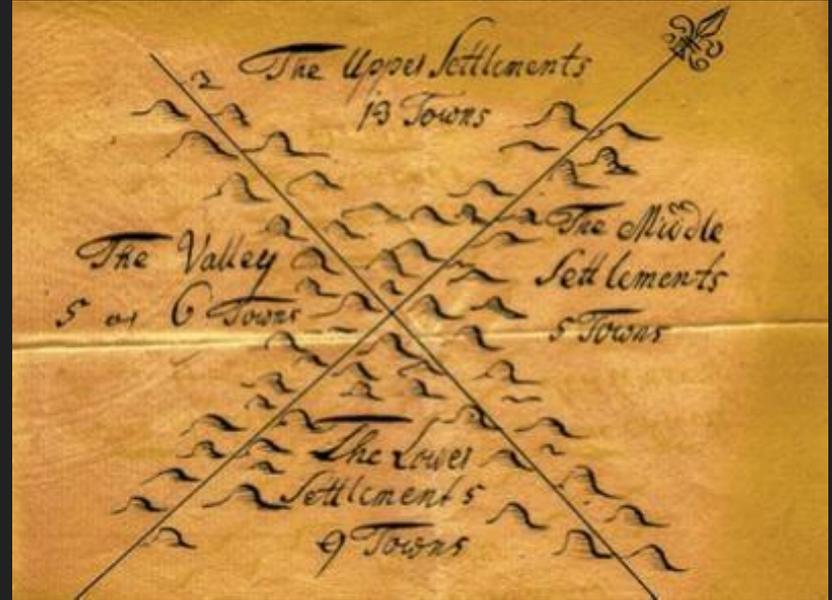


Principle Faith

Cherokee Religious History from Contact to Today
By Watson Harlan

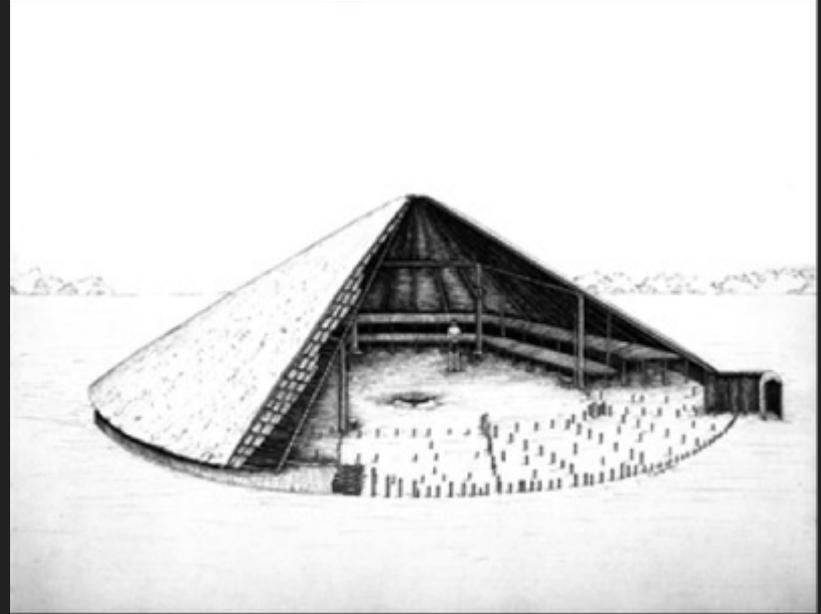
Common Elements of Spiritual Practice in Early Contact

- Ritual Action concerning states of purity.
- Unified Medicinal and Spiritual Theory.
- Daily and personal practice
- Syncretism.
- Nonstandard Henotheistic Characteristics.
- Integrated with Legal and Moral codes.
- Sacred space and place.



Important Societal Organizational Elements

- Beloved Elder
- “Medicine Men”
- “Chiefs”
- Clan structures
- Sacred Spaces and Community organizations
- Clan Mothers
- Township System
- Land Management System



Things To Not Assume

- Native tribes are self-defined, and each tribe has their own practice.
- Secrecy is a result of colonization.
- Respect people's privacy and personal beliefs.
- Do not appropriate traditions, especially if you're not a tribal citizen.
- Modern Pan-Native and NAC practice is not the same as historical Native Practices.



Contact and Early Interactions with Christianity

- Earliest direct contact with Christians in Cherokee is in the 1500's with the Spanish Conquistadores, Hernando De Soto and Juan Pardo.
- Earliest interactions with Protestants is with German settlers in Virginia in the 1680's.
- English and Jesuit Missions conducted in the 1700's.

Pre-United States Cherokee Religion

- Shifts away from matrilineal kinship systems and systems of collective rule to better fit with British diplomatic ideals.
- Chiefs acknowledge Christianity as a faith within their towns, and some settlers practice it within the Nation, but most “Cherokee Christians” still largely adhere to native practice.



The United States and The Moravians

- European and American Laws denigrate the legal authority of the Cherokee without Christianity, and direct conflict with the US caused violence and upheaval.
- Assimilation begins as a means of surviving US settler encroachment.
- Cherokee Nation allows the Moravians to build a mission for the purposes of Western education.



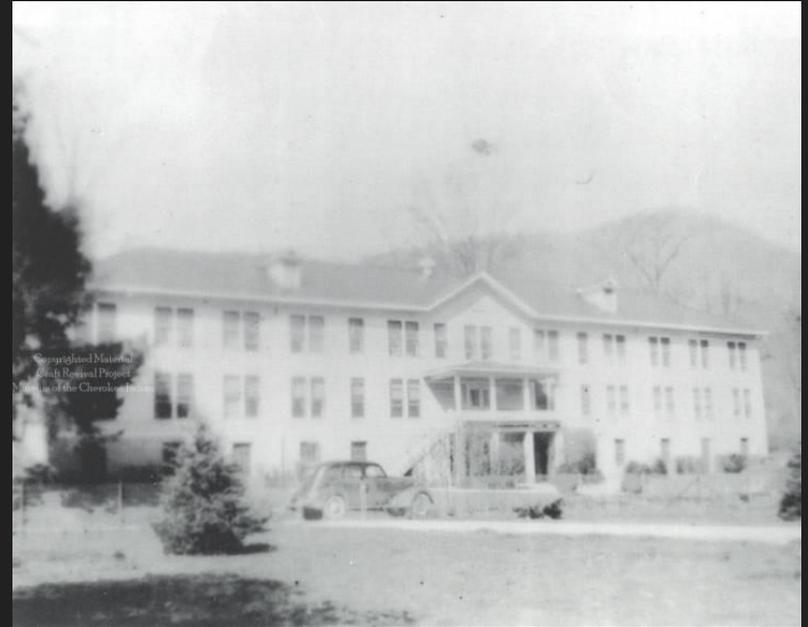
Conflict in the 19th Century

- Treaty Party and Assimilationist Cherokee adhere to Christianity, and adopt the cultural practices of Christians, and are recognized as the sovereign leaders of the Nation.
- Traditionalist and Anti-Removal factions, without American and European language or practices, are left out of the conversations between Cherokee and America.



Civilization and Pseudo-Scientific Assimilation

- US puts for legislations and schools designed to “civilize” native states and tribes within the US through boarding school programs.
- Schools ban the practice of traditional faith, language, hairstyles, clothing, imagery, stories and family structures.
- Traditionalist groups are forced underground and hide all traces of practice.



Termination, AIM, Modern Faith and Practice

- US tries to dissolve all ties with Native states and begins the urban relocation project for Native peoples.
- Native Civil Rights activists begin staging protests, seizing Alcatraz, and the March of Broken Treaties seizes the BIA.
- Termination is halted, and a Pan-Native identity is forged, but assimilationist politics and people still dominate native government.

