

Cherokee History

*as you've
never heard it*

*published by the
United Keetoowah Band
of Cherokee Indians
in Oklahoma*



“We shall never give up Keetoowah until all of us join hands and fall to the ground. And if anything arises to destroy Keetoowah, we shall all flock together to head it off with all our power.”

- Keetoowah Constitution and Bylaws, 1914

“Back in Georgia from whence the Cherokees originally migrated to the Indian Territory in 1838 and 1839, the old Keetoowah group was dying out as early as 1835,” (Tulsa Tribune, Dec. 28, 1928) stated John L. Springston. Springston had served as a clerk and court reporter in the Saline District before Oklahoma statehood and was a Keetoowah.

This narrative will help the reader understand the Keetoowahs before 1835, as well as after, explaining why the disappearance from Georgia leading to today’s location in northeastern Oklahoma. The spellings “Keetoowah” and “Kituwah” will be used interchangeably.

Origin of the Kituwah

In the early 1900’s, anthropologists noted that on ceremonial occasions, Cherokees frequently speak of themselves as ‘Kituhwagi,’ (James Mooney, Myths of the Cherokees, 19th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington Government Printing Office, 1900, pg. 15) but the origin goes back to the beginning of time. The fact that the name Kituwah has always had a special significance to the Cherokee full-bloods has been ignored by many, and it is often looked at as a recent name given to a particular society, and later adopted by a tribe. This is not true; the name Kituwah being the true name of the Cherokee people, a name given directly from the Creator.

Legends of the Kituwah people say that the name was given after seven of the wisest men of the ancient Cherokees went to the highest peak and fasted for seven days and nights, asking the Creator for guidance. This peak is known today as “Clingman’s Dome.” On the seventh night of their fast, the Creator told them, “You shall be Kituwah.” (*Benny Smith, The Keetoowah Society of Cherokee Indians, Masters Dissertation, Northwestern State College, Alva, OK, 1967*)

Former Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' Chief Dugan confirms this, "One name for the tribe is 'people of Kituwah'." (*Where Myth Meets Reality*, *Washington Post*, Sept. 13, 2004)

The 1859 Constitution of the Keetoowahs stated very eloquently, "...we began to study and investigate the way our nation was going on, so much different from the long past history of our Keetoowah forefathers who loved and lived as free people and had never surrendered to anybody; they just loved one another for they were just like one family, just as if they had been raised from one family."

Additionally, the Keetoowahs have always been known to be the most traditional and conservative of the Cherokee, holding on to the old ways of the full-blood Cherokee. Legends say that if these ways ever discontinue, the Cherokee will be no more. This has been spoken about by contemporary Kituwah spiritual leaders, who say that the people themselves will not die physically, but it will mean that they will be the same as the non-Indian. "The Sacred Fire of the Keetoowah is said to have burned since the morning of creation. Keetoowahs are the keepers of Cherokee tradition," said Cherokee Senator George Waters from Vian. (*Keetoowah-The Eternal Fire*, Maggie Culver Fry, *Oklahoma Today Magazine*, Vol. 14, 1964)

Original Home

Kituwah Mound, located near what is present-day Bryson City, North Carolina, is understood as the "mother town" and the place where the Creator gave the laws and first fire to the people. The Eastern Band cultural office reports that "This place wasn't just a town, this was the mother town, the place where the Cherokee began."

The Kituwah People originally lived in the southeastern part of the present-day United States, on lands forming present-day Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina.

Archeologists say that Keetoowah/Cherokee families began migrating to a new home in Arkansas by the late 1790's. (*ATU Research Station, University of Arkansas*).

Relocation

In 1808, a delegation of Cherokees from the upper and lower towns of the Cherokee nation went to Washington D.C. to inform the President of the United States that not all Cherokee people wanted to pursue what was deemed a 'civilized' life. The delegation requested the President divide the upper towns,

whose people wanted to establish a regular government, from the lower towns who wanted to continue living traditionally. On January 9, 1809, the President of the United States allowed the lower towns to send an exploring party to find suitable lands on the Arkansas and White Rivers. Seven of the most trusted men explored locations both in what is now Western Arkansas and also Northeastern Oklahoma. The people of the lower towns desired to remove across the Mississippi to this area, onto vacant lands within the United States so that they might continue the traditional Cherokee life.

In 1817, the United States ceded such lands to the Kituwah people (also known as Old Settlers, or Western Cherokee) in exchange for a portion of the Cherokee lands they had occupied and were entitled to in the East. As many as 4,000 Kituwah Old Settlers came. (*ATU Research Station, University of Arkansas*) The Treaty of 1817 with the United States exchanged lands back East for lands in Arkansas. This gained the Keetoowahs a definite title to a territory — what is called today a ‘Land Base.’

In 1819, the naturalist Thomas Nutall ascended the Arkansas River and gave the following description of the settlements:

“...both banks of the river, as we proceeded, were lined with the houses and farms of the Cherokee, and though their dress was a mixture of indigenous and European taste, yet in their houses, which are decently furnished, and in their farms, which were well fenced and stocked with cattle, we perceive a happy approach toward civilization. Their numerous families, also, well fed and clothed, argue a popitious progress in their population. Their superior industry either as hunters or farmers proes the value of property among them, and they are no longer strangers to avarice and the distinctions created by wealth. Some of them are possessed of property to the amount of many thousands of dollars, have houses handsomely and conveniently furnished, and their tables spread with our dainties and luxuries.”

Eastern and Western Cherokees

The Arkansas Cherokee requested that the US recognize the Eastern and Western Cherokee and two separate and distinct Nations. The Treaty of 1817 did provide for a separate census of the Cherokee in the east and west as a basis for annuity payments. The U.S. Government left the western boundary of the Arkansas Cherokee undefined partly due to efforts to get more Cherokee to emigrate and partly due to opposition from the Osage. As a result, the US withheld annuity payments to the Arkansas Cherokee, citing the undefined boundary and uncertainty of the population as the reason. Further, the Treaty of 1817 stipulated that “the treaties heretofore between the Cherokee nation and

the United States are to continue in full force with both parties of the nation, and both parts thereof entitled to all the immunities and privileges which the old nation enjoyed under the aforesaid treaties..."

Many Keetoowahs claim that many of them came to the west before the removal, and some close relatives were left behind to come with the main body of the Cherokee factionalists, but the Kituwah acknowledge that a few were never meant to come west. This is verified by the existence of Cherokees who consider themselves Kituwah today, and the rebirth of Kituwah Mound, which was repurchased in 1997 by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and many Kituwah people make pilgrimages there for prayer.

Those Kituwah people who removed as Old Settlers between 1817-1835 received from the U.S. government to each head of the family a good rifle, a blanket, a kettle, 5 pounds of tobacco, and all members of the family received a blanket, as well.

In 1818, Tahlonteskee, Chief of the Western Cherokee, requested the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions establish a mission in the west. Subsequently, Dwight Mission, near present Russellville, Arkansas, was established in the spring of 1820. Tahlonteskee, having died in the meantime, was succeeded as Chief by his brother, John Jolly.

Unlike the Old Cherokee Nation, the Western Cherokee Keetoowahs readily accepted Sequoyah's Cherokee syllabary in 1822. The then-Chief, Takatoka, was opposed to the introduction of the mission schools and greatly influenced the acceptance of a way to write the Kituwah people's own language.

Treaty to Move into Indian Territory (Oklahoma)

By 1828, dissatisfied with their lands on the Arkansas and White Rivers, partly due to encroachment by white settlers, the Kituwah people entered into a treaty with the United States to move onto lands further west. This treaty granted the "Western Cherokee" seven million acres of land running along the Arkansas, Canadian and Grand Rivers. They were also given a perpetual outlet West, as far as the sovereignty of the United States extended. By the Treaty of 1828 the Keetoowahs moved to Indian Territory in Oklahoma ten years prior to the forced removal of the Cherokee Nation. During that same year, the Keetoowahs went on to adopt a written constitution. It was also the same year that John Ross became Chief of the Old Cherokee Nation, eleven years after the Keetoowahs, or Western Cherokee, left the Old nation for lands in Arkansas. Ross did everything he could to not move his people west, which eventually led up to the Trail of Tears.

Those Cherokees who declined to leave and stayed in the Cherokee Nation were called, at that time, Eastern Cherokees. The southeastern states were unhappy that these Eastern Cherokees remained, and violent incidents were frequent between them and the Americans, especially in Georgia. The southeastern states placed pressure on the federal government to remove these remaining Indians and extinguish Indian title to the lands within those states. This led to the signing of the Treaty of New Echota, and later, the Trail of Tears. Many of the Kituwah people who had stayed behind were forced to travel with the other Cherokees on this trail of devastation. Two of the most famous Keetoowahs who did not come west with the Western Cherokee were Chiefs Going Snake and White Path. These Eastern Cherokees were removed to the land then held by the Western Cherokees.

Western Cherokee Government

Between 1828 and 1839, when the Eastern Cherokee from the Old Cherokee Nation arrived on the Trail of Tears, a capital was established east of Chief Jolly's home, about 2 miles up the Illinois from its mouth on the Arkansas. The council house, grounds and home of the first chief made up the national capital called Tahlonteskee to honor the Chief's brother, the former Chief. The general council met here for eleven years.

The Western Cherokee general council elected chiefs who served for 4 years. The first and second chief received \$100 annually, and the third chief \$60. The general council consisted of two houses, national committee and council. These two bodies were made up of two representatives from the districts of the nation, thus, there were eight members in each house. The general council convened in October and was divided into four districts; Sallisaw, Lee's Creek, Illinois and Neosho.

The district officials were judges and two Lighthorse, elected by citizens for two years. District judges received an annual salary of \$25, the Lighthorse received \$40. In 1832, schools were provided in each district and Sequoyah was employed to supervise the teaching of his syllabary at \$400 annually. You will note the value the Keetoowahs placed on educating their children in their own language; Sequoyah's salary was four times that of the Chief.

In 1833, Old Settler, or Western Cherokee Keetoowahs, met with the Muscogee Creek Nation at Cantonment Gibson to settle boundary disputes and precisely establish the boundaries of the new territory. Creeks who had been removed from the east in 1826-27 had found themselves living within the newly established Cherokee lands and were required to move again. The treaty fixed the boundaries for what would become known as the Cherokee Nation of Indian

Territory after the Trail of Tears in 1839. The Old Settlers enjoyed only a few years of peace before being joined by the Treaty Party and ultimately by the Eastern Cherokee, marking the beginning of the Cherokee Civil War.

Trail of Tears

After the influx of the Eastern Cherokees from the Trail of Tears, the Easterners greatly outnumbered the Western full-bloods and tensions began to mount. The Eastern newcomers wanted their form of government to replace the government already put in place by the Western Cherokees, who of course, objected to such displacement of their own powers, and was also against the provisions of the Treaty of New Echota.

Both the “Western Cherokees” and the “Eastern Cherokees” objected to the Treaty of New Echota, stating that the signers had not been authorized. However, the Western Cherokees sent two delegates, James Rogers and John Smith to make sure the provisions in the treaty were clear about the position the Cherokee Nation would have when arriving in Western Cherokee territory. The provision in the treaty, signed by the two Keetoowahs, assured the Cherokee Nation of a friendly disposition of their people and their desire that the nation should be united again as one people. That Uniting was meant to be with the Cherokee Nation joining the Western Cherokee government. The provision assured them “a hearty welcome and an equal participation with them in all the benefits and privileges of the Cherokee country west.” The provision concluded with, “But it is expressly understood that nothing in this treaty shall affect any claims of the Western Cherokees on the United States.” (*Treaty of New Echota, December 31, 1835, 7 Stat, 487*).

The Western Cherokees gave welcome to their friends and family without complaint; they said there was room enough for all. The Cherokee Nation council marked off a public square in the new capital of Tahlequah, and surrounded it with a rail fence and erected a log cabin for its headquarters, even though the Western Cherokees had already organized their governmental system, and made treaties in the west separate from the old Cherokee Nation. The stipulation in the Treaty of New Echota was ignored, mainly because the old Cherokee Nation considered the entire treaty invalid.

The administration of the Western Cherokee felt very strongly about the issue of governance, and in early June, 1839, the Western Chiefs called some six thousand Cherokees together for a three-week convention. They met in their new Keetoowah council house at Takatoka, north of Tahlequah. The new Western Cherokee Chief, John Brown, graciously welcomed the newcomers. The Cherokee newcomers were told they were welcomed, could vote in future

elections, and were even eligible for political office. But at the same time, they would be subject to the laws of the Western Cherokee. However, John Ross and his administration were ready. They presented a list of written resolutions calling for the formation of a new Cherokee Nation west of the Mississippi. They suggested the council be made up of an equal number of Old Settlers and old Cherokee Nation representatives. Brown reminded them that a government already existed. (*Brown, Looney and Rogers letter, June 19, 1839, Letters Received, OIA, Cherokee Agency (M-234), NA; Starr History 110-11*) Due to majority and aggression, the old Cherokee Nation moved to eventually coerce some Western Cherokees to sign an Act of Union at Tahlequah, joining the two governments and putting Ross in charge. This was never ratified by the Western Cherokees, or accepted by the U.S. Government. The Western Cherokees treaties were not changed.

Tahlonteskee was discontinued as the capital, and for a while the capital was at Takatoka Council house, north of Tahlequah. It was eventually moved to Tahlequah. For a brief time in the 1860's, it was proposed that the capital move to the town of Keetoowah, located at what is now Fort Gibson. Tahlonteskee continued to be a meeting place, and eventually became the 'seat' of the Cherokee Nation district, "Illinois." The arrival of the Cherokee Nation to Indian Territory brought a power struggle between the larger Cherokee Nation and Old Settler, Western Cherokee Keetoowahs, who had prior claim to the territory. The Treaty of 1846 forced the two groups to combine until the Civil War.

Civil War

Many of the Western Cherokees saw the approaching Civil War as inevitable, and perceived it as a threat to traditional Kituwah culture. They also acknowledged that the Cherokees were still divided into two main factions, with their faction being the minority. The Keetoowahs, as did most full-bloods who did not own slaves, sided with the Union (Wright, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma*, p.70) Following the guidance of several non-Indian missionaries, the Keetoowah's adopted a constitution in 1859, calling itself the "Keetoowah Society." The original object of the Society was to maintain and assert the rights of all the Cherokee people or the Cherokee Nation under the laws and treaties with the government of the United States, and in fact today it is still asserting those rights as the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma. Some of these rights are religious, some are property, and some political. James Duncan, English Secretary of the Society in 1926, stated, "As to property rights, perhaps of more importance to the Cherokees than political, many do not know and realize that the Society has, in a number of instances, 'saved the day.'" (*Chronicles of Oklahoma, 1926*)

Organizing to Maintain Separateness

On April 15, 1858, a small number of leading members of Keetoowahs got together and discussed the affairs of the Cherokees, the purpose and objectives for which they had always stood. They discussed what the final result probably would be caused by the existing state of affairs in the United States. The people of the United States were divided and it was clear they were about to fight. The Cherokees were situated too far in the South and the men were becoming reckless and seemed to be taking sides with the South, but the leading cause was those who owned negro slaves. It was plain to be seen that Cherokee people without a full understanding were taking sides with the South. It was plain the teachers from the North were objected to and were being forced out of the Cherokee Nation. They believed if the Missionaries were gone all the Cherokee people would go to the side of the South, but they were mistaken. These matters were already understood by the Keetoowahs, and the Keetoowahs felt sure what the final result would be. They knew the relative members of the several states. It seemed certain that the states of the South were entering into a conspiracy to abandon the union of states to set up a separate government. (*Keetoowah Laws - April 29, 1859*)

The old people say that the Kituwah people sided with the north, also because they did not want the states and people who had stolen their land and homes to be a power they would have to resume negotiating with. In 1859, the Keetoowahs wrote that the South are the people who took our lands away from us which lands the Creator had given to us, where our forefathers were raised.

A meeting of the Keetoowahs took place April 20, 1858. (*ibid*) Bud Gritts was appointed to create a plan that would be best for the Cherokee people and place the Keetoowah in charge of the Cherokee government at large. All Cherokee people in all the districts were informed, and it was accepted all over by the confidential Keetoowah lodges. (*ibid*) A formal convention was held the following year, and it was adopted on April 29, 1859.

Today, some people say this was the beginning of the Keetoowah Society, but it is clear from the words stated in their documents that their forefathers had always been Keetoowah. This was merely a reorganization, which constituted a written document, instigated by white missionaries who presented this option to the Keetoowahs for the first time. Rolls were taken of Keetoowahs in each district (lodges).

The Civil War brought renewed conflict. The Keetoowah fullbloods were non-slaveholders and fought for the Union. Some Keetoowahs became known also as "Pin Indians" or "Pins." After the war, the U.S. Government refused to treat

the Keetoowahs as allies, forcing them the same penalties as were given to the Cherokee Nation. During 1865 and 1866, the combined governments of the Cherokee Nation signed two treaties with the U.S. government. This lasted until 1898 when the pressure for allotment became great.

Tensions continued through the years, between the Cherokee Nation proper and the Keetoowahs. Schools set up by the Cherokee Nation newcomers actually intensified differences between the two groups. "Since there were few qualified Cherokee-speaking teachers, many of the schools were staffed by whites who spoke no Cherokee. Children of fullblood families found it frustrating and humiliating to go to school when they couldn't understand their teacher, and were ridiculed by class mates. Consequently, it was predominantly the sons and daughters of mixed-bloods who attended schools, although over two-thirds of the Cherokees were fullbloods." (*Indian Territory on the Eve of Civil War, Brad Agnew, p. 36*) A far cry from when Sequoyah was supervising the Keetoowah schools.

Surviving through Statehood

In 1900, the Keetoowahs watched Cherokee Chief Buffington and his delegates in Washington very carefully. Buffington and the delegates were there negotiating issues on the Dawes Commission issue. The Keetoowahs made a statement to the Wagoner Record newspaper that was published on April 19, 1900, "The fullblood Cherokee will never submit to such an agreement, which violates nearly every right held near and dear to a fullblood Indians. We would rather submit to the Curtis Bill than to the new agreement, in the first place, Chief Buffington and his delegates had no authority to make such an agreement. The delegates were not chosen by the Cherokee people, neither by the Cherokee council, but were appointed by Chief Buffington on his own responsibility, without consulting the fullbloods or real Indians. No, we will never submit to this kind of agreement." The Keetoowahs had previously sent a statement to Chief Buffington, respectfully asking for inclusion or representation in the delegation. The statement concluded with, "We earnestly solicit your consideration of the fact, well known to all of us, that the end of the Cherokee Nation and final division of property close at hand strikes closer and deeper into the hearts and lives of the Keetoowah or fullblood Cherokees than to any other people, or class of people, on earth. With the fact in mind, we confidently trust that this request may be submitted to the Honorable National Council with your recommendation that it be granted by due and proper legislative enactment."

In 1898-99 Attorney Frank J. Boudinot, Sr. served as General Council for the Keetoowah Society. In February of 1900, the Emigrant Cherokees organized to prosecute their claim for \$5,000,000 against the United States government, and

in “opposition to the Government of the Cherokee nation which set up an adverse claim of ownership to the fund if collected.” (Indian Pioneer Papers, Frank J. Boudinot interview, April 9, 1937) On September 20, 1905 Boudinot incorporated the Keetoowah Society under the laws of the United States and secured an official charter. This was in answer to the US Government terminating the Cherokee Nation government March 4, 1906, and the Keetoowahs wanting to maintain a traditional base of tribal government. Interestingly enough, the same year the incorporation was accomplished, Boudinot was elected Principal Chief (*Nov. 21, 1905*) in accordance with the Cherokee laws which were in full force for the purpose at that time. He took oath of office in the Senate Chamber of the Cherokee National Council. “Because of my active opposition to the Cherokee National authorities and to the Dawes Commission, I was persona non grats, and was never recognized as Principal Chief by the United States Government. I have been, and am now the representative of my people, the Cherokees by blood, before the authorities of the United States government, including the Court of Claims and the Supreme Court of the United States. I expect to continue in that capacity until the Cherokees’ affairs and claims against the United States are finally and forever rightly closed, or until my own affairs and activities on this earth end.” (*Indian Pioneer Papers, Frank J. Boudinot interview, April 9, 1937*)

Continuing After Termination of Cherokee Nation

From 1907 until 1933, there was no official Cherokee Nation Government, only the chartered Keetoowah Society. Therefore, the Keetoowahs continued to hold meetings, to elect chiefs and maintain community associations. During this period, there were at least six different traditional groups and societies of Keetoowahs.

In 1916, Boudinot was empowered by a duly-elected convention of the whole Cherokee people, presided over Hon. W.C. Rogers, the then recognized Principal Chief, to speak for all the Cherokees, in efforts to secure a general jurisdictional act. “I am still acting at all times under the direction and authority of the Keetoowah Society.” (*ibid*)

First Federally Recognized Cherokee Tribe in Oklahoma

With the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936, the Keetoowahs began taking measures to organize under the legislation. The federal government began buying up land, and placing it in trust for the “Cherokee tribe.” These tracts of land are located

primarily in three counties of NE Oklahoma. The deeds stipulate that the land is to be held in trust by the U.S. Government until they are assigned to a group organized under the Act of June 26, 1936. The Keetoowahs are the only group so organized. Darcy McNickle, Chief of the Branch of Tribal Relations of the Department of Interior, stated that the Keetoowahs historical had functioned as a political body, exercising independent action as a nation. McNickle and Chief Counsel Theodore Haas recommended that a bill be introduced to recognize the Keetoowahs under the OIWA, section 3. President Harry Truman signed the bill known as the Act on August 10, 1946 which recognized the Keetoowahs for the purposes of organizing under the OIWA (60 Stat. 978). The Department of the Interior's Office of Indian Affairs stated in 1949 that this provision permits the Keetoowah Indians to organize apart from the Cherokee Nation as a separate band. W. W. Keeler, the government-appointed 'chief' of the Cherokee Nation appointed by President Harry Truman, stated in a letter to Levi Gritts of the Keetoowah Society, "The more I think of it, the more I am convinced that the Keetoowahs are the proper ones to help the Cherokees." Later, in the same letter, Keeler strengthened these feelings, "I, for one, would be willing to go a step farther and recommend that the present Executive Group be dissolved and the Keetoowah organization be the sole representative with the Government of the Cherokee of Oklahoma."

The Keetoowah people ratified the Constitution/By-Laws and the Federal Corporate Charter on October 3, 1950. The Keetoowah's ownership of all unallotted lands was expressly recognized in the Charter. By 1963, the BIA began using the UKB as a conduit for federal funding to the Cherokees, as they were the only Oklahoma Cherokee entity organized according to federal statute. For about five years, the Keetoowahs were instrumental in negotiating with the federal government for funding of such projects as the modernization of rural Indian homes, health clinics, the new IHS hospital in Tahlequah, and the funding of the tribal complex. The United Keetoowah Band had offices in the tribal complex from the time it was built until 1968. Several years later, Cherokee Nation Deputy Principal Chief B. Bob Stopp wrote to Keetoowah Chief William Glory, and informed him that anytime the United Keetoowah Band wished to use the tribal conference rooms, "you are perfectly welcome to do so." The letter concluded with, "We want all Cherokees to feel welcome to use this Conference Room for meetings of a constructive nature which will serve the interest of the Cherokees."

The United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs confirmed in 1993, via letter to the United Keetoowah Band, that No OIWA or IRA constitution was adopted for or by the 'Cherokee Nation.' The letter states that they are not aware of any documentation showing the intent of the Commissioner to approve CNO's 1975 draft constitution within the meaning of the IRA (through the OIWA of 1936). Most importantly, the letter states that the

BIA is not aware of any documentation showing no justification for contracts and/or grants with the Keetoowahs to provide the same services to those portion of the Cherokee Nation that would be served under the Nation's contracts and/or grants. the BIA's Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ron Eden even sent a letter to the Keetoowahs on August 24, 1992, confirming the Band's autonomy, separate recognition and independent eligibility for services and trust land acquisition.

Cherokee Flag

The Keetoowahs were also responsible for the Cherokee flag, being in charge of producing and selling them. Cherokee Nation's appointed Chief frequently referred persons interested in obtaining the flag to the Keetoowahs, "...the Cherokee flags, which are to be produced and sold by the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees. Since this is being handled entirely by the Keetoowah Band, I am referring your letter. . . " (1969)

One People - Two Governments

There are two successor governments to the 1906 Cherokee Nation rolls. The UKB ancestors were part of the historic Cherokee Nation at the time of the Act of April 26, 1906 that dismantled the Cherokee government, allotted portions of the Cherokee lands and caused the creation of a final roll of the Cherokee Nation. (*Testimony of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, Dallas Proctor, to Senate, 2002*)

Throughout history, the traditional and fullblood Kituwah people have followed what they believe to be the proper channels. A Treaty was signed, they moved. They set up their government and flourished. The old Cherokee Nation forcibly overthrew the government by a majority in numbers. When the Cherokee Nation government was terminated by the Curtis Act, the Keetoowahs continued on, organizing under a federal charter and serving their people. When the OIWA was introduced, the Keetoowahs complied with all regulations and were approved for federal recognition with all rights and benefits afforded any other federally recognized tribes. Today, Cherokee Nation has revived it's tactics to attempt to overthrow the Keetoowah government and intervening each time the Keetoowahs promote programs and services for the traditional and high blood quantum people. Yet, the government continues to publish decisions confirming their backing of the Kituwah people.

“Keetoowah is a phenomenon which has existed almost since the beginning of time and will exist forever, and that the name refers to something more than a mere collection of homogenous individuals.” (Charles Wisdom, “The Keetoowah Society of the Oklahoma Cherokee,” submitted to the Department of the Interior, 1953)

“We must not surrender under any circumstances until we shall ‘fall to the ground united.’ We must lead one another by the hand with all our strength.” (Laws of the Keetoowah April, 1859)

Further Reading: *“The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma,”* Georgia Rae Leeds, American University Studies, Series IX, Vol. 184, 199

Copyright 2006, United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma.

Published by the Historic Preservation Program/Language History and Culture Dept., Sammy Still, Director. Written by Lisa Stopp.

www.ukb-nsn.gov