

Myths of the native american cherokee tribe

[People](#)



Myths are sacred to all Native American Tribes, and the two popular myths for the Cherokee Indian tribe is The Creation Myth, which explains how the world was made, and the other myth is The First Fire which is about how the fire was discovered. The Cherokees are a very large and powerful American Indian tribe and has a lot of history background and interesting facts. They use their cultural myths in their day to day lives in many different ways.

The creation myth is used more in their religion beliefs than the first fire is, but they both are similar with each other. The Cherokee Indians have a personal and trusting relationship with the earth, animals, and Plants to show that they love the earth and trust in it. The creation myth is about how the world was made in the Cherokee Indians point of view. This myth explains how the world was created and all the background information about it, and how and why we have mountains and valleys.

The Indians believe that “ The earth was a great island floating in a sea of water, suspended by a cord at each of the four cardinal points, hanging down from the sky vault, which is solid rock”, (Cherokee Beliefs Creation Of Earth), and they fear that once everybody dies on this earth the earth will go back underground like it was before everyone was created. There was a arch floating on this island of water with a few animals aboard, and on this arch was a little Water-beetle, who went on a journey to see what was under the water, and what he discovered was some mud.

The mud some how created a soft surface so that the animals could then walk on, which became the earth which was flat and very wet at first. All of the animals were very anxious to see if the ground was ready to walk on, so

each bird on the arch was sent on to check, but they could not find a place to land. Each time something was discovered or complete they would send out a different animal to do that task to help get the earth ready to live on. The father of all Buzzards than flew out to get everything ready, he is the one who made the valleys and mountains.

This happened when the Buzzard got very tired of flying, when he was in the Cherokee country his wings would touch the ground which turned into a valley than it turned in a mountains. The sun was created after the earth was dry, the animals saw that it was still very dark. So then the animals got the sun in track so it would come up each day across the island from east to west. The first inept didn't work due to it being really hot, it took a different animal and seven attempts to get the sun in the sky at a just enough spot.

The Indians believe that there is another world under the one we live in. They call it the underground and they say everything down there is the same with animals, plants, and people, the only thing different is the seasons they have. Its not known to whom and when the animals and plants were made, but they were a great use of help when the earth was being created. The animals did a lot of work on trying to get everything in order so they could have some where to live. The plants and animals had to stay up seven nights to test their abilities.

Only the owl, the panther and two other animals were able to stay up the full seven nights and were rewarded with the powers to see in the dark and stay awake at night. The tree's that were able to stay up was the Cedar, the Pine, the Spruce, the Holly and the Laurel, they were giving the ability to always

stay green and to be the greatest medicine. Men were created after the plant and animals were. First there was just a brother and sister that was living on earth and then the brother.

Then one day he made her multiply by striking her with a ish, which she did. In seven days there was a baby and then every seven days another baby was born. It came to a conclusion that earth couldn't keep all of the babies, because there were too many and it was dangerous. That's how it came about that its more healthy for women to only have one child in a year. The animals and people were at one point living in harmony with each other, but then the humans speeded all over the earth and there wasn't enough room for the animals or plants.

Then the animals declared a war against the humans, the animals were really mad, so they each chose a disease to send the humans to make them ill or die. The plants were the only things that was still pure and harmless to one another, they were friendly to both men and plants but, " when the plants, who were friendly to man heard what had be done by the animals they determined to defeat the latter's' evil designs"(Conley pp. 10. After the trees defeated the plan that was made, they cured the humans with their medicine from themselves.

The first fire myth explains how fire came about and who was discovered it. In mythology, fire appears both as a creative, cleansing force and as a destructive, punishing one, although positive aspects of fire generally outweigh negative ones. The fire was first made by some thunder that sent their lighting to a empty sycamore tree that was on a island which caught on

fire. The earth was really cold, and when all the animals saw that there was fire they did everything they could to get to it. Since the fire was on a island only certain animals could try to retrieve the fire.

The Raven had tried first because he was so strong he tried to bring back the fire, but he failed. In the process in trying to bring back the fire, the Raven got all of his feathers scorched black so he flew back. After most of the animals that could fly tried to get the fire failed and got hurt in the process, none of the other animals that could fly didn't want to try, because they were afraid. The next animal that tried was the black racer snake, he swam under the water and came up from the bottom of the tree where there was a hole at, and he made up it up the tree.

The snake almost had the fire, but it burst in flames in his face and he fell in the hole and climbed out just into, but he got turned all black. By then all of the animals were afraid to try to get the fire, so the animals held a council to see what they should do next, and the rest of them made up excuses why they couldn't try to go retrieve the fire. The last brave animal that was willing to make the trip across the island was the water spider.

For her journey she weaved a bowl and put it on her back to carry back the fire in. she crossed over the island and came back with a piece of coal in her bowl still burning. The water spider still wears the bowl strapped around her body to remind everybody how she got the fire. Cherokee Indians were one of the largest native American group in the United States. They were one of the most important tribe in the United States and the most civilized. They originally came from the southeastern region of the United States.

The Cherokee people also lived in different parts of the United States, such as Georgia, North and South Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee. The location of the Cherokee Indians changed in the 1800's, due to the Trail of Tears. The Trail of Tears is also known as Indian Removal, is when the government created an Indian territory in Oklahoma, and sent all the Eastern native Americans to live there. The Cherokee people were treated really badly and some died on the long journey to Oklahoma, which resulted in the deaths of 4000 Cherokees.

The name Cherokee comes from a Muskogean word meaning speakers of another language, and is pronounced Tsalagi in their language, but the Cherokee language belongs to the Iroquoian . The Cherokee originally called themselves Aniyunwia which means the principal people. The roles of the men and women Cherokee tribe were like their distant cousins the Iroquois. The Cherokee men and women were equal to each other, they had the same amount of power as each other. The men did the hunting, war and diplomacy. For hunting the men would make their own weapons by hand, the material they used was tomahawks.

When the Cherokee man hunters would prepare to hunt for their food, they would pray to the animals to ask for forgiveness from them, then they would continue to hunt, " Man fasted prayed before hunting, and then offered thanks in a ceremony after killing an animal; on returning to their village, they shared the meat, used all parts of the animal, and often danced to honor the animal", (Cherokee Indian Heritage and History). The Indians were thankful for the animal that gave them food, but They also felt bad so they honored them to show their appreciation to the animals and earth.

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Cherokee man would use blowguns to catch birds and sometimes to play a small game. They were good with building things also, building canoes and house frames and roofs. The women in the tribe duties was to be in charge of farming, property, and taking care of their families. The women also made their own tools, they wove mats, blankets, clothing and pottery. When the time came for making important political decisions in the Cherokee tribe the men would step in and play the important role, and when it came down to social decisions for the clan they would be the women place to step in and make the decisions.

In the modern time in the Cherokee history women couldn't be chiefs or anything in higher power, only landowners, and the man could only be the chiefs. Times have changed in the Cherokee tribe and now woman can be chiefs, but some Indians still prefer the traditional way to live. Some activities both genders did in the Cherokee tribe was artwork which is making drums and rattles, music which included them dancing to their traditional songs, storytelling and traditional medicine the pure healing.

The Indians were really serious about their ways of healing themselves and others in their tribe. The Cherokee's would have big ceremonies relating to this process of healing and forgiving with their traditional ways and beliefs. The Cherokee's religion and beliefs are based up on the protective spirits of the upper world to help them keep balance and harmony on earth, and it connects to the creation myth in a Many different ways.

The Cherokee Indians did a lot of rituals, prayers, and ceremonies giving thanks to the earth, plants and animals. They use the creation myth as guide

to lead them through their lives. This myth means a lot to the Cherokee Indians and their religion. Even though the Cherokee Indians don't use the term religion to describe the rituals, ceremonies, the cleaning of their bad feelings, and all of their other daily life styles, every part of their world had some sacred connection or religious meaning to it.

They began their day and end their nights with daily prayers, rituals, and seasonal ceremonies to deal with their problems and receive guidance and forgiveness from the earth. The Cherokee did a lot of rituals and ceremonies about how to rid all the bad feelings and getting the earth and animals to forgive them. They did special rituals for the animals they have killed " a hunter was required to follow certain prescribed rituals, and to apologize to the spirit of the animal he killed" (Conley pg. 7).

One of the rituals they did was Going To The Water, the purpose of this ritual is to help get rid of any bad feelings they may have and renew them in a positive way so they can begin a fresh start with a clear mind. They began by stepping into a river or creek facing east, and dipping their bodies under the water seven times to come up with a clear mind, " they prayed to the seven directions: the four cardinal points, the sky, the earth, and the center-the spirit", (Cherokee Indian Heritage and History). This was performed by men, women, and children.

Another ceremony the Cherokee's used was called the called The Green Corn Ceremony, which was used to help give them a fresh start and seek forgiveness for their quarrels and any crime they did. This ceremony was held each year at harvest time. The meaning of this ceremony was to forgive

one another and get forgiveness from the earth from what they did in their past year. In conclusion the Cherokee Indian were a very powerful tribe, who live their lives by many myths and traditional rituals, which is very sacred to them.

They focus on all of the good things in life, they are very respectful and thankful for a lot of things. To show thanks they usually do ceremony or a traditional ritual. The Cherokee Indians have a lot of balance and harmony in their lives. Cherokee Indians have a lot of love for the earth, plants and the animals, most of there stories, rituals, ceremonies, and legends are based upon those three things they love and respect the most. Animals, earth, and the plants all give something to the Cherokee Indians that they can use feed, nurture and protect their tribe.