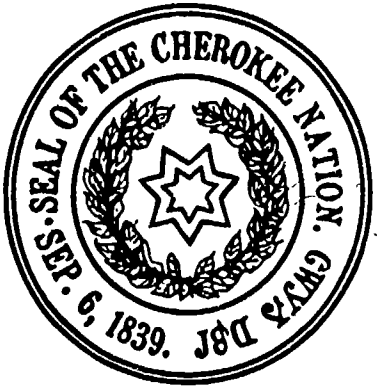
SEAL OF THE CHEROKEE NATION.
SEP. 6, 1839.

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 108 836 RC 008 645

TITLE	Indians of North Carolina.
INSTITUTION	Bureau of Indian Affairs (Dept. of Interior), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	72
NOTE	25p.; For related document, see ED 021 677
AVAILABLE FROM	Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (Stock No. 2402-0028; $0.35)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*American Indians; *Cultural Background; *Economic Progress; Education; Federal Aid; Health Services; Historical Reviews; Housing; Industry; *Modern History; *Reservations (Indian); Tourism; United States History
IDENTIFIERS	BIA; Bureau of Indian Affairs; *Cherokees; North Carolina

ABSTRACT

Published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, this brief booklet on the historical development of the Cherokee Nation emphasizes the Tribe's relationship with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and its improved economy. Citing tourism as the major tribal industry, tribal enterprises are named and described (a 61 unit motor court in existence since 1946, fishing waters, a campground of some 75 units, and picnic facilities). Designated the second largest source of income, reservation factories are also described in some detail (the manufacturing of moccasins, American Indian souvenirs, quilts, and hair accessories). Reduction of the number of individuals living in substandard housing (less than 60 percent as of 1972), is presented as evidence of improved housing efforts on the reservation, while a 26-bed hospital and almost total sanitation services (90 percent) serve as evidence of improved health services. A reservation map and numerous pictures supplement this descriptive report on the 56,000 acre Cherokee Reservation and its contributions to the U.S. today. (JC)

NORTE CAROLINA

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NORTH
CAROLINA


SEAL OF THE CHEROKEE NATION.
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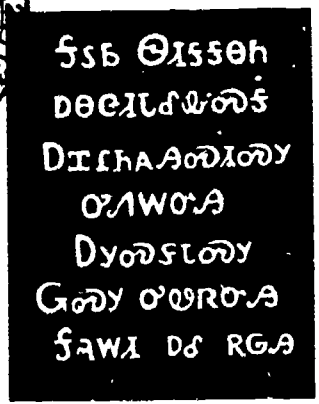


"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
from whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord,
which made heaven and earth."

—Psalms 121:1-2
(Translation from the Cherokee)

This passage from the Bible has particular meaning to the Eastern Band of Cherokees in North Carolina whose ancestors took refuge in the mountains during forced removal of the tribe to Oklahoma. That was in 1838. The descendants of those refugees now number 5,000 people who live on the Cherokee Indian Reservation—a mountainous tract in western North Carolina of more than 56,000 acres.

Always an industrious people, the Cherokees today are engaged in much the same occupations as their fellow Americans. They work in manufacturing plants, in construction activities, and do handwork, garden, and cut timber. And they cater to five million tourists each year. They are anxious to welcome even more.

INDIANS OF NORTH CAROLINA

THE CHEROKEE'S DESOTO MET

The Cherokee called themselves "Yun-ya-Wiya" or "the real people." Before the white man entered the new world they had the mightiest empire of all the southeastern Indian tribes. They built villages on the banks of streams in what is now parts of North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina.

Cherokee built their homes by placing large posts upright two or three feet apart. They set smaller posts between these, then interwove twigs or split canes. The result was basket-like walls, which they plastered over with grass mixed in smooth clay. Roofs they made similarly but covered with bark or thatch.

They laid fires in a basin in the center of the floor inside the house. Smoke from them escaped through a hole in the roof that had a diameter of about three inches.

The Cherokee of these times slept in beds not unlike their white counterparts, and used animal skins as coverlets. They learned to spin various types of animal hair and bark fibers into thread and to weave cloth from it.

They often surrounded their villages with stockades to enclose homes, gardens, and meeting grounds. The women were the gardeners, and came with the passage of time to realize that the largest seeds from the previous year's crop would grow the best plants in the years to come.

The Cherokee people had a social structure of seven recognized clans: Bird, Paint, Deer, Wolf, Blue, Long Hair, and Wild Potato. Each was represented in the tribal civil council by a counselor or counselors. Members of a clan were considered brothers and sisters and could not marry one another.

The chiefs of the Cherokee were selected from one of the clans. Their office could not be inherited. There were different governmental organizations for peace and war. Also important to the tribe were medicine men and honored women, women who shared in the government.

Hernando DeSoto and his men came into the Cherokee's mountain fastness in search of gold in 1540, followed by several other parties of Spaniards. The first treaty between the British and the Cherokee was signed in 1684.

Quite often the Cherokee joined the English in wars against their enemy Indian tribes. Such an alliance forced

the Tuscaroras out of the Carolinas in the early 18th Century and into New York State. Another enemy, smallpox, appeared in 1738 and killed half the tribe. Then, because the Cherokee refused to join in a great massacre of the whites, the Creeks burned and sacked Cherokee villages until the end of the Century.

The frontiersmen of the 18th Century feared the Indians and treated them with animosity. In three different treaties, they took from the Cherokee all their hunting grounds between the Cumberland and Kentucky Rivers. By the time of the American Revolution, the Indians were firmly aligned against the frontier colonists and fought shoulder to shoulder with the British. But the defeat of the British by the mountain men at King's Mountain, South Carolina, left the Cherokee at the mercy of the frontier Americans.

Tribe Decided to Modernize

As the 19th Century began, the Cherokee subjected themselves to an intensive stocktaking. Despite war, disease, and dislocation, they still had about 43,000 square miles of land (including that of the present Reservation). But they realized both the futility of war and the inadequacy of their primitive technology to deal with the stronger one of the white man. With the considerable aid of white Christian missionaries among them, they embarked upon a period of recovery and rebuilding that was to advance them to the top rank of America's Indians.

John Ross, as he looked in 1858 while he was in Washington, D.C. as Principal Chief of the United Cherokee Nation.
(PHOTO: SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

Sequoyah, one of the most brilliant figures in the annals of the American Indian, was born in Tennessee about 1760, the son of a white trader and a Cherokee woman of mixed blood. He grew up in the tribe, was a hunter and fur trader until permanently crippled in a hunting accident. Although he never attended school, Sequoyah learned to read and write by studying mission-school primers. By 1821, he had devised a system of writing suitable to Cherokee, the only case in American Indian records of a writing method invented without white prompting. Sequoyah carried his language system far beyond the Eastern Band to Cherokees living in the west. He died in Mexico at the age of 83.
(PHOTO: SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).

The tribe formed first a Cherokee National Council and in 1820, established the Cherokee Nation, a republican form of government with a 32-member unicameral legislature, with its capital at New Echota, Georgia. A constitution and code of law followed in 1827. Executive power was vested in a principal chief, the first of whom was the great John Ross, who was to be leader of the Cherokee Nation for 40 years.

Invention and development of a complete Cherokee syllabary by Sequoyah led to the tribe's most notable accomplishment during its brief "golden age;" the Cherokees made themselves a literate people. In 1825, an educated Cherokee began to translate the Bible into Cherokee. Another educated Cherokee was editor-in-chief of a newspaper printed

at New Echota, Georgia in both English and Cherokee. It was called *The Phoenix*.

But the tribe, already living in greatly reduced space, was faced with intensified threats to its land. The settlers continued to pour in. Gold was discovered in 1828 on the edge of Cherokee territory. The Cherokee had been allies of the British against the colonists. It all added up the cry for removal that began somewhat mufflled but was gradually intensified. By 1830, removal had become national policy.

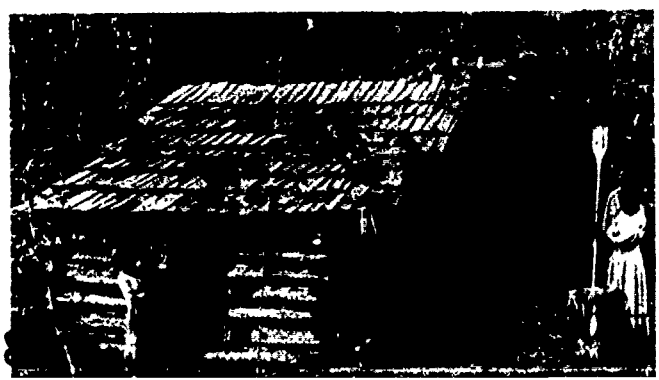
Exodus Along Trail of Tears

The Cherokees' struggle for protection under Federal guarantees was lost in December 1835 with the signing of an agreement under which the entire tribe would move beyond the Mississippi in exchange for land there and payment of $5 million. The Treaty for New Echota had not been negotiated by officials of the Cherokee Nation—only by a few members of the tribe. Most of the tribe would not accept it. The Federal Government, however, considered it binding. The Cherokees resisted for 2 years but Federal troops were finally called in to round up the entire population for removal.

There followed the tragic time in Cherokee history known, even today, as "The Trail of Tears." About 14,000 Cherokee began the 800-mile long journey on foot to Indian territory in what is now Oklahoma. Almost one-fourth died during the terrible hardships and suffering of the 6-month long ordeal. The Government's removal action was deplored by many Americans of the day. Said Daniel Webster, "There is a strong and growing feeling in the country that great wrong has been done to the Cherokee by the Treaty of New Echota."

Thus Cherokee tribal jurisdiction over its inherited land in North Carolina came to an end. Two generations were to pass before it was in some measure regained.

Cherokee cabin home of the 1880's on Qualla Reservation, Swain and Jackson Counties, North Carolina. Photographer was James Mooney, a great American ethnologist of the time and an authority on the Cherokee Tribe.
(PHOTO: SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION).



Left behind were scattered Cherokee who were legally entitled to remain because the Treaty of New Echota provided that such heads of Cherokee families as desired to remain within the States of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama, subject to the laws of those States and qualified to become useful citizens should be entitled to a pre-emption rate of 160 acres at the minimum Congress price, to include their improvements. Others remained behind as fugitives. By supplementary articles, this pre-emption was declared void and article 12 was amended to provide merely that such Cherokees as were adverse to removal and desired to become citizens of the States where they resided, if qualified to take care of themselves and their property, should receive their proportion of all the personal benefits accuring under the Treaty of New Echota "for claims, improvements and per capita." A considerable greater number were allowed to remain under that article. The number remaining in North Carolina in 1838 was estimated at between 1,100 and 1,200. By 1849 the number had increased to 2,133.

Struggling for homes and official acceptance, the Cherokee who refused to leave North Carolina turned for help to a white trader, Col. William Holland Thomas. To Thomas the Eastern Cherokee owe their existence as a people. For 50 years he was to be intimately connected with their history.

Recognition and Protection

The first recognition by the Government of the United States of the rights of the Indian who remained in North Carolina was in an act of July 23, 1848, that Thomas helped get passed, which provided that the number and names of the Cherokee in North Carolina after the Treaty of New Echota be ascertained and funds set apart for them. The purpose of the fund was so that whenever this group desired to remove west of the Mississippi it could do so. With funds given the Cherokee under this act and with other moneys Thomas purchased the lands on which they lived and made contracts for the purchase of the Qualla Boundary, the present reservation of the Eastern Band of Cherokee, comprising 50,000 acres or more.

Since North Carolina did not recognize Indians as landowners, Thomas bought lands for the North Carolina Cherokee in his own name. He divided them into five districts and gave them the names they still have: Bird Town, Paint Town, Wolf Town, Yellow Hill, and Big Cove. (The first three are names of Cherokee clans).

By North Carolina statute of 1866, the Eastern Band of Cherokees acquired with the approval of the United States permission to remain permanently in that State. Their

economic status was thus practically restored to what it was prior to the Treaty of New Echota.

In 1868, the Congress recognized this by providing that the Secretary of the Interior cause a new roll or census to be made of the North Carolina or Eastern Cherokees, and that thereafter the Secretary of the Interior cause the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to take the same supervisory charge of the Eastern Band of North Carolina Cherokees as of other tribes of Indians.

Thomas had intended to put the lands he had purchased for the Cherokee in their hands when they were finally paid for and the right of all interested parties could be determined. But illness and age intervened. In the meantime, a creditor of Thomas had the land sold and purchased it, entering into a contract with the Indians which allowed them to redeem the land upon paying the balance due by Thomas. In an effort to establish the rights of the Indians in the matter the Congress in 1870 authorized suit to be instituted against Thomas and his creditor. Money was finally appropriated by the Congress in 1875 that enabled the Indians to pay off Thomas' creditor and after that was done the deed was placed in the hands of the Secretary of the Interior for the use and benefit of the Indians.

In 1889, the Cherokee were given by the legislature of North Carolina the corporate charter which authorized them under the name Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to exercise the powers of a corporation under the laws of North Carolina.

Deed to the lands held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior then became conveyed to the corporation in 1925, by petition of the tribal council.

Today the Eastern Band of Cherokee has a federally recognized degree of self-government under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.

OTHER INDIAN GROUPS

Indians other than the Cherokee live in North Carolina but they are without a special relationship to the Federal Government. These include an estimated 31,000 Lumbee Indians who live in Robeson and adjoining counties, 2,000 Haliwa Indians in Halifax and Warren Counties, an estimated 2,000 Indians in Waccamaw communities in Columbus and Brunswick Counties, and an estimated 3,000 Coharie Indians in Sampson and adjoining Counties. Questions concerning these groups should be addressed to the Executive Director, North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, Lumbee Regional Development Association, P.O. Box 637, Pembroke, North Carolina 28372.

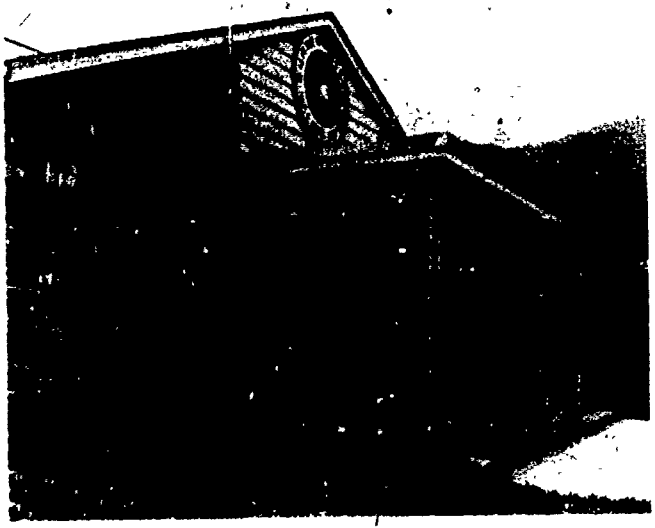
THE EASTERN CHEROKEES TODAY

About 5,000 members of the Eastern Cherokee Band live today in North Carolina, most of them on or adjacent to the 56,500 acre Cherokee Reservation in the western part of the State. The main portion of the reservation is called Qualla Boundary. A smaller part, known as the 3,200 acre tract, is to the south. Small pieces of trust land are in Graham and Cherokee counties, some 50 miles to the Southwest of the two larger land areas.

The Cherokee, like other Indians, are citizens of the State and the Nation in every respect, but they are governed by an elected 12 member tribal council and an executive committee that includes a Principal Chief, Vice Chief, and an Executive Advisor. The tribe has its own municipal department supported by a tribal sales levy (tax). This includes a police, fire, and sanitation department. Qualla Boundary is one of the few rural areas in the Nation that has regular free garbage pickup for all of its residents.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs of the United States Department of the Interior has had a special relationship with the Eastern Band of Cherokee since the 1870's, and has been trustee of their lands following Congressional action in 1924. As such, it has played a large part in Cherokee tribal

Noah Powell, Principal Chief, Eastern Band of Cherokee, at his desk in the tribal office.



Headquarters of the Cherokee Tribe, with the seal of the Eastern Band of Cherokee over the entrance.

development. Working in close harmony with the tribal officials, the BIA conducts many programs on the reservation to help the Band in its continued progress as one of the most modern Indian groups in the United States today. It also helps the tribe assume ever-greater rights and responsibilities towards managing and governing their own affairs.

Community Clubs of Cherokee were originally based on election townships sending representatives to the Tribal Council. Today the officers of the seven clubs form a Cherokee Community Club Council that advises the Cherokee Tribal Council. Each Community Club has a clubhouse and interests in projects that lead to community improvement. Technical support for these organizations comes from the staff of the Agricultural Extension Service which is funded by BIA under contract with North Carolina State University.

An unusual organization in the community is the Cherokee Boys Club., Inc. Originally a high school organization that provided practical leadership training, it has now become an independent group that operates a home for dependent Cherokee boys and girls, owns more than 20 school buses and operates them to serve the Cherokee school, contracts to pick up trash and garbage in the community. It also serves lunch to 1,250 Cherokee students, and performs a variety of other services.

Economy Improving

The Cherokee economy is improving each year. Family incomes have risen, as well as bank deposits and tribal sales

tax collections. These higher revenues have, in turn, contributed to business expansion and community improvements.

Family income on the reservation is slightly over 60 percent of the national average. However, in many cases it would not be this high were it not for the fact that several members of the same family work. Summer unemployment may be as low as 1 percent, but during the winter it may increase to 15 or 20 percent

This reflects the fact that the principal industry among the North Carolina Cherokee.

This industry at Cherokee has its roots in the creation of nearby Great Smoke Mountain National Park, which was created in the 1930's. But it was not until after World War II that it made a major impact on the Indian Reservation.

Most Businesses Serve Tourists

Of the 175 businesses operating at Cherokee today, the majority serve the tourist. About two-thirds are owned and operated by members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee, and several are owned by the Tribe itself. The tribally-owned enterprises include:

Boundary Tree Lodge, a 61 unit motor court owned by the Eastern Band of Cherokee, has been in existence since 1946.

Boundary Tree Lodge, a 61-unit motor court that has been in existence since 1946 and has associated with it two restaurants and a service station.

Tribal Fish Management Enterprise, which stocks certain designated Reservation waters with legal-size trout, collects fishing permit and license fees from tourists, enforces fishing regulations, and attempts to prevent pollution and keep the banks along Enterprise waters free of litter. The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of the Interior, supplies without cost the fish that are stocked.

Mingo Falls, a campground of about 75 units.

Tribal Picnic Operation, on the Oconaluftee River, across from the Cherokee Post Office, which supplies picnic facilities to people going through the Cherokee Reservation.

Second to tourism in importance to the reservation economy is industry. About 400 Cherokee are employed in factories on the reservation, most of which have located there because of efforts made by the tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Their combined annual payroll is $1,500,000. These efforts include the extension of revolving credit funds of the BIA and tribal funds. The three largest employers of Cherokee are:

Saddlecraft, Inc., which located at Cherokee in 1956. This company manufactures Indian moccasins and other souvenirs

relating to the Indian image, and its products bear the legend "made by the Cherokees." It began operations at the site of an old dairy barn no longer used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and, encouraged by tribal leadership, has grown from the employer of 6 persons to 200, close to 100 percent of which are Cherokee.

A quilting operation was begun by the Harn Corporation in 1959 in a plant financed through a combination of revolving credit funds of the BIA and Cherokee Tribal Treasury Funds. It has been purchased by White Shield of Carolina, Inc. The company employs 140 persons, about 100 of which are members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee and has expressed a desire to expand its operation.

Vassar Corporation, which began operation in 1964. It manufactures a variety of women's hair accessories and has performed considerable amount of contract sewing of several articles of clothing. It employs about 80 Cherokee Indians.

Since the Qualla Housing Authority came into being in 1962, housing construction has been an important industry on the Cherokee lands. The Cherokee High School when under construction as well as the continuing growth of new businesses, have also contributed to emp'oyment opportunities in the construction industry.

Handicrafts Supplemental

Handicrafts, gardening, and timber harvesting supply supplemental income to the Cherokee people. Handicrafts are sold through the Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc., and other outlets. They reach their highest stage of development in basketry and woodcarving, but there is also some pottery and beadwork.

Farming is limited to narrow strips along waterways and adjoining lower hill slopes and includes vegetable gardens, pigs, chickens, and cattle that supplement Cherokee income and diet. There is today no single full-time Cherokee farm family.

A few Cherokee support themselves by working in reservation forests, which are harvested on a sustained-yield basis. More than 1½ million board feet of timber are sold by the tribe each year to individual Cherokees, who in turn market sawlogs and other forest products to nearby industries.

Cherokee has a bank and a local credit union. The Cherokee Tribal Council created an official weekly tribal newspaper, *The Cherokee One Feather* in the mid 1960's. Qualla Civic Center was completed in 1970 under a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and local funds. It includes a library.

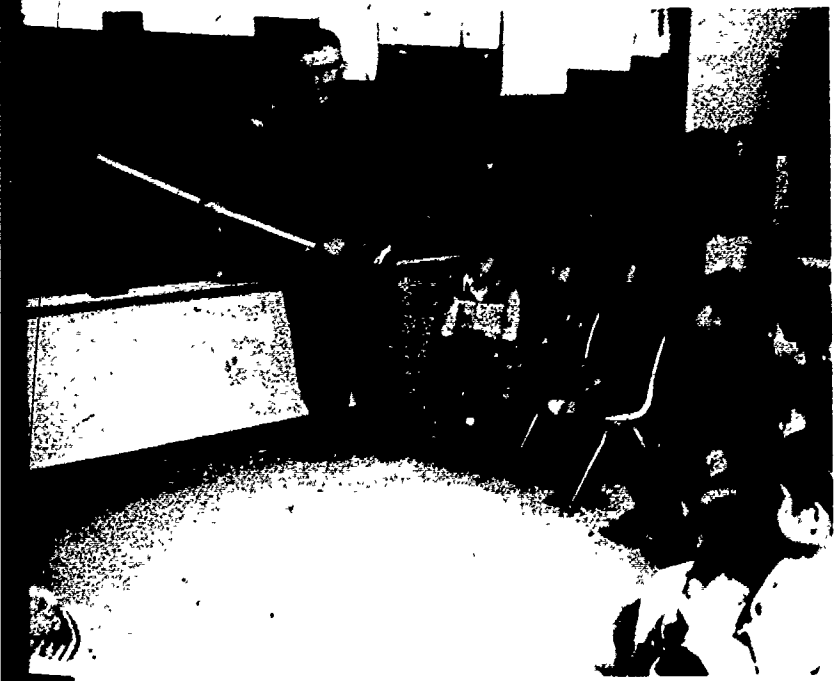
The Bureau of Indian Affairs helps Cherokees find jobs on or near the Reservation, as well as in distant industrial areas if that is the individual's wish. The Bureau also sponsors an on-the-job training program in several local industries, and provides institutional vocational training for qualified adults. The Bureau's most recent vocational training effort is the formation of an Indian Action Teams that will help develop engineering technicians, survey crews, and construction inspectors.

Saddlecraft, Inc., manufactures Indian moccasins and other souvenirs relating to the Indian image. Its products bear the legend "made by the Cherokees." Here a Cherokee woman works on a moccasin heel.

Children Go To BIA Schools

Cherokee children today attend largely Bureau operated schools at Cherokee, being able to attend grades kindergarten through 12. In addition, Day Care Centers are sponsored by the Qualla Boundary Community Action Program in Big Cove, Birdtown, Soco, and Snowbird communities for children aged 2 to 5.

Dedicated in 1972 is a new $1.2 million high school. It includes an auditorium as well as units for academic



and vocational courses. In 1971–72, 35 young Cherokee people were enrolled in colleges and universities. A basic adult education program has helped about 60 Cherokee men and women receive high school equivalency certificates from the State of North Carolina over the past 3 years.

Housing Improving

The Qualla Housing Authority came into being in 1962. At the same time, legal arrangements were made to enable leasehold mortgages on Cherokee land to be established as collateral for financing of new housing and also housing improvements. Construction began on 36 units of rental housing made available for use in 1966.

In 1967, a mutual help housing program was established. Under this, 180 units have been constructed. Funding for additional homes has been approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. In 1968, funds first became available for a home improvement program, of benefit primarily to the elderly, handicapped, widowed, and others unable to participate in the mutual-help program.

Kindergarten class of a Bureau of Indian Affairs school learns the Cherokee language.

Durir ast 5 years, more than 400 homes have been constr r significantly improved. The number of indivdu ve in substandard housing is reduced to somewhere below 60 percent. If progress is maintained at this pace, the large majority of Cherokee will be in adequate housing by 1976. The number of mobile homes in use is increasing.

Electric service is available to all Cherokee families who wish it, and telephone service is available in most areas.

Health Services Available

The Indian Health Service of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare operated a 26-bed hospital on the reservation. Today nearly 90 percent of all Cherokee homes have safe water and septic tanks as compared to less than 10 percent in 1956.

Various North Carolina counties give help to Cherokee needy. Social Security Administration and Veterans Administration also provides benefits in certain cases. The North Carolina Employment Security Commission provides unemployment compensation, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs gives general financial assistance for individuals in need and not eligible for help from other resources.

Prospective Cherokee Indian homeowners work together to build walls for one of their houses at a warehouse on the Reservation.

TOURIST ATTRACTION

Cherokee and its environs is enjoyed by some 5 million tourists each year. It is the Federal Indian reservation closest to large Eastern centers of population and one of the few reservations in the South.

Easily accessible by good paved roads, the reservation offers mountain scenery, mild climates, excellent trout streams, and miles of inviting trails for the naturalist, hiker, and horseback rider.

Throughout the reservation and adjacent counties are plentiful facilities for camping and picnicking. There are about 16 campgrounds at Cherokee alone. Nearby lakes beckon for swimming, fishing, boating, wading, and water skiing.

Cherokee's 32 miles of clear mountain streams provide some of the best trout fishing in the southeast. Weekly throughout the season (April-October), the Cherokee stock their waters with brown, brook, and rainbow trout of legal size. Daily fishing permits and North Carolina fishing licenses are available at numerous locations.

A couple examine their catch in Cherokee waters. Streams on the reservation are stocked by Tribal Fish Management Enterprise with fish from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

About 35 motels and cottages on the reservation, plus additional ones immediately adjacent, assure ample accommodations. Trailer facilities are also available. The reservation has a variety of restaurants, barber and beauty shops, grocery stores, laundromats, and service stations, most of which are owned and operated by individual tribal members.

In addition to scenery and recreation, Cherokee offers the special attraction of reservation Indian life and activities. The Cherokee Historical Association sponsors three programs of cultural and entertainment importance. This organization is made up of leading citizens of the North Carolina including some members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee and has been in existence since 1949. Best known of its efforts is the outdoor drama "Unto These Hills" which portrays the history of the Cherokee people.

Oconaluftee Indian Village, a second program, depicts traditional Cherokee Indian life as it was in the 18th Century. Cherokees demonstrate how they made pottery and their weapons at that time, show several houses of the period, and their traditional council house and amphitheater. The Museum of the Cherokee Indian is another Association project.

Additional attractions include Frontierland, The Cyclorama, and Santa Land among others. At Frontierland


QUALLA
ARTS AND
CRAFTS
MUTUAL INC
WOOD CARVING
BASKETS
WEAVING
POTTERY

tourists see a reconstructed frontier town and fort. Santa Land features Christmas year 'round.

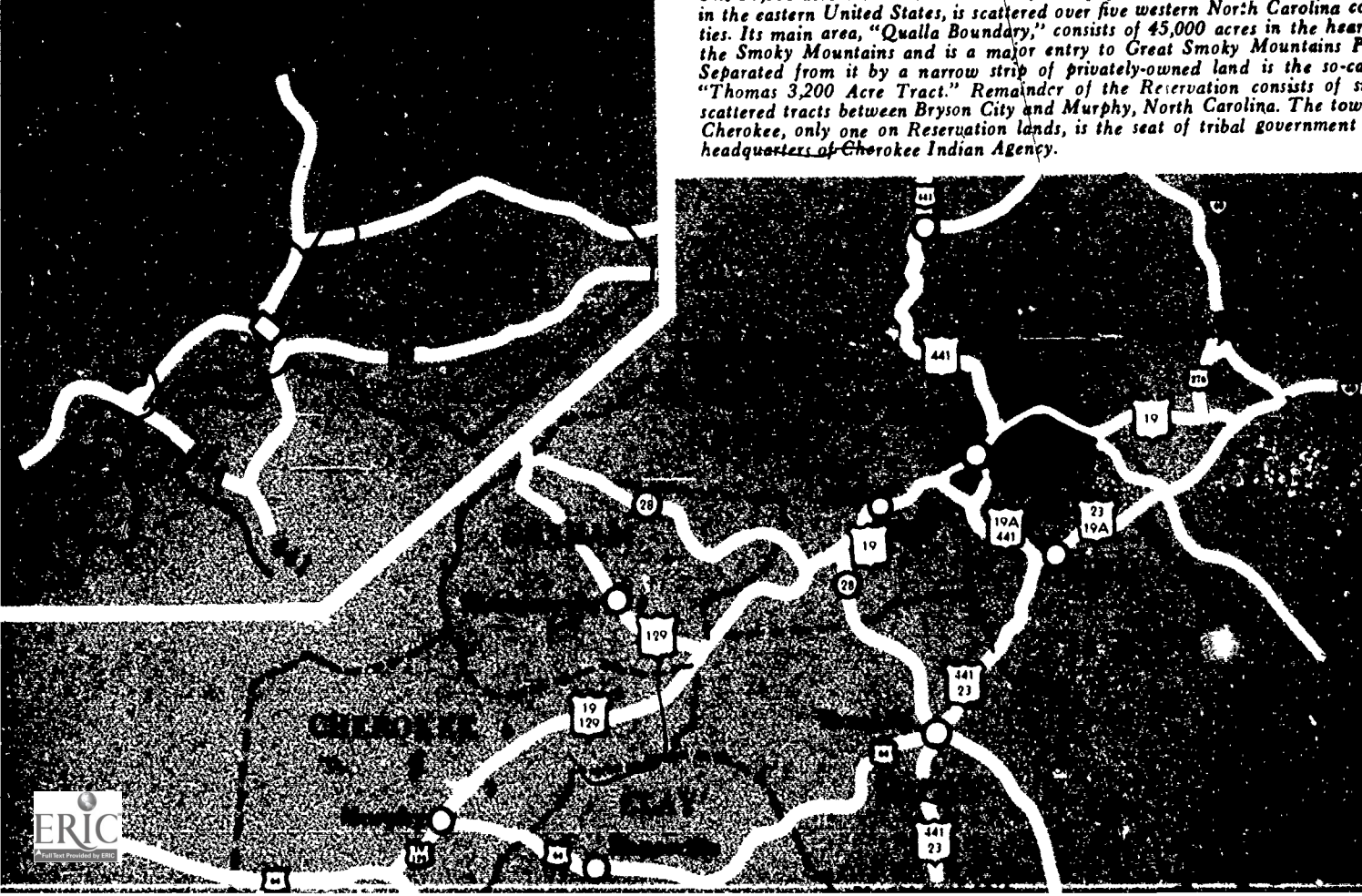
Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc., a tribal cooperative and official display and marketing center for Cherokee Indian crafts that originated 26 years ago operates a shop of interests to both the serious collector of Indian art objects and the tourist in search of small mementos. It deals only in authentic Indian handicraft, largely Cherokee. Baskets in the shop are made of white oak, river cane, and honeysuckle. Woodcarvings are made from local woods and express feeling for animals and birds of the area. Beadwork is of the graceful flower motifs typical of Eastern woodlands Indians.

Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc., a tribal cooperative and official display and marketing center for Cherokee Indian arts and crafts (Left).

A basket weaver weaves the characteristic basket of the Cherokee Indians on the reservation. Craft work is an important source of employment (Right).

A scene from the annual pageant at Cherokee, North Carolina, on the Indian Reservation entitled "Unto These Hills," on page 20.

☆U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1972 O—472-350



in the eastern United States, is scattered over five western North Carolina co
ties. Its main area, "Qualla Boundary," consists of 45,000 acres in the hear
the Smoky Mountains and is a major entry to Great Smoky Mountains P
Separated from it by a narrow strip of privately-owned land is the so-ca
"Thomas 3,200 Acre Tract." Remainder of the Reservation consists of s
scattered tracts between Bryson City and Murphy, North Carolina. The tow
Cherokee, only one on Reservation lands, is the seat of tribal government
headquarters of Cherokee Indian Agency.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources".

The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

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