

Missed Museum Opportunities; Neglected History & Forgotten Peoples

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Abstract

This paper argues that in the clamor to claim history, powerful and monied groups have drowned out much of the richness and diversity in making their jingoistic case for importance. Many of the most marginalized peoples are only now beginning to use the internet to reclaim their place in history. North American Museums have often overlooked the richness of the past, for the glossed and simplified myths and misconceptions of tribes, territoriality, and warring that was part of the holocaust set off by European invasion of the Americas. The Yuchi are an excellent example. This now small and extremely marginalized people were once at the center of a broad and diverse cosmopolitan culture that was nothing short of the First United States. A wealth of oral tradition remains with Yuchi elders, which can be assessed and analyzed. Such questions as: how and why the Green Corn Culture (Southeastern Ceremonial Complex) took hold throughout the Southeast, and whether the Cherokee Syllabary is older than history maintains, and whether it has broader meso-American roots that need to be explored. It is the duty of museums and educational institutions to dispel the popular notion that everything was either Cherokee or Sioux, and to open the possibilities on the rich diversity of the American Indian past. This can only be done by giving voice to all peoples, even the most marginalized, in exploring the possibilities that the past holds in the rich fragments it has left to us.

Diversity in History

Of the more than five hundred Indigenous peoples that were known to inhabit the United States, the majority remain obscure and comparatively unknown. While some of these have long since disappeared into the oblivion of extinction, others remain neglected in a serious state of marginalization. One of these, the Yuchi, can serve as an example for many others who have suffered similar fates. As nothing succeeds like success, the monied and the powerful have dominated history as well. This is true to the point that the Trail of Tears shared by the four Civilized Tribes and many others, has become almost entirely the Cherokee Trail of Tears -- and has been established as such by the National Park Service no less.¹ While it is true that human endeavors, whether science, art or history, is in part about simplifying to the essence of things -- oversimplification yields a mere shadow of the reality. Actively or passively, there is a concerted effort to write these forgotten peoples out of history. This then creates a need for museums to foster a greater inclusiveness in our history, and the following unfolds a case for just that.

The Yuchi are poorly known and largely misunderstood people. While the Yuchi have only been studied by a handful of scholars and the body of work spans only a half-dozen books and perhaps some one hundred journal articles, little of this knowledge has left the dusty archives. Worse, there are volumes more that await a dedicated researcher to gather and compile. Such is the fate of many marginalized Indigenous peoples -- to become mere footnotes in the histories crafted to feature the powerful and monied cultures. This neglect of the Yuchi is not because they are extinct, as South Carolina has posted on its official web pages.² It is not because they are uninteresting, as they are oft referred to as the mysterious Yuchi. It might have something to do with the small currently identified population, but more likely it is due to a lack of funding and the public's disproportionate fascination with a few Indigenous cultures. It also has to do with a general dismissal of oral traditions, allowing them to remain uncollected. Lastly, it is perhaps in part due to the somewhat daunting Yuchean language. While the Yuchi are far from unique with respect to neglect here among the 500 some Indigenous peoples of the North American continent, they just may have the most to tell us about the deeper past, more than even the well researched tribes.

Much of what is popularly written about the Yuchi is based in half-truths and misunderstandings. Some of the

widely available references posit that all Yuchi have light skin and blue eyes, and more than a few try to expand on a few similarities to make them into a Jewish people, others are about proving them to have more recent Asian roots. Many archaeologists have claimed that they moved around a lot, and there is often little agreement on the area wherein they once resided. So misunderstandings in scholarly materials leave a lot of confusion in the public mind as well. However, the real mysteries surrounding the Yuchi are not quite as fanciful as these imagined ones, and when fully investigated provide a much broader understanding of the Yuchi and the Southeastern protohistory in general.

The Yuchi are a distinctive, but scattered people with populations assimilating to various degrees among the Creek Nation, the Snowbird Cherokee, the Shawnee, the Seminole, the Melungeons, and the Dominant Cultural population, as well as perhaps others. The Yuchi are Federally unrecognized, and have been denied recognition on two occasions. The largest recognizable population is among the Creek Nation, where a few still are fully fluent in the Yuchi Language. They are staunchly proud and independent, and even as mixed or partially assimilated are openly proud of their Yuchi heritage. Right up through the Twentieth Century, it was to the Yuchi that the tribes came to reinitiate their tribal green corn ceremonies -- it being widely recognized that the Yuchi have kept their traditions. ³

Why are the Yuchi Important?

Besides having retained much of their oral traditions, the Yuchi have another important and unique resource in the Yuchean Language. This language is an isolate, unrelated with any other AmerInd Language with any perceptible closeness to categorize it. It is further a rather pristine isolate, which has not been physically isolated, but “intellectually protected.” This would certainly seem to give the language some strategic usefulness in deciphering intertribal relationships in the Southeast. Further, the language has other unique features to offer.

In addition to being a pristine isolate, the language is built on agglomeration of morphemes. ⁴ These small elements of meaning gives the language an ease to creating new words that alleviates the need to borrow words, but more importantly it allows for an ease in evaluating the etymology of Yuchi words. It makes it much easier to trace words back to the Yuchean from other languages as well. It also allows one into the Yuchi culture and thinking in analyzing how these morphemes are used to construct the words. It would seem that such a pristine language isolate, with a morpheme agglomerative structure would be quite a gold mine of understanding of the Yuchi culture and people -- and it certainly is. Analysis of the language is proving useful in corroborating Yuchi oral tradition, wherein we now understand that the Yuchi were a key people in the Southeastern Ceremonial or Moundbuilding culture as Yuchean oral history has long maintained. ⁵

Words for “priests” and “interpreter/translator” demonstrate why the Yuchi got around. Both Lew Ballard and Jim Crawford have noted that the Yuchean word for “interpreter” has been borrowed into a number of the Southeast Languages. ⁶ Many Yuchi were multilingual, particularly since outsiders were not expected, nor desired to learn Yuchi. It is clear that the Yuchi played the role frequently and widely in order for the Yuchean word to become the standard through so many languages. Even my Elder and Yuchean teacher, Addie George, was multilingual, fluent in not only Yuchi, but Cherokee, Creek and English as well. It is very likely that this was long the standard among the Yuchi. The Yuchi oral traditions tell of the Yuchi being traders and priests among all the tribes. This would require an ability to communicate with these tribes. Given that the word *yatiki* has been widely adopted by neighboring Southeastern tribes, the question is can we verify the priestly role, as well, by finding Yuchean etymology for the words “priests” in these neighboring languages? The answer is yes; the principle terms for priests do indeed have meaningful morpheme structure in Yuchean. ⁷ *Iniha*, *kutani*, and *shawaeno*, are the priestly terms used among Southeastern tribes – as all would seem composed of meaningful Yuchean morphemes. This combined with the nobility claim of being the “Children of the Sun” (*Tsoyaha*) would tend to support the claims of a Yuchean priesthood among all these tribes. As the White Chiefs among these tribes were called Great Suns and supposed to have descent from the Solar Spirit (*tsowaeno*), it would very much seem that the language tends to substantiate the oral traditions in this regard.

Valuing & Validating Oral Traditions

It would appear that while oral traditions should be suspect for reasons of likely taint by mythology, that discounting them completely has been a mistake as well. Too often anthropologists have failed to treat elders with respect and thus failed to get cooperation, only to rely on younger and less knowledgeable informants -- as Frank Speck was forced to do in his seminal work with the Yuchi.⁸ Elders tell of Speck's rudeness, and how his main informant was a half-Yuchi/Creek boy who was not all that knowledgeable in Yuchi traditions.⁹ Several papers on Cahokia have mentioned that they have queried the tribes roundabout, and none have any traditions about this mound city.¹⁰ However, they obviously did not ask the Yuchi elders, or they would have gotten a long account tradition of how the Yuchi and the Siouians built these mounds, and how the little mound on the Yuchi Squareground today remembers that time. Yes, oral traditions may lack reliability, but they can be validated by other resources as Heinrich Schliemann did when he found Troy. Oral traditions may be neither quite true, nor false, but useful just the same.

I have found an arrogant dismissal from nearly all academic scholars when I mention oral traditions. It is a prejudice that they cannot seem to suppress. Perhaps it makes them feel superior that they trust the written word so much more -- yet the Indian knows that lawyers and historians can bend the written word every bit as far as oral traditions fraught by myth. It serves their purposes to look down on people they see as illiterate and inferior, but as we shall see even this may be a modern myth, as the Yuchi claim the Syllabary as their own.

It is certainly true that oral traditions must be sifted through other knowledge in order to sort out the validity of the material that can be deemed useful to a scientific understanding from that which has a symbolic meaning. While I do understand that many are not equipped to tackle such an interdisciplinary validation process, it does not mean that it is not a fruitful ground to those with the skills and resources to correlate the oral traditions with the language and symbolism that bring greater meaning to this knowledge and the insights it can give us. I would not ask anyone to believe the oral traditions or even me -- but one should be able to follow a good argument to its logical conclusion. If good sense alone does not require this, then an understanding that oral tradition however tainted it may be, is the only history that Indians have left to them now, and to utterly discount it is disrespectful in itself.

What the Yuchi Elders Say in Oral Traditions

Yuchean Oral Traditions recall that the Yuchi came to the Southeastern part of North America by island-hopping. The last hop was from the Bahamas into South Carolina. I can only assume that the previous hops brought them through the West Indies from the Yucatan region, although here I am guessing just like all the others who have them coming from various points around the world. The Yuchi tell that they brought the knowledge of ceramic pottery, corn and bean agriculture, tobacco rites, and moundbuilding into the Southeast. These boasts do agree with where the earliest pottery has been found in the region. The Yuchi further assert that when they came into the Southeast only the Algonquin Lenape were here, and they and all tribes still refer to them as the "Old Ones," or "Grandfathers."

They then recount how they met the Siouian people, followed by the arrival of the Algonquin Shawnee, and then waves of Creek peoples, and lastly the Cherokee arrived. Each group of people were brought into the Green Corn Ceremonial / *Tsotanewaeno yudaha*, the "brotherhood of the pipe," and became peaceful participants in the moundbuilding culture. While this all occurred over a lengthy time period, generally no real timeline is put forward. It just relates how the tribes came in succession and were brought into the religio-political arrangement by the Yuchi priests in order to live peacefully together. The culture is about peace. It includes the "little brother of war," the ball game. It includes pipe ceremonies and pan fluting to announce your coming. It includes counting coup rather than blood feuding. Most importantly it includes white or peace towns of refuge, and forgiveness of all but murder at the renewal ceremony. This is not so much a warrior society, as it is a peaceful statecraft among a large and diverse grouping of peoples.

This is a society focused greatly on peace, not the warrior death cult portrayed by the archaeological literature. Anyone visiting a squareground during a green corn ceremonial can see these elements still being practiced today. The Yuchi elders would be glad to elucidate upon them to anyone being respectful and polite. The Yuchi remain very proud of their role as leaders and “the nobility” during this lost, but not forgotten period wherein the culture and civilization during the period eclipsed that of Europe at the time. Perhaps it is just that understanding that has caused it to be all but swept under the rug by the Dominant culture.

The Elders also relate the importance of trade. The Yuchi were in control from the earliest times of the major salt licks of the region. Salt becomes a necessary dietary supplement when one moves from a meat-based diet to a plant-based diet. The ancient trail system was originally laid out by the mega fauna plant-eaters, and so the trails lead from one salt lick to another. The Yuchi thus quickly set up to utilize these salt licks, and processed salt and moved it along the trails.¹¹ Other commodities became important as well, and mica mines and copper mines were developed by the Yuchi and their allies in the Appalachians, and shells were harvested from the Gulf shores. Whether their language skills made them good traders, or the exchange of trade made them adept at linguistic translation really becomes a chicken or egg came first argument. A robust trade developed around these high status items and the religious items manufactured from them to further spread the peace message and the rule of the Great Suns theocracy.

It was by controlling trade, engendering a peace, and by having priests spread throughout the diversity of tribal villages that the Yuchi brought a peaceful culture to the Southeast. It was in a very real sense the first United States of this land. While all memory of it has been nearly eclipsed by the Contact Holocaust and the following three centuries of strife and starvation, it is pridefully recalled by the Tribal Elders, and validated in the structure of the unique Yuchean language.

Where was the Yuchi homeland?

Is there validating evidence for the any of this being in the least a factual take on history? There certainly is evidence for trade in salt, mica, shell and copper. These materials principally came from the south central region where the Yuchi were known to have been. The question of exactly where the Yuchi were has been somewhat contentious. Most evidence places them in Eastern Tennessee as well as various places along the trail system down the Savannah and Chattahoochee Rivers. The archaeological evidence combined with the Yuchi cultural footprint¹² would place them in Central and East Tennessee. Chief Sam Brown, Jr. places the Yuchi in the Great Valley from Pennsylvania southward into Tennessee. Their involvement in Trade would also have them up and down the trails, just where they are placed in various reports, as well as places where Yuchi names still occur on the landscape. Places like Silver Bluff and Tybee Island on the Savannah River, Yuchi Town on the Chattahoochee (a.k.a. Chattayuchi) River,

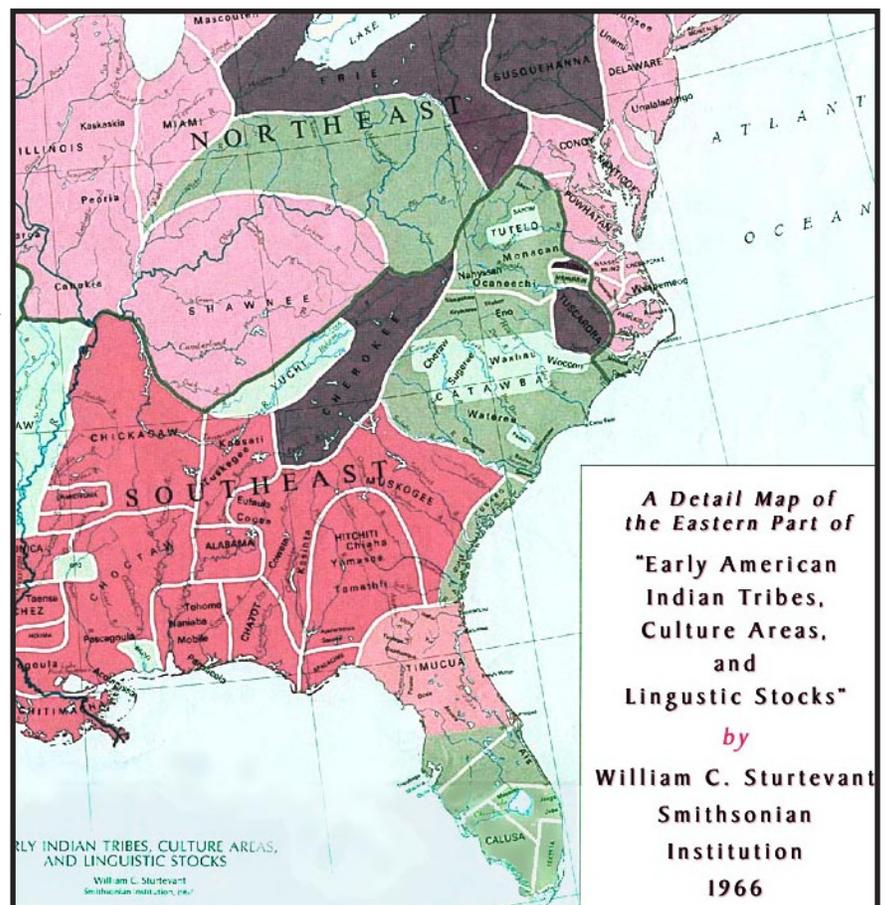


Figure 1 A

The Yuchi are hard to locate on a map, as Indians did not occupy land/territories in the European sense. It would be more logical to talk about a sphere of influence here as it stretched out along the trail system.

The Euchee Valley in Florida, Yazoo, on the Natchez Trail, Euchee Old Fields and Chestoee in Tennessee and on up to Saltville in Virginia. Yuchean nomenclature left on the landscape is certainly one indication that the Yuchi were there about. (see **Figure 1**) A remnant population of Indigenous peoples still resides in Great Valley area of Virginia and Tennessee, while only a few yet remember cultural elements that tied them to the Yuchi and Koasati, many have reidentified with the Cherokee for political reasons. While nearly everyone claims to have a “Cherokee” Grandmother here, most do have Indigenous heritage in their deeper family trees.

While the Yuchi did not inhabit this territory exclusively, and the archaeological evidence is confused by this multiple occupancy of the region – this, too, is consistent with the oral traditions that talk of a single culture with Yuchi priests in all the tribes white towns. The fact is that the European concept of territory and land ownership has colored the usual interpretations here. The land was very much shared by a very cosmopolitan and diverse society composed of many tribes intermingled upon the land in relative peace – and not the warring nations image that was derived from the Post Contact Holocaust period, where a stressed population was desperately forced to subsist. Rather the evidence strongly supports a much more peaceful time wherein the people had time to throw up great mounds and craft artful religious and status objects among the diverse tribes. A single culture, a civilization that has failed to be recognized as such, and yet it stretched over much of the Eastern United States.

Statecraft in the Americas

It is not as if this widely spread moundbuilding culture has not been recognized. It has been recognized by nearly all, and given several different names (Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (SECC), Southern Cult, & Mississippian Ideological Interaction Sphere). Frank Speck recognized the residual effects of this civilization in the region, while Swanton recognized early on the importance of the Solar Deity to the theocracy at the center of this civilization, most discussions have down-played it as a multicultural Death Cult or a collection warring tribes.¹³ Waring & Holder also recognized that this was an overarching culture, but from the earliest investigation of the mounds, the dominant culture has wanted to attribute it anywhere but to Indigenous Americans. There has long been a desire to view Indigenous peoples as inferior and incapable of real civilization. Many use the human sacrifice of the Mayan and Aztec cultures to argue that they were not civilized – despite an every bit equal level of violence among European peoples of that time. This down-playing of the magnitude and scale of the Indigenous North American civilization has been addressed by Francis Jennings.¹⁴ The point is that the mounds and their contents give undeniable testimony to a civilized culture that rivaled anything in contemporaneous Europe. It deserves recognition as the First United States, if viewed without this dominant cultural bias that lingers still.

The Yuchi also had several names for this multicultural civilization, but the most important one was: **Tsotanewaeno yudaha** (Literal meaning: Sacred brotherhood of the pipe). The religious and political movement was begun by the Isopogee or Sun beings that brought a series of metal plates and some religious teachings that the Yuchi priesthood represented to all the tribes.¹⁵ In this Indigenous theocracy, the stamp of the Greencorn Ceremonial is clear in its cultural imprint on the Eastern Siouians, the Shawnee, the many Creek peoples, the Cherokee and perhaps many other tribes -- a remnant of their membership in this united nations. It is also quite clear from even a brief Yuchean etymological survey that the Greencorn Ceremony and the Yuchi Language coevolved. The Yuchi were indeed the priests they claimed to be in their oral traditions, and the

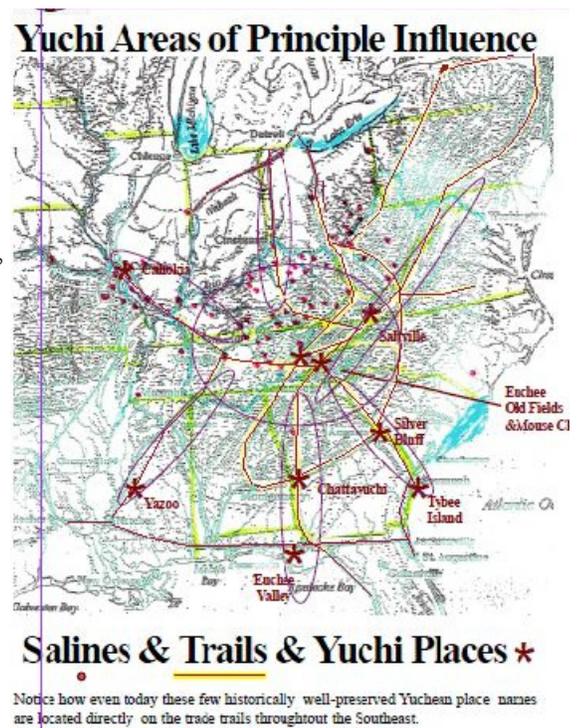


Figure 1 B Map after Helen Hornbeck Tanner, Map in **Powhatan's Mantle**, 2006

confirmation of those traditions is indelibly etched into the structure of the language.

The evidence is all there in the records, and can be easily added up to the conclusion that this was a real state. The many elements in the theocracy designed to engender peace, the general uniformity across the Southeast of symbolism and understanding, the high level of trade. The evidence for real statecraft is very evident. The Solar Deity and ruling Great Suns were the **Tsoyaha yudgiha** (Children of the Sun). It only degenerated into the warring tribes, so oft used to describe the SECC, when the culture collapsed due to the Contact Holocaust. This is not to deny that there were blood feuds and political infighting, but the real scope of the culture was one of peace, not death and war as it is so often cast.

While more proof is forthcoming as the Yuchi language is further analyzed, there is more than sufficient evidence to support this more Indigenous sympathetic version for consideration than the standard model that has been put forward. It can certainly be argued that the current view is biased and greatly lacking for real evidence as opposed to speculation. The Yuchean oral traditions and the Yuchean language offer a large data base of new material to bring to bear on the question of the protohistoric culture of Eastern North America.

It is important to Indigenous Americans to reclaim their history from its dusty hiding places. All Americans need a sense of past, and a pride in their origins. Despite its political usefulness as a propaganda tool, history is not a single story. Many of our most renowned minds have questioned the nature of history. An old African proverb states, “Until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunters.” Mark Twain has stated that “The very ink with which history is written is merely fluid prejudice,” and that “History is merely gossip agreed upon.” It is clear that often a history is meant to hide as much as it is meant to reveal. Real history is made up of many strands and viewpoints, and becomes closer to true, the less it is simplified. Just as we do not all agree on how we should approach the future, we do not agree on the past and the meanings to be taken from it. It is not a question of a true history versus a false history. It is a question of inclusiveness. A marginalized people are necessarily also marginalized in history as rule by relative powerlessness. A dedication to diversity and inclusiveness demands that all viewpoints be heard. Alternate versions of history must be given some consideration, if real inclusiveness is to be entertained. Only then can the astute mind decide what viewpoint is the best. Until the internet, there really was no real inclusiveness – now all ideas may get a hearing. The real question is will museums continue to listen only to the academic cliques, and the wealthy, or will even the marginalized get a hearing and inclusion?

As an example of an excellent candidate for an alternate history we have the case of the Cherokee Syllabary. The standard story of its creation in brief is that an illiterate, crippled, frontiersmen, half-Cherokee/half-Englishmen invented it. On the face of it, this is absurd beyond real belief. Yet it is the story that has been pushed by the Dominant Culture, particularly the missionaries for well over one hundred years. Aside from the difficulties of a subsistence farmer who is handicapped and without a real education mastering the skills in a few short months to create a useable orthography, we have the fact that such syllabaries are the stock of the meso-American orthographies, but not understood at that time. Furthermore, while it has not gotten a real hearing we have an Indigenous history that tells a much different story with respect to the Syllabary. Traveler Bird, a Cherokee descendant of the real Sequoyah, tells how the Syllabary is based in an ancient writing system among the Cherokee priests, and was not invented by Sequoyah, only adapted.¹⁶ Here we have a very credible alternate history that has all but been ignored except on the internet.

Not surprisingly, Chief Sam Brown, Jr. has independently claimed that the syllabary was much older as well, and that it was Yuchean originally. While I am not prepared to make any such assertion of fact here, it is clear that the syllabary is at least 75% effective in rendering a Yuchi orthography, and thus could easily have been adapted for Cherokee use. (see **Figure 2**) It also should be noted that one University of Tennessee professor has discovered a syllabary cave inscription that is “difficult to attribute with certainty as it may date rather early for the syllabary and involves few identifiable words or phrases.” This cryptic reference maybe just “marketing” by

Footnotes:

1. **Cherokee Trail of Tears** (DVD) & campaign promoting the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail., National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior 2009.

2. <http://www.sciway.net/hist/indians/yuchi.html>, previous to 2010 this site listed the current status of the Yuchi not as “active” as is currently listed, but as “Extinct.” This has been painfully noted in media coverage of Richard Grounds – in his lament on how it feels to be extinct.

3. Chief Sam Brown Jr. and several communications from contacts in other tribes have related that the Yuchi have been consulted on matters of traditional ritual. Joe Mahan, the unpublished tapes of Chief Sam Brown, Jr., Yuchi Tribal Archives (copied from Mahan Collection, Schwab Archives, Columbus State University, Columbus, Georgia). Also, page 268: “The Yuchi are remarkable for having retained their own tribal language and much of their lore...” Muriel Wright, **A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma**, University of Oklahoma Press 1951/1986

4. Mary Linn, **A Grammar of Euchee (Yuchi)**, PhD theses, University of Kansas, 2000.

5. Joe Mahan, the unpublished tapes of Chief Sam Brown, Jr., Yuchi Tribal Archives (copied from Mahan Collection, Schwab Archives, Columbus State University, Columbus, Georgia)

6. Lew Ballard and Jim Crawford both have noted the similarity of words for translator/interpreter – W. Lewis Ballard, “Linguistic and Cultural Areal Features Among the Yuchis, Creeks, and Shawnees: Questions, Proposals and Bibliography,” page 4, unpublished paper delivered at the Conference on Muskogean Languages and Linguistics at the University of Oklahoma, October, 19, 1978, and referring to Crawford’s reference to *jatiki* (Timucuan) at Oswego Conference in August 1976. Initiated by observation of the common use of the term for “Interpreter” in James Crawford, **Studies in Southeastern Indian Languages**, page 279 #15, University of Georgia Press, Athens 1975, wherein he originally thought the word arose in the Creek language first. Ballard notes its Yuchean structure, and that it may be easily decomposed into logical morphemes in Yuchi, and therefore most certainly has its origins in the Yuchean use. This would be further supported by the virtually complete absence of borrowed terms into Yuchi, and lack of a logical Muskogean etymology.

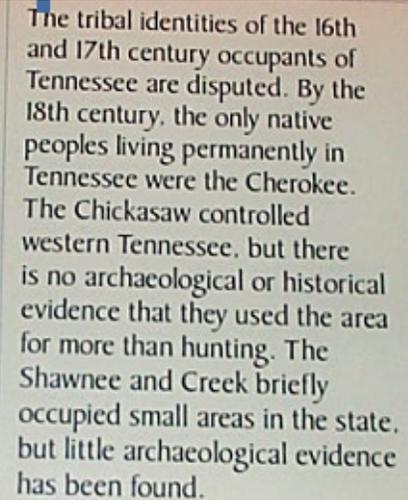
7. David Hackett, “Spiritual Yuchi” @ www.yuchi.org

8. Frank Speck, **Yuchi Ethnology** 1909

9. Addie George personal communication. Also Chief Sam Brown in Mahan tapes.

10. An example news report of such efforts at identification of the builders of Cahokia wherein researchers have publicly stated they could find no oral traditions, includes this one on the web: “But what really puzzles archeologists and anthropologists is that there are no legends, no records, no mention whatsoever of the once-grand city in the lore of any of the tribes -- Osage, Omaha, Ponca and Quapaw -- that are believed to be the direct descendents of the city’s builders.” @ <http://www.wired.com/culture/lifestyle/news/2004/10/65170>

11. Salt is recognized as being a premier commodity in cultural trade because it is so necessary to agrarian peoples, and it has an unequal distribution. The Yuchi have been linked to salt both at Tybee Island, Georgia



The tribal identities of the 16th and 17th century occupants of Tennessee are disputed. By the 18th century, the only native peoples living permanently in Tennessee were the Cherokee. The Chickasaw controlled western Tennessee, but there is no archaeological or historical evidence that they used the area for more than hunting. The Shawnee and Creek briefly occupied small areas in the state, but little archaeological evidence has been found.

Figure 3

This is the only mention of tribes other than Cherokee in the University of Tennessee’s McClung Museum otherwise excellent exhibit. It is sad that they choose to hide behind this noninformative statement.

(dabi is salt in Yuchean), and at Saltville Virginia, as well as other salt licks around the Southeast. Even into the Twentieth Century the Yuchi were on Salt Creek in Oklahoma among the Sac & Fox tribes plying the salt making trade. (page 267) Muriel Wright, **A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma**, University of Oklahoma Press 1951/87 & E. Raymond Evans, Koasatis Napochin, and Yuchis in the Eastern Tennessee Valley @ http://www.itslt.org/koasati_yuchi_napochin.doc, Page 9 Yuchis, salt and Saltville

12. Yuchi Cultural Footprint was outlined in Joseph Bauxier (1957) and by Kneberg and Lewis (1946 & 1958) in **Hiwassee Island** and **Tribes that Slumber**. It includes oriented and extended burials often with the grave lined by wood, bark or stone; trench wall semisubterranean houses in palisaded round towns; story telling effigies; flared rim pipes, and of course the Yuchean language.

13. Frank Speck, "Some Outlines of Aboriginal Culture in the Southeastern States," Am Anthropol pp 287-95 Vol 9 #2 Apr/Jun 1907

John Swanton, "Sun Worship in the Southeast," Am Anthropol pp206-13 Vol 3 #2 Apr/Jun 1928.

A.J. Waring & Preston Holder, "A Prehistoric Ceremonial Complex in The Southeastern United States," Am Anthropol pp1-, Vol 47, #1 Jan/Mar 1945.

14. Francis Jennings, **The Founders of America**, W.W. Norton, NY, NY, 1993. In Chapter two, he delineates the long history of agriculture in North America and the well over half the staple crops have their roots here. In Chapter Four, he relates the high level of civilization of Cahokia, making it clear that this was a "civilized" culture by any standard. He does not state who the ruling elite from meso-America that built Cahokia, but they were certainly Great Suns, and children of the Sun.

15. Peter Martyr in **De Orbe Novo** translated by McNutt discusses a priestly tribe living in the mountains. Portion reprinted on p.41 et seq. in John Swanton's **Early History of the Creek Indians and their Neighbors**, 1922.

16. Traveller Bird, **Tell Them They Lie; The Sequoyah Myth** Los Angeles: Westernlore Publishers, 1971.

17. The University of Tennessee has long denied any knowledge of connections between the protohistoric Indigenous population and any historic peoples. This academic dishonesty of the staff of the McClung Museum and Anthropology Department of the University of Tennessee will be further addressed in a later paper. In short, I as a Yuchi person have been long treated persona non grata here. UT is in a conflict of interest that involves both a desire to keep 10,000 human skeletons in their warehouse and away from NAGPRA resolution, and with some designs on Cherokee bingo funds as grant money according to one unnamed staff source. Their ruse of ignorance is not only disingenuous, but a blatant academic dishonesty, as there is clear historic documentation that ties these Indigenous Tennesseans to living tribes. There may be confusion with respect to individual skeletons (perhaps because proper records were not kept of context), there is no confusion about what peoples inhabited the Tennessee Valley in the Protohistoric time. Further, it is all inconsequential, as under NAGPRA law there is no requirement to prove direct relationship as they have asserted. If challenged, they would have to return the bones. My issue is that their broad claims that the Yuchi were not in Tennessee is the last act of genocide: the writing of a people out of history. In both discussions with me, and with such others as personnel of the Tennessee Wildlife Management, they have made these absurd claims with respect to the Yuchi. The fact is that I have never raised any issues about the bones, but merely inquired about Yuchi resource materials, and was floored when I was angrily told that I would have to produce DNA evidence before they would give up any of the bones. Such a non sequitur reply to my desire to access reports is just one of their responses that speak volumes here. They certainly believe they should be the sole arbitrators of all knowledge of Tennessee's Indigenous peoples, and that these artifacts belong to them. In my experience this institution is hostile to Indigenous peoples, and provides an outstanding example of noninclusiveness and marginalizing behaviors, as well as being in violation of NAGPRA law.

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