John Arch was the preferred interpreter for missionaries and official emissaries by 1822 and became the official interpreter for the Nation in 1824.

⁸⁹ *BJ*, 220-221, 231.

⁹⁰ Altman and Belt, "*Tohi*: The Cherokee concept of Well-Being," 19-21.

⁹¹ William McLoughlin, "Cherokee Anti-Mission Sentiment," 363; *HMSFC*, 491.

While Hicks was a respected Cherokee leader who was trusted “to control the external affairs with the Whites,” a series of events during the early 1820’s seems to have cast some bit of doubt on Hicks’ among more conservative Cherokees.⁹² In the last years of Hicks’ life he struggled to balance the support of conservative Cherokees with the perceptions of the federal government and white public. His scrofula limited his ability to communicate directly with Cherokees, government officials, and whites. Growing anti-mission sentiments among the Cherokee population were surely empowered by Hicks’ inability to travel among his people and “guide them in the right way.” By 1823, some chiefs and headmen were asking for the expulsion of missionaries from the southern part of the Nation.⁹³

Charles Rhenatus Hicks’ involvement in treaty negotiations, the establishment of Christian missions, the interpretations of ideas and information between whites and Cherokees, the views and position of John Ross, early modes of resistance to removal, the promulgation of the Cherokee syllabary, and the “warm feelings” initially expressed toward missionaries made him “the first transitional figure” in a tumultuous period of Cherokee history. The changing relationships between Cherokee society and their landscapes made major shifts along exactly these same hinge points during the early decades of the nineteenth century. At the same time, Hicks utilized accepted Cherokee modes of knowledge acquisition and sharing in all his efforts. The work of Charles Hicks became the foundation on which Cherokee society sustained “political autonomy, local

⁹² McLoughlin, “Cherokee Anti-Mission Sentiment, 1824-1828,” 363.

⁹³ McLoughlin, “Cherokee Anti-Mission Sentiment, 1824-1828,” 363-364; *BJ*, 230-231.

self-government, and the lands of their fathers.”⁹⁴ One of the most significant outcomes of all Hicks’ work was probably the establishment of the Valley Towns mission where the goals of “civilizing” and preserving Cherokee society became thoroughly entwined.

⁹⁴ McLoughlin, “Cherokee Anti-Mission Sentiment, 1824-1828,” 364.

REVEREND HUMPHREY POSEY: REMAKING THE SPIRIT OF A “BENIGHTED”
LAND

The Southern Appalachian landscape of the early nineteenth century was a place of sights, sounds, and experience distinct from other regions of the young United States. Travelers, traders, soldiers, federal agents, and settlers all noted unique aspects of this forested, mountainous, frontier region of America. With the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, hundreds of thousands of square miles of “wilderness” fell under American control. Almost immediately, the “total expulsion of Native peoples from the western border of the United States” to the new land west of Mississippi became the preferred option for solving the “Indian problem.” The beautiful, resource rich mountains of Cherokee country were seen by whites as a rich reward for the hard work that had forged the Declaration of Independence, The Constitution, and American liberty. Furthermore, most Americans felt that the “uncivilized heathen” Cherokee did not understand how to properly use the land they claimed, and that they must become “civilized” Americans or be removed. The Cherokee, of course, did not share these views. The Southern Appalachian Mountains were their ancient home where they, as a distinct people, had been made. Each ridge and valley, riverbed, plant, animal, and stone was a part of the Cherokees’ life and history. In the decades between the American Revolution and forced removal of the Cherokee in 1838, thousands of white settlers moved onto land once inhabited by the Cherokees. During these same years, the Cherokee took some clear and

decisive actions to maintain control of their society and the landscapes that were part of their social structures.¹

The Reverend Humphrey Posey was a pioneer Baptist preacher in the North Carolina mountains during this transitional period. As independent white farmsteads developed and pushed deeper into Cherokee country, men like Posey felt “called” to establish and uphold proper Christian attitudes. Faithful pioneer communities were to establish and maintain a particular relationship to the landscapes on which they existed, one that reflected devotion to Christian ideals. American society’s view of landscape sought out usable or profitable resources through categorizations of religion, economics, and the divine forces of American Exceptionalism. The new American relationship to the land was drastically different than that of the Cherokees, who had inhabited the land for generations.

Traditional Cherokee social order was an inclusive conception of spaces, places, plants, animals, and processes of balancing interactions. A century of change in Cherokee society had meant shifts in traditions of land-use, gender roles, war practices, and particular relationships to the plants and animals of the landscape, but fundamental social processes had persisted. As certain plants, animals, and resources became more plentiful or scarce, others were introduced, making certain relationships more-or-less

¹ Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835*, (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 112; James Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*, (HMSFC), (Fairview, NC: Historical Images, 1992), 61; “Indian Civilization Fund Act,” (March 3, 1819), in *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, ed. Francis Paul Prucha, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 516-517.

valued. The well-known history of the deerskin trade is an excellent example.² Pressure from encroaching whites forced changes in Cherokee politics, economics, and daily life. By the time of their forced removal Cherokee thinking was attempting to bridge the gap between American wants and needs and the remaining structures of the ancient culture of mountain Cherokees.³ Changing human relationships visibly shaped the landscape in complicated ways. The role of Christian missionaries in directing these changes cannot be over-estimated.

The story of Baptist missionary Humphrey Posey demonstrates how remaking the landscape was an intentional aspect of Christianizing and civilizing the “wild” Cherokee. While Baptists were not the only whites to direct attention toward remaking the landscape, Baptist ideas present a very clear example of how some of these processes worked. Not all early pioneers and white traders shared Christian sensibilities and men like Posey wanted to “save” these whites as well. Posey’s story shows the complex relationships between missionaries, Cherokees, and pioneer whites as they shared the mountain landscape. Many of the same resources were utilized by these groups, but the ways in which individuals viewed the same landscapes were often drastically different.

² M. Thomas Hatley, “The Three Lives of Keowee,” in *Powhatan’s Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast*, eds. Peter H. Woods, Gregory A Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 227; Thomas R. Vale, “the Pre-European Landscape of the United States: Pristine or Humanized?” in *Fire, Native Peoples, and The Natural Landscape*, Washington and London: Island Press, 2002), 9 (Box 1.1).

³ Rowena McClinton, “To Ascertain the Mind and Circumstance of the Cherokee Nation, Springplace, Georgia, 1805-1821,” (master’s thesis, Western Carolina University, 1992), 87-88; Carrie Ann McLachlan, “Cherokee Cosmology,” (master’s thesis, Western Carolina University, 1999), 68-72, 58-59; Mooney, *HMSFC*, 250, 434-442; Charles O. Walker, *Cherokee Footprints... Volume II: Home and Hearth*, (Canton, GA: Industrial printing Service, 1989), vi, 98-107; John Howard Payne and Daniel Butrick, *The Payne-Butrick Papers (PBP)*, eds. William L. Anderson, Jane L. Brown, and Anne F. Rogers, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 1: 22.

Christian relationships to the landscape sought a new focus on “God, the Son, and The Holy Ghost,” ideas that needed to be established in the land. Varying ideas about spiritual relationships to rivers, agriculture, animal husbandry, living spaces, and communication with spiritual forces became categorized in increasingly similar ways by whites and Indians as both groups vied for political and economic positions during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The ways of thinking that developed around daily spaces further remade the mountain landscape. Humphrey Posey’s life exemplifies the ways human ideology was reflected in the landscape during this era.

Humphrey Posey’s Salvation

Humphrey Posey was born in Henry County, Virginia on January 12, 1780. The Posey family moved to Burke County, North Carolina when he was five years old. Posey grew up in Cane Creek, a small pioneer community in the mountains east of Asheville “on a farm, where he had to ‘work for a living.’” Posey was part of America’s first independent generation, full of fresh ideas in a cultural atmosphere where one charismatic individual could have immense influence. Posey was “above the ordinary size, of powerful frame, of fine head and face, and possessed great vivacity and activity both of body and mind.” From a young age, Humphrey Posey stood out not only as a physically striking figure, but also as a hard working, and intelligent man.⁴

Posey’s mother was “of considerable reading,” “a woman of true Christian decision.” She taught him to spell and read so that before he was ten years old “he had read through the New Testament several times.” In his late teens he began teaching

⁴ J. H. Campbell, “Humphrey Posey 1780-1846,” Office of the Librarian of Congress, (Macon, GA: J.W. Burke & Company, 1874), <http://files.usgwarchives.net/ga/unknown/bios/gbs725posey.txt>, (accessed October 12, 2011).

“little old-field schools and also vocal music,” traveling seasonally in North and South Carolina for teaching work. By the time he was twenty, Posey was already known for his excellent memory, his knowledge of the Bible, his talents as a teacher, his affable demeanor, conciliatory nature, and consistent readiness to learn. Posey’s biographer, Robert Fleming, saw “the hand of the Lord...shaping... the mind of this poor and obscure boy, for the great work whereunto he was afterwards called.” In January of 1800 Posey married Lettice Jolly. In the literature on Posey, there is little mention of his wife, other than to note that she was a Methodist when they wed.⁵ Some time during their first year of marriage, Posey began attending a Baptist church in Union, South Carolina near where he was teaching. Posey’s experiences at this church changed the course of his life, eventually releasing the “great weight” on his sinful soul.⁶

Posey recorded his conversion experience in his personal papers, writing, “I was addressed so plainly, that I rose hastily up in bed, believing some human being had spoken to me in these words: *‘Without you repent carefully you shall die, but if you repent there Is yet mercy for you.’*” Posey had “put off seeking the salvation of [his] soul” until “the subject was brought home to [his] conscious with so much power” he was “deeply affected” by his “dread...of the judgement’s coming.” Posey related periods of “distress” and “calm” from “about seventeen years of age” until one evening in 1801, on the heels of a lively Sabbath day revival, “which had not been the case [at the Union

⁵ Robert Fleming, *Sketch of the Life of Elder Humphrey Posey: First Baptist Missionary to the Cherokee Indians, and Founder of Valley Town School, North Carolina*, (Newnan, GA: Western Baptist Association of Georgia, 1852), 13-14, 16; George Washington Paschal, *History of North Carolina Baptists (HNCB)*, (Raleigh: The General Board North Carolina Baptist State Convention, 1955), 2: 534-535.

⁶ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 13-14; Campbell, “Humphrey Posey 1780-1846,” Office of the Librarian of Congress.

Baptist church] for a long time previous.” This early “camp-meeting” in western North Carolina was followed by four days of “anguish...past expression” for Posey. His account reads, “The fourth night I went, almost in despair, and kneeled down by a pile of rocks in my field and...begged the Lord...mercy. In this agony, light broke into my soul, with an impression like this, ‘*Thy sins are forgiven thee.*’” Posey told his story to the Union congregation and was baptized on June 11, 1802, at the height of the “Great Revival” in the southeast. The following year, having been “called by God to His service,” he was licensed to preach. He was 23 years old.⁷

Posey’s account of his own salvation was shaped into a lesson through his talents as a preacher and teacher. The worldview and Baptist values that Posey hoped to transmit through his own teachings are apparent. The “dread” of the impending time of final judgement, the necessary “agony” and “despair” that made salvation the only solution, and the deep soul-searching that inevitably lead to the moment of “light” breaking on a sinful soul, were central to Posey’s view of true spiritual rebirth. Posey’s lesson also includes a conception of the landscape necessary for, and created by, true Christian living. Describing “a pile of rocks in my field” as Posey’s place of redemption, he clearly links his salvation to his own personal patch of “improved” land. This direct reference to the proper landscape for Christian life, a personal landscape tamed by faith and civilizing ideals, demonstrates one of the many ways Posey’s teaching conveyed proper ways of Christian thinking and doing. His own spiritual rebirth was a demonstration of the “necessary” spiritual rebirth of the “unimproved” land.

⁷ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 20-25; *HNCB*, 2: 534-535, 358; Elder John Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity The Life and Legacy of Elder Shubal Stearns*, (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 194. Fleming gives Posey’s conversion story “just as [Posey] has left it...in his own handwriting”

Implicit in this conception of landscape is the idea that one could not be properly Christian in the “ancient wilderness” of the Southern Appalachians. The landscape, which reflected a long relationship to the Cherokee, had to be altered for Christianity to illuminate the “heathen darkness.” Whites did not acknowledge that the “poorly utilized” landscape was actually in a controlled state according with Cherokee conceptions of place in the larger living world. Evidence of the previous “heathen” relationship had to be erased. Europeans could only recognize a flawed, “ignorant,” Cherokee presence on the face of the land. Cherokee conceptions of social order included “harmony in town affairs, personal relations, and tribal business, as well as in their relationship to nature and to the supernatural,” reciprocal relationships within an entire cosmological system. Most Europeans tended to think of society as a singularly human set of processes that required the resources provided by “the Great Benefactor, God.” For white society, hierarchical categorizations provided a narrative of dominion over nature and “benighted” heathens, as interpreted from the “Word of the Lord.” The propagation of this narrative superseded all other relationships.⁸

The lesson given in Posey’s salvation story included a central dichotomy of biblical interpretations that formed most Christian relationships to landscape, conceptions of light and darkness. His field was the place where “light broke,” not the shaded forest. Posey’s conception of his place in the world led to his presumptions that the Cherokee could not be saved from damnation until both the spiritual and actual “dark wilderness” in which they lived was subdued and illuminated. Posey recognized a relationship

⁸ *PBP*, 2: 218-219; William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renaissance in the New Republic*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 11; Carrie Ann McLachlan, “Cherokee Cosmology,” 70-71.

between Cherokee thinking and the “unimproved” forests where they lived. But for Posey, that relationship meant that Cherokee society, as an “ignorant” element of the “wilderness,” was always in the dark, outside the illuminating knowledge found only in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Cherokees’ “sinfulness” was shaped by their “benighted” life in the wilderness. With the paternalistic attitude of most Christians at the time, Posey felt that reshaping the landscape to establish and acknowledge the presence of “God, The Son, and The Holy Ghost” was a first step toward correcting the spiritual deficiencies of the Cherokee. An organized process of Christianizing and “civilizing” would save the Indians and the land on which they lived from a “poor benighted” state.

Changes in Cherokee society during the eighteenth century had undermined cohesive social structures such as matrilineality, land-use techniques, and a reciprocal gift economy, all geared toward maintaining an environmentally inclusive social balance. By the early nineteenth century, Cherokee society perceived its own un-balanced, un-healthy state. Cherokees had previously relied on concepts of balance embodied in Cherokee words like *to’hi*. Many words in Cherokee convey the complexly interwoven relationships of Cherokee thinking. *To’hi* has a range of meanings, including “an even rate of movement,” “individual health,” and “spiritual balance of the individual or group.”⁹ The marginalization of important Cherokee social structures created an opening for influences from Christian conceptions. Cherokee leaders, looking to traditions of cultivating diversity and acquiring useful knowledge, sought to bring society back into

⁹ Durbin Feeling, *Cherokee-English Dictionary*, ed. William Pulte, (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1975), 156-157; Hartwell Francis and Tom Belt, “Cherokee Culture and Language” (class discussion, Cherokee Language 232, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee NC, March 2, 2011); Hartwell Francis and Tom Belt, conversation with author, March 7, 2011; *PBP*, 4: 93.

balance. Posey's Christian categorizations did not comprehend the inclusive cultural fabric of concepts like *to'hi*. Posey relied on his own cultural framework, woven with different structures of meaning and motivation. Theda Perdue has stated, "the gendered language of evangelicalism clearly revealed the patriarchal structure of Christianity" that not only conceived gender in a certain way, but also health, economics, land-use, and race. For Posey, the Cherokee world had to be properly categorized to fit this structure and unfamiliar elements were generally excluded. Even if Posey had worked through the language barrier, an explanation of *to'hi* would have seemed irrelevant and nonsensical to him. Posey, believing fully that Cherokee survival required complete societal change, dedicated his life to providing the "poor benighted Cherokees" with the proper structures for Christian success. It was the hard work of the Cherokee to grasp the new categorizations of the world in which they hoped to survive, and if they succeeded, they would be saved. The new categorizations of the Cherokee world would be clearly reflected in the new shape of the landscape.¹⁰

The Reverend Humphrey Posey's Circuit and "Articles of Faith"

Humphrey Posey was, by all accounts, an outstanding man who wanted "with all his great soul" to help the Cherokees "adjust" to the new world in the making. Prior to his work among the Cherokee, Posey preached among white pioneer communities in the

¹⁰ Richard White, "Indian Peoples and the Natural World: Asking the right Questions," in *Rethinking American Indian History*, Donald L. Fixico, ed., (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 87; Sarah H. Hill, *Weaving New Worlds: Southeastern Cherokee Women and Their Basketry*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997). xvii-xx; Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, 125-127, 171; Theda Perdue, *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540-1866*, (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1979), 46-47; William G. McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity, 1794-1870: Essays on Acculturation and Cultural Persistence*, ed. Walter H. Conser, (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1994), 16-18.

mountains. As soon as he was licensed to preach in 1802, Posey began to travel with a group of respected North Carolina Baptist preachers. These independent minded men acted on their own initiatives in organizing church congregations. The first churches organized by Posey were Locust Field Baptist west of Asheville, in 1803, and Cane Creek Baptist, east of Asheville near his farm in Burke County, in 1805. In 1806, expanding his circuit northwest, Posey represented French Broad Church at the Broad River Association's first meeting. He was noted as "being the only man among [the Association ministers] who had obtained more than the bare elements of an English education."¹¹ The mountainous terrain between these congregations included numerous tributaries to the French Broad River and Posey traveled a circuit between them every two weeks along the main wagon road and smaller connecting paths. Traveling from Cane Creek Church he would have crossed Cane Creek, Brush Creek, Swannanoa River, The French Broad, Bent Creek, Beaverdam Creek, and then up the south bank of Hominy Creek to Locust Field Church, a distance of about 35 miles. Given the rough terrain, this journey would have taken over two days on horseback. Traveling northwest to French Broad Association churches would have added at least two more days. From the very beginning of his career, Posey traveled a constantly expanding circuit of churches and meeting places.¹²

¹¹ *HNCB*, 2: 354, 368, 473-474, 422-429; E. H. Stillwell, *Historical Sketch of Tuckaseegee Baptist Association, 1829-1929*, (Cullowhee, NC: Western Carolina Teacher's College, 1929), 5-6; Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 51-52; Campbell, "Humphrey Posey 1780-1846," Office of the Librarian of Congress; G. Ammons, *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, pamphlet, (Mars Hill, NC: Mars Hill College, 1932), 6-7.

¹² Hubbard Scientific Inc., "Knoxville, Tenn.; N.C.; S.C; GA: NI 17-1," map, 2002 revision; John Norton, *The Journal of Major John Norton, 1809-1816*, (Toronto:

Along this circuit Posey would have passed farmsteads, expanding pioneer communities, including Asheville, and frontier cabins, all places where a respected preacher would have had no trouble finding a comfortable place to spend the night. Posey would have passed through freshly cleared or planted crop fields, open meadows of seasonal wildflowers, dense cane-breaks, and stretches of old growth forest. Chestnut trees, hickories, tulip poplars, oaks, sourwoods, and dozens of other hardwoods would have towered over riverbanks and areas where paths steepened and narrowed. Posey would have also crossed numerous animal territories and migration paths as he traveled west of Asheville. Bears, wolves, deer, panthers, and dozens of species of birds and smaller animals would have been present and observable as Posey rode along. Even though white settlements had already affected the life of the mountains, Posey would have witnessed an incredible array of plants and animals that were categorized by his Baptist understanding of the landscape. Seasonal changes would have also presented unique travel pleasures and challenges, even as Posey became increasingly familiar with the way. But the range of diversity would have been worth mentioning to Posey only in some extreme or unusual circumstance, or in a general discussion of “God’s creation.” Every inch of the distances traveled and retraced, Posey would have been treading on a landscape shaped by generations of Native American life. Posey’s home near the “destitute settlement” of Cane Creek, was very near the ancient Cherokee town “Joara- [later] Fort San Juan-the earliest European settlement in the interior of what is now the

The Champlain Society, 1970), map, 34; Cane Creek Baptist is now Fairview Baptist on US 74, a road that follows the old wagon road through western North Carolina.

United States.”¹³ The roads and paths he followed were often thousands of years old. New farms and settlements sat on ground that had been home to Native Americans for ten thousand years, a length of time that Posey would never have considered. The white farms and settlements were only the newest means of categorizing the world and relating to the landscape. The expanding “improvements” and networks of new roads linking white settlements and farms reflected the newest way of life in the ancient Appalachian mountains.¹⁴

The way from Burke County to Haywood County was undoubtedly familiar to Posey by 1810. The transformation of frontier wilderness into scattered communities with neatly cultivated land plots and increasing Baptist sensibilities was surely

¹³ Warren Wilson College, “The Berry Site,” Warren Wilson Webmaster, <http://www.warren-wilson.edu/~arch/berrysite>, (accessed June 19, 2011).

¹⁴ Donald Edward Davis, *Where There Are Mountains: An Environmental History of the Southern Appalachians*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2000), 11-14; Timothy Silver, *Mount Mitchell & The Black Mountains: An Environmental History of the Highest Peaks in Eastern America*, (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 38-46, 78-83; Jennifer Frick-Ruppert, *Mountain Nature: A Seasonal Natural History of the Southern Appalachians*, (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 31-33, 44-45, 68-69, 119, 161-162, 204-205; William H. Banks, *Plants of the Cherokee: Medicinal, Edible, and Useful Plants of the Eastern Cherokee Indians*, ed. Steve Kemp, (Gatlinburg, TN: Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2004), 14-15; Henry Timberlake, *The Memoirs of Lt. Henry Timberlake: The Story of a Soldier, Adventurer, and Emissary to the Cherokees, 1756-1765*, ed. by Duane H. King, (Cherokee, NC: Museum of the Cherokee Indian Press, 2007), 9-12, 31-33; William Bartram, *The Travels of William Bartram*, ed. Francis Harper, (Athens & London: The University of Georgia Press, 1998), 377, 228, 229-230, 235-236; Charles Fenton Mercer Noland, *Noland's Cherokee Diary*, ed. Mildred E. Whitmire, (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1990), 18-19, 12; Bennie C. Keel, *Cherokee Archaeology: A Study of the Appalachian Summit*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1976), 33-34; Max E. White, “An Ethnoarchaeological Approach to Cherokee Subsistence and Settlement Patterns,” (PhD dissertation, Indiana University, March, 1980), 181-213; Sara Gwenyth Parker, “The Transformation of Cherokee Appalachia 1755-1808,” (Phd dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1991), 213-220; Hubbard Scientific Inc., “Knoxville, Tenn.; N.C.; S.C; GA: NI 17-1,” map, 2002 revision; Norton, *Journal*, map, 34.

comforting to Posey as he witnessed and participated in the changes. At the same time, seasonal changes and movements of animals would have been quietly observed and noted by Posey as a matter of necessity. The daily lives of early mountain settlers were intricately linked to natural patterns, albeit through the categories of an entirely different understanding than the Cherokee.¹⁵

Posey was teaching at the settlement school at Cane Creek when he and Reverend James Whittaker “drew up Articles of Faith” for those intending to constitute a new church congregation. Articles of Faith were the foundational rules of church groups, detailing a lifestyle and ideology intended to build and sustain a community of proper faith. At that time, mountain Baptist Articles of Faith were designed after a series of circular letters from eighteenth century Calvinist, Pennsylvania Baptists, referred to as the Pennsylvania Confessions. The content of these letters spelled out and validated the basic tenets of “true” Baptist faith. The members’ “calling [to baptism] and election [to salvation were] sure.” Each individual was “excite[d] in a holy resignation to the will of God,” “diligent in...prayer,” and “earnest for households and the land in general: especially for the welfare of Zion (God’s Kingdom on Earth) that the Lord may make her

¹⁵ Catherine Albanese, “Exploring Regional Religion: A Case Study of the Eastern Cherokee,” *History of Religions*, vol. 23, no. 4 (May, 1984) 346-355; E. Raymond Evans, “Highways to Progress: Nineteenth Century Roads in the Cherokee Nation,” *Journal of Cherokee Studies*, vol. II, no. 4, (Cherokee, NC: Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Fall, 1977), 394; *HNCB: Vol. II*, 473-474, 422; Stillwell, *Tuckaseegee Baptist Association*, 5-6; Phillip S. Paludan, *Victims: A True Story of the Civil War*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 3-6; Durwood Dunn, *Cades Cove: The Life and Death of A Southern Appalachian Community, 1818-1937*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1988) 1-15; Wilma Dykeman, *The French Broad*, (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1955), 10-12, 18-28.

a praise *in the earth*.” Among all the other tenets of faith, Articles of Faith also outlined the proper relationship to the land.¹⁶

Landscape and modes of land-use were implicit in Baptist Articles of Faith and essential to establishing the proper community structure. Changing the landscape was a necessary element of establishing Christian communities. As was customary, “a presbytery [ordained minister]” was invited to attend congregation meetings, and if he were “pleased with the Articles” the church was officially organized. At subsequent church meetings, beginning several weeks after the first, the pastor often “baptized...professed believers.” Posey followed this process many times and was consequently the first pastor of many churches. Numerous community members “were received for baptism at almost every meeting” during Posey’s early circuit preaching years. The next step in establishing a church community was the construction of a church building, whose architectural presence on the landscape was a symbol of the community’s faith. Baptist churches were most often located on hills near rivers or streams accessible and deep enough for immersion baptism. Posey participated in clearing church sites, leading prayers, and offering his knowledge of biblical sanctions for the clearing of land and construction of churches. He was undoubtedly familiar with cutting good river access through the dense cane that sometimes grew for miles along riverbanks. His presence and participation in the community was a powerful form of validation, especially as he made a name for himself in the region. He maintained his

¹⁶ *HNCB*, 2: 473-475; Philadelphia Baptist Association, “The Holy Scriptures,” May 1774, “The Being and Perfections of God: The Trinity,” October 1774, “The Decrees of God,” 1775, Circular Letters, at <http://baptisthistoryhomepage.com/pennsylvania.cl.index.html>, (accessed June, 12, 2011); Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity*, 164-165.

preaching on a growing circuit of congregations from Burke County to Cherokee territory, constantly traveling and marking the civilizing Christianization of the landscape.¹⁷

Mountain Baptist Associations

Along with organizing churches, Posey was also very active in organizing Baptist Associations. Pioneer towns, and settlements and early counties were frequently named after early settler families or prominent politicians and “discoverers” of important places. Baptist organizations were typically named after the watershed in which the group of churches was centered. The Broad, French Broad, Holston, and Tuckaseegee Associations are just a few examples in North Carolina. The naming of Baptist church associations reflects the distinct ideological relationship between church congregations and the symbolic salvation of rivers.¹⁸ The river landscape defined conceptions of church identity and closely connected Baptist church members with the “living waters” of baptism locations. Understanding the flow of tributaries to larger rivers was also a fundamental aspect of peoples’ own understanding of where they were.¹⁹ An understanding of the animals and plants along riverbanks was also necessary knowledge for pioneers who utilized and shaped the land to fit their needs, obtaining food, craft and building materials, and plant medicines. The relationship to the river was a fundamental one.

¹⁷ *HNCB*, 2: 424-429; William G. McLoughlin, ed., *The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900*, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968), 27-30; Norton, *Journal*, 162; Bartram, *Travels*, 238.

¹⁸ Stillwell, *Tuckaseegee Baptist Association*, 14; *HNCB*, 2: 473-475, 104-110.

¹⁹ Hubbard Scientific Inc., “Knoxville, Tenn.; N.C.; S.C; GA: NI 17-1,” map, 2002; Timberlake, “A Draught of the Cherokee Country,” map, March, 1764, in *Memoirs*, 16; Royce, “Map of the Former Territorial Limits of the Cherokee Nation of Indians,” 1977; Norton, *Journal*, map, 34.

White frontier populations expanded in a pattern of localized development centers that reached deeper into Cherokee country, from all sides. From developing communities, more ardent pioneers moved further into “unsettled” territory. This expanding network of settlements was critical in the Cherokee mountains claimed by North Carolina and Georgia. Economic relationships were also defined to a large degree by the landscape, access to water being important for every economic community. Church organizations, as pioneer communities of faith, worked together and built denominational economic centers around gristmills, sawmills, and on a larger scale, ironworks and blacksmiths. The self-sufficient agrarian ideal, infused with denominational doctrines, literally cleared the way for the independent minded Democracy that built frontier communities.

The banks of rivers below 2200 feet were often covered in river cane that had to be cleared for fords and baptism access. River cane was one of the most important plant resources in Cherokee society, but for whites the “over-abundance” was a nuisance. Hogs, wild descendants of Spanish hogs and the “tame” hogs of Cherokees and white settlers, as well as goats and cows, ate young cane shoots and the nutritious sub-surface rhizomes, as if “commanded by God” to clear the banks. Traveler John Norton noted in 1810 that “In this [Cherokee mountain] country, people raise cattle with the greatest facility, and without any further trouble or expense than that of giving them salt...they feed in cane brakes, and in the summer, they are dispersed in herds in the vicinity of little Salt Licks...Thus the greatest trouble [settlers] have with their herds is when they collect them to send to market.” Major John Norton’s informal 1810 census of Cherokee towns lists “Black Cattle 19, 615. Sheep 1,037. Swine 19,778.” White settlements in the

region had similar or larger numbers of livestock. William Bartram noted fifty years earlier that, "there are extensive Cane Brakes or Cane meadows spread abroad round about, which afford the most acceptable and nourishing food for the cattle." Livestock often roamed the mountainsides, eating chestnuts, cane shoots, and other wild foods. Whites kept track of their animals with bells and branding that identified their owners. Large numbers of livestock devastated river cane and many other plants, but this would have been seen as an improvement for most whites. This was a very new relationship between humans and Appalachian riverbanks, one that produced immediate change. By the 1820's, large areas of rivercane had already been destroyed.²⁰

Whites had little use for rivercane, and their relationships to other plant resources were sometimes equally dismissive. Many important Cherokee wild foods such as mulberry, honey locust, and butternut, were neglected by whites. These plants required too much processing, had odd flavors, or were ignored in favor of familiar items. Cherokee social structure acknowledged nutritional and medicinal uses for each of these plants. Cherokee society, with knowledge accumulated over generations, placed great value in resources that whites did not acknowledge.²¹ White communities, believing in the superiority of "civilized ways," often neglected Cherokees' accumulated knowledge. As human relationships to particular plants changed, some plants' significance was lost. In many cases, whites directed their energies, whether directly or indirectly, toward

²⁰ Bartram, *Travels*, 238; Norton, *Journal*, 57, 142, 162; David Cozzo, "Ethnobotanical Classification System and Medical Ethnobotany of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians (ECSEBCI)," (PhD dissertation, University of Georgia, Athens, 2004), 315, 318; *HMSFC*, 490.

²¹ ECSEBCI, 48, 58-59, 59-60, 61-62; Banks, *Plants of the Cherokee*, 35-36; Paul B. Hamel and Mary Chiltoskey, *Cherokee Plants: Their uses-a 400 Year History*. (Hamel and Chiltoskey, 1975), 45, 61. Much of this cultural knowledge and long history is reflected in the Cherokee names for plants.

facilitating this loss of knowledge among the Cherokee, especially if such knowledge could be connected to "sin" and "darkness." These tendencies affected a relationship that had a homogenizing effect on "wild" plant foods and plant resources, denying the natural diversity of valleys, plateaus and other microclimate areas.

Cultivated crops included creasy greens, potatoes, turnips and other European imports as well as adopted Native American crops such as squash, beans, and corn. While crops in both Cherokee and white societies were increasingly similar, the fields themselves were still very different. On white farm plots, each crop would be planted in neat rows, weeded in between and separated by exposed soil. Some who participated in "missionary experiments" observed that "the Natives already understand the art of raising corn & keeping cattle in the wood, but they have never experienced the advantage of pasture, fields & meadow....If we had sufficient help to extend our agricultural business on the above plans, our example might be followed."²²

Cherokee plots were a tangle of bean vines growing up cornstalks, with squash, strawberries, and ground cherries covering the ground in between, farming techniques that were rooted in Cherokees' spiritual connection to the plants and the land.²³ Remaking the agricultural landscape was an explicit part of missionary activity, sanctioned by evangelical ideas in Baptist Articles of Faith, as well as US government declarations like the Civilization Act. The proper organization of agriculture was an essential element of pioneer life, Baptist church member or not. In the eyes of men like Posey, the presence of orderly weeded single-crop rows on the landscape was evidence of

²² HNCB, 2: 246; Sarah Tuttle, *Letters and Conversations on the Cherokee Mission*, (Boston: T.T. Marvin for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Union, 1830), 24, 26; Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, 160.

²³ Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, 11-13, 17-19; *PBP*, 2: 67, 268-269.

civilizing mindsets, working in readiness for the spread of the Gospel. The organization of Baptist Associations empowered larger communities to shape the landscape in similar, organized ways.

Humphrey Posey and Northern Missionaries

Posey's drive for missionary work among the Cherokees was inspired by a rising tide of evangelical excitement that, like the Articles of Faith, originated in northern church organizations. In 1813, the Reverend Luther Rice became Posey's "valuable acquaintance," and primary contact with northern Baptist theologians. Rice was at the forefront of missionary enthusiasm that "led to the formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM)." The American Missionary theology that influenced Humphrey Posey was given official sanction through the work of Rice and a small group of seminary students at Williams College.²⁴ This group of northern missionaries discussed their convictions in the polarized language of light and darkness, civilization and wilderness. Adoniram Judson, another member of this group, studied music as well as theology. His missionary hymns became favorites among mission boards, and are still sung today in many Baptist churches. Judson is considered by many to be the first American Baptist missionary. In a letter to Luther Rice, Judson recounted his "call" to missionary work, writing,

...it was during a solitary walk in the woods, behind the college, while meditating and praying on the subject, and feeling half inclined to give it up, that the command of Christ, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,' was presented to my mind with such clearness and power, that I came to

²⁴ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 38; William G. McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees, Evan and John B. Jones*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 23, 27.

a full decision; and though great difficulties appeared in my way, resolved to obey the command at all events.²⁵

Judson's letter demonstrates polarized missionary thinking in which the "light of God" which missionaries experienced through revelation, could empower the work of good men in "dark" places. These personal revelations can and should be taken into "all the world...to every creature." There was a clear sense that the spiritual revelations that remade the missionary must be recreated in "the heathen" to do the work of bringing "light" to the world. This was the world-shaping "power of salvation" that Judson, Rice, and Posey hoped to take to the dark wilderness. This sort of personal revelation contrasted sharply with older Christian views put forth in the Doctrine of Election and predestination, which posited that only the "elected" could be saved and God had already determined who those people were and were not. Despite continued attachments to Calvinist tradition, for a brief time between 1805 and 1812, missionary work came to be viewed as a responsibility of American Protestants among most mountain congregations. The powerful, charismatic ideas of young men like Luther Rice and Adoniram Judson were in some ways a response to the thinking of pioneer American evangelicals who worked to civilize "dark" Indian lands during the early years of the nineteenth century.²⁶ Judson, Rice, and several other Williams' College students sent a letter to the General Association of Ministers at Bradford, Massachusetts in 1810 in which they expressed

²⁵ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 37-39.

²⁶ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 38-43; John Overton Choules, *The Origin and History of Missions, Volume II*, (Boston: Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 1837), Appalachian State University e-books edition, 236; James B. Taylor, *Memoir of Reverend Luther Rice: One of the First American Missionaries to the East*, (Baltimore: Armstrong and Berry, 1840), Appalachian State University e-books edition, 86; *HNCB*, 2: 538.

their belief in the “duty and importance of personally attempting a mission to the heathen.”²⁷

Judson and Rice, trained as Methodists, established a mission in Calcutta in 1812, but “became convinced that their sentiments on baptism were unsupported by the Word of God... [and] became Baptists.” Rice returned to America in June of 1813 to “stir up the Baptists to the work of the Lord in the support of foreign missions,” traveling to “many parts of Georgia, Carolina, and Virginia.” Although exactly when and where is unclear, there is no doubt that Humphrey Posey met Luther Rice in 1813, placing Posey among the earliest group of men in North Carolina who “burned with holy enthusiasm, for the salvation of their benighted fellow-men.” Posey’s involvement with missionary thinkers as early as 1812 shows his zeal during the early years of the Baptist missionary movement.²⁸ The founding of the Triennial Convention and the Baptist Foreign Missions Board (BFMB), both in 1814, gave Posey an institutionalized means of working toward the salvation of the Cherokee. The Moravians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and some independent Methodists and Baptists in Georgia and Tennessee had already established a presence in Cherokee country, but Posey set out to establish the first schools in the North Carolina section of the Cherokee Nation.²⁹

²⁷ Taylor, *Memoir of Reverend Luther Rice*, 86; Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 39; *HNCB*, 2: 539. Paschal notes that some seminary students asked to keep their names off this letter, so as not to offend seminary leaders with a large number of signees. Signees Samuel Nott and Gordon Hall established the first American mission overseas in Bombay, India, in 1812.

²⁸ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 38-43; Choules, *The Origin and History of Missions: Vol. II*, 236; Taylor, *Memoir of Reverend Luther Rice*, 86; *HNCB*, 2: 537-539.

²⁹ Robert G. Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, (Atlanta: Georgia Baptist Historical Society, 1989), 80-91, 93, 110-111; *HNCB*, 2: 537-539.

Posey had been engaged in the “work of the Lord” years longer than the young missionary thinkers at Williams College, but upon meeting Rice, he took up “with his whole heart” the missionary cause.³⁰ Posey had “pursued his own studies assiduously” as a teacher and member of the Baptist faith. On the suggestion of Rice, Posey traveled to Washington City and Philadelphia, where he expanded his library to include *Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*, *Gill’s Body of Divinity*, and publications of the American Bible Society, The American Tract Society, the Baptist General Tract Society, and the Newton Theological Institution.³¹ Posey took the energy and inspiration of formally educated ministers and tempered their ideas with the independent habits of Appalachian Baptists. As post-Revolution denominations across most of America had coalesced into organized institutions, the mountain South, “remained in essence the pre-Revolutionary, personality-based, and...patriarch-led entity” of the eighteenth century. Posey was part of the first wave of transitional itinerant preachers that stoked the fires of the Second Great Awakening in western North Carolina. He discussed his missionary hopes to preach among the Cherokees with anyone who would listen.³² Posey’s ambitious leadership and astute, affable personality, allowed him, at least for a time, to bridge the gap between growing mountain communities and northern congregations and mission organizations.

³⁰ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 47-52.

³¹ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey* 45, 69; *HNCB*, 2: 535-536; I. M. Allen, *Triennial Baptist Register*, no. 2, (1836), 331. The *Triennial Baptist Register* states “*Gills Tracts on Baptism* Very powerful; he brings a mass of learning within a small compass.” *Gill’s Body of Divinity* was abridged by ABCFM Secretary and Posey’s friend, Dr. William Staughton. Posey often sent copies of northern tracts to his Moravian friends at Springplace.

³² Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity*, 5.

Posey was “acquainted with the Indians” as early as 1805, but there is no evidence to support that he actually preached to the Cherokee so early. Posey surely had made some contact with Cherokees during his early travels, but he never learned to speak Cherokee. Even though there were many individuals who spoke Cherokee and English living in the region, before 1815 there is no evidence that Posey knew the translators who would eventually assist him in evangelizing. It is possible he met English-speaking “half-blood” Cherokee Ned Tucker before 1810, but very unlikely that Posey traveled “through [Cherokee] villages...bringing them the Gospel” as Baptist historian G. W. Paschal claims.³³ Itinerant preachers had just begun to “challenge the [Cherokee] traditionalists in ...local villages” by 1812, but they were generally unwelcome in predominantly full-blood mountain towns until years later.³⁴ The real seed of Baptist missionary work among the Cherokee was planted when Posey and Rice met in 1813. The two men discussed “the planning and development of a mission school for the Cherokees” and Posey had placed himself in a perfect position to do the difficult work he felt “called” to do.³⁵

Unity in the midst of a “Great Dissension”

For a nineteenth century preacher in the Southern Appalachians, preaching and singing hymns were the primary tools for spreading the Gospel. In 1813 Posey had already been an itinerant mountain preacher for a decade, regularly delivering monthly or bi-weekly sermons and singings at dozens churches. Posey was known for ““singing with the spirit and with the understanding also,’ [that] he had great power over his

³³ *HNCB*, 2: 542.

³⁴ McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity*, 22-23.

³⁵ *HNCB*, 2: 538.

congregation.” According to Fleming, among Posey’s personal papers there were no notes for sermons, a sign of a successful preacher in circuits where congregations preferred “extemporaneous sermons over written texts,” and lay preachers over those with seminary training. He had a “talent to explain the doctrine of election and predestination in a practical manner, so that Free-will Baptists and the Arminians generally received him with love and admiration.”³⁶ Through constant travel, singing, preaching, and conversing, Posey had already firmly established himself among various Baptist groups over a large region of the mountains by 1813.

Divisions among Baptists occurred frequently in the early nineteenth century. As new settlers flooded into the mountains, social attitudes toward particular church doctrines shifted, often along lines of local economies defined by river basins. Congregational splits resulted from the social and economic changes sweeping through growing pioneer communities. Localized denominational fractures were driven by varying takes on how to incorporate “one or another aspect of social change into [the church communities’] tradition” for the greatest benefit of the economic community.³⁷ As a result, splits in church doctrine debates were also often defined by river basins. In North Carolina and northern Georgia, the Baptists were most numerous. Humphrey Posey was directly involved in much of the Baptist growth. Practically all American

³⁶ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 77.

³⁷ W. Glenn Jonas, Jr., “Defining a Tradition: a River Runs Through It,” and John G. Crowley, “The Primitive or Old School Baptists,” in *The Baptist River*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006), 2-6, 158-161; George W. Purify, *Pedobaptist Immersions: A Desultory Treatise, Showing the Inconsistency of Those Who Are Baptist in Sentiment, Being Immersed By Pedobaptist Administrations*, (Forestville, NC: The North Carolina Baptist and Publication Society, 1854), 1; Minutes of the Three Forks Baptist Association, (September, 24, 1818), Miscellaneous Church Records, Appalachian State University Special Collection, Box 3, File 29.

Protestants were “enthusiastic over missions” at some point in the first twenty years of the nineteenth-century. Missionary sentiments had briefly been a unifying force for rural denominations. By the 1820’s regional groups from every denomination began to split over the missionary issue. But Posey’s preaching circuit continued to expand as he pushed civilizing ideals along the Cherokee frontier. The ideological distinctions that defined Free-will, Separate, General, Regular, and Primitive Baptists, were reconciled for itinerant Reverend Humphrey Posey by focusing on river immersion baptism and the “priesthood of the believer.” These two beliefs in particular were almost unanimously accepted in mountain Baptist churches.³⁸

The “priesthood of the believer” referred to the practice of ministers and preachers who had “been called” to preaching by their own faith in God. It also signifies the individualism and charisma of hard-working and proud pioneers. Posey was respected for being a self-educated and well-traveled preacher. Fleming wrote, “[Humphrey Posey] was not what is usually called an educated man,” having attended only enough school “to enable him to read, write, and perform the simple rules of arithmetic.”³⁹ Posey felt it was his “calling” to travel the mountains, taking the word of the Lord into the wilderness. He was a “true believer” in God’s literal sacrifice of “his only begotten son, Jesus Christ” in order to “wash away the sins of man.” For each man’s every instance of sin, Jesus suffered. Baptism in the endlessly flowing river was symbolic of immersion in the endlessly flowing blood of Jesus. Immersion baptism, the only proper “cleansing of evil from the hearts of men,” required a direct relationship with

³⁸ *HNCB*, 2: 420-422; Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity*, 196-197, 246-249; Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 77-79.

³⁹ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 15.

mountain river landscapes. Mountain Baptists especially felt that seminary training and study of theological works other than the Bible weakened the faithful's connections with the real presence of the Holy Ghost in god's creation and the "Word of God." The "priesthood of the believer" required only a "calling from God" and fervent connections with the Bible, the Holy Ghost and the river.⁴⁰

In early pioneer years, the hard work of faith on the muddy, cane filled riverbanks demonstrated the righteousness of the "priesthood of the believer." The hard physical work of remaking the land showed commitment to the harder spiritual work of illuminating the "wilderness." Posey professed the "action of the Holy Ghost," through which "a miraculous, divine regeneration of ...[the] soul" occurred. An individual seeking to be baptized must first proclaim a direct experience of "divine regeneration" through the presence of the Holy Ghost, then convince the church body of the experience through personal testimony. God's unrelenting love could save the sinner, making him "good," a member of the "body of Christ," the Baptist community. Baptismal immersion in the symbolic "blood of the lamb," the flowing river, both represented and acknowledged this rebirth in the hearts of the baptized and the members of the church. Posey's ambitions went further than enabling small pioneer communities, he hoped to bring the presence of the Holy Ghost among the heathen Cherokee. Posey, riding alone on his horse, may have imagined how, after the Cherokee were baptized, being "true believers" in the "good news," they would become "civilized." The land would be quickly "improved" by motivations of the newly saves and "God's plan" for humanity's

⁴⁰ W. Glenn Jonas, Jr., "Defining a Tradition: a River Runs Through It," 2-6; and John G. Crowley, "The Primitive or Old School Baptists," 158-161; Purify, *Pedobaptist Immersions*, 1; Minutes of the Three Forks Baptist Association, (September, 24, 1818).

salvation through the hard work of good men could move forward, ever more empowered.⁴¹

As with many circuit preachers who “made no hard-line statements about predestination,” Posey avoided divisive topics as long as other preachers’ sermons “kept within the covers of the Bible.”⁴² Posey was able to travel far and wide, preaching to all manner of Baptist, Congregationalist, and even Moravian congregations. Posey’s regular circuit included over a dozen churches in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia by 1822.⁴³ In that year, congregations throughout the Appalachians split into “Regular” and “Separate” Baptist denominations, fracturing along fine points of theology, including the doctrine of election and missionary activity. The distinctions of argument became so complex, they almost reflect the number of river valleys in the southern mountains. But “little or nothing is told of [this conflict] in the sections where Rev. Humphrey Posey labored.” Posey seemingly avoided being “classified as either Separate or Regular” and maintained a sense of unity in his circuit churches, defying any simple categorizations of mountain Baptist theology.⁴⁴

Moody Hall, John Gambold and other missionaries, noted Posey’s lack of hard-line denominational declarations with much respect. His sermons “excited interest” and attentiveness among missionaries, slaves, and Cherokees. His statements were heartfelt and directed toward inspiring personal faith in Christ, not “nit-picking” at theological

⁴¹ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 41; Stillwell, *Tuckaseegee Baptist Association*, 5-6; Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 64-65; *HNCB*, 2: 420-422.

⁴² Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity*, 196-197, 246-249; Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 77-79.

⁴³ Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity*, 194-195, 201, 243; *HNCB*, 2: 426; Crowley, “The Primitive or Old School Baptists,” 160.

⁴⁴ *HNCB*, 2: 425; Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity*, 243; Crowley, “The Primitive or Old School Baptists,” 160-161.

points. Wherever Posey traveled, he found Christian friends, rather than denominational competitors. But where Posey had his own constituency, by 1815 he had already become “the leader in a Baptist development” southwest from Buncombe County into Georgia while sections north in Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, and Kentucky suffered a “very early great dissension.”⁴⁵

Posey’s tendency to center his circuit further west and south was certainly influenced by the Baptist conflicts north and east of his itinerancy. Posey did not, or could not after 1819, conceal his personal convictions toward mission work (denying the doctrine of election and “Free-Willers”), his support of slavery (splitting with northern missionaries), nor his belief that slaves should be able to access the Gospel in white churches (splitting with many Georgia and Carolina congregations). But as “Baptists... received a terrific boost from the Great Awakening...non-elitist revival crusade...[The] cultural cohesion it provided was ...significant, and it unified the poor, powerless, and socially outcast.” Posey seized on shared hardships and rewards of frontier life and encouraged communities of openness toward Christian civilization as a polar opposite of “heathen wilderness.” While other Baptist leaders focused on splitting theological hairs, Posey promoted the Christian life in contrast to a dark “howling wilderness.”⁴⁶

Posey’s acquaintance with northern missionaries, their ideas, international ambitions, and respected publications qualified Posey as a “good English Scholar” on the

⁴⁵ *HNCB*, 2: 425-429; Moody Hall, personal journal, (October 29-31, 1822), in Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptist in Georgia*, 98-99; Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity*, 243; Crowley, “The Primitive or Old School Baptists,” 160-162.

⁴⁶ Kay Norton, *Baptist Offspring, Southern Midwife: Jesse Mercer’s Cluster of Spiritual Songs (1810): A Study in American Hymnody*,” (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2002), 6-8; Thomas Roberts, untitled travel account published in *Baptist Christian Watchman*, (Boston, March 9, 1822), 51; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 28.

Southern Appalachian frontier where many preachers never owned or read a book other than the Bible. Pioneer families were intricately connected to the landscape, working an existence against the dark woods. These communities had ever growing connections to the rest of America. Ever-increasing numbers of itinerant preachers traveled the same paths as Posey from the 1820's on. Posey distinguished himself in the ways he came to understand some of the motivations of politicians and missionaries in Washington City and Philadelphia. He used "the wit and the power [he] possessed in wielding the sword of the Spirit, and the Word of the Lord." to the great advantage of his Baptist congregations.⁴⁷

"Among the Heathen"

As he traveled further and further west, into older, darker wilderness of the Cherokee Mountains, Posey hoped to first establish a day school in a new circuit of preaching places. Posey's travels took him as far west and south as the Little Tennessee, Tuckaseegee, Hiwassee, Valley, Nantahala, Chatahoochie, Coosa, and Connesauga river valleys. Posey was unafraid of these "poor benighted" Indians.

Paschal states that "years before [1813, Posey] had made several missionary journeys through [the Cherokee] nation, but their ears were stopped by their heathen ignorance and they did not respond to his message." Into the 1820's many Cherokees reported going to itinerant preachers' sermons but "not understanding most of what was said." Posey "yearned for the salvation of the Cherokees, the 'poor Cherokees' as he

⁴⁷ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 76-77; *HNCB*, 2: 534; Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity*, 5-8, 246-247. Posey's connections to northern church organizations included familiarity with Shubal Stearns' legacy, the Philadelphia Confession, the writings and hymns of Adoniram Judson, his friendship with Luther Rice and his continual reading of northern Baptist publications.

always called them,” but rather than preaching to the Cherokees, it is more likely that Posey came into contact with mixed-blood Cherokee Christians in some congregations prior to 1813. He certainly met Cherokee Christians at the Moravian mission in Springplace, Georgia before 1819. It is also likely that Posey, a vocal teacher who loved to sing, met Cherokees who knew some Christian Hymns, or at least the tunes of those hymns, and established a connection with those people.⁴⁸

Between 1813 and 1817 Posey made “two trips of inspection” through Cherokee country, during which time he may have first met Moravian convert Charles Renatus Hicks. Hicks had been discussing Christian faith and singing hymns from the Hiwassee River in North Carolina south to his home in Georgia.⁴⁹ During the same years Posey and Rice had been discussing the establishment of an accredited Baptist mission to the Cherokee, Posey had organized a day school “near the home of Ned Tucker.” This school was a meeting place that extended Posey’s regular circuit into Cherokee country. Over several months of correspondence with the BFMB’s secretary, Dr. William Staughton, Posey earnestly requested “the [Baptist Foreign Mission] Board...bear me up in their prayers, and beseech the blessed Jesus to ask for the poor benighted Cherokees, as part of His immediate inheritance.” Posey was appointed BFMB missionary to the Cherokee Nation on December 1, 1817.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *HNCB*, 2: 538-542, 535-536; Willena Robinson and Prentice Robinson, *A Small Collection of Cherokee Hymns From 1830 on...*, (Tulsa, OK: Cherokee Language and Culture), 21-23; Rowena McClinton, *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees (MSMC), 1805-1813*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska, 2007), 2: 228.

⁴⁹ *MSMC*, 2: 228, *V. I*, 563; McClinton, “Charles Hicks,” 19.

⁵⁰ Humphrey Posey to Dr. William Staughton, November, 24, 1817, reprinted in Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 55-57; *HNCB*, 2: 429.

Posey, with characteristic “promptitude and decision,” set to work right away, preaching at Cherokee meeting places organized by Ned Tucker and Charles Hicks. Both of these men interpreted for sermons, as did a Moravian Cherokee named *Dawzizi*, and later a student, James Wofford.⁵¹ During 1818 and 1819 Posey “formed a very extensive acquaintance with the [Cherokee] tribe,” and the “real Christian” Charles Hicks.⁵² The Moravian mission station at Springplace in Georgia was a frequent stop for travelers, and a spot where Hicks and Posey spent much of their time together. A Moravian Brother recorded in the Springplace diary, “Mr. Humphrey Posey” was “a very dear man who seems to mean very well.” On June 28, 1818, Posey went to a Council at Oostanuala with Governor McMinn of Tennessee to discuss plans for a mission school with the gathered chiefs. A group of “Negroes” and other Moravians present at the council reported back to the Moravian mission that Posey “had held a very beautiful sermon at the Council” on Sunday.⁵³

In October, Posey took a trip to Arkansas to “scout out a likely place to establish a mission.” It is unclear with whom he traveled, what discussion with the Cherokee he had about doing so, or whether he visited any of the Cherokee that had already West. It does seem clear that Posey was planning on the Cherokee “removing to the West,” even

⁵¹ *MSMC*, 2: 146, 228-229; Sadie Smathers Patton, *The Story of Henderson County*, (Asheville: The Miller Printing Company, 1947), 65; Humphrey Posey, “Humphrey Posey to William Staughton, November 18, 1819,” *Latter Day Luminary (LDL)*, February 20, 1820; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 20-23; Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 57; *HNCB*, 2: 540; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 93-96. Patton also names Cherokee “Currehee Dick, a prominent mixed blooded chief” as a translator

⁵² Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 57; Humphrey Posey, “Humphrey Posey to William Staughton, June 1, 1818,” *LDL*, August 1818.

⁵³ *MSMC*, 2: 228-229.

though the Cherokee Council was still solidly planning strategies to remain in the East.⁵⁴ In the Treaty of 1817, all Cherokees who wanted to emigrate to Arkansas were allowed to trade land in the East for an equal amount of land across the Mississippi. This Treaty ceded all of the lands holding the small day schools at Cowee, Tillanoocy, Eastatory, and Posey's school "near the home of [Cherokee] Ned Tucker." At this time, Posey clearly felt that the US government would likely succeed in removing the Cherokee and his main focus became their salvation, rather than their community relationships.⁵⁵

When Humphrey Posey first crossed the banks of the Hiwassee River, the landscape of the Cherokee Valley Towns reflected a history of changing Cherokee ways of thinking. The Valley Towns were not towns, but a series of scattered huts and cabins "for miles" along the Valley and Hiwassee Rivers.⁵⁶ After decades of frequent wars and the "misplaced alliance" during the American Revolution, Valley Towns Cherokees had "yielded the greater part of their hunting grounds to white invaders." Once-thriving towns along the Hiwassee River had been destroyed by John Sevier in the 1770's. The surviving families from Hiwassee and Valley River towns had taken to the relative safety of living in scattered homes, and continued the practice. As a result, the river valley had few discernable population centers. "Adventurous and often unprincipled [white] men"

⁵⁴ Campbell, "Humphrey Posey 1780-1846," Office of the Librarian of Congress; *MSMC*, 2: 228.

⁵⁵ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 16; Royce, "Map of the Former Territorial Limits of the Cherokee Nation of Indians," 1977; "Articles of a Convention Between J.C. Calhoun and Cherokee Delegation," *American Mercury*, July 20, 1819, edition no. 1829; Fleming, *Elder Humphery Posey*, 38-43; *MSMC*, 2: 228, 146; Jonas, "Defining a Tradition: a River Runs Through It," 2-6; Crowley, "The Primitive or Old School Baptists," 158-161.

⁵⁶ Norton, *Journal*, 52, 56; *BJ*, 495-496; Jeremiah Evarts, "Memoranda," May 6, 1822, 2: 154; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 29; Evan Jones, "Cherokee Territory, 1836-1838," map, in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 151.

had initially settled along the fringes of this land with no sizable towns. As time passed white populations grew, settling sparsely inhabited buffer zones and extending the network of pioneer communities illegally into Cherokee country. Some Cherokee towns settled deeper into the forest and higher into the mountains to avoid direct contact with whites, but Valley Towns residents remained scattered much as they had been since the 1780's. Charles Hicks and the Cherokee Council felt this place would be an ideal site for a mission school, a center for a new community for the mountain Cherokees.⁵⁷

A Clear Voice

On the 25th of May 1819 Posey was at Springplace where he “complained about strong chest pains.” Moravian Brother Crutchfield bled Posey, administered some “Essence of Peppermint,” and Posey was on his way in the company of another man (Eddins) to see “Brother Hicks.” Posey and Hicks returned to Springplace three days later, staying until the afternoon of Sunday the 30th. The Moravian Diary records in some detail Posey’s sincerity, attentiveness, and “clear voice,” both in reading scripture and singing from the Moravian hymnal. Posey politely declined taking Communion with the Moravian brothers, but later “said among other things with a moved heart, ‘My dear Brothers and Sisters, I cannot hide from you that my heart feels very well in your midst. I have enjoyed *spirituality* with you and will not easily forget the feeling of this. We are one in Jesus, members of His body, and feel ourselves very closely bound in Him.’” On that Sunday, Posey gave a sermon “about I Kings 6:16, with sincere prayer on our knees

⁵⁷ Norton, *Journal*, 28; *HMSFC*, 70-73; Charles C. Royce, “Map of the Former Territorial Limits of the Cherokee Nation of Indians,” Museum of the Cherokee Indian, 1977.

at the beginning and end.”⁵⁸ Posey also expressed keen interest in the Moravians’ theological literature *Harmony of the Four Gospels* (An annotated collection of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that “explains the single narrative of Jesus life”), and a book the brethren gave him, *Acts of the Last Days of the Son of Man* (which details Biblical prophecies of the last days), further expanding the biblical texts in his library.⁵⁹

Posey’s sermon scripture, I Kings 6:16 reads, “And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built them for it within, even for the oracle, even for the most holy place.” Taken as another lesson in the construction of the proper Christian environment, Posey’s scripture clearly relates the construction of a new holy place. Posey was preaching a new presence on the landscape. Posey’s friend Jesse Mercer’s favorite “missionary verse” was Acts 13:47, “For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.” Missionary sermons to mixed white, slave, and Cherokee audiences almost always included metaphors of light and darkness and constructing the proper environment for Christian worship. Metaphors of light and darkness are directly applied to the not yet Christian landscape and group social structures, which are depicted as being at “the ends of the earth. Phrases such as “heathen wilderness,” and “ends of the earth” make direct reference to biblical prophecies of the “latter days,” or “end times.” Part of bringing the “light of the Gospel” to the ends of the earth was building the proper structures for Christian worship and living. The “ends of the earth” were the wrong places, incorrectly structured for

⁵⁸ *MSMC*, 2: 289-291.

⁵⁹ *MSMC*, 2: 292.

Christianity. These same themes are also the central to the messages of missionary hymns.⁶⁰

Humphrey Posey was noted for his love of singing, his “clear voice,” and his spiritual attachment to particular hymns. Cherokee interpreter Charles Hicks was also frequently noted for his love of singing hymns and reading biblical tracts. The singing of Christian hymns in Cherokee country was a new and very distinct change in the sound of the landscape. Hearing the ordered tones of hymn-singing signified a new spiritual power that attracted many Cherokees to at least see what Christian services were all about. Humphrey Posey and Charles Hicks certainly seemed to have bonded over their love of singing. On Sunday, May 30, 1819 at Springplace the two men stood side by side and sang hymns during the Moravian service. The potentially powerful religious experience and reverence of vocalizing spiritual ideas as a group became a strong bond between Posey and his Moravian friends. In Cherokee communities where few spoke English, singing the ordered melodies of European scales presented a distinct music that would have been a very powerful means of stirring Cherokee interest. Posey was one of many who recognized how hymns and singing were incredibly strong tools for achieving missionary goals. Two particular hymns stand out in the lives of both of these men.⁶¹

The hymn “Oh, Tell me no more of this World’s Vain Store &c,” sung together by Posey and Hicks at Springplace that May, presents many of the fundamental Christian ideas involved in reshaping the thinking of converts. Direct references to “ground” and

⁶⁰ Kay Norton, *Baptist Offspring, Southern Midwife*, 8; Norton discusses Mercer’s “favorite Biblical command to missions” and his sermon at Valley Towns Mission in 1823.

⁶¹ Kay Norton, *Baptist Offspring, Southern Midwife*, 7; *MSMC*, 2: 289; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 44-45.

place relate a new environment with new ways of thinking about the world. “This world’s vain store,” this time and place, becomes something to be denied as “that happy ground,” becomes something to be gone after, “Go after Him Go!”

O tell me no more of this world’s vain store! The time for such trifles with me is now o’er; a country I’ve found where true joys abound, To dwell I’m determin’d on that happy ground. No mortal doth know what Christ will bestow, What life, strength and comfort! Go after Him go! Lo, onward I move, to see Christ above, None guesses how wondrous my journey will prove. Great spoils I shall win, from death, hell and sin; Midst outward affliction shall feel Christ within; And still, which is best, I in his dear breast, As at the beginning, find pardon and rest. When I am to die, receive me, I’ll cry, For Jesus has lov’d me, I cannot tell why; but this I do find, we two are so join’d, He’ll not live in glory and leave me behind. This blessing is mine, through favor divine, And O, my dear Jesus, the praise shall be thine. In heaven we’ll meet in harmony sweet, And, glory to Jesus! We’ll then be complete.⁶²

Posey’s missionary associate, Jesse Mercer, is remembered today for his famous *Cluster of Spiritual Songs*, a collection of hymns that included songs specifically intended as missionary tools. Mercer was moderator of the Georgia Baptist Association, and a leader in the Triennial Baptist Convention. Mercer’s only known sermon to the Cherokee occurred at Valley Town Mission in 1823 and very likely included his favorite verse, Acts 13:47. A large part of Posey’s successful missionary work centered on teaching and singing hymns to young Cherokee students. His conversations with other missionaries often centered on particularly useful scriptures and hymns. In a letter to William Staughton prior to the opening of Valley Towns school, Posey described his second visit to Baptist Duncan O’Bryant’s Tinsawatee School in Georgia. Posey was impressed with the Cherokee children’s “remarkable ...improvement in singing” tuneful

⁶² Jesse Mercer, *The Cluster of Spiritual Songs*, (Augusta, GA: Hobby & Bunce, 1810), 236; William Walker, *The Southern Harmony*, (Los Angeles: Pro Musicamericana Reprint, 1966), 59; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 44-45; Kay Norton, *Baptist Offspring*, 66-70.

hymns including “Come Holy Ghost, Lord God.”⁶³ In 1822 a Cherokee student at Tinsawatee “[probably James Wofford] and Posey sang... a hymn descriptive of the millennial day- ‘Slight tincture of skin shall no longer engage,’ &c. and, “When white men and Indians united shall praise,/One vast hallelujah shall raise,’ [which] excited much interest and praise.”⁶⁴ The full hymn goes,

Roll forward, dear Saviour, roll forward the day.
When all shall submit and rejoice in thy sway,
When white men and Indians, united in praise,
One vast hallelujah triumphant shall raise.

Forty years later, missionary C.J. Ryder said wryly of these “versifications,” “they are an appeal to the churches more liberally to supply us with means, that we may be able to respond and go in to possess the land.” Posey and his missionary associates coordinated the use of specific scripture and hymns to solidly enforce in the minds of “heathens” specific beliefs about the “end times,” and the sinfulness of their traditional ways of thinking.⁶⁵

“Come Holy Ghost, Lord God” was another hymn that missionaries taught, and one Posey and Hicks often sang together. This hymn was part of the Moravian baptism ceremony and was very meaningful for Charles Hicks as a part of his own conversion experience.⁶⁶

⁶³ Humphrey Posey, “Humphrey Posey to William Staughton,” undated letter reproduced in *LDL*, May 1, 1821, 311. Posey describes Tinsawatee school “improvements” and the “orderly behavior” of the Cherokee children there.

⁶⁴ Originally from *Columbian Star*, Washington, D.C., 30 November 1822, 2, quoted in William Walker, *The Southern Harmony*, 59.

⁶⁵ Superintendent C.J. Ryder, “Notes from the Saddle,” *The American Missionary*, April 1887, 110; Originally in *The Sweet Songster*, Edward W. Billups, D.D., (Cattlesburg, KY: no publication information available), 111.

⁶⁶ *MSMC*, 2: 290-291. “Come Holy Ghost Lord God” was translated from latin and the lyrics augmented by Martin Luther himself. The tune and some of the lyrics

Come, Holy Spirit, God and Lord! Let all your graces be outpoured,
 On each believer's mind and heart; Your fervent love to us impart.
 Lord, by the brightness of Your light, You in the faith do men unite,
 Of every land and every tongue; This to Your praise, O Lord, be sung.
 From every error keep us free; Let none but Christ our Master be,
 That we in living faith abide, In him with all our might confide.
 Lord, by Your power prepare each heart, And to the weakness strength impart,
 That bravely here we may contend, Through life and death to You ascend.⁶⁷

The metaphors of light and direct references to “every land and every tongue” singing the praise of Jesus, place hymn singers in a self-conscious position, where opening themselves up to a revelatory experience is expected. “From every error keep us free” calls to attention the constant threat of old ways of thinking that might cause one to make “sinful” decisions. Shifting ways of living and thinking are the common themes in the hymns missionaries taught to Cherokees, because making these changes would eventually bring “that happy ground” of Christian faith. Implicit in the words are events referencing biblical prophecy that signify the “latter days” before Jesus’ return.⁶⁸ Lyrics such as “white men and Indians, united in praise,” and “in the faith of men unite, of every land and every tongue,” reference biblical prophecies about the Christian conversion of all men, one of the signs of the immanent day of final judgement, for which all converts must be prepared. Missionary hymns and bible verses often focused on references to “land” and “earth,” signifying a necessary spiritual rebirth of the land as well.

originate in the 11th century. Count Zinzendorf, as part of his revitalization of Moravian ideas in the 1720's, enshrined this song in the Moravian baptism ceremony.

⁶⁷ Hymn Time, “Come Holy Ghost,” Hymn Time Ministries, <http://hymntime.com/tch/htm/o/t/motmntwvs.htm>, (accessed June 12, 2011); John Gambold, “Come Holy Ghost, Lord and God,” in the English language *Moravian Hymn Book*, 1742, number 107. Also known as “Come Holy Ghost, God and Lord,” “Come Holy Ghost, Lord God,” and “Come Holy Spirit, Lord God”

⁶⁸ Numerous Bible verses such as Job 19:25, “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,” suggest a spiritual preparation that might also be interpreted as a preparation of “the earth.”

During church services, all those who were singing faced the same direction and followed the words as a group, a new mode of community experience for Cherokees. For Moravians, much instruction was offered before “the lottery” conferred baptism and first communion, and learning hymns was an essential element of the process. Moravians placed great importance on the order and purpose of hymns, which were carefully described in liturgical texts and hymnals. Unaccompanied clear, intonated, human voices made “all the more important, then, ...the practice of congregational singing and the song repertory of the Bohemian Brethren.” The Moravians wanted the Cherokee to understand what they were singing, and tried to translate German and Latin lyrics as simply as possible.⁶⁹ Baptists set similar goals and adopted some Moravian hymns into their own hymnals. Cherokee converts were noted for being somber and attentive during sermons and hymns. An English traveler noted, “When [Cherokee congregations] sang...each one having a hymnbook in his hand... I certainly never saw any congregation engaged more apparently in sincere devotion.”⁷⁰

Throughout the warm months of 1819, Hicks and Posey spent “a great deal of time” in conversation about “civilizing” the Valley Towns Cherokee. The two men met at Springplace on a number of occasions and very likely met at Brainerd and the Peachtree valley as well. Posey explained in a letter to the BFMB that the Valley Towns

⁶⁹ Johann Lasitis, public statement, and J.A. Comenius, editor, *Historiae de origine et rebus gestis fratrum Bohemicorum liber octavus, cci* (Amsterdam: 1649), quoted in Walter Blackenburg, “The Music of the Bohemian Brethren,” 592-607, in Friedrich Blume, *Protestant Church Music: A History*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1974), 599-602; The Moravian Church in America, *Hymnal of the Moravian Church*, (Chicago: Raynor Lithography Company, 1969), 111-114.

⁷⁰ George W. Featherstonehaugh, *A Canoe Voyage up the Minnay Sotor* (London, 1847), quoted in Caroline Foreman, “An Early Account of the Cherokees,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 34 (Summer, 1956): 150-151.

Cherokee wanted a mission school, funded by the sale of some of their lands, and directed by Christians, “their only friends, whose example they wish the rising generation to follow.”⁷¹

In fact, the Valley Towns Cherokee were more interested in a usable education for their children than any new religion. As far as the Cherokee were concerned, they were inviting schools so their children could acquire useful knowledge. Hicks and Posey met at a crossroads where Christian ideals defined their actions and directed their thinking. Their singing was a new sound on the landscape, a way of singing that was clearly Christian. The hopes that these two men had for “civilizing” the Cherokee may have differed, but the shared ways in which they sought a re-ordering of the landscape went far beyond clearing forests and building roads. New ways of thinking about place involved a remaking of the ways people communicated, especially in a spiritual context. Cherokee singing had previously been “intended for an imitation of the mournful notes of some bird, such as the turtle dove, hidden in the deep forests,” or direct communication with plants “to assist in curing disease,” and animals “to win the favor of the lords of game.” Songs ranged from a “sweetly plaintive tune,” to “ceremonial prayers and invocations...in the form of songs or chants.” The differences between traditional Cherokee singing, which was embedded in relationships to the landscape, and the ordered tonal group singing of Christian hymns, which related the group to God, brought a

⁷¹ Humphrey Posey, “Cherokee Indians: Extract of a Letter From Elder Humphrey Posey, To the Corresponding Secretary,” *Boston Recorder*, September 4, 1819; Evan Jones and Thomas Dawson, “Valley Towns Station: Letter from the Reverend Evan Jones and T. Dawson to the Cor. Sec.,” *LDL*, May 1, 1825; Phillips and Phillips, *The Brainerd Journal*, 167-168; Patton, *Henderson County*, 65; Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 57-58. The funds from the sale of Cherokee lands were probably part of the annual \$10,000 sum allotted for missions to Indian nations in the Civilization Act.

striking new character to the harmony of human voices that echoed through Christian valleys. It was the order perceived in hymn singing, as with garden plots, that missionaries hoped for “the rising generation” to learn as a way of reflecting their newly civilized ways.⁷²

Missionaries Gather for Council

In October of 1819, Charles Hicks arranged for a number of missionaries to attend the General Council meeting on the 26th and 27th. This council was held at a newly constructed council house in Oostanuala. In the 1760’s Bartram described a Cherokee council house as “a large rotunda, capable of accommodating several hundred people... a circular range of posts or trunks of trees, about six feet high, at equal distances, which are notched at top, to receive into them, from one to another, a range of beams or wall plates.” Henry Timberlake similarly stated a council house was “raised with wood, and covered over with earth, and has all the appearance of a small mountain at a little distance.” The structure was “large enough to contain 500 persons, but extremely dark... Within it has the appearance of an ancient amphitheatre... the seats being raised one above another, leaving an area in the middle, in the center of which stands the fire; the seats of the head warriors are near it.” Eighteenth century descriptions of Cherokee council houses and meetings emphasize the size, seating organization, and darkness.⁷³ Brainerd missionary Ard Hoyt described the new council house of a November 1818 council,

⁷² HMSFC, 401, 435, 468, 472-473, 463; James Mooney and Frans Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript: Cherokee Sacred Formulas and Medicinal Prescriptions*, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1932), 297, 298, 301-308; James F. Barnett Jr., *The Natchez Indians: A History to 1735*, (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 131-133.

⁷³ Bartram, *Travels*, 232-233; Timberlake, *Memoirs*, 17-18; BJ, 89

the council house...is merely a spacious roof, supported by posts set in the ground, & left *open on all sides*, except a railing which extends round the whole building, leaving only an opening on one side about the width of a common door. Next the railing on the inside are benches round the whole building, on which the king [Pathkiller], old men, & chiefs [including Charles Hicks] are seated; the rest of the people stand *on the outside* of the railing. I stood a little below the center of the house, facing the king, with Br. Hicks on my right as interpreter, my audience surrounding me on every side.⁷⁴

An apparently new design element of the council house, to which numbers of missionaries were invited, was the open sides, allowing light in from “all sides.” Even with all the added illumination, these structures were entirely different than the hewn-log, squared corner buildings of pioneer communities and mission schools, but in no way less architecturally sophisticated.

Moravian Brother Abraham Steiner preached a “dedication sermon” to “a large and attentive audience” at the new Oostanaula (New Echota) council house. Brother Steiner spoke of the “civilizing” accomplishments at Springplace mission and plans for new buildings so more Cherokee children could board at the school. Daniel Butrick spoke of the ABCFM’s “help that is coming on” in the form of teachers, farmers, and craftsman. Humphrey Posey spoke of his plan for a mission school in the mountains and his hopes to “bring the light of the Gospel” to the Valley Towns. Hicks proposed the site of “the old Natchez town” in the Peach Tree Valley. Posey was allowed to “buy an improvement” in the name of the BFMB and obtained the Cherokees’ “hearty consent, and promise of co-operation” in establishing a school for “the most uncultivated portion of the tribe,” the “forgotten stepchildren” of the Cherokee, those nearest Posey’s home in

⁷⁴ *BJ*, 89.

the mountains of western North Carolina.⁷⁵ This section of the nation consisted of “predominantly full-bloods, [who] had less wealth, and were more traditional” than the mixed-blood, slave-holding Cherokees in Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama.⁷⁶ Humphrey Posey set out immediately to procure funds and support.⁷⁷

The October 1819 General Council established an important new laws, most of which dealt with white intruders, white involvement in Cherokee business and trade, and white employment on Cherokee lands. This Council also marked an important series of political moves through which the Cherokee took control of their own “civilization” process. The decisions in October of 1819 established controls on mission work while assuring the continued involvement and support of missionaries in increasing the Cherokees’ “civilization.” On November 12, 1819 Hicks wrote the Brainerd missionaries, stating “the late council forbid their own people to employ white men to till their land, or oversee their farms, but that missionaries may employ what help they need.

⁷⁵ John Ross and Path Killer To All Whom It May Concern, October 27, 1819, in *The Papers of Chief John Ross*, ed. Gary Moulton, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 1: 31; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 96, includes transcript of council decisions as recorded in Triennial Convention Board, January 25, 1820; Patton, *Henderson County*, 65; *HNCB*, 2: 542-543; Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 57.

⁷⁶ Christopher C. Dean, “Memoir of John Arch, A Cherokee Young Man. Compiled From Communications Of Missionaries In The Cherokee Nation,” (Boston Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1838), reprinted in *Journal of Cherokee Studies* 26, (2008), 34; John R. Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees, 1819-1900*, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 13.

⁷⁷ *MSMC*, 2: 319-320; *BJ*, 134; *PBP*, 6: 359, note 8; *1835 Cherokee Census*, (Park Hill, OK: The Trail of Tears Association Oklahoma Chapter, 2002), Cherokee Nation Map, 19-23; Norton, *Journal*, 46-47; Barnett, *The Natchez Indians*, 131-132; Humphrey Posey, “Cherokee Indians: Extract of a Letter From Elder Humphrey Posey, To the Corresponding Secretary,” *Boston Recorder*, September 4, 1819; Evan Jones and Thomas Dawson, “Valley Towns Station: Letter from the Reverend Evan Jones and T. Dawson to the Cor. Sec.,” *LDL*, May 1, 1825; Patton, *Henderson County*, 65; Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 57-58; Stillwell, *Tuckaseegee Baptist Association*, 1-2.

The October 1819 council affected almost immediate changes across the Cherokee Nation as Cherokee political structures became more organized, one of the more significant results was the Valley Towns Baptist mission.⁷⁸

80 Acres at “Notchee Town”

The 80 acres allotted for the mission were old fields, and orchards and “Notchee Town,” along the “lowest settlements that composed the whole nation” along the southern edge of the ancient Cherokee homeland.⁷⁹ The rich soil of the low-lying valley was good land for orchards and gardens. Apples, peaches and plums, cherries, mulberries, persimmons, blackberries, strawberries, grapes, buffalo nuts, corn, squash, beans, cucumbers, potatoes, watermelons, ground cherries, and pumpkins, would have been grown in abundance prior to the Revolutionary War. Black walnut, butternut, honey locust, black locust, oaks, tulip poplars, river birch, dogwoods, sassafras, and chestnuts would all have grown there as well, gaining considerable size during the years of limited human use. Wild greens such as sochan, curly dock, lamb’s quarters, ragweed, and other plants, considered weeds by white settlers, would have thrived in old-fields. Rivercane, yellow locust, and other non-food resource plants would have been abundant as well. Such a rich landscape would have still held value as a resource-gathering site for the Cherokee, even after abandoning many of the town sites along this part of the Hiwassee river. At the same time, the less densely inhabited land acted as a buffer between encroaching whites and acculturated Cherokees, and the traditionalist, non-English

⁷⁸ *BJ*, 138-139; *Laws of the Cherokee Nation: Adopted by the Council at Various Periods. Printed for the Benefit of the Nation.* (Tahlequah: OK, Cherokee Advocate Office, 1852, reprinted Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1973), 6.

⁷⁹ Charles Hicks to John Ross, February 1, 1826, and Charles Hicks to John Ross, March 1, 1826, in *PCJR*, 1: 112-113, 114-115; Barnett, *The Natchez Indians*, 131-133.

speaking, non-slave owning Cherokees in the mountains north of the Hiwassee.⁸⁰ Posey envisioned crop fields and neat rows of buildings, bustling with Cherokee students speaking English, reading the Bible, and singing hymns as they worked the farm. He had large plots of land almost entirely cleared, ignoring many of the useful resources already present.

In April of 1820, Posey's first hired teacher, Thomas Dawson, visited the Brainerd Mission to the Cherokee in Tennessee. An entry in the mission journal reads, "Mr. Dawson, who is engaged as a teacher in the mission school projected by our Baptist brethren in the eastern part of this nation, called to make us a short visit. Mr. Dawson and the Rev. Mr. Humphrey Posey and family, have commenced their operations on the bank of the Highwasse [sic] creek, about 20 miles from the Tennessee river and about 120 from Brainerd, in the valley called Peach Tree. They do not expect to begin their school until corn is ripe." The Valley Town mission school was expected to open in August or September of 1820. While Dawson was visiting Brainerd, Posey was on his

⁸⁰ Evan Jones, "Cherokee Territory, 1836-1838," Map; Hubbard Scientific Inc., "Knoxville, Tenn.; N.C.; S.C; GA: NI 17-1," map, 2002; ECSEBCI, 43-45, 47-51, 56-62, 64, 65, 69-76, 90, 122-123, 142, 202, 215-216, 236, 318, 345, 346, 347-349, 354; William W. Baden, *Tomotley: An Eighteenth Century Cherokee Village*, (Knoxville: Tennessee Valley authority Publications and University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 79-82; M. Le Page du Pratz, *The History of Louisiana*, ed. Joseph G. Tregle, Jr., (Baton Rouge: Louisiana American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1975), 64; Chris Bolgiano, *Mighty Giants: an American Chestnut Anthology*, (Bennington, VT: The American Chestnut Foundation, 2007), 39-40, 61. All the plants listed here bear Cherokee names that denote significance in Cherokee culture for food, medicine or other specific uses. Hickories have been omitted due to the "quite confusing...large number of botanical synonyms." See Banks, *Plants of the Cherokee*, and Chiltoskey and Hamel, *Cherokee Plants*.

way to Washington City in hopes of raising more funds for the school under the conditions of the *Civilization Fund Act*.⁸¹

Posey was “kindly received” by President Monroe and met with John Calhoun in Washington City to procure Civilization Act funds for “improving the state of the Indians.” The Civilization Act provided for equal funds to be distributed among the various missionary denominations in Cherokee country, the sum of \$1,000 dollars.⁸² After receiving approval from Calhoun, Posey set out immediately to Baptist churches in Philadelphia, preaching and forming more “valuable acquaintances with many of the most eminent ministers in the denomination.” Fleming points out that “though brought up among the mountains...not accustomed to ...*city ways*... [Posey was] easy in his intercourse with his brethren under almost any circumstances.”⁸³ Fleming continues in describing Posey’s distinctly “mountain” behavior in one Philadelphia church.

[Posey] was preaching [in a Philadelphia church.] It is not an unusual thing, in many of the churches in our [North Carolina] backwoods, for the preacher to close a meeting by singing, and going round through the congregation, the mean while, shaking hands with the brethren and people generally....Posey became unusually warm while speaking of the love of Jesus to lost sinners...he exclaimed ‘Is thine heart right [with God], as my heart is with thy heart? If it be, give me thy hand.’ [He] immediately...started from the pulpit, and went through the congregation, giving them his hand, and speaking all the while, of the love of the adorable Savior. [The Congregation] seemed not offended, but rather delighted with the apparent heart-felt piety and godly simplicity which prevailed [at the service].⁸⁴

⁸¹ *BJ*, 167-168; William H. Crawford, and “*Indian Civilization Fund Act*, March 3, 1819,” in *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, ed. Francis Paul Prucha, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 27, 516-517;

⁸² *Civilization Fund Act*, 516-517; Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 59; Crawford, “Secretary of War Crawford on Trade and Intercourse March 13, 1816,” 27.

⁸³ *HNCB*, 2: 421, 542-543; *Civilization Fund Act*, 516-517; Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 59; Crawford, “Secretary of War Crawford on Trade and Intercourse March 13, 1816,” 27.

⁸⁴ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 62.

Posey returned from Philadelphia “on horseback, preaching,” having presumably raised the necessary funds for completing the mission grounds and facilities. He stocked the new mission, probably in Knoxville, with “three horses, wagons, tools, 40 head of cattle, and about 100 hogs, and soon had about 80 acres enclosed and in cultivation.” In the process of clearing 80 acres of the once well-kempt Natchez town, workers would have accumulated usable timbers and firewood, resources too valuable to ignore. Locust and chestnut logs were used to build long-lasting split rail fences to enclose the area. It must be remembered that at this time, fences were more for keeping unwanted animals out, rather than keeping animals in. Bricks for building chimneys and a bread oven were made from the heavy red clay on the banks of the river. While certain materials had to be purchased and carried in by wagon, the Peach Tree valley was loaded with other resources the missionaries would have utilized including blackberries, mulberries, chestnuts, and game such as deer, rabbits, squirrels, and fish. Many other food resources may have come into use as a genuine relationship with the local Cherokees was established. The plum and peach trees for which the valley is named would have mostly grown past the age of bearing edible fruit. It is likely that most of these trees within the 80 acres were cleared for a new, orderly orchard planted with young trees grown from transplanted saplings and gathered seeds.⁸⁵

The rough work of clearing the site would have taken considerable effort. Historian William McLoughlin states that Posey “appears to have used slave labor and may have owned slaves himself [when he established the mission],” an undertaking that

⁸⁵ William Lord and Ralph H. Lutts, “A Fenced-In Forest,” in *Mighty Giants*, ed. Chris Bolgiano, 130-132; ECSEBCI, 43-45, 47-51, 56-62, 64, 65, 69-76, 90, 122-123, 142, 202, 215-216, 236, 318, 345, 346, 347-349, 354; Banks, *Cherokee Plants*, 84, 79-80, 67-68, 61.

even in the 1820's would have stirred controversy among northern Baptists. This may explain why there are no records of whom Posey employed at this stage. It is possible that Georgia Cherokees allowed Posey to utilize the labor of their slaves without renting or paying them. The Hicks, Vann, and Ridge families frequently hired out or loaned their slaves to other missionaries for construction projects. Those same families were the Cherokees most interested in educating and civilizing the Valley Towns Cherokee, but the distance between the Valley Towns site and slave-holding Cherokees was significant. Posey could have used his own slaves, if he did own any, or even have made arrangements with an Asheville slave owner. Frontier whites could have been hired but this seems unlikely due to the expense and the rough, un-Christian nature of most whites on the border of Cherokee country. There are signs that Posey and the Philadelphia based BFMB, which expressed early abolitionist leanings, did not get along well, but it is not unlikely that Posey used mission funds to hire slave laborers, with the money going to the slave owner. Later financial issues between Posey and the BFMB show that a significant sum of money was spent on the mission's initial construction, certainly more than the northern boards had planned to pay.⁸⁶

At Brainerd and Springplace a number of slaves attended Sabbath services regularly. During the initial stay of the Moravian missionaries at James Vanns, before the mission was established, "Mr Steiner preached regularly every Sunday, to white, black, & red people & half breed Indians & [Moravian] Missionaries met there with kind & hospitable treatment. Mr Vann directed his negroes to assist the brethren in building a

⁸⁶ Schwarze, *Moravian Missions Among Southern Indian Tribes of the United States*, 64; Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs, *Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs Day Book Number 2*, 61; *MSMC*, 2: 89, 100-101, 214, 240, 374-374, 466.

Cabin, upon the land appropriated for the use of the mission to which they removed” on July 13th, 1800. By April of 1818 Hicks had pledged to “build a spacious building that would serve as both meeting room and schoolhouse for the Sunday school for the Negroes” at Springplace. Springplace had from the beginning utilized borrowed slave labor, mostly belonging to the Vann’s or Hick’s, and always allowed any of the slaves to attend services. Posey was certainly aware of the use of slave labor in constructing and keeping up the Springplace mission.⁸⁷

There is also the possibility that some congregation members from nearby Baptist churches may have participated. Given Posey’s “conciliatory nature,” it seems just as likely that he would have paid the extra expense to hire white workers in order to avoid slavery issues altogether.⁸⁸ Whatever the case may be, the difficult work of clearing 80 acres of land that had not been fully tended in over 40 years was done and cost Posey, and the cooperating northern Mission Boards, real money. Where this money came from and where it went would later become an issue for Humphrey Posey.⁸⁹

By June of 1820, Posey received his first Civilization Act funds through dispersing agent Return J. Meigs. Through the summer Posey had carpenters, “erecting a frame school building for the boys and a log building for the girls.” Posey and Dawson’s

⁸⁷ Schwarze, *Moravian Missions Among Southern Indian Tribes of the United States*, 64; *MSMC*, 2: 100-101, 240, 374-374, 466; *BJ*, 56, 101; *PBP*, 5: 276, 296.

⁸⁸ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 28-29; McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity*, 77.

⁸⁹ *MSMC*, 2: 260, 240, 435; *BJ*, 28, 29, 56, 166-167, 432; McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity*, 22; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokee*, 77, 78-85; Tiyah Miles, *the House on Diamond Hill: A Cherokee Plantation Story*, (Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 104-107. Diary and journal entries from Springplace and Brainerd frequently reference instances of Cherokee slave holders loaning slaves to friends and mission stations, often for the most difficult work.

cabins were underway, as well as a gristmill and sawmill.⁹⁰ Posey's vision was taking place, a model of "civilization" cleared away in the middle of the dark uncivilized forest. The square of mission buildings, "300 hundred yards along each side," lay at the southwest end of the cleared land. The gristmill was almost a mile up the Hiwassee. The 40-year tangle of trees, bushes, and weeds was remade in less than a year, presenting a neat and orderly Christian environment for the education of Cherokee children. The first Cherokee students helped plant the first corn crop in late June of 1821.⁹¹

In September of 1821 Posey wrote the BFMB, saying, "I humbly hope day is broke in this wilderness." He went on to describe the state of the mission, the single unfinished chimney, the sawmill, which was not quite ready to "cut plank," and the gristmill, which was "pretty well on the way." The "dear brethren and sisters" of the "mission family" were expected to arrive later in the fall. Posey's letter, describing the unfinished state of the grounds, did not present a promising place for several families to settle just before winter. But those families were already on their way when Posey's letter arrived in Philadelphia. It was exactly one year after Thomas Dawson stated to the Brainerd missionaries that the Valley Town school would be open. It seems likely that some mission board representatives were having serious doubts about Posey's capabilities to meet his claims.⁹²

⁹⁰ Humphrey Posey to Return J. Meigs, June 23, 1820 in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 24; *Civilization Fund Act*, (March 3, 1819), 516-517.

⁹¹ Humphrey Posey, "Letter from Valley Towns Station," *The Baptist Christian Watchman*, March 9, 1822, 51; Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs, *Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs Day Book Number 2*, 61.

⁹² *HNCB*, 2: 543; *LDL*, November 1, 1824, 338; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 97.

When the missionary families from Philadelphia met Posey in Knoxville during late November of 1821, he led them on the last ninety miles southeast, the roughest part of their journey. The new teacher Thomas Dawson described the last section as “almost a waste, howling wilderness.”⁹³ After several days travel through “extremely cold” weather and “indescribable” mountains, the group arrived at Valley Towns mission to find “that neither their dwellings nor the school buildings were finished.” The 26 individuals who traveled to the Peach Tree valley from Pennsylvania were a group of farmers (one a blacksmith, another a weaver), teachers, missionary women (perhaps the first in North Carolina), and their children (16 in all). Among this group was Mr. Evan Jones, a Welsh immigrant who had joined the Baptist church in Philadelphia some years earlier.⁹⁴ This group arrived at the mission on November 23, their safe journey costing the BBFM a meager \$3.64, considering the rough 800 miles and seven weeks of travel. There are opposing claims about the reactions of the mission group upon arriving at Valley Towns mission. Baptist historians generally claim happy agreement among the missionaries, however, William McLoughlin, relying on nineteenth century published sources, finds a less positive attitude among the missionary party.⁹⁵

Posey had hired one black woman to work in the kitchen, keeping the 20 or so Cherokee children who were staying in the unfinished schoolhouse fed. These children were a token effort to meet the requirements of a functioning mission school as described

⁹³ Thomas Dawson, “Letter from Valley Towns Station,” *The Baptist Christian Watchman*, March 9, 1822, 51.

⁹⁴ Humphrey Posey, “Extract of a Letter From Elder Posey,” *LDL*, February 1, 1820, 28; *HNCB*, 2: 543-544; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 28-30; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 101-102.

⁹⁵ Posey, “Extract of a Letter from Elder Posey,” *LDL*, February 1, 1820, 28; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 29-31.

in the Civilization Act, but a small portion of the “one hundred students” promised to the Cherokee council and BFMB by Posey. It is unclear whether or not these children were receiving much tutelage, other than a few bible lessons and a schedule of work, singing, and prayer. It seems unlikely that they were acquiring much useful knowledge. The unfinished state of the mission, the small group of students, and the isolation of the “wilderness,” must have been disheartening for the new missionaries.

Tensions Grow

Posey intended that students learn English right away, a task he and many others presumed would be easy given the “primitive” nature of the Cherokee language. Moravians had given up on the task of learning Cherokee stating, “their Language...[even] when attained is incapable of conveying any Idea beyond the senses.” Others believed the Cherokee language was “one of the most pitiful even in expressions concerning life in general and the doings and dealings therein. Therefore, it is completely impossible to impart to [Cherokee speakers] the right ideas about God or spiritual things in it [the Cherokee language].” To some missionaries and many local Baptists, speaking Cherokee conveyed the darkness and ignorance of Cherokees’ uncivilized ways. In November of 1819, missionary Daniel Butrick had been “relieved from the temporal concerns” at Brainerd to focus on “the study of the Cherokee language,” a controversial move that unsettled proponents of removal and the Civilization Act. Butrick and Evan Jones argued that the “native fertility of the language, compensated in a great measure for the paucity of ideas familiar to the natives of the forest.” Within Jones’ first year at the

mission, he came to believe that the only way to successfully teach Cherokees Christianity was in their own language.⁹⁶

Posey never learned to speak Cherokee and probably discouraged the school children from speaking it. Posey's Calvinist background included a teaching method that relied on strict discipline. Posey felt that the strict guidelines of the Civilization Act should be followed, specifying English as the language of the classroom. But as part of the Civilization Act, the War department recommended the English Lancastrian teaching system in which "older children teach the young and offer rewards as incentives for learning rather than relying on fear of the rod for discipline." Missionary boards preferred this method for many reasons, not the least of which was the money it saved in teacher's salaries. The Lancastrian method, first described in an English pamphlet in 1802, was purportedly able to teach "hundreds of children" with very few teachers and textbooks.⁹⁷ This teaching method "linked the shaping of youthful character to specific spatial settings."⁹⁸

Learning spaces across Europe and America were being revolutionized with the intention of educating large numbers of students. The Lancastrian method envisioned a sort of inexpensive production line readying young students to be moved into roles in the

⁹⁶ *BJ*, 138-139; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 36; *MSMC*, 2: 199, paraphrasing Colonel Hawkins; "Extract from the Journal of the Mission at Springplace," *LDL*, November 1, 1824, 337.

⁹⁷ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 23-24; "Boston Monitorial School," *American Journal of Education*, vol. 1, (1826), 72; Phil E. Hager, "Nineteenth Century Experiments with Monitorial Teaching," *The Phi Delta Kappan* 40, no. 4, (Jan., 1959): 165-166; Gordon E. Fouts, "Music Instruction in Early Nineteenth Century American Schools," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 22, no. 2, (Summer, 1974): 112-115.

⁹⁸ Dell Upton, "Lancastrian Schools, Republican Citizenship, and the Spatial Imagination in Early Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of The Society of Architectural Historians* 55, no. 3, (Sep., 1996): 238-239.

machinery of society, much like the vision of the Civilization Act itself. Along with this system came a new open and large type of classroom architecture. The separate schoolrooms for boys and girls at the Valley Towns mission were by far the largest buildings on the mission grounds. These buildings may not have resembled the massive schoolhouses for hundreds of children that were going up in London, New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, but when presented to the mountain Cherokees, the learning spaces would have had a similar psychological affect. Even though Cherokee council houses were much larger than the mission buildings, council structures had a familiarity to young Cherokee minds. The wattle-and-daub construction methods, the woven river cane elements and the central fire on an earthen floor covered by woven cane mats presented a space constructed from recognizable elements of the Cherokee landscape. Aside from a less familiar appearance, the rectangular shape of hewn log and framed structures of the Baptist mission lent to the hierarchical structure of schooling, with teachers and older students seated or standing at the head of the room, and all students facing the same direction.⁹⁹ This conception of space for learning and student-production fit well with Posey's vision of orderly Christian civilization, but he very likely retained a healthy bit of skepticism about slack disciplinary methods, a minor point of contention that added to Posey's increasing detachment from the mission school.

Many of Posey's attitudes toward missionary work immediately broke with the methods and intentions of northern missionaries. As the mission struggled toward

⁹⁹ Upton, "Lancastrian Schools," 249-251; Walker, *Cherokee Footprints... Volume II: Home and Hearth*, 189-194; BJ, 89.

completion, “debts for maintaining the mission mounted.”¹⁰⁰ The difficulties of teaching and evangelizing to the Cherokee, while trying to raise enough funds to finish and run the school, forced Posey and the “mission family” to recognize his talents could best be used to “itinerate and collect children and visit different parts of the nation to establish local schools, etc.”¹⁰¹ Posey was already building community support among whites and Cherokees, and itinerating to the “poor and lazy, dirty and slothful” Georgian frontiersman, who may have needed his efforts more than the Cherokee.¹⁰²

Posey’s decisions at this time were almost surely linked to some combination of financial squabbles, disagreements over how the mission should be operated, tensions with abolitionists on northern missionary boards, and a belief that Cherokee removal was inevitable. Posey wrote that “itinerancy was in his blood” and he continued to preach, mostly among newly established white churches on former Cherokee lands. Head teacher Thomas Dawson left to establish a short-lived school at Coosawattee in the southern part of the Nation. The missionary Thomas Roberts assumed the superintendent position of the school and Evan Jones became head teacher, freeing Posey to pursue the itinerant preaching he preferred.¹⁰³

By 1821, Posey was traveling more frequently into Georgia, raising money and support for the mission wherever he went. Reports of excessive expenditures and misused funds had begun to overshadow Posey’s accomplishments at the mission, especially in light of the still unfinished state of the mission buildings and his impossible

¹⁰⁰ *The Baptist Christian Watchman*, March 9, 1822, 51; William McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 28-31.

¹⁰¹ *Baptist Christian Watchman*, March 9, 1822, 51.

¹⁰² Noland, *Noland’s Cherokee Diary*, 12.

¹⁰³ McLoughlin, *The Cherokees and Christianity*, 21-22

promise to teach one hundred Cherokee students within the year. Posey had reported some small number of baptisms but had no Cherokee congregation. In 1823 a special BFMB meeting was called to question Humphrey Posey and Thomas Roberts about “the large amounts of money” that had been provided by the Board and federal government. Posey was unable or unwilling to produce adequate records of his expenditures and requested the French Broad Baptist Association appoint a committee to “visit the place and report the true state of the case.” The two committee members who conducted the visit reported the school was “in a very flourishing condition, fully up to their highest expectations....notwithstanding large sums of money had been expended for the establishment, yet not unnecessarily...they, therefore, heartily recommend its promotion.” Posey’s biographer, Robert Fleming, invoked scripture in posthumously defending Posey against these charges. “‘Blessed are ye,’ says Christ, ‘when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake.’”¹⁰⁴ Posey was “cleared of any malfeasance,” but seems to have immediately focused his considerable energies elsewhere, out from under the hand of northern boards and federal mandates.¹⁰⁵

Posey continued to “spread the Gospel” among the burgeoning frontier settlements. Posey also continued to enjoy the friendship of the Moravians as they shared

¹⁰⁴ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 93-95; On September, 29, 1813, the Moravians used the same scripture to defend themselves against the slander of Nancy Vann.

¹⁰⁵ *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention*, (1823), 432; Campbell, “Humphrey Posey 1780-1846,” Office of the Librarian of Congress; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 44; Lucius Bolles to Jesse Mercer, American Baptist Mission Union Papers, Mar 16, 1827. At the Baptist Board meeting of 1824, the Board’s general manager Luther Rice was censured for the genuine misappropriation of \$1300 from mission funds.

plans to thwart Methodist dominance in north Georgia.¹⁰⁶ By February of 1822, Posey was back at Springplace where he preached a sermon “from John 4:25” to a congregation including some Moravian Cherokees. Posey emphasized the immanent coming of Christ, as missionary successes throughout Cherokee country reinforced his views that they were living in the “latter days.” Posey’s sermon focused on “true worship,” implying the sins of un-Christian ways of thinking.

But the hour cometh, and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.¹⁰⁷

Posey continued to travel and preach further southwest into Cherokee country, promising to start a school for a large group of Cherokees living along the Coosa river. In May, Posey visited Brainerd, referred to in the *Brainerd Journal* as “Br. Posey from the Valley Towns.” The evening of his arrival, the new corresponding secretary of the ABCFM, Jeremiah Evarts and American Board missionary Moody Hall arrived from Pennsylvania. Posey preached the following afternoon to “a number of Cherokees,” his sermon translated by “br. Reece.”¹⁰⁸ By June, Evarts had convinced Posey that any new schools should be under the auspices of the ABCFM. Posey’s popularity among northern missionary organizations had waned, while his popularity among Georgia congregations with Cherokee and “Negro” members had grown immensely.

In October of 1822, Moody Hall wrote in his journal, “Mr. Posey is to preach a funeral Sermon to-morrow at Mr. Harnage’s (Longswamp 14 miles hence).” Hall, Daniel

¹⁰⁶ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 64, 66-67; Royce, “Map of the Former Territorial Limits of the Cherokee Nation of Indians,” 1977.

¹⁰⁷ John 4:25.

¹⁰⁸ *BJ*, 265-266.

Butrick and some others went to the funeral. Afterwards Posey returned with Hall and Butrick and “preached at [their] house” at Brainerd. Posey commented on the changes at Brainerd, “truly astonished” at the expansion of the mission station. More fields had been cleared and more houses for more converts had been constructed, with slave labor, and some buildings for “the Negroes.” Posey walked the mission grounds, talking with “hopeful converts.” Hall wrote, “Br. Posey is free from those little contracted sentiments, which fetter the souls of many. Tho. A Baptist, he appears happy in the company of Christians of other denominations, and avoids saying anything in preaching or conversation that would appear exceptionable to those of different views.”¹⁰⁹ Posey was diligently doing his part to subdue the dark wilderness and bring the light of civilization to the “poor benighted Cherokees” through a largely polarizing and dichotomous set of categorizations.

As for the Valley Towns Mission, after Posey’s departure, the leadership of Evan Jones proved to be an even greater success for the Cherokee. Jones views on the education and salvation of Cherokee children, quite the opposite of Posey, hinged on Jones’ willingness to understand Cherokee categorizations of the world. He encouraged students to speak in their native tongue, and worked diligently to learn from their language in the process. Jones and Jesse Bushyhead became confidants of chief John Ross and were instrumental in organizing resistance to removal in the 1830’s. Some of the first words that Evan Jones and his son John B. Jones ever translated into written Cherokee were the very same hymns Posey had first taught at the mission. The Cherokee

¹⁰⁹ Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 98; Ard Hoyt to Jeremiah Evarts, July 1, 1822, ABC, reel 738, frame 232; Moody Hall, Journal, October 29, 1822, ABC, reel 738, frame 639 in Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists*, 97-99.

hymn-book and the New Testament remain the most important Cherokee language documents today. Jones and Bushyhead, and James Wofford, the student of Posey's, led groups of 926 and 1269, respectively, to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears. Jones and Bushyhead founded a Baptist mission in Indian Territory and developed the Kituwah Society, which became the major force for reasserting traditional Cherokee values in tribal government.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 96-97, 113-117; John Ross to Winfield Scott, November 7, 1838, in *The Papers of Chief John Ross (PCJR)*, 1: 688-689.

EVAN JONES AND JESSE BUSHYHEAD: A CHEROKEE CHRISTIAN
LANDSCAPE

The Cherokee Category of “Politics.”

By the spring of 1823, just as most missions were beginning to enjoy real successes in Christianization and civilization, anti-mission sentiments among the Cherokee began to spread, especially in the section of the Nation claimed by Georgia. The majority of Cherokees had supported the establishment of schools that could educate their children, but mission schools were teaching a new religion that promoted new ways of thinking. Many Cherokees had begun to associate the mission schools with federal attempts to acquire Cherokee land. Christian teachings were generating changes in the younger generation’s worldview and limiting young Cherokees’ motivations for traditional knowledge acquisition. At the same time, missionaries of every denomination had observed that once a Cherokee student left the Christian environment of the mission grounds, “their native habits of indolence and listlessness [resumed] their full force,” and even the most promising students returned to heathen ways. In attempts to achieve the parallel goals of civilization and Christian conversion, missionaries began to try and wipe Cherokee sensibilities and behaviors based in landscape relationships from students’ minds. Cherokees and missionaries were fighting over the categorizations of the world applied by the younger generation.¹

After a few years of frustrating experiences, most missionaries took a hard stance on Cherokee students’ behavior. Missionaries began to emphasize Christian

¹ “Present Encouraging Aspect of the Unevangelized Parts of the World,” *The Latter Day Luminary (LDL)*, May 1, 1820, 76; William G. McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees: Evan and John B. Jones*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 34.

categorizations of the world more directly, a goal that was antithetical to the educational needs professed by Cherokee headmen. But Evan Jones, who took over leadership of the Valley Town mission in 1824, began to develop syncretic methods of teaching and evangelizing that utilized Cherokee modes of learning and understanding the world. Jones' presence in Cherokee country became a powerful force that mediated transition from Cherokee systems of knowledge embedded in traditional landscape relationships to ways of thinking and knowing that utilized writing and Christianized ideas. As a result of missionary efforts at Valley Towns under Jones' leadership, mountain Cherokees were better empowered to develop their own understandings of Christian ideas and sustain aspects of older Cherokee categorizations of the world. Jones encouraged several Cherokee converts to get involved in missionary work, including Jesse Bushyhead and James Wafford, men who later became important and influential members of Cherokee society in the Western Nation.²

One of the most important elements of Jones' educational developments during the mid-1820's was the use of the Cherokee language in teaching biblical scriptures and Christian hymns. Prior to Jones, many missionaries declared that Cherokee was an inferior language, incapable of transmitting Christian truths. Most missionaries insisted students speak and read English as soon as possible. Jones learned to speak Cherokee and translated Christian ideas into Cherokee during the late 1820's. Jones allowed a level of syncretic adaptation among his congregation that made other missionaries, and most frontier whites, uncomfortable and wary of his methods. However, the Cherokee appreciated Jones' efforts because the Welsh Baptist minister worked to understand

² McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 16-17; "Present Engouraging Aspect of the Unevangelized Parts of the World," *LDL*, May 1, 1820, 76.

Cherokee ways of thinking and learning, enabling the persistence of Cherokee landscape relationships. Jones talked openly and often with Cherokee conjurers, medicine men, headmen, and chiefs, and strongly influenced an effective group of early Cherokee Baptist preachers.³

In 1823 Jones began to take on more responsibilities at the mission school. Superintendent Thomas Roberts and Humphrey Posey were called before the 1823 Baptist General Convention in Philadelphia to explain unapproved and unaccounted for expenditures of Baptist Foreign Mission Board (BFMB) and Civilization Act funds. The BFMB requested that Thomas Roberts leave the mission on a regular basis to speak and raise funds to offset “large expenditures” the mission had accrued. After returning from humiliating accusations of financial mismanagement, Posey stepped back from missionary work among the Cherokees and began to more ardently itinerate among white communities along the borders of Cherokee country in North Carolina, and north Georgia. Posey’s activities at this time suggest that he supported immigration of the

³ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 88-89, 90-91, 36; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, ;Anderson et. al., *The Payne-Butrick Papers (PBP)*, 1: 11-12; *The Papers of Chief John Ross (PCJR)*, 2: 728, 738; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 106-108; Rowena McClinton, *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees (MSMC)*, 2: 439-440; McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries*, 287; Schwarze, *History of the Moravian Missions Among Southern Indian Tribes of the United States*, 156, 196, 210; *LDL*, May 1, 1821, 311. Jones and Thomas Roberts worked with ABCFM missionaries Daniel Butrick and later Samuel Worcester. Just after Butrick’s third visit to Valley Towns in 1822 Roberts wrote to ABCFM Secretary William Staughton, “We have, in conjunction with the Rev. Butrick of Brainerd, selected from the Roman characters an alphabet which comprehends all the sounds in the language which I think is simple and natural.” McLoughlin writes of these missionaries efforts “using this [roman character] system, they began their first translation in August 1822. They were also assisted by a bilingual Cherokee named James Wafford. Wafford had a white father and a Cherokee mother; he had lived for a time in a white settlement in Georgia before moving to the Valley Towns area. At the age of twenty he was attending the Baptist mission school to improve his English. Some Cherokees who heard these early translations read by Wafford said they could understand what he read.”

Indians to the West and did not personally acknowledge the validity of Cherokee landscape relationships or Jones' teaching methods.⁴

European Economics on a Cherokee Landscape

Evan Jones leadership of the Valley Town mission resulted from a series of issues that troubled the BFMB and the federal government. The imposition of Euro-American conceptions of "economic efficiency" on a Cherokee landscape was at the heart of the problems. After the 1823 BFMB meeting in Philadelphia, the prospects of the Valley Towns mission began to falter. Upon returning from the disheartening accusations of personal and financial breaches of faith, Thomas Roberts limited the number of Cherokee students to a total of fifty for the following year as one means of saving money.⁵

Roberts hoped for an even split of boys and girls, but in keeping with Cherokee matrilineal traditions, most Cherokee girls stayed on the land of their mothers,

⁴ *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention*, 1823, 432; Thomas Roberts, "Cherokee Mission," *LDL*, June 1, 1823, 332; Lucius Bolles to Jesse Mercer, March 16, 1827, American Baptist Mission Union, in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 44, 47-49, 51; John Ross to Jeremiah Evarts, February 12, 1824, in *PCJR*, 1: 67; Jeremiah Evarts, *Report to the Prudential Committee, April 1824*, notes 42, 43; *BJ*, 395-396. Posey's friend, and General Manager of the Board, Luther Rice was also called before the same Baptist Convention meeting to explain where and why thousands of dollars raised for mission work had been spent. McLoughlin states that Rice "was suspected of having misappropriated some of it to pay for the publication of the *Latter Day Luminary* and to found Columbian College, a Baptist institution, in Washington, D.C." Rice had used \$1,300 of Civilization Act Funds to pay off private debts. Rice was censured in 1826, the Board's ties to Columbian College were dissolved, mission financing and activities were restructured by all denominations, and a Baptist Board "Committee of Outfit" was established to direct all missionary funds. In December of 1823, ABCFM missionary Jeremiah Evarts traveled through the Cherokee and Choctaw missions to assess the operations and speak with students and missionaries. On his return to Philadelphia in May of 1824, Evarts provided the ABCFM with an extensive report of recommendations for restructuring the entire mission program. See Jeremiah Evarts, *Essays on the Present Crisis in the Condition of the American Indians*, (Philadelphia: Thomas Kite, 1830).

⁵ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 41, 44, 60; Thomas Dawson, "Valley Towns Station," *LDL*, Sept. 1, 1824, 112-113.

maintaining cabin homes and farming family gardens. Cherokee families were more willing to send boys to boarding schools and missionaries felt Cherokee girls were “less acculturated.” One of the methods missionaries hoped would instill Euro-American gender roles and divisions of labor at the boarding school was to have the boys help with “men’s work,” and the girls help with “women’s work.” The boys worked in the fields and at the mills, and the girls did the cooking and cleaning. But Cherokee women and daughters resisted Euro-American categorizations. The persistence of Cherokee gender traditions meant that the missionary wives were disproportionately burdened with the cooking, cleaning, and hosting responsibilities attending to male students, teachers, hired workers, and the steady stream of Cherokee and white visitors. Thomas Roberts hired a part-time kitchen helper, Pauline Cunningham, from Tennessee in 1822 out of necessity, but without the BFMB’s approval. Because there were too few women workers to mend and sew clothes and blankets for the students, clothes were purchased from Knoxville or Augusta, another regular and unapproved expense. Combined with the lack of Cherokee converts, the disproportionate number of male students and the steady accumulation of unapproved bills continually disappointed and annoyed the Baptist Board.⁶

But the majority of the unapproved mission expenses arose in the yearly repair or reconstruction of the gristmill and sawmill due to annual Peachtree Valley floods. Cherokees had always balanced their lives with the flooding, allowing rich river silt to replenish cultivated soils and anticipating the seasonal floods. But Euro-American

⁶ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 41, 44, 60; Thomas Dawson, “Valley Towns Station,” *LDL*, Sept. 1, 1824, 112-113; Thomas Roberts, “Cherokee Mission,” Nov. 1, 1823, 167-168; Thomas Roberts, “Cherokee Mission,” October 1, 1823, 333. Pauline Cunningham later became Pauline Jones, Evan Jones’ second wife. The “Negro woman” hired by Posey probably only worked for the year 1821.

conceptions of civilized living required mills that utilized waterpower and the mission plan also located buildings very close to the riverbanks. Jones eventually hired workers to construct a dam to control flooding and regulate the supply for waterwheel power in 1825, but this solution was expensive as well.⁷

During the early years of the mission, Humphrey Posey, Thomas Roberts, and Evan Jones had all expected Indian Civilization Act funds to pay for the construction and maintenance of mission buildings. However, the annual sum of \$10,000 appropriated for the Civilization Act was divided among *all* Indian missions and only applied to two-thirds of the total expenses accrued during initial construction of school buildings and the institution of the “means of instruction...introduced with [the Indians’] own consent.” The Cherokee had never explicitly consented to the construction of anything other than a single school building. Mills were never considered “school buildings,” and were therefore not covered by Civilization Act funds. In 1824, 1825, and 1826 Evan Jones sent a bill for repair of the mills to the War Department and was finally “informed that the government would not pay for the repair of mills or other non-school buildings.”⁸ Furthermore, the missionaries’ methods of evangelism and Christianization often fell

⁷ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 40-45, 60-61; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 104-105. The hired workers themselves, led by worker David English, later made serious problems for Evan Jones as they concocted a scheme to profit from the sale of the improvements they had made.

⁸ Thomas L. McKenney to Joseph McMinn, August 26, 1824, M-21; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 47-49. See also Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *Salvation and the Savage* (New York: Atheneum, 1976). Funds from the “sale of Cherokee lands” were also supposed to be applied toward the initial construction of the mission but it is unclear whether those funds were allocated to the civilization Fund or elsewhere.

outside approved Lancastrian teaching methods, bringing almost the entire endeavor under questionable funding.⁹

Yet another factor in the expense of maintaining the Valley Town mission on the mountain landscape was the management of the farm. In 1823, as another hopeful expense-saving measure, Roberts rented out most of the cleared mission acreage to a farmer from Tennessee. The rental agreement stipulated that twenty percent of the annual crop would be given to the mission, while the farm family kept the rest of the crop and assumed all farm expenses. In 1824 the Tennessee farmer “immediately cut back” the amount of cultivated land, leaving the mission’s twenty percent insufficient for feeding the students. The missionaries were forced to buy corn, beans, wheat, pork, and beef and have the supplies transported in, usually over 90 miles from Knoxville or Augusta. Adding to the farm expense was the fact that after 1824 much of the cleared land became overgrown and in need of laborious attention before a crop sizable enough to sustain the mission could be planted. In the end, renting out the farmland proved to be much more expensive than maintaining it would have been.¹⁰

⁹ Thomas L. McKenney to Joseph McMinn, August 26, 1824, M-21; Thomas Dawson, “Valley Towns Station,” *LDL*, September 1, 1824, 112; “Indian Civilization Fund Act,” (March 3, 1819), in *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, ed. Francis Paul Prucha, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 33; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 47-49, 21-22, 44-45. Roberts had rented the mills to a miller for five years beginning in 1822 under an arrangement in which, the “miller was to pay one hundred dollars a year to the mission in the form of cutting planks and grinding corn up to that amount. The miller was given ten acres of land for a farm for his family and allowed to keep any money he made from the mills.” But the expensive maintenance of the mills remained the mission’s responsibility.

¹⁰ Thomas Dawson, “Valley Towns Station,” *LDL*, September 1, 1824, 112-113; Thomas Roberts, “Cherokee Mission,” *LDL*, October 1, 1823, 333; Evan Jones to Baptist Foreign Mission Board, July 5, 1826; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 44, 52. In 1826 Jones took the farmland back under the charge of the mission school.

In sharp contrast to Cherokee relationships with the landscape, missionaries' plans for land use and subsistence continued to flounder and fail. By the 1820s, the Cherokees of the Valley Towns did not need to be taught agricultural techniques, they had adapted white farming implements to established Cherokee practices with immense success. Jones wrote the BFMB in 1826, stating, "The situation in this Nation at present is such as not to require missionaries to instruct them [Cherokees] in farming; some of them being better farmers than the missionaries themselves."¹¹ Between 1823 and 1826, Valley Town missionaries realized that a boarding school and mission farm, as conceived in their plans, were ineffective and too expensive to be sustained in the Cherokee "wilderness." The Valley Town missionaries and BFMB members in Philadelphia and Washington City were attempting to apply static understandings of "bottom line" economics to an often unpredictable landscape, the needs and motivations of mountain pioneer life, and interactions with Cherokee cultural practices. The discomfort, discontent, and expense of the school, farm, and mill staff contributed to the departure of almost all the white residents, missionaries, and workers by the spring of 1824. The white mill workers and the blacksmith left during the fall and winter of 1823. Thomas Roberts, following the Baptist Board's request, set out in early 1824 to speak and preach in regional Baptist churches to raise funds for the Valley Towns mission. Roberts never returned to live at the mission and rarely visited after 1824.¹²

¹¹ Evan Jones to Baptist Foreign Mission Board, December 22, 1826, American Baptist Mission Union collection at the American Baptist Historical Society, Rochester, NY, in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 56.

¹² *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention*, 1823, 432; Thomas Roberts, "Cherokee Mission," October 1, 1823, 332-333; Thomas Dawson, "Valley Towns Station," *LDL*, June 1, 1823, 281; Thomas Roberts, "Cherokee Mission," *LDL*, April 1, 1824, 112, 341; Duncan O'Bryant, "Tinsawatee School," *LDL*, May 1, 1825, 147-149;

The mission situation prompted Jones to ask Thomas Dawson, one of the original teachers under Posey, to return to Valley Towns and leave the day school recently established at “Coosawaytee.” Jones wrote Dawson in an August 1823 letter that he and his wife Eliza would be the “only persons left to carry on the whole concern” by the coming spring. Dawson arrived at the mission in December of 1823, and took over the superintendent position from Roberts. Jones was able to commit most of his time to evangelizing in the surrounding Cherokee towns, with bilingual Cherokee John Timson translating. Jones declared his “calling” to preach soon after Dawson’s arrival, and set about attaining the blessing of the Hiwassee Baptist Association in Tennessee in order to join the “priesthood of the believer.” Jones spent much of the summer of 1824 preaching in white and Cherokee communities on the Tennessee side of the mountains to demonstrate his worth as a Baptist preacher. During that spring and summer Jones became familiar with settlements in the western mountains, learning the plants, animals, and “lay of the land,” while obtaining a better understanding of Cherokee thinking. It was probably during this time that Jones began to comprehend the landscape-based systems of knowledge and categorizations that defined Cherokee society.¹³

Fleming, *The Life of Elder Humphrey Posey*, 70; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 44-45. Humphrey Posey also sent some funds, as he had been doing since 1819, but after most missionaries left in 1824 Posey seems to have discontinued sending any significant amounts of money to the Valley Town mission. Evan Jones eldest daughter left with the blacksmith to return to Philadelphia.

¹³ *Proceedings of the Baptist General Convention*, 1823, 432; Thomas Roberts, “Cherokee Mission,” *LDL*, October 1, 1823, 332-333; Thomas Roberts, “Cherokee Mission,” *LDL*, April, 1, 1824, 112-113; Thomas Dawson, “Valley Towns Station,” *LDL*, September 1, 1824, 281; Evan Jones and Thomas Dawson, “Valley Towns Station,” *LDL*, May 1, 1825, 147-148; Evan Jones to Thomas Dawson, August 20, 1823; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists*, 105-109; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 44-46. Jones was ordained at the Valley Town mission in August 1824 by preachers from the

Evan Jones' Successful Mission

After the spring of 1824, the situation at Valley Town mission looked very different than the first five years. Humphrey Posey and Charles Hicks were both drawn into work that prevented them from associating very often, if at all. Beginning in 1824, Posey “resided temporarily in some one of the old counties in upper Georgia...[in] the Cherokee region of the state.” He accepted “an agency for Hearn school, an important institution,” in Cave Spring, Georgia, a white settlement in what would become Floyd County. Hearn school was deeply in debt at the time, but Posey “relieved the institution of its embarrassments,” after which time the school flourished and was later described as “an academy of high grade...[that] afford[ed] a liberal salary to a thorough teacher and assistants.” In spite of northern missionaries’ doubts, Posey proved himself more than capable of managing school finances.¹⁴

As Jones began to better understand Cherokee relationships to the landscape, he embarked on a pattern of successes in Christianization and “civilization” that offset shortcomings in the financial organization of the mission. In 1823, mixed blood John Timson had begun “asking more earnest questions about the meaning of sin, the possibilities of forgiveness, and the nature of conversion and eternal life.”¹⁵ Timson became the first Cherokee to be baptized at the Valley Town mission. He assisted in

Hiwassee Baptist Association in McMinn county Tennessee. Jones’ itinerating in Cherokee towns with Timson as interpreter “annoyed some of the Cherokee.”

¹⁴ Campbell, “Humphrey Posey 1780-1846,” Office of the Librarian of Congress; Adiel Sherwood, *A Gazetteer of Georgia: Containing a Particular Description of the State; it’s Resources, Counties, Towns, Villages, and Whatever is Usual in Statistical Works*, (Atlanta: Brawner & Putnam, 1860), 66; Porter E. Sargent, *A Handbook of American Private Schools, Volume 2*, “Chronological List of Historic Schools,” (Boston: Porter E. Sargent, 1916), 41.

¹⁵ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 41.

teaching and helping Jones and Roberts learn Cherokee. He was also the first to “exhort” to his fellow Cherokees on his redemption experience. Soon after, Timson’s wife became the second Cherokee baptized at the mission and Jones immediately noted the power Timson exhibited through conveying Christian ideas to his fellow Cherokees in their own language. Timson most likely connected ancient “going to water” rituals with his baptism as a simple function of translating ideas, but deeper cultural associations were probably understood as well, infusing Christian ideas with Cherokee-ness.¹⁶

By the spring of 1822 Jones, working with Roberts, and Brainerd missionary Daniel Butrick, had already determined to develop a system of Roman letters to write translations of hymns and scriptures in Cherokee. Butrick traveled to the Valley Town mission a number of times in 1822 and 1823 to discuss ongoing research. The group developed a roman “alphabet which comprehends all the sounds in the language which...is simple and natural.”¹⁷ The group began their first translations in 1822, with the assistance of James Wafford, a twenty-year-old student at the mission school who hoped to improve his English. The four men hoped at some point in the future to procure a printing press for the purpose of distributing hymnbooks and scripture among non-English speaking Cherokees. Roberts reported to the BFMB that, “the Indians are glad to find that some attempt is made toward imparting them knowledge in their own

¹⁶ Thomas Roberts, “Cherokee Mission,” *LDL*, October 1, 1823, 332-333; Jones’s letters, ABMU, February 1, 1828, in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 42-43.

¹⁷ Thomas Roberts, “Letter from the Rev. Thomas Roberts to the Rev. O.B. Brown, dated Jan. 22, 1822,” *LDL*, Mar. 1, 1822, 91, 93; “Cherokee and Choctaw Indians,” *LDL*, September 1, 1822, 283; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 36, 39. Butrick was corresponding with Harvard linguistics expert John Pickering to develop a roman alphabet system for writing in Cherokee.

language.”¹⁸ Although Sequoyah had already invented the syllabary and some Cherokees were beginning to spread its use, the missionaries did not learn of it until 1825 when “knowledge of Sequoyah’s syllabary swept through the Nation and Cherokees were teaching themselves to read and write in their own language.”¹⁹

The beginning of 1824 was a tumultuous time in Cherokee country. The Brainerd and Valley Town missions were reorganizing their goals and methods to focus on Christianization, while the Moravians at Springplace were adamantly adhering to teaching in English and accepting converts according to the Lot.²⁰ The Cherokee council was busy addressing unfulfilled Treaty stipulations, white intrusions on Cherokee land, and increasing demands for further land cessions. James Wafford participated in taking a census of Cherokee towns in *Aquohee* district, probably during spring as part of settling

¹⁸ Thomas Roberts, untitled letter to the Baptist Board, *LDL*, June 1, 1822, 184; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 36-37.

¹⁹ Thomas Roberts, untitled letter to the Baptist Board, *LDL*, June 1, 1822, 184; Thomas Roberts, “Letter from the Rev. Thomas Roberts to the Rev. O.B. Brown, dated Jan. 22, 1822,” *LDL*, Mar. 1, 1822, 91, 93; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 36, 39. Wafford’s father was white and his mother part Natchez and part Cherokee. At one point in his youth Wafford had lived in a white settlement in Georgia, on the Wafford Tract, which was ceded by the Cherokee before 1817, around when Wafford moved to the Valley Towns area. Some Cherokees who heard the early translations read by Wafford said they understood the Christian ideas for the first time. McLoughlin states that Jones did not learn of the syllabary until 1826 but Charles Hicks’ letter to Thomas L. McKenney that included a handwritten syllabary copy made the potential of writing Cherokee well known among whites within a few months in 1825 and it is unlikely that Jones, Butrick, and Pickering were not aware of the syllabary soon after.

²⁰ *MSMC*, 2: 439-441; *BJ*, 395-397, 399-400, 440-441. McClinton’s work is taken from the diaries of Moravian missionary Anna Rosina Gambold, who died in 1821, leaving the remaining history of Springplace recorded only in official mission records and correspondence. The last Moravian missionaries were forced from Springplace at bayonet point by Georgia citizens in early 1833. See Crews and Starbuck, *Records of the Moravians Among the Cherokees*. The last entry in *The Brainerd Journal* was made in December 1823 but the mission “remained a center for Christianizing and “civilizing” the Cherokees” until August 1838.

a boundary dispute between the Cherokees and the federal government.²¹ Wafford reported that the Natchez from “Notchee Town” had moved when the Baptist mission was built there. Wafford also noted that, “As most of the Indians had come under Christian influences so far as to have quit dancing, there was no townhouse” at the new settlement.²²

In February of 1824 another bilingual Cherokee, *Atsi* or *Arch Skit*, became the third Valley Town convert and was given the Christian name John Arch. *Atsi* was a student at the Valley Town school when he became very ill in 1823. Roberts wrote to the BFMB on February 4, 1824 that,

a few months ago [*Arch Skit*] knew nothing of Jesus Christ and his salvation. To gratify his desire for acquiring human knowledge, he left his friends, and came the distance of 50 miles to school. At first he seemed rather more careless than

²¹ *HMSFC*, 387; Thomas Roberts, “Cherokee Mission,” October 1, 1823, 332-333; Evan Jones, “Extracts of a Letter from Mr. Jones to a Friend in this City,” *LDL*, Oct, 1, 1822, 310; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 34-35. Although there are no official Cherokee census records for 1824, Wafford may very well have assisted in taking an unofficial census of Cherokee towns in early 1824 as part of a land cession boundary dispute along the Unicoi Turnpike and negotiations about 1804 Treaty stipulations that the federal government had not yet fulfilled. These issues are discussed at length in letters between Thomas McKenney and the 1824 Cherokee delegation that was in Washington during the winter and early spring. Thomas Roberts wrote the BFMB that James Wafford reported there were 6,000 Cherokees in the Valley Town settlements, and only 5 or 6 capable interpreters. See John Ross, George Lowrey, Major Ridge, and Elijah Hicks to Thomas L. McKenney, Washington City Tennison’s Hotel, April 29, 1824, (Two letters), May 3, 1824, May 7, 1824, May 17, 1824, May 22, 1824, May 24, 1824 (Three letters), May 28, 1824, (Two letters), and June 1, 1824, in *PCJR*, 1: 80-95.

²² *HMSFC*, 387. Mooney was informed by Wafford in the 1890’s that the Natchez “were living jointly with the Cherokee in a town called *Gulani’yi* at the junction of Brasstown and Gumlog creeks, tributary to Hiwassee, some 6 miles southeast of their former location and close to the Georgia line. The removal may have been due to the recent establishment of the mission at the old place. It was a large settlement, made up about equally from the two tribes, but by this time the Natchez were not distinguishable in dress or general appearance from the others, and nearly all spoke broken Cherokee, while still retaining their own language.”

common to any religious instruction, as if that were a subject belonging to white people.²³

Roberts stated that just as *Arch Skit* had begun to show some interest in “Jesus Christ, death, and eternity...the Lord visited him with a sore affliction, which brought him near the gates of death.” *Arch Skit’s* mother came and took him home to *Skina* for several weeks. When the boy finally returned to the Valley Town mission, Jones was,

happy to find that his serious impressions, instead of wearing away...were deepened in his heart... those extracts translated into Cherokee are of great service to him, as well as to some others. Last Saturday evening, he gave before the brethren, and the most serious part of the school, a very pleasing and satisfactory relation of the work of grace on his soul. He said, among many other things, that what grieved him most was, that he had been so bad. That now Jesus Christ is his only refuge; and that he could find no comfort to his soul, until he gave up himself to God. ...At the close of the meeting, being asked to pray, he instantly fell on his knees, and with uncommon solemnity and fervor prayed for more grace...for all the family, for the children at the school, and for his own relations, that God would show them his salvation. All this was in his own language. On Lord’s-day he was baptized in the river Hywassee.²⁴

Jones and Roberts were clearly pleased, if not overjoyed, and saw once again how powerful Christian ideas became for Cherokees when expressed in their own language. Jones had visited the town of *Skina* in January of 1824 and reported “considerable attention among the people, excited by what Arch had been telling them concerning the Savior.” Christian ideas were too far removed from the Cherokee landscape when presented in English, but when native speakers translated their own

²³ Thomas Roberts, “Cherokee Mission,” *LDL*, Apr. 1, 1824 112.

²⁴ Thomas Roberts, “Cherokee Mission,” *LDL*, Apr. 1, 1824 112-113.

heartfelt ideas about Christianity in Cherokee a relationship to the landscape-based worldview was made real.²⁵

Another important Cherokee convert and exhorter was *Wasadi*, a full-blood chief who attended the school even though he was thirty years old. *Wasadi* spoke no English, having fully attained Christian ideas through spoken Cherokee translations. Roberts wrote the BFMB in September 1823, that *Wasadi* “feels great concern for his people, and thinks if they only knew of the Savior, all would believe. He asked whether the ungodly white people ever heard the gospel. When answered that they did, he was astonished that they continued in sin and unbelief.”²⁶ *Wasadi* was not baptized until 1825 but was a powerful exhorter among his family and nearby towns from the fall of 1823. Roberts closed his letter with the hope that God might make *Wasadi* “a shining light in this benighted land,” a statement that would have never been applied to a non-English speaking “heathen” just a few years earlier. Because *Wasadi* only spoke Cherokee, his interpretations of Christian worldviews were probably expressed through thoroughly Cherokee classifications of the world.²⁷

²⁵ Thomas Roberts, “Cherokee Mission,” *LDL*, Apr. 1, 1824, 112-113; *Baptist Missionary Magazine* 16, Jan., 1836, 23-24; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists*, 108-110; Walker, *Cherokee Footprints... Volume II: Hearth and Home*, 100. Roberts wrote to the board that the name *Skina*, “being interpreted, signifies the Devil’s town, perhaps so called as being the supposed haunt of that malignant spirit, or for the wickedness of those who dwelt there.” Gardner’s footnote 19, on page 110 states, “Skina/Skena/Skeinah/Skeenah (a contraction of *Uskiniyu*) was a settlement shown on Jones’s 1837 map...Hodge explained the derivation of the name in this fashion: ‘From a confusion of the name of the Cherokee *askina*, an evil spirit or malevolent ghost, it has sometimes been rendered ‘Devil Town.’”

²⁶ Thomas Roberts, “Cherokee Mission,” *LDL*, October 1, 1823, 332-333.

²⁷ *Baptist Missionary Magazine (BMM)* 4, 264, in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 43-44; Thomas Roberts, “Cherokee Mission,” October 1, 1823, 332-333; Evan Jones and Thomas Dawson, “Valley Towns Station,” *LDL*, May 1, 1825, 147-148.

After the gradual departure of most of the mission staff in 1824, Jones seized on the idea of using Cherokee “exhorters” to encourage conversion. In Sabbath day meetings at Valley Town, Jones began to emphasize the importance of each Cherokee member “exhorting” to their families and towns whenever possible. In an 1824 letter to the BFMB Corresponding Secretary, John Timson wrote, “Arch Skit...has gone to tell his people how kind the Savior is. Mr. Jones has undertaken to go all about to preach to the people” through interpreters.²⁸ Through the efforts of Jones and his Cherokee “exhorters,” towns in the *Aquohee* and *Taquohee* districts in North Carolina and north Georgia, an area centered around *Skina* fifteen to fifty miles south and southeast of the mission was “introduced to preaching by native and white persons early in 1824.”²⁹

During this period, Jones experienced the opposition of Cherokee priests and *adonisgi*. Over the next several years, Jones spoke out against the *adonisgi*, denouncing the “idolatry” and “imaginary beings” of the Cherokee medical and religious system. In the spring of 1830, Jones wrote, “some of the sons of Belial threatened to throw me in the river.” Jones initially categorized Cherokee beliefs and practices according to his Christian worldview, without attempting to understand the complex system of ritual, ceremony, community gathering and ways of thinking that defined Cherokee categorizations of the world. As time went on and Jones interacted with more *adonisgi*,

²⁸ John Timson, “John Timson to William Staughton, February 13, 1824,” *LDL*, May 1, 1825, 145; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists*, 109. John Arch, John Timson, and James Wafford all interpreted for Jones.

²⁹ Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 110; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, Table 6.1, 146, and Table 6.3, 152, map, 151; *BJ*, map, n. p., adapted from Henry Thompson Malone, *Cherokees of the Old South*.

medical practitioners, and traditional headmen, he began to understand how to best promote the spread of the Gospel without directly denouncing Cherokee systems.³⁰

Cherokee *adonisgi*, conjurers, and priests, in accordance with Cherokee categorizations, assumed that Jones and other missionaries were also healers and often refused to treat Cherokee Christians. Cherokees did not distinguish medicine and religion any more than they drew hard lines between religion and politics. One important aspect of Jones growing understanding of Cherokee knowledge systems was his interest and willingness to learn the Cherokee language, which gave him insight into Cherokee thinking.³¹

In 1826 the focus of missionary activities in every denomination switched from an official policy of “civilization” to one of “Christianization,” emphasizing reported numbers of Cherokee converts. The expense of boarding schools, mission farms, sawmills and gristmills had shown “only the most meager returns for Christianization.” Itinerant preachers and native convert preachers had more quantifiable and less expensive results. The shift in missionary board policies made it possible for Jones to expand his study and use of the Cherokee language in the mission school, allowing Cherokee landscape relationships to interact with Christian ideas.³²

³⁰ Evan Jones journal, January 26, 1830, June 28, 1830, and August 11, 1829, American Baptist Mission Union collection, in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 70-75; McLoughlin cites *LDL* 5, no. 4, March, 1824, 145, which could not be found.

³¹ Evan Jones journal, January 26, 1830, June 28, 1830, and August 11, 1829, American Baptist Mission Union collection, in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 70-75; McLoughlin cites *LDL* 5, no. 4, March, 1824, 145.

³² Thomas L. McKenney to Joseph McMinn, August 26, 1824, “Letters received by Office of Indians Affairs, 1824-1821, Bureau of Indian Affairs,” RG 75, M-234, roll 71, frames 550-551, National Archives, Washington, DC; McLoughlin, *Champions of the*

Changing Land, Changing Language, and Cherokee “Politics.”

As anti-mission sentiments were spreading among the Cherokee populace, Charles Hicks and some members of his family drew closer to the missionaries at Brainerd and Springplace. On April 1, 1823, Hicks’ daughter Sarah was married at Brainerd. In May, hoping to expand missionary acceptance in the Tennessee mountains, Hicks promised Turnipmine town that Brainerd missionaries would assist in setting up a school with blacksmith apprenticeships for several Cherokee boys. The Cherokee population understood that having trained and equipped blacksmiths would increase their “civilization” and make them less reliant on whites at the same time. The demand for technical education and training clearly demonstrates that Cherokee leaders in the mountains wanted practical skills and knowledge that did not disrupt landscape-based categorizations of the world, not religious teachings and ways of thinking that denied Cherokee traditions. Hicks seemed to feel that Christian thinking and Euro-American skills went hand-in-hand, and he occasionally took some of the most successful students from Brainerd and Springplace under the care of his family, placing educated Cherokees in a Christian Cherokee environment rather than the more traditional communities.³³

Simultaneous troubles in Cherokee government drew Cherokee leaders’ attention away from events at the missions. Pressures from surrounding tribes to accept immigration to the West began to rise in 1823 as well. In October, John Ross, President of the National Committee, called a secret meeting during which he exposed a plot by

Cherokees, 47-49; See also Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *Salvation and the Savage* (New York: Atheneum, 1976).

³³ *BJ*, 347, 358, 379. On September 30, 1823, Brainerd missionaries recorded that, “John D. Paxton has finished his school education and is now in the family of Mr. Charles R. Hicks.” Hicks son Elijah, who became very active in Cherokee politics, wanted nothing to do with Christians.

several United States Commissioners and Second Creek Chief Macintosh, a friend of Pathkiller. The secret meeting was called to order in the presence of Macintosh and Pathkiller. Ross announced that the trust the Cherokee people placed in his leadership was “sacredly maintained and shall be ever preserved.” Ross then proceeded to have a letter from Macintosh read aloud and translated into Cherokee sentence by sentence, noting that, “the author...has mistaken my character and sense of honor.” Macintosh had discretely passed Ross the letter in which he proposed to pay Hicks, Ross, Major Ridge, and others thousands of dollars each to support land cessions and removal. Macintosh had \$19,000 “at his disposal” for the purpose of persuading Cherokee leaders. After a “dead silence,” Pathkiller denounced his friend Macintosh, expressing his grief “that he had been mistaken...in a devoted brother.” Pathkiller, following Cherokee traditions of group consensus, left decisive action to the General Council, “only reminding them that treachery must never be overlooked.”³⁴

By 1823 Cherokees, wealthy and poor, acculturationists and conservatives, were forced to acknowledge some distinctions between political activities and their more traditional categorizations of the world. But even in acknowledging the distinctions, persistent Cherokee categorizations linked politics, economics, religion, and education to ecological, landscape relationships. In attempts to convince the Cherokees that immigration West was in their best interest, whites and other tribal leaders among the

³⁴ Robert Thomas, “Cherokee Values and Worldview,” unpublished paper (n.d.), 4-5; *PBP*, 6: 421-423. According to Butrick, Macintosh’s letter “mentioned that twelve thousand dollars were then at the disposal of Mr. Ross, besides seven thousand which Macintosh suggested might be divided thus, three thousand to Charles Hicks, two thousand to Mr. McCoy, and two thousand to Mr. Ross, all as secret gifts.” None of the Cherokee leaders mentioned in Macintosh’s letter were inclined to accept any money and each had refused “secret gifts” in the years between 1819 and 1823.

Choctaw and Creeks began to define land in terms of ownership and property rights. Discussion of land and ownership came to be categorized as distinctly political. Cherokees did not directly adopt these categorizations, but they were forced to acknowledge the same hard categories in order to present their own arguments for maintaining a sovereign Nation in their homeland. As a result of the dialogue between Cherokee and American leaders, Cherokees began to analyze some of their own traditions and history in ways that applied white ways of thinking. Cherokee categorizations of their land and their world shifted but did not change wholesale.³⁵

Charles Hicks was continuing to struggle with his scrofula, an ever-growing Cherokee unrest concerning mission schools and land cession rumors, and the realization that the 1819 treaty had not, in fact, secured a “permanent home” for his people. Brainerd missionaries reported hearing rumors that Hicks received cash payments for each Cherokee child, and the children were never returned to their homes. In early 1824, the local chiefs in Etowah, *Enhalla*, a north Georgia Cherokee town, “advocated the recall of the American Board’s missionaries and school teachers from their town.”³⁶

In February 1824, Hicks advised a Cherokee delegation that visited Washington City in response to a recent “compact between the United States & Georgia” that resolved to purchase the Cherokee lands claimed by Georgia. The delegates included Hicks’ son Elijah, John Ross, George Lowrey, and Major Ridge. The delegation wrote to Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun that, “the Cherokees have come to a decisive and unalterable

³⁵ Thomas, “Cherokee Values and Worldview,” 19-20; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 6-8.

³⁶ William McCloughlin, “Cherokee Anti-Mission Sentiment, 1824-1828,” *Ethnohistory* 21, no. 4 (Autumn, 1974): 363; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 101-104, 122-124, note 27; *HMSFC*, 522-523.

conclusion, never to cede away any more lands.” Ross, the main author of the letter, concluded by saying,

An extent of Territory, twice as large, West of the Mississippi...or all the money, now in the coffers of your Treasury, would be no inducement for the nation to exchange or to sell their Country. It rests with the interests, the disposition and free consent of the nation to remain as a separate community or to enter into a Treaty with the United States for admission as citizens, under the form of a Territorial or State Government, and we can only say that the situation of the nation, is not sufficiently improved in the arts of civilized life, to warrant any change at present. Therefore the subject must be left for our posterity to determine for themselves, whenever the whole nation shall have been completely and fully civilized, and shall have possessed the arts and sciences.³⁷

The delegation, under the advisement of Hicks, argued that the level of “civilization” among the Cherokee population was increasing but was not yet at an acceptable level to include most Cherokees under the general rule of the United States. As part of promoting the idea of the advancing “civilization” of the Cherokee populace, the National Council was officially acknowledging points of advancement, and tacitly acknowledging “political” and “property” categorizations of the landscape. Cherokees were beginning to understand “civilization” as being exclusive of their traditional landscape relationships, just as most missionaries intended. Cherokees then shifted ideas of “civilization” toward indigenous ecological relationships through new knowledge acquisition. At the National Council meeting in *Echota* in the fall of 1824, the Council voted to award a medal of honor to Seqoyah for his invention of the syllabary. The Cherokee council was debating the fine points of “unfinished business,” concerning several Treaties and annuity payments that were being divided between Eastern and Western Cherokees. The Cherokee Council also began to discuss the work of drafting a

³⁷ John Ross et. al., to John C. Calhoun, February 11, 1824, in *PCJR*, 1: 64-66.

Cherokee constitution in earnest. Ross and the other delegates presented the Council's perspective that Cherokee civilization could only proceed under Cherokee leadership.³⁸

On January 14, 1825, Charles Hicks sent a copy of the Cherokee syllabary to the Office of Indian Affairs, still a subsidiary bureau in the War Department.³⁹ This copy of the syllabary, written out by "Captain Spirit," was the first sent in an official capacity and gained the Cherokee international acknowledgement of their increasing "civilization." In the accompanying letter Hicks wrote,

The improving state of this nation is a circumstance that has excited considerable interest by the invention of Eighty six alphabetical characters of letters by which numbers of our people writes correctly in our own language by these letters these alphabetical characters has being invented by one George Guess native Cherokee with out any education what ever and scarcely understands the English language. And by his inventions has caused considerable stimulus for learning among the young adult Cherokees. Which they can learn this sound in the course of a few days. The knowledge of which is Extending through the nation by which numbers of our [people] communicated with one another by the means of these letters I enclose you a list of these letters as a sample of the forms the alphabetical character which were made out by Captain Spirit ...And wrote his name in Cherokee by the above letters. But I am quite Ignorant to the sounds of all these letters.⁴⁰

The letter shows that Hicks was unable to read and write in Cherokee until after 1825, and may have never been truly literate in Cherokee. But significant portions of the

³⁸ *PBP*, 2: 140-143; John Ross et. al., to Thomas L. McKenney, May 28, 1824, Ross to James G. Williams, December 15, 1824, and Ross, Lowrey, and E. Hicks to John C. Calhoun, Feb. 17, 1825, in *PCJR*, 1: 91-92, 96-98; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists*, 114-115.

³⁹ Charles R. Hicks, to Thomas L. McKenney, January 14, 1825, "Letters received by Office of Indians Affairs, 1824-1821, Bureau of Indian Affairs," RG 75, M-234, roll 71, frames 553-558, National Archives, Washington, DC; McLoughlin, *Cherokee Renaissance*, 131, 131n. 14, 133, 234, 306, 339; Willard Walker and James Sarbaugh, "The Early History of the Cherokee Syllabary," *Ethnohistory* 40, no. 1, (Winter, 1993): 90, 91. Captain Spirit was given the Christian name John Huss after his conversion later in 1825.

⁴⁰ Charles R. Hicks to Thomas L. McKenney, January 14, 1825; Nettle and Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, social capital.

general Cherokee population had begun to utilize the syllabary by this time. Even some of the most conservative Cherokees became literate in their own language. By 1826, some *adonisgi* had begun to record sacred formulas and songs in hand-written syllabary, making literacy in Cherokee a tool of national resistance to acculturation and a form of social capital that instilled pride and unity among full-blood and conservative Cherokees. Jones wrote in his journal, “The syllabic writing, which has frequently been learned in a day, is exerting an influence almost miraculous, and if this instrument were wisely and vigorously directed, its effects [would]...exceed all calculation.”⁴¹

On October 15, 1825 the Cherokee National Committee “voted the establishment of a paper & printing office & the forming of a sett of types for the purpose of printing with the characters invented by George Gist.”⁴² At the time, the War Department and mission school guidelines still promoted the teaching of English and Lancastrian methods as part of official Indian Civilization policy. Jones instituted Lancastrian methods in teaching the Cherokee syllabary and written translations of scripture and hymns, “catechizing the children and reading portions of the scripture with short observations.” Jones was studying the language and was one of the first missionaries to be proficient in

⁴¹ Evan Jones, journal, American Baptist Mission Union, March 3, 1830 in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 80;

⁴² *PBP*, 2: 141; Wm. Joseph Thomas, “Creating Cherokee Print: Samuel Austin Worcester’s Impact on the Syllabary,” *Media History Monographs* 10, no. 2 (2007), 2-5, at <http://facstaff.elon.edu/dcopeland/mhm/mhmjour10-2.pdf>, (accessed May 24, 2011); Cherokee Nation, “S.A.Worcester,” The Official Site of the Cherokee Nation, <http://www.cherokee.org/AboutTheNation/History/Biographies/24485/Information.aspx>, (accessed May 24, 2011). This press was to be operated out of New Town, *Echota*, in the section of the Nation claimed by Georgia. Reverend Samuel Worcester and a “proper English educated” Cherokee named Elias Boudinot were to translate scriptures, hymns, and editorials and operate the press. The press, type and other materials were not assembled in *Echota* until January 1828 and in February of that year the first issue of the national newspaper, *The Cherokee Phoenix*, was published.

reading and translating using the syllabary. Jones was impressed with the Cherokee language's "multitude of nice distinctions...denoting voices, moods, tenses, sub-tenses, qualities, place, motion, person, number and transition with some other notations which have never yet been explained in English. The verbs, once thoroughly mastered, the rest is not difficult [sic]."⁴³

In February 1826, at the age of 59, Hicks began a series of letters passing his knowledge of Cherokee history and traditions to John Ross.⁴⁴ Hicks first letter explained his intention to "outline... the traditions of [the Cherokee] nation which have been handed down from our forefathers from time immemorial. There can be no doubt that their institutions began to decline when their intercourse commended with the whites; and their oratory discourses of their emigration was no doubt instituted when the nation became permanently settled in this country." Hicks believed that the "orationary discourses" which had been traditionally delivered at "festival dances & assemblies" were memorials to the Cherokee ancestors who settled the mountains. Some of these memorial tales were recited "like in a sacred discourse, in a kind of poetic style, with a long breath to each word," while others were "related as common conversation." Hicks went on to mention the oratory talents of chiefs he had seen speak as a child, including the Badger, Little Turkey, Oconostota, and Attacullaculla. In these letters Hicks recalled the counting of cycles at ceremonies, tales of the settlement of the Tuckasegee and Hiwassee river valleys, and a name or title "Elder sire of all - for he is acknowledged to

⁴³ Evan Jones, journal, ABMU, May 15, 1828 in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 80.

⁴⁴ Charles R. Hicks to John Ross, Feb. 1, 1826 in *PCJR*, 1: 111-113.

have had a being before all other things &c.” Hicks implied that this title was an ancient reference to the Cherokees’ belief in God.⁴⁵

Given the political turmoil of the mid 1820’s, it seems that Hicks was providing Ross with an historical context for supporting the political autonomy of the Cherokee centered on “their homeland” while promoting associations between Cherokee traditions and “civilized” ancient Jewish and Christian beliefs. Hicks also clearly defined the distinct landscape on which the newly developing Cherokee government was hoping to establish a lasting sovereign state. It is likely that Hicks was hoping to promote ideas about advancing Cherokee “civilization” in connection with the place where Cherokees had lived the longest.⁴⁶

Thomas L. McKenney, chief of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, hoped to disrupt the spread of Hicks’ Cherokee sovereignty ideas and characterized Hicks, Ross, and others as “those enlightened half-breeds from whom the opposition to emigration generally comes.” In fact, most Cherokees in the 1820’s were united in their resistance to removal and only a small portion of the Nation even considered emigration to the West. But many wealthy “half-breeds” had heavy investments in cultivating the land or acquiring

⁴⁵ Charles Hicks to John Ross, March 1, 1826 in *PCJR*, 1: 111, 116-119, 121, 122, 132. Hicks wrote, “I well remember to have heard the Badger mention frequently in addressing the council when convened that “another day had passed off since they had met at their council fire” council met in spring and fall Badger, next principal chief to the Little Turkey, whose oratory talents... “*Cho, tauh, ne, le, neh*” implies both the elder brother, as {well as } Elder sire of all. Hicks suggests that the Cherokee “ancestors may have been neighbors to the children of Israel, and by their intercourse ... may have obtained the knowledge,” and that the “Highwassee old towns were the lowest settlements that composed the whole nation, who had immigrated from Big Tellico” Hicks also stated that the Yuchis were the nearest neighbors south of Hiwassee, and the Cherokee towns Kituwah, Highwassie, A,wuo,hee and Clau, noos, were among the oldest settlements. The same towns were exposed to Creek invasion in Attakullkulla and Oconostota’s time.

⁴⁶ Charles Hicks to John Ross, March 1, 1826 in *PCJR*, 1: 116-119, 121 -122.

stores, ferries, taverns, or other entrepreneurial activities that they would have to give up if forced to remove. These were motivations that whites clearly understood and so McKenney portrayed resistance as originating in the more acculturated, economically motivated Cherokees. What McKenney and most other whites did not understand were the motivations of the “poor benighted” populace of the tribe, and so McKenney attributed compliance and flexibility to conservative traditionalists that made up two-thirds of the Nation. McKenney very likely believed that the less civilized heathen savages would be very easily convinced to remove. But the full-bloods were more ardently dedicated to resisting removal from their ancient homeland where the basis of their society was deeply connected to their relationship with the plants, animals, and places.⁴⁷

In April of 1826 Charles Hicks was informed that he must appoint Cherokee commissioners to assist a U.S. surveying team in retracing the Cherokee boundary line with the Creeks. The federal commissioners, under the direction of Georgia Governor George M. Troup, would clearly mark the boundary between the Cherokee Nation and Creek territory that had just been ceded for land in the West. Marking a hard boundary forced the Cherokee to recognize that their world was physically shrinking, redefining their relationships to particular pieces of land. This move was probably also calculated to intimidate the Cherokee, demonstrating the power the federal government had over Cherokee leadership by forcing Hicks to appoint prominent Cherokee commissioners to assist Governor Troup. Hicks himself had experienced this powerless “commissioner”

⁴⁷ Thomas L. McKenney to Lewis Cass, Dec. 2, 1826, “Letters received by Office of Indians Affairs, 1824-1828, Bureau of Indian Affairs,” RG 75, M-234, roll 71, National Archives, Washington, DC; John Ross to James G. Williams, December 15, 1824, *PCJR*, 96.

status when he “assisted” the survey for the federal road in 1806 and he surely recognized the political show of power Troup hoped for. Hicks avoided making any commissioner appointments, believing the federal government was not yet ready to initiate construction projects or seize Cherokee lands without at least the presence of Cherokee “assistance.”⁴⁸

By December of 1826, Charles Hicks lay ill and confined to his home. After months of continuing demands for “commissioners” to assist in boundary disputes and other business that the federal government insisted was of primary importance, Hicks and John Ross had decided to deny any such “assistance” to government representatives. A refusal to appoint “commissioners” for a canal survey request was one of Hicks’ final acts as Cherokee Chief. The turn of the new year would also be the beginning of a new era in Cherokee politics.⁴⁹

Pathkiller, who was “between 80 and 90 years of age,” and had been ill for several months, died on January 8, 1827. Charles Hicks and John Ross had already taken on most of Pathkiller’s responsibilities beginning in the fall of 1826. Charles Hicks became acting Principal Chief until a full election could be held. But twelve days later, on January 20, Hicks succumbed to the scrofula he had suffered for most of his sixty years. Charles Hicks was buried in the Moravian cemetery at Springplace becoming the first Cherokee Chief to be given a Christian burial. Evan Jones reported Hicks’ death to the Triennial convention, saying that Hicks was “one of the best friends of missionaries, a

⁴⁸ Col. H. Montgomery to Charles R. Hicks, April 26, 1826, doc. D, no. 9, and Charles Hicks to Col. H. Montgomery, May 15, 1826, in *PCJR*, 1: 174-175; Moulton, *John Ross*, 35.

⁴⁹ Charles Hicks and John Ross to Montgomery, Dec 11, 1826, in *PCJR*, 1: 126-128.

steady, enlightened and consistent Christian, a true patriot and...a nursing father to his benighted people.”⁵⁰

John Ross, a one-eighth blood Cherokee, found himself in the primary leadership role of a nation that consisted mostly of full-blood, traditionalist Cherokees. Ross’ understandings of the Cherokee world and traditional relationships with the plants and animals they lived with had come largely from Pathkiller and Hicks. Ross began to rely heavily on men he knew Hicks and Pathkiller had trusted, Evan Jones, Jesse Bushyhead, James Wafford, and others in the Valley Towns region, who kept Ross abreast of what the mountain Cherokees expected and hoped for. Ross clearly understood that the thinking of the mountain Cherokee and their connections to ancient landscape based traditions was crucial in understanding and leading the Nation.⁵¹

Charles Hicks had been a respected Cherokee leader. His close friendship with Pathkiller had shored up Hicks’ support, even among the most conservative Cherokees who distrusted Christians. And even considering rumors of Hicks’ financial and property “gifts” for his dealings with mission schools and missionaries, most Cherokee still believed that Hicks was “devoted to maintaining the tribe’s political autonomy, local self-government, and the lands of their fathers.”⁵² The death of both chiefs at a time when drastic political changes were taking place sent a wave of distress through the Nation. The anti-mission sentiments that had been growing since 1823 came to a head in what is

⁵⁰ Evan Jones to Lucius Bolles, February 16, 1827, American Baptist Mission Union papers, in Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists*, 113-114.

⁵¹ Don L. Shadburn, *Cherokee Planters in Georgia, 1832-1838*, Pioneer Cherokee Heritage Series, (Cumming, GA: Don L. Shadburn), 2: 297, 300; *PBP*, 2: 143; John Ross to James G. Williams, December 15, 1824, in *PCJR*, 1: 96.

⁵² William McLoughlin, “Cherokee Anti-Mission Sentiment, 1824-1828,” *Ethnohistory* 21, no. 4, (Autumn, 1974): 363-364.

known as White Path's Rebellion. In 1828 White Path, the alternate conservative government, and the National council reconciled in favor of presenting a united resistance to the ever-growing threat of forced removal. The deaths of Pathkiller and Hicks had weakened the Cherokee government's position in Washington, allowing federal representatives to take a newly harsh stand against Ross and the new Constitution.⁵³

Jones' and Posey's Separate Paths

When Thomas McKenney appended a print of the syllabary to the 1828 Treaty, Evan Jones was already organizing local day schools on the strengths of teaching literacy in Cherokee.⁵⁴ In February 1828, when Jones believed "that a remarkable revival of

⁵³ William McLoughlin, "Cherokee Anti-Mission Sentiment, 1824-1828," 363; Mooney 1900: 113; ABCFM Papers, "Chamberlain's Mission Journal," May 3, 1827. McLoughlin writes that the Etowah traditionalist chiefs "who advocated the recall of the American board's missionaries and school teachers from their town in 1824," "recognized the importance of tribal unity and strength vis a vis white pressures for removal. They support Hicks as Second Principal Chief (though he was a Christian convert) to manage their dealings with the Whites because he was devoted to maintaining the tribe's political autonomy, local self-government, and the lands of their fathers. They also supported Path Killer as Principal chief, a traditionalist and fullblood who neither spoke nor wrote English, in order to sustain the views of those in the nation-the large majority who wished to accept only so much acculturation and so much political centralization as was needed for economic self-sufficiency and national unity...too late, however, to reverse the wheel of progress, and under the rule of such men as Hicks and Ross, the conservative opposition gradually melted away." White Path's rebellion party was considered the "heathen party" by the missionaries. "Pathkiller, though eloquent and influential in internal Cherokee affairs, had allowed Hicks to control the external affairs with the Whites... Relationships with missionaries constituted external affairs. Hicks did not wish to alienate people whose services were so valuable and whose influence he needed with the federal government and the White public at large."

⁵⁴ Walker and Sarbaugh, "Early History of the Cherokee Syllabary": 85; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 81. Jones had adapted Lancastrian teaching methods to Cherokee learning habits, helping promote the rapid literacy of the Cherokee Nation.

religion would soon take place among the Cherokees,"⁵⁵ he wrote of the Sequoyan syllabary that,

This invaluable invention is likely to be productive of the most important advantages to this people. Vast numbers can now form the characters in an awkward manner and read slowly by syllable, but in order to give full effect to the system, some plan must be adopted to teach them to read with fluency and to write with felicity. If a few of the steadiest young men were taught to write with freedom and expedition, and to read well, schools might be commenced in several places with great advantage and at very trifling cost. These schools might be so organized that the leading facts of Sacred History and the plainest doctrines of the Gospel might be made familiar to the pupils.⁵⁶

1829 Jones was still struggling with financial issues at the mission. He decided to try and lease the farmland once again. Jones met with a preacher from Tennessee who was interested in renting the farm. Jones recorded in his journal,

I showed him the land and he said he liked the country well. But in conversation, I found out he was one of those good people who do all business by means of negro slaves, and that his object was to fix himself here till the Cherokees should be driven off their lands. I concluded therefore it would not so to let him have it at any time as it would counteract all our efforts among the Cherokees, besides the injustice of introducing their enemies into the hearts of their country.⁵⁷

Jones' early abolitionist leanings, commitment to promoting good Christian ideas among the Cherokees, and resistance to their forced removal aligned him with the mountain Cherokee. By 1828, many mountain Cherokees had come to recognize and appreciate Jones' position among other whites. Taken together, Jones' situation as a mountain missionary made him a more acceptable and trustworthy friend to Cherokees. As Jones traveled and preached among the Valley Towns and north Georgia settlements, he surely witnessed many ways the Cherokee had adapted white practices in home

⁵⁵ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 70-71.

⁵⁶ Evan Jones, journal American Baptist Mission Union papers, February 18, 1828 in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 80-81.

⁵⁷ Evan Jones, journal, American Baptist Mission Union papers, February 7, 1829, in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 90

construction, agriculture, and trade. These newer elements of Cherokee society encouraged Jones to practice a similar synthesis in spreading the Gospel. Jones willingness to acquire knowledge about Cherokee thinking allowed him to learn how to transmit his own Christian ideas.

The new Cherokee constitution went into effect in 1828, and in December Georgia reacted by passing a set of laws that made the threat of forced removal a reality. The new laws declared that Georgia would “assume jurisdiction over the Cherokee land within its borders, [nullifying] all Cherokee tribal law, and ..any Indians who remained in Georgia” would be treated as free-blacks, having no rights. Cherokees would be allowed to keep working farms, but any land not being “used” would be turned over to Georgians for settlement. Cherokees in Georgia were once again forced to realign their conceptions of landscape relationships with white categorizations of the world.⁵⁸

The increasing pressures of disenfranchisement at the hands of Georgia and threatened removal from the Cherokee homeland forced Cherokee leaders to acknowledge white categorizations of the world. Cherokee delegates such as George Lowrey, Major Ridge, and Elijah Hicks, influential headmen and former warriors, became more adept at the particular practices of “politics.” In the process, their understandings of the world became less connected to Cherokee knowledge systems as they became enthralled in political power plays with whites and other Cherokees. The ways of thinking that connected politics, religion, and medicine began shifting toward ways of thinking that relied on sharp distinctions. Evan Jones, on the other hand, had

⁵⁸ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 68-69, 122; Richard Peters, *The Case of the Cherokee Nation Against the State of Georgia*, (Philadelphia: John Grigg, 1831), 281-284, at archive.org/stream/caseofcherokeena00cher#page/6/mode/2up , (accessed Jan 12, 2012).

begun to blur hard categories as a means of genuinely communicating Christian ideas to the obviously intelligent and willing-to-learn Cherokees.⁵⁹

For most of the summer and fall of 1829, Posey had been fulfilling new duties to the federal government while he traveled a preaching circuit through white settlements and towns. Posey was appointed by Indian Affairs commissioner Thomas L. McKenney “to go around [North Carolina] for the purpose of purchasing such Reservations of land as are yet claimed by Indians or Indian Countrymen.”⁶⁰ It is very likely that McKenney had first become aware of Posey through the Moravians at Springplace. McKenney was considered a “worthy friend” of the Moravian mission in Georgia and known by them as “a great friend of the Indians.”⁶¹ Posey and McKenney were both obviously in favor of removal and saw the new Georgia laws as a model of how other states should react. Charles Hicks’ death had broken Posey’s only tie to Cherokee government. Posey’s new association with General Romulus Saunders, who rode in full uniform throughout the Cherokee mountains encouraging families to sell their lands and remove, led to the sale of hundreds of acres of Cherokee land in western North Carolina.⁶²

⁵⁹ “Acts of the Legislature of Georgia: Act of 20 December 1828,” and “Act of 19 December 1829,” in Richard Peters, *The Case of the Cherokee Nation*, 51-53, 281-284. Peters states, “In the [Supreme Court Justice’s] opinion, which is full and elaborate, the whole subject is examined; and the conclusion pronounced by the court is, that the Cherokees are an independent nation, with the exclusive power of legislation within their own territory.” Andrew Jackson famously denied enforcing this decision.

⁶⁰ Staff writer, “Thomas L. McKenney,” *Cherokee Phoenix*, June 5, 1829, microfilm edition, NAM, M-21, roll 5, no. 0210; Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, *Deed to State of North Carolina From Reserves Conveying to that State Reservation Land in Macon County, Cherokee Reserves 1828-1840*, National Archives, in *Cherokee Reserves Letters, 1828-1840*, print edition, ed. Dawn C. Stricklin, (Rockport, MA: Picton Press, 2005), 16-20.

⁶¹ *MSMC*, 2: 250, 255.

⁶² Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, *Deed to State of North Carolina*, National Archives, in *Cherokee Reserves Letters*, 18.

Posey signed off as agent for the sale of nearly forty individual Cherokee land reserves, bringing \$9,370 to Cherokees in exchange for an unknown acreage of land in North Carolina that went to the United States. In many instances, Posey delivered cash to Cherokees at the Valley Town mission, where Cherokees had Jones count the money for them. On December 1, 1829, Posey signed a federal indenture and completed his role as land agent. Jones and Posey clearly maintained a relationship that must have been based purely in Baptist ideology. Given Jones habit of circumscribing discussion of his activities in letters to the BFMB, it seems likely that Jones may have down played his deeper relationships with Cherokees in the Valley Towns. But in the coming years it must have become increasingly difficult for Jones to hide his true feelings and intellectual engagement with the Cherokees' diverse relationships to the landscape.⁶³

Facilitating the sale of Cherokee land reserves to the United States government demonstrates Posey's complicity with the reservation system, which offered 640 acres of Cherokee land per household or 640 acres in Arkansas for Cherokees living on land ceded by 1815. If a reservee chose to stay in the East, he could not abandon the allotment for "any period of time" or the title "reverted to the U S government." Upon the reservee's death, title also reverted to the U.S. government. In such a case, the heirs were compensated monetarily for "improvements." Those who took reservations lost their citizenship in the Cherokee Nation, and the land eventually belonged to the United States anyway. About one third of the land reserve dollars that Humphrey Posey signed for were divided among heirs of deceased reservees. The "improvements" for which heirs

⁶³ Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs 1824-1881, frames 48-53, National Archives, microfilm, M234, roll 117; Evan Jones journal, September 2-4, 8-9, December 3-7, 1829, in Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 116-117.

were compensated were all frame or brick buildings, as traditional Cherokee constructions and small log cabins were assigned no value. The legal details of Posey's practices were obviously patterned after the new Georgia laws.⁶⁴

On November 6, 1829, during the same months he was distributing money to Cherokees willing to immigrate, Posey "preached the introductory sermon [at a Georgia Baptist Association meeting] from the text found in Ephesians fourth chapter and third verse... His subject was of course unity and co-operation." Posey had a lively discussion with a group of ministers on "certain standards of scholarship in the rudiments of language and in a knowledge of the Bible and Baptist faith and doctrine, besides certain other requirements of age and personal habits," that he felt "were required before ordaining candidates for the ministry."⁶⁵ Posey preached about the immanent return of Christ and "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace... One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Posey's words and actions suggest that during the impending latter days before Christ's immanent return, the Cherokee's "attachment to the land of their fathers" and resistance to removing west were not the proper "one faith," that only salvation and faith would redeem the pain caused by the necessity of removal. At the

⁶⁴ Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs 1824-1881, frames 48-53, National Archives microfilm, M234, roll 117; Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, *Deed to State of North Carolina*, National Archives, in *Cherokee Reserves Letters*, 18.

⁶⁵ Stillwell, *Tuckaseegee Baptist Association*, 3-4, 7; Evan Jones journal, September 2-4, 8-9, December 3-7, 1829; Evan Jones to Lucius Bolles, December 11, 1829, American Baptist Mission Union papers, 53, in Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 117.

same time, he continued establishing churches among growing white settlements, very likely on some of the same tracts of land he had helped transfer to white hands.⁶⁶

“Unused” Cherokee land in Georgia and North Carolina was opened to white settlement, cleared, then broken with plows and planted by monoculture plots or gnawed by cattle, sheep, and goats. The heathen wilderness was slowly defeated, plot by plot, and the heathen Cherokee were to go with it. Posey had probably been convinced since at least 1818 that removal of the Cherokee to Indian Territory was the best solution to the problems in the East. Posey’s mission work among the Cherokee was geared toward convincing them to let go of their conceptions of place, replacing their categorizations of the world with the “true worship” of “God, The Son, and The Holy Ghost.” But Posey did not have the missionary success that Evan Jones had because Jones allowed Cherokees to “feel the spirit of the Gospel” in their own way without demanding Cherokees accept hard categorizations of the world.⁶⁷

By the early 1830’s Christianity, and especially Baptist Christianity in the North Carolina and Georgia mountains, was growing quickly among the Cherokee. The first ordained Cherokee Baptist preachers were working for their people to “advance in the divine life.”⁶⁸ In 1823, Posey’s last year at the mission, the Valley Towns mission reported only four Cherokee conversions, but by 1835 “the whole number of baptisms at

⁶⁶ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 71; Paschal, *HNCB*, 2: 544; Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, *Deed to State of North Carolina*, National Archives, *Cherokee Reserves Letters*, xi-xii, 16-20.

⁶⁷ Fleming, *Elder Humphrey Posey*, 71; Paschal, *HNCB*, 2: 544; Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, *Deed to State of North Carolina*, National Archives, *Cherokee Reserves Letters*, xi-xii, 16-20.

⁶⁸ American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, “Annual Report: Cherokees, Valley Towns In North Carolina, with several out-stations,” *BMM* 15, Boston: Massachusetts Baptist Convention edition, 1835: 127-128.

Valley Towns had been 260.”⁶⁹ Evan Jones’s success utilized the Cherokee language, spoken and written, to present Christian ideas through traditional modes of Cherokee knowledge acquisition. Teaching English was still part of the curriculum, but the traveling rotation at schools and preaching places made Lancastrian methods in Cherokee the most important element of daily lessons. Lessons and bible verses were prepared for the weekly or monthly visits of Jones and Dawson, who visited the closer places around the Valley Towns. station. Foregoing the expenses of a boarding school and mission farm in favor of small day schools and evangelizing at local preaching places led to great missionary success. Evan Jones wrote in 1835,

A very few years ago, the vicinity of the scene of this evangelical ordinance was shrouded in the darkness of heathenism... But the Sun of Righteousness has arisen, and his beams are penetrating the gloom and chasing away the darkness, and enlightening and purifying the minds of the people. The worship of God has supplanted the revelries of superstition, and the Christian Sabbath is hailed with joy, and ushered in with songs of praise to the Lord Jehovah.⁷⁰

Jesse Bushyhead

In June of 1830 Jones had persuaded the Board to hire Cherokee convert and “exhorter” *Kaneeda*, who was given the Christian name John Wycliffe.⁷¹ In 1831 *Dsulawee*, later given the Christian name Andrew Fuller, and another Cherokee named Alexander McGrey were hired. But the most successful and important hire of a Cherokee Baptist interpreter and preacher was *Tastheghetehee*, christened Jesse Bushyhead. Jesse

⁶⁹ American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, “Annual Report,” 128; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokee*, 150-151; William G. McLoughlin, “The Reverend Evan Jones and the Cherokee Trail of Tears, 1838-1839,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 73, no. 3, (Fall 1989): 561-562; *Proceedings of the Baptist General convention*, (1823), 432; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 44.

⁷⁰ American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, “Annual Report,” 128.

⁷¹ “Mission to the Cherokees,” *BMM*, June 1830, 162.

Bushyhead, one “of the most efficient of their number,” was appointed missionary by the BFMB in 1833 and was frequently preaching at Valley Towns mission, as well as *Amohee* Church and a six week circuit in the Cherokee Nation along many of the same routes Posey had initially established.⁷²

Bushyhead lived in a town called *Achaia*, in the *Amohee* district of Tennessee, seventy-five miles west of the Valley Towns in the Hiwassee Valley. He had been raised in a fairly conservative Cherokee fashion, although his grandfather was a British army captain. Since his birth in 1804, he had spoken Cherokee and English and was an excellent student at the Candy Creek ABCFM school. Bushyhead became a Baptist at the age of twenty-five, after “reading the Bible carefully” and concluding that infant baptism was not the true form of baptism. Bushyhead related immersion baptism in “the living waters” of the river to true cleansing, just as “going to water” rituals viewed the river cleansing. Bushyhead became a member of “the priesthood of the believer” in 1831, after attending services with Reverend Burrow Buckner’s Baptist congregation in Cleveland, Tennessee.⁷³ Buckner “began to visit *Achaia* after this to evangelize and in 1831 gathered a small church there [at *Achaia*] consisting of nineteen Cherokees, eleven

⁷²“Valley Towns Mission Station,” *BMM* 11, no. 1, 1832: 19; “Cherokee Mission,” *BMM* 13, no. 4, 1834: 210; Evan Jones, letters, American Baptist Mission Union, January 7 1832, September 7 1832, and September 10 1832 in McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 146, 91-92.

⁷³ *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 14, no. 3, (Sept. 1936), at digital.library.okstate.edu/chronicles/v014p349.html , (accessed May 8, 2011); Teri Dermitt, “Descendants of Bushyhead: Notes for JESSE TAH SKE KE DE HE,” (n.d.), at http://the-ancestors.8m.net/custom3_1.html, (accessed May 14, 2011); McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 91-92. Bushyhead’s grandfather, Captain John Stewart, was spared in battle by *Attacullaculla* on August 7, 1760, and taken to Virginia where he soon after became British Indian Agent to the southern tribes. Stewart, known to the Cherokee as *Oonaduto* which glosses as “bushyhead,” married a Cherokee woman, Susannah Emory. The Bushyhead family men have been prominent preachers, healers, and chiefs among the Western Cherokee since removal.

whites, and five black slaves.”⁷⁴ Bushyhead sought out Jones at Valley Towns in January 1832, and the two men were soon working together for the salvation of the Cherokees. Jesse Bushyhead served as co-pastor of Achaia Baptist church until 1835 when he formed his own congregation at *Amohee* consisting of mostly Cherokee members.⁷⁵ Bushyhead traveled constantly from the Tennessee mountains, through the western North Carolina Cherokee towns and into north Georgia settlements, preaching and discussing the rapid changes he witnessed in the Cherokee landscape. Paths were widened into roads, settlements and farms cleared ancient forests, rivers were dammed and diverted for waterwheels and mills, and by 1835, large forts were being constructed by the federal government.⁷⁶ Many of the plants and animals that Jesse Bushyhead had seen utilized by Cherokees in his childhood were already becoming scarce in some areas of the nation. Rivercane breaks along north Georgia and east Tennessee rivers were probably dwindling due to the massive increase in livestock on the land. Cherokee relationships with particular plants were changing fast and the landscape visibly reflected the change. The use of honey locust in the Lower and Overhill towns was probably already being supplanted by honey and sugar. Jesse Bushyhead and other Cherokee Baptists very likely

⁷⁴ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 91; Burrow Buckner, untitled letter, *BMM* 12, no. 1 January, 1833, 227; E.C. Routh, “Early Missionaries to the Cherokees,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 15, no. 4 (Dec. 1937): 449-460, at <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/Chronicles/v015/v015p449.html>, (accessed February 23, 2012). McLoughlin also cites Walter N. Wyeth, *Poor Lo* (Phil. 1896), 60-61, which could not be located.

⁷⁵ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 91-92. Bushyhead was the first Cherokee of any denomination to pastor his own church.

⁷⁶ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 91-94; E.C. Routh, “Early Missionaries to the Cherokees,” 454-456; Walker, *Cherokee Footprints... Volume II: Hearth and Home*, 84-85, 98, 100; Thomas, “Cherokee Values and Worldview,” 23-24.

saw Baptist ideas, especially expressed in Cherokee, as new, balancing knowledge in a rapidly changing world.

Jesse Bushyhead was an intelligent and educated bi-lingual Cherokee, with more experience in both languages than either Timson or Wafford. Bushyhead became Jones' primary collaborator in translating hymns and scriptures. As with all of Jones' Cherokee "exhorters" and preachers, Bushyhead was also deeply dedicated to resisting removal and preserving Cherokee society in the mountain homeland, even as he witnessed the landscape change. By 1835, when the threat of forced removal became probable, Bushyhead was elected to the Cherokee Council. For the rest of his life, Jesse Bushyhead worked closely with John Ross and became Chief Justice of the Cherokee Supreme Court in Oklahoma in 1840. Even after taking on important and time-consuming political roles while still in the East, Bushyhead remained pastor at *Amohee* Baptist Church until the fall of 1839. Bushyhead and Jones led 1000 Cherokees on the Trail of Tears as part of their request to remove the remaining Cherokees without armed military escort. Throughout this disturbing period, Cherokee categorizations of the world maintained ways of thinking that connected politics and religion, and Bushyhead exemplified the sustained importance of Cherokee categorizations.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ E.C. Routh, *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 14, no. 3, (Sept. 1936), at digital.library.okstate.edu/chronicles/v014p349.html, (accessed May 8, 2011); E.C. Routh, "Early Missionaries to the Cherokees," 449-460; Jesse Bushyhead to the American Baptist Missionary Board, March 19, 1839, at Sequoyah Research Center: American Native Press Archives, http://www.anpa.ualr.edu/trail_of_tears/indian_removal_project/letters/1839March19JesseBushyheadtoTheAmericanBaptistMissionaryBoard.htm, (accessed May 14, 2011); McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 91-92.

“A Remarkable Revival of Religion”

Part of the “remarkable revival of religion” that Jones predicted in 1828 had been his own open expression of resistance to the recently passed Georgia laws that negated any Cherokee claims to sovereignty within the state’s boundaries. Jones’ vocal defiance of Georgia’s policies continued for years and made the Valley Town mission popular with Cherokees in North Carolina and Georgia. Many Cherokees from Georgia towns traveled to the mission to hear Jones and the Cherokee Baptists speak on a regular basis between 1828 and 1833.⁷⁸

In 1830 Jones reported thirty-seven Cherokee baptisms, many more than any of the nine years since Jones arrival at the Valley Town mission. The increase in baptisms continued into 1831. Jones reported that there were so many Cherokee members of the church from surrounding towns “that it is scarcely possible for all to attend at one place.” The Cherokee brethren at nearby *Deesehodee* “erected a convenient shelter ...covered with boards and railed except for two doorways. They also cleared a place at the side of Valley River to go down to baptism.” Evan Jones and John Wycliffe preached the first Sabbath in the new structure. Jones commented in a letter to the BFMB, “A friend who stood by the riverside, viewing the procession, remarked that so large a company of Indians, all clean and neatly clothed, moving solemnly along, singing with joyful lips the high praises of Jehovah, was a most delightful sight.”⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 119-122; “Valley Towns Mission Station,” *BMM* 11, no. 1, (1832): 282; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 94.

⁷⁹ Evan Jones, “Evan Jones to Corresponding Secretary,” *BMM* 11, no. 3 (December 26, 1830): 91-92; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 94; One black man was also baptized in 1830.

In January 1830 a local committee asked Jones to assist in circulating a memorial to Congress concerning Georgia's new laws. Thirteen hundred Cherokees signed the petition. During the circulation of the petition, Jones went to a nearby council house to help with some writing, and two months later he helped keep circuit court records, probably at the request of his friend and Cherokee Supreme Court Judge, *Situagee*. Jones also began to express his hopes that northerners, and northern Baptists in particular, might be able to persuade northern state governments to speak out against Andrew Jackson's removal policies in letters to the BFMB.⁸⁰

A few days after Christmas 1830, Samuel Worcester called an ecumenical meeting at New Echota to sign "prepared statements" about the state of the Cherokees. The statement was published in the *Cherokee Phoenix* and the ABCFM's *Missionary Herald*, and led to the infamous arrest of Worcester and other missionaries by the Georgia militia. The statement presented the united views of most of the missionaries in the Cherokee Nation. The missionaries saw the "Indian Question,"

...as being not merely of a political, but of a moral nature—inasmuch as it involves the maintenance or the violation of the faith of our country—and as demanding, therefore, the most serious consideration of all American citizens, not only as patriots, but as Christians...we view the removal of this people to the West of the Mississippi as an event to be most earnestly deprecated; threatening greatly to retard, if not totally to arrest their progress in religion, civilization, learning and the useful arts, to involve them in great distress, and to bring upon them a complication of evils... that the establishment of the jurisdiction of Georgia and other states over the Cherokee people, against their will, would be an immense and irreparable injury...To us it appears that the Cherokees are in a course of improvement, which promises, if uninterrupted, to place them at no distant period, nearly on a level with their white bretheren [sic]. Laboring, as we are, to aid them in their progress, we cannot do otherwise than earnestly deprecate any measure which threatens to arrest it. ...Our sympathies are with them—our prayers have often earnestly ascended, and shall still ascend in their behalf—and

⁸⁰ Evan Jones journal, January 4, March 13, May 5, August 9, May 1, 1830 in Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 118-119.

we earnestly invite the prayers of all our fellow Christians, that He who rules the destinies of nations will deliver them out of all their afflictions, and establish them in the land which he has given them; and at the same time, that he will open all their hearts to receive the Gospel of this son, and thus to secure to themselves the possession of a better country, even a heavenly [one].⁸¹

Among the Cherokee population in the districts where Jones evangelized, the political upheavals and the emerging recognition of political and religious distinctions were accompanied by a better understanding of Christianity. As McLoughlin argues, “the appeal of Christianity was a cumulative response to acculturation arising from a better understanding of [Christianity’s] richness of meaning among those Cherokees who had come to understand it, and not simply a reaction to political tensions.” At the same time, the increasing Christianization among the Cherokee between 1828 and 1830, which included every denomination, only amounted to about ten percent of all Cherokees.⁸² After 1832 all the mission stations closed except the Valley Town mission and missionaries went to western Indian territories or returned to northern cities. Jones even began to acknowledge that the forced removal of the Cherokee was probable. Jones continued to assert his successful evangelizing and that of the native Baptist preachers he worked with to the BFMB.⁸³ As a result of most missionaries’ abandonment of the

⁸¹ Worcester, Samuel A. *New Echota Letters*, eds. Jack Frederick Kilpatrick and Anna Gritts Kilpatrick, (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1968), 83, 84, 85-90, 91-92; *Cherokee Phoenix*, (January 1, 1831), and ABCFM *Missionary Herald*, (March 1831, ABMU), 127; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 120-121; Walker, *Cherokee Footprints... Volume II: Hearth and Home*, 157-158; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 125-131

⁸² McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 95-96.

⁸³ Evan Jones to Lucius Bolles, June 18, September 7, 1832 in Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 155-157. A federal agent, probably Benjamin F. Currey, had arrived in New Echota in the summer of 1832, increasing Cherokee anxiety about forced removal. See Grace S. Woodward, *The Cherokees*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 171, and Thurman Wilkins, *Cherokee Tragedy*:

Eastern Nation, there was a revival of old religion, ball-play, dances, and singing. But even some of this old religion revival became infused with Christian influence, especially in the tonality and timbre of singing and storytelling, both incorporating Christian ideas. Through the processes of revitalizing older Cherokee beliefs, practices, and categorizations of the world after the presence of Christianity, Christian ideas were synthesized within more traditional Cherokee landscape relationships. Evan Jones, as one of the most successful and dedicated Christian missionaries in Cherokee country, played an important role in this Christianization of Cherokee society.⁸⁴

Murder Accusations, Oaths, and Arrests

In the spring of 1833 Posey was again engaged at the Valley Town mission when he was elected moderator of a Baptist council to investigate murder allegations against Evan Jones and his second wife. Jones was accused of murdering his wife's sister and her newborn child in February of 1833, and acquitted in Macon County Superior Court on April 8. Continuing rumors of Jones' guilt caused him to request a church investigation in the hopes of regaining his credibility among some Cherokees and Baptists who began to doubt Jones's innocence.⁸⁵ Posey convened the church council at the Valley Towns mission on April 17. The council consisted of Reverend Burrow Buckner, Jesse Bushyhead, Thomas Dawson, visiting BFMB treasurer Heman Lincoln,

The Ridge Family and the Decimation of a People, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 255.

⁸⁴ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 94-96; *PBP*, 3: 263, 4: 12-13, 5: 278-280; Thomas, "Cherokee Value System and World View," 23-24. Thomas states that "Jesus' moral code has bolstered the old Cherokee values and, in fact, they have become one and the same thing." He then goes on to say that whites presented Baptist ideas as dogma, which Cherokees mostly ignored. But Jesus' story makes sense in a Cherokee worldview. I argue that Jones methods of utilizing Cherokee language and understandings of the world promoted a similar focus on the morality and story of Jesus.

⁸⁵ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 97.

and the newest mission mill worker Leonard Butterfield. Posey was then the pastor of the Baptist church in Franklin, NC, with influence among mountain Baptists. It seems probable that Jones was innocent of murder and his accusers had concocted a scheme to profit from improvements on mission land at the expense of the Baptist mission. The two most ardent accusers had rebuilt the mission gristmill, and built the dam and other improvements distant from the main mission grounds after the 1825 flood. The two men apparently hoped to claim this portion of the mission grounds and profit from the sale of the improvements they had rebuilt. Though the murder allegations “dogged Jones’ footsteps for the rest of his life,” the more immediate concern for Posey was that such rumors would “cast aspersions on the whole mission enterprise,” and the salvation of Indian souls was still important. The BFMB made considerable effort to suppress publicity of the trial and Humphrey Posey seems to have made the church investigation as quick and painless as possible. It was evident to Jones and all the Cherokees around the mission that the power and control of white society was closing in.⁸⁶

The supposed murder occurred during the same months that the state of Georgia was arresting missionaries who would not swear an oath to the state. It is likely that Jones’ accusers were emboldened by waning support for missionaries among frontier whites. Posey and the BFMB appointed council “heard the worst that could be said against [the Joneses], gave the slanderers a chance to prove their charges, and then declared Jones to be innocent and held him up in full honor as a pastor and a missionary.”

⁸⁶ William G. McLoughlin, “The Murder Trial of the Reverend Evan Jones, Baptist Missionary to the Cherokee in North Carolina, 1833,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 62, no. 2 (April, 1985): 173-176; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 97-117; *Laws Of the Cherokee Nation*, (Tahlequah, Cherokee Nation: Cherokee Nation, 1852), 10; McLoughlin, *Cherokees and Missionaries*, 25.

Posey's support of the Jones family, at least in this instance, shored up good feelings toward the mission in the eyes of some frontier Baptist communities and ended rumors of Jones' guilt among Baptist church members.⁸⁷

After the murder trial, Jones and Bushyhead became increasingly involved in Cherokee politics and resistance to removal. Both men reported directly to Chief Ross on the position of army encampments and scouting parties in North Carolina and north Georgia. Cherokee Judge *Situagee* wrote regular letters to Jones in syllabary communicating personal and court information pertaining to the increasing army presence, the growing number of Cherokee converts, and the general sense of anxiety over removal. In 1837, Chief Ross appointed Bushyhead as lead negotiator between the Seminole and federal government in the Seminole war. The federal government had requested assistance from Ross in negotiating with the Seminoles who were violently resisting forced removal. Ross agreed to the request, hoping that cooperation would prove politically useful. Ross sent Bushyhead to ostensibly serve as a Christian negotiator between the US Army and the Seminole resistance leaders, but also to provide information about the Seminole resistance to the Cherokees. Jones kept in touch with Ross and Bushyhead and transmitted as much information as he could to the Cherokees in his itineracy about the Seminole resistance and their negotiations with the army. The Valley Towns Cherokees were increasingly reliant on Jones' information, hoping to learn what sort of bargain might be struck with the federal government that might allow them

⁸⁷ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 111; McLoughlin, "The Murder Trial of the Reverend Evan Jones," 174. It is possible that David English and the other accusers had not been fully paid for their hard work in 1825, although their attempts at payment were exposed as illegal. Jones claimed that the BFMB had cleared all "mission debts" by 1826, but there is no clear record of what Jones' real debts were and how or when they were paid.

to remain on their ancient homeland. Jones reported increasing conversions and baptisms to the Baptist Board, but omitted his political engagement.⁸⁸

From 1835 to 1838, Jones and Bushyhead became increasingly involved in Cherokee resistance and disseminating information between Cherokee government and Cherokee towns. Cherokee resistance remained a peaceful endeavor that simultaneously allowed Cherokees a better understanding of Baptist ideas and Jones' understandings of Cherokee thinking. Jones' and Bushyhead's activities also show that Baptists at Valley Towns were using Cherokee categorizations that connected politics and religion to promote Baptist ideology and resistance to removal, further entrenching Christian ideas in Cherokee relationships to the land on which they lived. Jones wrote, "appearances are such, as to induce a hope, that the Lord has a favor for this people, and that whether they be permitted to live by the graves of their fathers, or be forced away, He is preparing them to endure the tryals [sic] and afflictions through which, they may be called to pass or to be instruments of righteousness to carry on his designs of mercy in this sinful world." Jones and his congregations clearly felt they were better Christians than the government, soldiers, settlers, and citizens that advocated for Indian Removal. The expressions of righteousness from Jones and his Baptist Cherokee friends made them targets of the army, who had a continually growing presence after 1833.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 160-162; John Ross to the Chiefs, Headmen, and Warriors of the Seminoles, Oct. 18, 1837, Ross To Jesse Bushyhead Nov. 14, 1837, Evan Jones to John Ross, Nov. 20, 1837, Dec. 29, 1837, Feb 24, 1828, Lewis Ross to John Ross, Apr 6 1838, Annuities Paid to Ross-viz *Situakee* and White Path, June 25, 1838, in *PCJR*, 1: 523-526, 545-546, 549-551, 571-572, 599-600, 625-626, 647.

⁸⁹ Evan Jones to Lucius Bolles, June 18, 1832 in Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 156-157; Lt. Charles Fenton Mercer Noland, *Noland's Cherokee Diary: A U.S. Soldier's Story from Inside the Cherokee Nation*. ed. Mildred E. Whitmire, (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1990), 14.

In 1836, Jones was forced to leave the Valley Towns mission by threats of arrest from army officials who recognized Jones role in the political resistance. Jones rented a farm in Tennessee near the North Carolina border, at the BFMB's expense, and defiantly continued to itinerate along most of his established circuits.⁹⁰ Many Cherokee Christians had come to see themselves as better Christians than whites, and felt God and Jesus wanted them to remain on their land. The federal government had insisted that "half-breeds" and mixed-blood political leaders were the only Cherokees involved in the rhetorical and political resistance to removal for a decade. In fact, by 1832, many of the Cherokee leaders McKenney had once named as resistance leaders, including Elias Boudinout and Major Ridge, had turned to favor removal. McKenney's propaganda was no longer sufficient to hide that it was the "uncultivated" full-blood portion of Cherokees, over two-thirds of the population, that most vehemently supported the resistance promoted by Ross, Bushyhead, and Jones. But, as McLoughlin and Conser have shown, the federal government consistently, and probably intentionally, underestimated the total number of Cherokees remaining in the East by thousands of individuals. As a result, many potentially sympathetic whites, especially in the North, did not believe that most Cherokee were against removal.⁹¹

⁹⁰ See McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, Chapter VI, 143-170; Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 181- 210, 211-216.

⁹¹ William McLoughlin and Walter H. Conser, Jr., "The Cherokees in Transition: A Statistical Analysis of the Federal Cherokee Census of 1835," *The Journal of American History* 64, no. 3, (December, 1977): 678-703. The 1835 Cherokee census shows that the federal government "persistently underestimated the total number of Cherokees in the East, generally using a figure of 10,000, when the true figure was over 16,500 in 1835 and never below 12,000 after the first census taken in 1808-1809." The official census also "consistently over-estimated the occurrence of intermarriage with whites among the Cherokees" at 50 percent when the number of intermarried families were actually "less than 23 percent in 1835."

Cherokees noted these white deceptions with stunned surprise and broken hearts, but Cherokees, for the most part, remained true to their Treaty obligations of peace as a means of emphasizing the treachery of whites concerning those same treaties. As Cherokee categorizations of the world adapted to the presence and dominance of whites, core aspects of Cherokee thinking were preserved and distinct forms of Cherokee Christianity developed. Evan Jones' participation in that development proved not only a point of pride for some white Baptists, but also forged a long-lasting trust between Cherokees and Jones' Baptist ministry.⁹²

Jones was willing to engage with Cherokees and their unique relationships to the diversity of the landscape on which they had lived for thousands of years. Jones' friendship and mentoring of early Cherokee Baptist preachers and his vocal participation in resistance to removal established and strengthened ideological links between Baptist thinking and Cherokee landscape relationships. Associations between Cherokee beliefs and practices and Jewish and Christian beliefs that Charles Hicks had promoted, and powerful connections between Cherokee values and Jesus' morality that were especially evident when expressed in the Cherokee language, forged lasting links between Cherokee and Christian ideas. Jones' encouragement of expressing Christian ideas in the Cherokee language endeared his missionary efforts among mountain Cherokees and created networks of communication and thinking that have helped sustain deep relationships to the landscape. Baptist Cherokees in the East and West have maintained ideological

⁹² Evan Jones to John Ross, March 20, 1838 in *PCJR*, 1: 614-615; Patrick N. Mingos, *Slavery in the Cherokee Nation: The Keetoowah Society and the Defining of a People, 1855-1867*, New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 35-37; Thomas, "Cherokee Values and World View," 23-25.

connections for the past two hundred years and Evan Jones and Jesse Bushyhead are an important and acknowledged part of that legacy.⁹³

⁹³ Thomas, "Cherokee Values and World View," 23; McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 135-139.

CONCLUSION

Charles Renatus Hicks did not have to witness the forced removal of his people. Although a devout Christian, Hicks relationship to the land of his ancestors was a deep and powerful presence in his daily life. His afflictions and personal desires did not divert him from a commitment to securing a home for the Cherokee in their ancient homeland. In the end, Hicks' dealings with the US government must still be considered a success. He was an important negotiator in discussions with federal representatives that made it possible for the 1819 treaty stipulation allowing the Qualla Boundary Cherokee to remain in the East. But some smaller successes should also be acknowledged. Hicks was directly involved in developing and maintaining the presence of missionaries in Cherokee country. Through Hicks, missionaries were given a friendly reception at Council and on mission grounds that he also helped establish. Without the sharp intellect, bilingualism, dedication to preserving Cherokee history and traditions, and Christian faith of Charles Hicks, the history of the Cherokee would have followed different, and very likely more tragic, paths.

Humphrey Posey continued work among frontier whites, "improving" the landscape surrounding Cherokee territory. He was the founding pastor and regular preacher at dozens of Baptist churches. He was instrumental in forming the Tuckaseegee Baptist Association in 1829. He is listed in the "names of messengers from the Mountain Association...Baptist ministers of Prominence" each year from 1833 to 1841. In 1836 Posey served on the inaugural committee for Mercer University in Coweta County,

Georgia.¹ A fellow preacher said of Posey in 1847, “who, that heard him preach the education sermon at Monroe, Walton county, in 1838, will ever forget it? Yet his great talents were all consecrated to the glory of God and the good of his fellow-men. Even though our abilities may be far inferior to his, with such as we have, let us ‘go and do likewise.’”² Posey continued to inspire and motivate white Baptists in former Cherokee territory, even at the very moment that thousands of “poor benighted Indians” marched to the West. But somehow, Posey maintained the status of “friend” to the Indians, at least among white communities. A Georgia newspaper said of Posey in 1889, “At the name of

¹ Cowee Baptist Church, “Cowee Baptist Church,” Cowee Baptist Church Association, <http://www.coweebaptist.org/About/ChurchHistory.asp>, (accessed June 23, 2011); *HNCB*, 2: 424-29, 272, 446; Baptist Churches in Douglasville, Georgia, “Pray’s Mill Baptist Church,” Douglasville Baptist Association, <http://praysmill.com/about-pm/visitors/history/>, (accessed June 18, 2011); Jeff Bishop, “Posey was missionary to the Cherokees,” *The Newnan Times Herald* Monday, January 4, 2010, online edition, <http://www.times-herald.com/Local/Posey-was-missionary-to-Cherokees-943101>, (accessed February 12, 2011); Stillwell, *Tuckaseegee Baptist Association, 1829-1929*, (Cullowhee, NC: Western Carolina Teacher’s College, 1929), 5-6; Abbot, “Elder Humphrey Posey,” *The Weekly Constitution*, November 17, 1889; J.C. Bryant, “Mercer University,” *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*, online edition, <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-1448>, (accessed December 19, 2010); Jeff Bishop, “Coweta History: Humphrey and Jane Posey early Mercer Supporters,” *The Newnan Times-Herald: Local*, Sunday, January 3, 2010. Cowee Baptist Church first met in a schoolhouse under Posey’s pasturing in 1828. Posey preached the first sermon for the Pray’s Mill Baptist Church congregation at the home of Ephraim Pray in Douglasville, Georgia in 1841. Posey’s close friend, Baptist missionary, preacher, and hymn collector, Jesse Mercer was “instrumental” in Mercer University’s founding. When posey’s first wife Lettice died in 1844, Humphrey Posey buried her and carried on with his work. Later that year he married Jane Stokes and moved to her estate in Newnan, Georgia. Stokes’ first husband had been a railroad magnate, and had widowed her at a relatively young age. When Jane Posey died in 1860, she donated “\$10,000 worth of Atlanta & West Point Railroad stock” to Mercer University. The manual labor farm school, with an emphasis on theology and religious music, was the ideal investment of Posey’s inheritance.

² Campbell, “Humphrey Posey 1780-1846,” Office of the Librarian of Congress.

Humphrey Posey it is said a Cherokee would weep for the love of him long after they had gone away” to the West.³

By the time of his death in 1846, Posey had become a leading elder of the regional Baptist faithful. During the last months of his life, Humphrey Posey continued to preach. His friend J. H. Campbell wrote,

in September 1846, he came forward on the Lord’s day and, with great liberty and power, performed [a Western Baptist Association missionary sermon]. It was the dying effort of a giant mind, and on the subject that lay nearest his heart [education]. Many, now living, cherish the remembrance of that sermon, and will till their latest day. The effort, however, was too much for his failing strength, for that afternoon he was attacked with a chill, which was followed by high fever. From that attack he only partially recovered; his health continued feeble, and after preaching his last sermon at Ebenezer church in Coweta county, on the second Lord’s day in December following, he was again prostrated by disease, and fell asleep in Jesus on the 28th of the month. Death had no terrors for him, but he was welcomed as God’s messenger, sent to release him from the labors of earth and introduce him to the rest and refreshment of heaven.⁴

Posey’s Baptist faith defined his conception of place in the world, but it was Posey’s relationship to the landscape and the people who lived on the land that defined his character. Throughout Posey’s life he participated in a cultural expansion that remade the Southern Appalachians. He witnessed the establishment of countless churches, schools, and meeting places from Asheville to Newnan. His stern but open-hearted brand of Baptist faith carried him successfully through an era of some of the most incredible changes on the Southern Appalachian landscape. The changes on the mountain landscape that Posey witnessed were directed by the same categorizations of the world that Posey taught and promoted. For a time, this remarkable and intelligent man helmed the development of a series of Baptist communities that still thrive today.

³ *HNCB*, 2: 542.

⁴ Campbell, “Humphrey Posey 1780-1846,” Office of the Librarian of Congress.

Evan Jones' views on the education and salvation of Cherokee children, quite the opposite of Posey, hinged on Jones' willingness to understand Cherokee categorizations of the world. He encouraged students to speak in their native tongue, and worked diligently to learn the Cherokee language and ways of thinking. Some of the first words that Evan Jones and his son John B. Jones printed in Cherokee were the very same hymns Posey had first taught at the mission. But the expression of hymns and scripture in the Cherokee language carried a different set of cultural associations that were more intimately connected to the plants, animals, and other beings of the landscape. The Cherokee hymnbook and the New Testament remain the most printed and read Cherokee language documents today. Jones and Bushyhead founded a Baptist mission in the Western Nation and developed the Keetoowah Society, which became the major force for reasserting traditional Cherokee values in tribal government during and after the Civil War.⁵

On May 24, 1838, the process of forcibly removing the Cherokees from their land began. Stockades and disembarkation points were constructed and the military presence drastically increased in just a few months. General Winfield Scott commanded the soldiers that rounded up Cherokees from Georgia to Tennessee. Cherokees were often in the middle of preparing meals and going about daily business when armed soldiers arrived and forced them toward western towns and forts where the stockades had been

⁵ Gardner, *Cherokees and Baptists in Georgia*, 96-97, 113-117; John Ross to Winfield Scott, November 7, 1838, in *The Papers of Chief John Ross, 1807-1839*, ed. Gary Moulton, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 688-689; Robert Latham Owen, "Memorial of the Keetoowah Society relating to lands of the Cherokee Indians," February 10, 1911, 1-3; Patrick N. Mingos, *Slavery in the Cherokee Nation: The Keetoowah Society and the Defining of a People, 1855-1867*, New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 35-37.

constructed. Most of the Valley Town Cherokees were driven toward Fort Butler near Columbus, Tennessee.⁶ Down to the last moment, many Cherokees did not believe they would be forced to remove to the West. Some Cherokees believed their Christian faith would allow them to remain in their homeland. But federal representatives and soldiers showed that it did not matter how Christian or civilized Cherokees were, demonstrating that Cherokee relationships to the landscape, plants, animals, and each other came out of deeply rooted values that whites did not share.⁷

U.S. Commissioners had issued a statement in December of 1837 claiming that John Ross and other Cherokee leaders had “known for more than a year that no exertion or artifice...could effect the slightest” improvement in the Cherokees’ position against removal. But Ross, Evan Jones, White Path, *Situwagee*, and many others continued to campaign and encourage the Cherokees that removal might still be avoided.⁸

In 1835, a federal dispersing agent named Charles Fenton Mercer Noland wrote in his diary, “Many reports have gone abroad prejudiced to this gentleman [Evan Jones], but I do not believe over half of them...The Indians in this region very wild [sic] and much opposed to emigration. The Missionaries exercise much influence over them.” Of the white settlers in north Georgia and western North Carolina Noland wrote,

⁶ William G. McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees: Evan and John B. Jones*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 171-173; Lewis Ross to John Ross, April 20, 1838, and John Ross to Martin Van Buren, April n.d., 1838 in *PCJR*, 1: 632-635.

⁷ McLoughlin, *Champions of the Cherokees*, 172-173; Thomas, “Cherokee Values and World View,” 23-24, 18-21.

⁸ U.S. Commissioners to the chiefs, Head-Men and People of the Cherokee Nation, December 28, 1837 in *The Payne-Butrick Papers, vol. Five*, ed. William Anderson, et. al., Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 287; Evan Jones to John Ross, March 20, 1838 in *PCJR*, 614-615; James Mooney, *History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees (HMSFC)*, (Fairview NC: Historical Images, 1992), 127-130.

so far as my observation [white pioneer settlers] are poor and lazy, dirty and slothful...their only aim is to dispossess the Indians of their lands. Tricks and dishonesty in all its distorted forms is resorted to effect their purpose...with shame I have to confess [as a government agent] aiding and abetting these vultures in human form, to draw the last drop of blood in the veins of these unfortunate [Cherokee].⁹

The rough white settlers often followed the soldiers around and pillaged Cherokee homes and settlements before the Cherokees were even marched out of sight. Some Cherokees managed to hide in the mountains or find sanctuary among the Qualla boundary Cherokees who had nominally become US Citizens in 1819. Ross hoped to negotiate a Treaty for the “safe and comfortable conducting of the several detachments” to the West. By October of 1838, Ross and Scott had reached a general agreement about the entire ugly process. Elijah Hicks, Jesse Bushyhead, *Situwagee*, and James Wafford were among the twelve detachment leaders “all on the line of March for the West” by November 7 without armed military escort. Thousands would die on the way, including White Path and John Ross’s wife.¹⁰

Evan Jones wrote a series of letters to John Howard Payne from January to July of 1839 describing the vicious murders and murder attempts in the Western Nation. Major Ridge, Elias Boudinot and most of the Treaty Party were killed, in accordance with ancient Cherokee traditions of blood vengeance, while plots against Ross and Jones were

⁹ Lt. Charles Fenton Mercer Noland, *Noland’s Cherokee Diary: A U.S. Soldier’s Story from Inside the Cherokee Nation*. ed. Mildred E. Whitmire, (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1990), 14, 19. Noland was assigned to guide Reverend J.F. Schermerhorn around the Cherokee country as the reverend negotiated the final removal treaty. Noland resigned his post in 1837 before having to participate in the Cherokees’ forced removal.

¹⁰ John Ross to Winfield Scott, July 23, 27, November 7, 9, 12, 15, December 17, 1838, in *PCJR*, 650-651, 688-693; *HMSFC*, 132-133.

averted.¹¹ The string of violent events that resulted from the forced removal lasted well into the 1840's, while the violence indirectly associated with removal arguably still continues to this day. The forced uprooting of most of Cherokee society and culture from its place in the Southern Appalachians remains one of the most tragic and violent stains on the United States of America's history.

The events of the early nineteenth century were crucial in defining American relationships to the southern mountain landscape, but the previously established standards of Cherokee society have remained viable and important as well. The beliefs, ideas, and charismatic personalities of men like Charles Hicks, Humphrey Posey, Evan Jones, and Jesse Bushyhead played important roles in shaping Southern Appalachian attitudes and relationships to the landscape, although removal was devastating to the potential of a sustained Cherokee presence.

Today, conceptions of the landscapes that are home to southern Americans are almost entirely based on commodification of resources and other economic determinants. Deeper ecological relationships are most often dismissed as "tree-hugging" environmentalism or classified as sentimental spirituality out of touch with "modern times". But with the massive increase in funds available to the Eastern Band of Cherokees due to Harrah's Casino, Cherokees in the East have established numerous initiatives to revitalize their distinct culture and society. Tourism dollars are the major form of cash flow in western North Carolina, as they have been for several decades, but the Cherokee are now directing an incredible influx of money toward re-empowering

¹¹ Evan Jones to John Howard Payne, January 26, 1839, June 24, 1839, July 22, 1839, and July 31, 1839 from the Western Nation in *PBB*, 5: 292-298, 299-302.

Cherokee-ness and instilling pride in the distinct language and ways of thinking that have lived on the mountain landscape for thousands of years.

In tune with Cherokee cultural revitalization, ways of thinking about human and ecological health are beginning to change. Concepts such as *tohi* may have a strong presence on the mountain landscape once again. But ideological changes are slow to develop and spread. The necessity of an historical foundation on which to stabilize these ideologies remains relatively undeveloped, especially among the region's white population. Through discovering the history of white Baptists and Cherokees and the tense but sustained relationships between disparate groups, a strong foothold for shifting ways of thinking about human and ecological relationships can be made.

The landscape-based categorizations of the world that the Cherokee held to for centuries have not fully vanished. The ecological world of the Southern Appalachian mountains is very different, having been totally altered in the past two hundred and fifty years. But ways of thinking and being in the world remain acutely distinct for many Cherokee people. Plants, animals and sacred sites remain sources of power and revelation. Traditions of knowledge acquisition and knowledge sharing remain strong in some Cherokee communities. Older Cherokee categorizations of the world are not invalid or unfeasible. I argue that Cherokee categorizations and eco-centric worldviews can have a regenerative effect on the landscapes on which human populations live, creating healthier and more diverse ecologies and ways of thinking in which humanity sustains awareness of place, purpose, and responsibility.

Revitalizing conceptions of human living that include ecological relationships will take patience and careful deliberation, practices of American society that Cherokee

history shows are weak. But as we look for new ways of talking about human relationships with the ecosystems in which we live, discovering viable resolutions and ideas from the past are a crucial aspect of our future. It is the socially functioning set of cultural values and awareness of place in ecological relationships that shapes the health of the landscapes on which we live. Humanity is inescapably a part of the ecosystems and diversity of America's landscapes and the health of those landscapes directly affects the health of the people living there. Existing ecological relationships are not static. Options for resolving the deepening crises of human ecologies are not finite or confined to set dichotomies and categories. Societies of the past have found successful ways to balance their own lives with the multitude of lives around them and through study and discussion of those histories we can develop awareness and balance in our worldview that promotes ecological health and diversity.

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