

Re: Former Keetoowah Speaks out

August 25 2005 at 1:38 PM
Response to [Former Keetoowah Speaks out](#)

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary defines the term disenroll as "to erase from a roll or list." But, what does that really mean?

The issue of disenrolling tribal members is one that goes up there with land quandaries, casino problems, and Leonard Peltier. I believe that tribes should have the authority and jurisdiction to govern over their own reservations, without fear of involvement or interference from the United States government. The purpose of being a sovereign nation is that of being able to make decisions without government help. Another glance at my friend, the dictionary, reads that sovereign is a term meaning "self-governing; independent".

However, the government feels that they can control enrollment, as well as every aspect of tribal government, thus destroying the idea of sovereignty altogether. When I was younger, I can recall my father claiming that the government changes the blood quantum for tribal enrollment all the time for their own benefit. "The less Indians there are, the less money they have to give away!", my father, a quarter-blooded Ojibwe, insisted.

As the required blood quantum gets more restricted, the less "real Indians" there will be. And, in truth to what my father says, the less government checks there will be issued. On the Turtle Mountain Reservation in northern North Dakota, only enrolled members (those with a blood quantum of 1/4 or more Ojibwe blood) could qualify for G.A. - General Assistance. Although G.A. was cut (due to the budget) by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) during the summer of 2005, this is one of the examples of government issued monies to "real" Indians.

But what is a "real Indian?" Stereotypes dictate that a "real" Indian lives in a teepee on an Indian Reservation and has a name like Albert Roaring Thunder of John Eagle Feather. False.

It isn't where you live or what your name is, but instead is something inside. A respected tribal elder once said to me: "It isn't what you look like on the outside, but how you feel on the inside. You're Native American if you feel Native American." How true she was.

Not only am I Native American but also French (-Canadian and -Huguenot), German, Norwegian, Dutch, English, Irish, Scottish, Belgian, Brazilian, and Swedish. I embrace all of my nationalities, but my Native American blood is the only one that I need to have substantial proof in order to find definition. I can say that I'm German, no one would blink an eye, but if I said I am Native American, everyone would stand up and say "Prove it." This is where blood quantum enters the picture.

The act of enrolling and blood quantum in the first place is archaic and is a method created by the United States government to break tribes apart (in a bid for assimilation). Before the founding of the United States, the idea of enrolling and this organizational mumbo-jumbo did not exist. Definitions have been set by the government to define what is and isn't "Indian". So, if someone does not meet those set requirements, they are not officially Indian; they would be considered white.

As an enrollee descendant, I consider myself to be Native American (both internally and externally), along with the many nationalities that my ancestors racked up throughout the centuries. Just because of the fact that I am not enrolled, it doesn't mean that I am any less Native American than my neighbor. Personally, I do not set a value as to how much Native American some one is. For example, my 5th-great-grandmother, a Canadian prairie woman named Suzanne, was a one hundred percent pure Sioux woman. Even though the Sioux blood I inherited from Grandmother Suzanne has mingled with many other bloods throughout the seven generations it took for me to form, I still consider myself as being Sioux. However, the government does not. Instead, because the Sioux blood is not in the majority of my genetic make-up, I am instead a nationality-less human being. Does that mean that I am one of millions that the government is denying their heritage? Absolutely! No matter what list I do or do not appear on, I know what I am. I don't need my name on a piece of government paper to put me under a categorization or to appreciate or honor my heritage.

However, there are some that don't feel the same way. The denying of one's heritage - or cultural alienation - is considered one of the characteristics leading to depression when it comes to Native Americans. And Indian Country is slowly starting to grow with depression statistics. According to a study conducted by Kimberly Forrest, PhD in 2001, Native American children had the highest depression rate. This is something serious that needs to be stopped.

Resolving the enrollment issue is a task that should be achieved by every sovereign nation. Regaining every part of sovereignty will help to create a stronger Indian Country. Setting guidelines for enrollment is key, but it should be done solely by the tribe.

When you consider the current interference by the United States government, it can send shivers down your spine to think about what is next. Will Indian Country let that happen before it's too late to stop? I feel the United States government should cease in interfering with the process of tribal sovereignty. After all, they have their own government to take care of.

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Chapter Two -The Birth and Growth of the Keetoowah Society

to be reseeding themselves. Thoughts and energy to counter them are also coming to harvest and, hopefully, will reseed in an even greater strain, so that the twenty first century will become a new era of peace and justice. I dream this not because I am a romantic, but because I come from survivor peoples who revere the sacred law. [143] The "Kituwah spirit" was a way to transcend the differences between political parties, religious beliefs, factional disputes, and even clan affiliations. The goal of the Keetoowah Society was to define a true Cherokee "patriot" as one who clung to traditional lifestyle which included many of the ancient ceremonies, ideals, and spirituality of the "old ways," i.e. traditional religion. Although the focus of the Keetoowah Society was upon the "fullbloods," a proper understanding of this term must be seen within a cultural context, as opposed to a biological or racial one. [144] One can see "fullblood" as a connotation for traditional/conservative and "mixed-blood" as implying assimilated/progressive. [145] Many of those commonly referred to as fullbloods, including many of the leaders of the Keetoowah Society itself, were the products of Cherokee/White intermarriage. John Ross, leader of the full bloods, was only one-sixteenth Cherokee; Stand Watie, leader of the mixed bloods, was a full blood Cherokee. The term mixed-blood often meant intermarriage with whites and those intermarried with free blacks and slaves were classified as black or fullblood. [146] When the Keetoowah Constitution describes its members as being "only fullblood Cherokees uneducated," it is referring to those fluent in Cherokee who are "uneducated" in the sense of European language and culture, but educated in the sense of being literate in Cherokee language and culture. [147] It was not a race based of identity for as was discussed above, there was no race-based understanding of identity within the "old ways" of Cherokee culture. If one were literate in the Cherokee language and integrated into Cherokee culture, as many African Americans and some European Americans were, then there were the transcendent bonds of the "Keetoowah spirit" that made you effectively a "full-blood." [148] Thus, the Cherokee Nation as understood by

the Keetoowah, would be one open to all people regardless of race; Keetoowah meetings opened with the expression, "We are all Keetoowah people." [149] The Keetoowah Society was essentially a religious organization; it sought to preserve traditional religious beliefs as expressed in the Constitution, "They all came as a unit to their fire to smoke, to aid one another and to protect their government with what little powder and lead they had to use in protecting it." The centrality of national identity, the sacred fire, and sacred ritual of tobacco smoke were critical elements in the Keetoowah Society. [150] The meetings of the Keetoowah were held at the gatiyo, or stomp grounds, centered around the sacred fire which was reportedly brought with them from the East and kept constantly burning. [151] Critical to the meetings of the Keetoowah Society was the sacred fire: The sacred ritualism of the original Keetoowah is performed only with the sacred ceremonial fire. When the council of the Keetoowah is about to go in session, the fire keepers start the fire at the council grounds before the sun appears in the east. The fire must not be started with a match but through the old custom. [152] The fire-keepers built earthen mounds topped with four logs surrounded by seven arbors for seating representing the seven clans. Meetings were often highly ceremonial with opening pipe ceremonies, sacrificial offerings to the sacred fire, songs and dances, and explanations of the sacred mysteries of the wampum belts. In addition, large areas were kept adjoining the central meeting place for ball play. [153]

However, in spite of its relationship to traditional culture and religion, the organization sprung up within the Northern Baptist churches and its leadership were the same men who were the leadership of the Northern Baptist churches. The Head Captains of the Keetoowah Society -- Levi Gritts, Smith Christie, and Lewis Downing were all Baptist ministers; the Keetoowah spread its message and its organization through the nascent Baptist churches in the Cherokee Nation and in the Creek Nation as well. Fullbloods sympathetic to the Keetoowah cause were encouraged to attend the meetings in the churches whether they were Baptists or not; from these organizational meetings Captains and sub-Captains were appointed and Keetoowah meetings scheduled. Trusting their native preachers, the ministers Evan and John Jones allowed Gritts, Christie, and Downing to spread the Keetoowah message by utilizing Baptist organizational principles, the affinity between traditional meetings and Baptist camp-meetings, and congregational tendencies of the Cherokee society to build a potent force for religious revitalization. [154]

It is also critically important to recognize the affinities between the structure and function of the Keetoowah Society and the same within secret societies and mutual benefit/ burial societies which had proliferated among white and blacks before the war. A provision was made in the Constitution of the Keetoowah Society to collect a general welfare fund to provide for the relief of the sick or distressed; for the benefit of poor fullbloods, Cherokee script (similar to Confederate money in the proverbial sense) was accepted at face value. Section 23 of Chapter II of the Constitution of the Keetoowah Society also states:

Be it resolved by the Keetoowah Convention, if any Keetoowah should get sick, or unable to take care of himself, all members of Keetoowah Society who live nearby, shall look after him and visit him. And in case of the death of any Keetoowah they immediately must notify those that live afar and those that receive the message, it shall be their duty to come. All brother Keetoowahs shall march in line to the grave following the dead. And each shall take a shovel full of dirt and put it in the grave. [155]

There is also a striking similarity between the burial ceremony of the Keetoowah Society and that of Free-

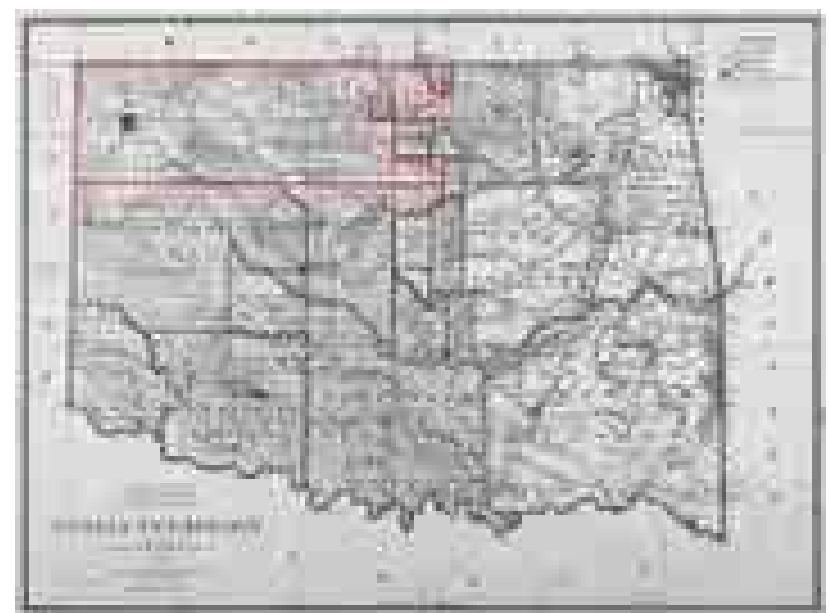
Cherokee Outlet

The Cherokee Outlet, or Cherokee Strip, was located in what is now the state of Oklahoma, in the United States. It was a sixty-mile (97 km) wide strip of land south of the

Oklahoma-Kansas border between the 96th and 100th meridians. It was about 225

of the Cherokees, the ranchers using the land organized and began fencing individual claims. The Cherokees felt the organization would help them collect their rents.

In 1883 the cattlemen finally incorporated under the laws of Kansas as *The Cherokee Live*



miles (362 km) long and in 1891 contained 8,144,682.91 acres (32,960 km²)

The Treaty of New Echota, May 23, 1836, gave the land to the Cherokees as a perpetual outlet to travel and hunt in the West. This was in addition to the land given to the Cherokees for settlement after their arrival from their home in Georgia.

After the Civil War, the Cherokees were required to renegotiate their treaties due to their alliance with the Confederacy. The treaty, ratified on July 19, 1866, allowed the United States government to dispose of the land: "*The United States may settle friendly Indians in any part of the Cherokee country west of 96° ... to be paid for to the Cherokee Nation ... after which their jurisdiction and right of possession to terminate forever...*"

The settlement of several tribes in the eastern part of the Cherokee Outlet closed it from the Cherokee Nation and left them unable to use it for grazing or hunting. After the Civil War Texans began driving their cattle across the Outlet to markets in Kansas and soon others began using the land for grazing. In the early 1880s, with the support

Stock Association. They negotiated a five-year lease for the entire outlet for \$100,000 per year, payable semi-annually in advance. At the end of the five years, the Cherokee Council put the lease up for bid, hoping to get a better price. The Cherokee Live Stock Association eventually got the bid for \$200,000 per year. But it was not to be completed. In 1889, Congress authorized a commission to persuade the Cherokees to cede their complete title to the land. After a great amount of pressure, and confirmed by a treaty Congress approved March 17, 1893, the Cherokees agreed, for "*the sum of \$8,595,736.12, over and above all other sums*" to turn title over to the United States government. On September 16, 1893, the Cherokee Outlet was settled in the largest land run in the United States.

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherokee_Outlet"

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Alternate meaning: Cherokee Strip, Kansas

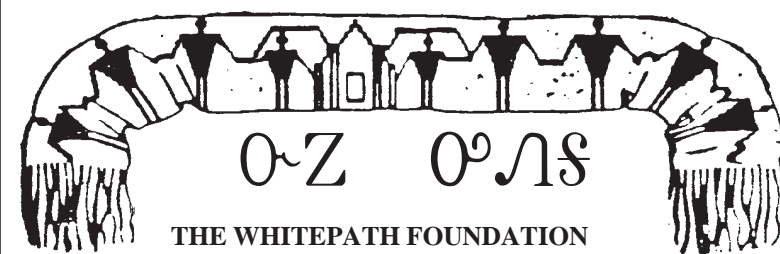
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Cherokee Caviar



- 15 oz Blackeye Peas
- 15 oz Black Beans
- 15 oz White Corn
- Drain & rinse
- 28 oz Dice Tomatoes
- Drain
- 10 oz Rotel Chili Fixin's
- 10 oz Rotel Extra Hot Dice Tomatoes & Chili Peppers
- Drain both Rotel
- 1 1/2 cup Garden Onions
- Diced
- 1 med Red Onions
- Diced
- 1 Table Spoon Cayenne Pepper
- Med jar Zesty Italian dressing
- Mix all together
- Chill in refrigerator overnight
- Serve with tortilla chips
- Enjoy! from the McLain's

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