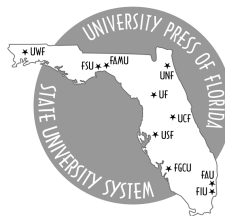


## Creation Myths and Legends of the Creek Indians

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# Creation Myths and Legends of the Creek Indians

Bill Grantham

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In memory of William Jefferson Grantham, Jr., 1934–1999

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## Preface

In my own search for an understanding of Creek mythology and cosmology, I realized that no single work existed that encompassed the entire corpus of information available. The myths and legends collected here were published in ethnographies, magazines, travelers' accounts, and a variety of other formats, many of which have become obscure. This work brings together for the first time an extensive collection of Creek creation myths and migration legends in a format that allows the reader to compare the myths and legends and to retrieve information from them easily. It is my hope that historians, anthropologists, folklorists, and students of religion will find this work a useful reference and that people of Creek descent will find it an accurate repository of their myths, legends, and religious heritage.

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I would like to thank several people who made this work possible. Charles Daniels (Sakim) generously provided me with many references and, along with Mary Johns, some of the contemporary Creek myths that are included here. Daniel Penton provided insight and in-depth discussion of many of the myths and concepts presented. Donna Cobb graciously provided the cover design. Daniel Penton, Dr. Robert Pullen, Donna Cobb, and my father, William J. Grantham Jr., read early drafts of the work and offered many useful suggestions for improvement. I thank my wife, Susan, for her support and help in preparing the final manuscript. And finally, I would like to thank the many people who offered their encouragement and enthusiastic support for the project.

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# Part I

## Beliefs and Ritual

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## The Role of Mythology

Their medicine has no strength anymore to help them. The Indian has lost all his knowledge. And so their medicine and their pleasure are all different now. The life ruler had given them all these things for their use but they did not take care of them. The medicine that they have now and their clothing is all different, they wear clothes of the “water-foam-people”; their own dresses are lost, their own way of thinking has been lost, and they do not know any more what the old people have taught.

These words, recorded during the summer of 1928 and the winter of 1929, were spoken by Maxey Simms about his own people, the Yuchi.<sup>1</sup> While it is perhaps true that much of “what the old people have taught” is forgotten, it is not all lost. Some of the mythological stories describing the creation of the worlds and the earliest times of the Creek Indians who once populated southeastern North America are still to be found scattered through obscure academic journals and among the descendants of those earliest Creek people.

### Mythology and Religion

Unfortunately, a negative connotation is often attached to the term *myth*. Myths are commonly seen as untrue or fanciful explanations of the past. E. B. Tylor viewed myths as logical associations of ideas that account for nature with the aid of analogies and comparisons.<sup>2</sup> Often confused with folktales, which are flighty, fantastic, and migratory, and with legends, which are locally bound and historically rooted, the myth portrays gods and supernatural beings and all kinds of metamorphoses.<sup>3</sup> Myths reveal the world of the gods and the cosmic order through which the social order and cultural values of a society are confirmed.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the earliest treatments of North American mythology are credited to D. G. Brinton, who focused on the solar aspects of North American myths, and to H. Kunike, who focused on lunar themes.<sup>5</sup> During the early part of this century, Franz Boas in anthropology and Krohn in folklore took a historico-geographic approach to North American mythology. Boas's *Tsimshian Mythology* and Gladys Reichard's *An Analysis of Coeur d'Alene Myths* provide examples of Boas's diffusionist influence, while Stith Thompson's work provides examples of Krohn's influence.<sup>6</sup> It was also during the early part of the twentieth century that John R. Swanton urged scholars to compile a concordance of North American myths, and the concepts of "tale type" and "motif index" began to be applied to North American myths.<sup>7</sup>

During the 1930s and 1940s, Bronislaw Malinowski's functionalism greatly influenced the study of mythology in other parts of the world, but, because of Boas's considerable influence, it had little impact in North America. During the same period, some European scholars began taking a psychoanalytic approach to mythology, and much of their attention was turned toward North American myths. The "culture hero" and "trickster," common characters in North American legends and folktales, attracted the interest of such scholars as Geza Róheim and Carl Jung.<sup>8</sup> In this analytic approach to mythology, irrational man, particularly his id and sublimations, provides the central focus. Similarly, Sigmund Freud sought the origins of mythology in the subjects and images that occurred in dreams.<sup>9</sup> Religion, in his approach, is considered only as an expression of subconscious forces at work.

During midcentury, a sociological approach to mythology emerged in Europe. In Britain, Robertson Smith began considering mythology as a description of ritual, while Emile Durkeim, in France, reached the conclusion that religion, including myth, is modeled on and integrated with society. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and his pupils also adopted Durkheim's approach in Britain.<sup>10</sup> Both approaches have been criticized for their lack of consideration of the religious aspects of myths and for their reductionism. The sociological approach has, however, shown that myth can serve as a *charta*—a *sanction*—for both ritual and profane institutions.<sup>11</sup>

An analytic approach that has had considerable influence in the study of North American mythology is the structuralist approach of Claude Lévi-Strauss.<sup>12</sup> The structuralists' focus, however, is not on the myths themselves but on the structure of the human mind that produces the myths. In this approach the way that elements of a myth are combined are taken as coded messages, which, if analyzed properly, provide clues as to



the structure of the mind.<sup>13</sup> Little or no attention is paid to the religious aspects of mythology, but the structuralist approach does point out the logic, rhythm, and style of a myth.<sup>14</sup>

### Myth and Religion: Sacred Time and Space

The role of myth in religious belief systems and daily life is an important one. Unfortunately, scholars have paid little attention to the relationship between mythology and religion. Myths are considered the most sacred truths to those among whom the myths originate. Myths are a culture's way of explaining how the world, people, and all things came to exist, and how order or cosmos was established from disorder or chaos. Since the events of a myth take place at the beginning of the world or universe as it is now known, they are necessarily intricately concerned with time. Time, according to Mircea Eliade, exists in two forms, sacred and profane: "On the one hand there are the intervals of a sacred time, the time of festivals (by far the greater part of which are periodical); on the other is profane time, ordinary temporal duration, in which acts without religious meaning have their setting."<sup>15</sup> Profane time—ordinary temporal duration—passes, never to be reclaimed. Sacred time, however, is the time in which cosmos is brought from chaos; that is, order is brought from disorder, existences from non-existence, the world from nothingness. It is the time of the original creation, a time when the gods were active in the formation and ordering of the universe. Sacred time is reclaimable, repeatable; "by its very nature sacred time is reversible in the sense that, properly speaking, it is a primordial mythical time made present."<sup>16</sup> By means of ritual, rites, and religious festivals, sacred time can be experienced by ordinary beings: "Every religious festival, any liturgical time, represents the reactualization of a sacred event that took place in a mythical past, 'in the beginning.' Religious participation in a festival implies emerging from ordinary temporal duration and reintegration of the mythical time reactualized by the festival itself."<sup>17</sup>

Sacred history (myth) supplies the models for the rituals, rites, and festivals in which ordinary beings should engage in order to reclaim sacred time: "Origin myths provide answers to questions about how things began; equally important, they also serve to establish an order among values and to justify, by reference to these values, the major customs and institutions of society. Furthermore, the myths, being biographies of the gods, endow the names of the pantheon not only with a list of powers and attributes but also with unique personal identities comparable to those of

real human beings. The myths, in other words, describe the supernatural community with which man must interact.”<sup>18</sup> More directly, Eliade argues:

The myth reveals absolute sacrality, because it relates the creative activity of the gods, unveils the sacredness of their work. In other words, the myth describes the various and sometimes dramatic interruptions of the sacred in the world.

[T]he supreme function of the myth is to “fix” the paradigmatic models for all rites and all significant human activities—eating, sexuality, work, education, and so on. Acting as a fully responsible human being, man imitates the paradigmatic gestures of the gods, repeats their actions, whether in the case of a simple physiological function such as eating, or of a social, economic, cultural, military, or other activity.<sup>19</sup>

The repetition or the reenactment of divine models provided by the myths is an act of imitation of the gods, through which man remains sacred. Also, through the continuous reactualization of these divine models, the world is resanctified. “Men’s religious behavior contributes to maintaining the sanctity of the world.”<sup>20</sup>

Especially important among mythological traditions is the cosmogony—the original act of creation, the emergence of cosmos from chaos—which Eliade describes as “the supreme divine manifestation, the paradigmatic act of strength, super abundance, and creativity.”<sup>21</sup> Herein lies an important motivational force. Ritual, or the reenactment of myth, is at the same time a repetition of a past divine activity and a new creative action:

Through annual repetition of the cosmogony, time was regenerated, that is, it began again as sacred time, for it coincided with the *illud tempus* in which the world had first come into existence. . . .

[B]y participating ritually in the end of the world and its re-creation, any man can become contemporary with the *illud tempus*; hence he was born anew, he began life over again with his reserve of vital forces *intact*, as it was at the moment of his birth.<sup>22</sup>

Many cultures view sacred or cosmic time as cyclic. It begins, ends, and begins again. This concept is more comprehensible when it is understood that time itself only came into existence with the original creative act; thus, the reactualization of the divine creative activities recounted in myth, in effect, restarts the cosmic cycle. To some cultures time and cosmos are so

intertwined that they are considered synonymous. According to Eliade, in some North American Indian languages the concept of the world or cosmos is used in the same sense as the concept of a year; as the temporal year ends, so too does the cosmos return to chaos.<sup>23</sup>

Through the annual reactualization, or ritual reenactment of the mythical original creation, cosmos is returned from chaos and sacred time begins anew. All that is old is made new again, sins and transgression of the past year are dissolved, and man too, having symbolically participated in the cosmogony or original creation of the world, is regenerated, born again in a purer form.

Equally as important as the concept of sacred time is the concept of sacred space. As Eliade states, “For religious man, space is not homogeneous; he experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others.”<sup>24</sup> The concept of sacred space is of primary importance to all religious traditions for “if the world is to be lived in, it must be founded,” and no world can be founded in the chaos of profane space.<sup>25</sup> Most cultures, especially nonindustrialized ones, perceive the world in terms of three levels or planes: an upper world, the middle world (earth), and the lower world. Sacred space, any space where the sacred manifests itself on earth, can be thought of as an *axis mundi*: the center of the world. It is this world axis that provides the orientation for the world and connects the three planes. This axis, providing an opening through the three planes, makes possible communication with the sacred. This world axis may be symbolically represented as a world pillar, a ladder, a cosmic mountain, a cosmic tree, and so forth. Eliade provides a sequence of concepts and cosmological images that together constitute what he calls the system of the world:

- (a) A sacred place constitutes a break in the homogeneity of space.
- (b) This break is symbolized by an opening by which passage from one cosmic region to another is made possible (from heaven to earth and vice versa; from earth to the underworld).
- (c) Communication with heaven is expressed by one or another certain images, all of which refer to the *axis mundi*: [world] pillar, ladder, [cosmic] mountain, [cosmic] tree, [cosmic] vine, etc.
- (d) Around this cosmic axis lies the world . . . hence the axis is located “in the middle,” at the “navel of the earth”; it is the center of the World.<sup>26</sup>

Within the boundaries of sacred space, the profane world is transcended and communication with the gods is made possible; it is the place

where the gods can descend to earth and man can symbolically ascend to the world of the gods.

Whatever boundaries religious man perceives as his world, whether country, city, village, or house, he has a need to exist in an organized world or cosmos. To achieve this organized world, he seeks orientation with respect to the *axis mundi* through the ritual provocation of signs indicating the location of sacred space. Once determined, the axis or center of the world becomes the point of orientation from which man's sacred places, and in fact his whole world, are constructed. Construction itself, because of the orientation provided by sacred space, then becomes a sacred act, a reenactment of the original world creation.<sup>27</sup>

### Historical Sketch of the Creeks

To understand Creek cosmological and mythological beliefs, it is necessary to understand the historical context in which these beliefs developed. The social entity that became known as the Creeks was composed not of culturally homogeneous people but of groups of people from diverse tribal and linguistic backgrounds.<sup>28</sup> Many of the cultural groups spoke dialects of the *Muskhogeian* language. Speakers of the *Muskogee* dialect of the Muskhogeian language included the Abihka, Coosa, Coweta, Kasihta, Holiwahali, Eufaula, Hilibi, Wakokai, Tuckabahchee, Okchai, Pakana, and Seminole. Speakers of the *Hitchiti* dialect of the Muskhogeian language included the Hitchiti, Apalachicola, Sawokli, Okmulgee, Oconee, Tamali, Chiaha, and Mikasuki. Speakers of the *Alabama* dialect of the Muskhogeian language included the Alabama, Koasati, Tawasa, Pawokti, and Muklasa. The Tuskegee are classified as the only group who spoke the *Tuskegee* dialect of the Muskhogeian language. In addition to the people who spoke various dialects of the Muskhogeian language, there were also the Yuchi, who spoke an unrelated *Uchean* language, the Shawnee, who spoke *Algonquin*, and many other non-Muskhogeian speakers.

The Yuchi, the Alabama, and the Hitchiti already occupied the areas that are now Georgia, North Florida, and Alabama when the Muskogeans migrated into the region from the west, incorporating many of these groups into their political organization.

The term *Creek* was first used by the English in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>29</sup> When western Muskogeans intruded upon and settled on lands occupied by the Hitchiti, some of the oldest inhabitants of the Southeast, they were referred to by the Hitchiti as "Ochesee." British traders came to refer to these Muskogee people as the Ochesee Creeks

because of their settlements along Ochesee Creek (the Upper Ocmulgee River). Eventually, these people became known simply as “Creeks.”<sup>30</sup>

After the Yamasee uprising in 1715, the Ochesee Creeks, like other groups, migrated westward, settling towns such as Coweta and Kasihta near the Chattahoochee River. The English began calling Muskogeese living on the Chattahoochee “Lower Creeks” and those Muskogeese who had earlier settled on the Coosa and Tallapoosa above the forks of the Alabama “Upper Creeks.”<sup>31</sup> Eventually all native people, including the Yuchi, the Hitchiti, the Shawnee, and others, living near the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers became known as “Lower Creeks” and all of those on the Alabama, Coosa, and Tallapoosa as “Upper Creeks.” Despite the European perception of these people as one, many different linguistic and cultural traditions persisted among the Creeks.

According to legend, the Abihkas, the Coosas, the Cowetas, and the Kasihtas—Muskogee-proper speakers—migrated in a series of waves into the southeast from the west. Such places as the Red River, the Rocky Mountains, and Mexico have been suggested as the speculative origin of these people, but no starting point for their migration has been definitively discovered.

The Hitchitis, who in de Soto’s time lived in villages throughout southern Georgia and northern Florida but especially along the Ocmulgee River, spoke a dialect of Muskogean completely unintelligible to Muskogee-proper speakers.<sup>32</sup> After the Yamasee Revolt of 1715 and the founding of Georgia in 1733, the Hitchitis relocated to the Alachua (Gainesville) area in Florida, the lower Chattahoochee River, and throughout Upper and Lower Creek villages in Alabama and Georgia.

The Alabamas, who were closely associated with the Koasatis, Tawasas, and Tuskegees, among others, may have formed a separate confederacy before joining the Creeks. The Alabama language, a Muskogean dialect, is sometimes described as a blend of Hitchiti and Choctaw.<sup>33</sup> Muskogee-proper speakers couldn’t understand them but Hitchiti speakers could.

The Yuchis, among the oldest inhabitants of the Southeast, are believed to have had a powerful chiefdom, probably known as “Chisca” to Hernando de Soto, located perhaps in South Carolina, Georgia, or Tennessee.<sup>34</sup> The Yuchis could not understand Muskogee, Hitchiti, Alabama, or any other Muskogean dialect.

The Tuckabatchees migrated southward into the southeast and established the town of the same name on the Tallapoosa River. Tuckabatchee became one of the largest and most influential of the Upper Creek towns,

though tradition holds that these people were not Creek but perhaps Shawnee or at least a group closely affiliated with the Shawnees.<sup>35</sup>

During most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Shawnees were an influential group in the Southeast, living mostly along the Savannah River and at Tuckabatchee.<sup>36</sup> During the later part of the eighteenth century, many of the Shawnees migrated north of the Ohio River, but some stayed in the Southeast and became known as Creeks. Those who remained among the Creeks continued to speak Shawnee, an Algonquin language, and lived in rectangular lodges rather than the circular wattle and daub lodges common in the region.<sup>37</sup> Some Natchez also settled among the Creeks after they were defeated in 1729 in an uprising against the French where they were established on the Mississippi River. All of these diverse tribes eventually coalesced into the Creek Confederacy, a political alliance composed of people from multiple cultural backgrounds. Although some voluntary migrations had already taken place, most of the Creeks were removed from Alabama, Georgia, and Florida during the early nineteenth century to Indian Territory west of the Mississippi River. Of those who remained in the Southeast, some assimilated into white culture and others migrated southward into Florida and assimilated into various native groups living there.

## Creek Mythology

The fluidity of any mythology and cosmology makes difficult the task of rendering them adequately in words. One problem encountered when attempting to render a belief system in words is that of time. By nature, beliefs are fluid and subject to change; therefore, any description of a belief system is necessarily temporally bound. Many aspects of the Creek belief system are centuries if not millennia old, while others have changed within this century; one must choose which point in time the description will reflect. Most of the sources referenced in this work are from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Therefore, the descriptions provided here are rendered in past tense. This in no way implies that the belief system is extinct. There are those who still explicitly adhere to Creek beliefs both in Oklahoma and in the Southeast.

Culturally specific concepts and perceptions are another set of difficulties to be considered. In non-Western belief systems such Western concepts as “supernatural” are of little use, because in the animated world of non-Western people there is nothing “supernatural” about unseen spiritual beings or plants and animals having souls. These concepts are considered

perfectly natural. There are also substantial differences in concepts of time and space, good and evil, moral and immoral, and so forth. Therefore, every care has been taken to avoid “Westernizing” these concepts as they exist within the Creek belief system.

When discussing Creek mythology and cosmology, sociohistorical factors must also be considered. First, the Muskogees migrated into a Southeast already occupied by such cultural groups as the Yuchis and the Hitchitis. Many of these groups were subdued and incorporated into the Muskogee sociopolitical system. Second, contact with Europeans greatly reduced southeastern populations through the spread of European diseases to which these populations had no resistance. Populations were further stressed through the loss of hunting and agricultural land. The westward expansion of the Europeans then compressed the native populations of the Southeast westward, forcing the easternmost populations to relocate among the westernmost populations. Eastern towns were relocated among or merged with the westernmost towns. Forced and voluntary removals of the “Creeks” from the Southeast and their relocation north, west, and south of their original territory then caused further geographical mixing of culture groups.

This set of historical and social circumstances produced two results with respect to a discussion and understanding of Creek mythology and beliefs. First, many of the traditions, rituals, beliefs, and mythologies of the culturally differing social groups that became the Creeks became communal property. The Yuchis, for example, assert that when the “Creeks,” meaning Muskogee, overran the Southeast and incorporated the Yuchis into their nation, they also adopted the Yuchi annual ceremonies, or *Busk*, almost completely. The Muskogees, however, claim an independent origin for their ceremonies from spiritual beings.<sup>38</sup>

The second result of the historical circumstances that led to the emergence of the Creeks as a social entity is that early (and even recent) historical and ethnographic accounts of the people regarded as Creeks often refer to them only as “Creek,” with little or no regard for their cultural heritage. This assumption of a single heritage has led to much confusion in the literature and seemingly conflicting historical and ethnographical accounts. With regard to an understanding of mythology and beliefs, this assumption has led to many descriptions of the Creeks that are actually only collections of mismatched bits and pieces of information: a Yuchi creation myth, a Muskogee folktale, a description of a “Creek” festival, and so on.

While many aspects of the mythology and beliefs of the Creeks have

become lost or confused due to historical circumstance and the passage of time, some important information can still be reclaimed from a careful comparative study of Creek mythology and beliefs. This reclamation, however, is only possible when as much information as possible about the myths and beliefs is collected into a single source as presented here.

Although collections of Creek folktales that contain some mythology are available,<sup>39</sup> no extensive collection of Creek mythology has ever been compiled. Instead, these stories that describe creations, migrations, and the origins of Creek beliefs and perceptions of the universe are found scattered throughout early ethnographic accounts, travelers' reports, missionary reports, and the like. Most scholars regard these stories as purely fictional and therefore of little value in understanding and describing Creek culture, which may account for the minimal academic interest shown in these stories. Even were that true, the richness of Creek mythology would be reward enough for compiling such a collection. Considered in isolation, as many of these stories are found in the published literature, it is sometimes difficult to realize the academic importance of these myths. However, when collected into a single volume, their importance becomes obvious to the discerning scholar. Perhaps the most important idea developed in this work is the existence of at least two distinct mythological and cosmological traditions among the Creeks, which can be thought of as an "Eastern Creek Tradition" and a "Western Creek Tradition," the latter consisting of the Muskogee, the Alabama, and the Koasati and the former of the Yuchi, the Hitchiti, and probably the Tuskegee.

Creek myths and legends are presented in Part II in such a way as to preserve their literary richness while at the same time rendering scholarly comparison and analysis easily accomplished. The original spelling and grammar used in the earliest known published version of each myth or legend are preserved. The stories, as originally published or told, are presented single spaced and double indented. Paragraphs are indicated by line spaces between blocks of text.

The title of each myth or legend is preceded by the language group from which the story originated. Each story is given a reference code beside the title (U2, for example), and line numbers have been added to the left of the text for easy reference. Throughout the discussion of Creek cosmology, the myths are referenced by these codes. Comments of the original recorders of the myths and legends follow the text of the story.

The myths and legends are organized into chapters based on topics. Within each chapter the stories are presented by language group following Swanton's classification of southeastern tribes: *Uchean* (Yuchi), *Hitchiti*



(speakers of the Hitchiti dialects of the Muskogean language), *Alabama* (speakers of the Alabama dialects of the Muskogean language), and *Muskogee* (speakers of the Muskogee dialect of the Muskogean language).<sup>40</sup> A chapter titled “Contemporary Creek Myths and Legends” includes modern versions, some of which are previously unpublished and others that have enjoyed only limited distribution in publication. Finally, although this work focuses on the myths and legends of the Creek Indians, a few creation myths and migration legends from the Choctaw language group are included because of their relevance to the Creeks.

The myths and legends are followed by an appendix in which historical and biographical information is given about the collectors of the stories and their sources. A phonetic guide is provided to aid, when possible, in the pronunciation of native words as they appear in the myths and legends. Finally, a glossary of native words as they are used in the myths and legends and an extensive index are provided. Multiple spellings of the same word are indexed separately for ease of comparison and for the convenience of those interested in the linguistic aspects of the words.

## Cosmogony

Cosmogonies are creation myths, explanations of how chaos or disorder is transformed into cosmos or order. They are an accounting of a culture's sacred past and an explanation of the present, accounts of how the world, plants, animals, and people were created. Creation is usually accounted for in one of several ways: (1) from chaos or nothingness, (2) from a cosmic egg or primal maternal mound, (3) from world parents who are separated, (4) from a process of earth diving, or (5) from several stages of emergence from other worlds.<sup>1</sup> At least two types of creation myths are common in Creek mythology: earth diver accounts found among the Eastern Creek Tradition and emergence accounts found in the Western Creek Tradition. A third possible creation type may be represented by the Tuckabatchee, a tribe that was apparently incorporated into the Muskogees.

Earth diver explanations for the creation of the world are common throughout eastern North America. Among the Creeks the Yuchis, the Hitchitis, and probably the Tuskegees account for creation this way. In earth diver accounts, there exists, in the beginning, only water and the sky and those beings that inhabit each. A being, often but not always the Crawfish in Creek mythology, dives beneath the water to the earth below and after several attempts and near failure succeeds in pulling the earth to the surface of the water to form land.

### Before the Earth

In the earliest time, according to the Yuchis and Tuskegees, there existed only a boundless and flat expanse of water and air. It was inhabited by water beings and air beings. Some of these beings had animal forms, some natural forms, and others human-like forms, but all behaved much like human beings. These beings had families, traveled, played games, hunted,

made war, and performed certain rites or rituals. Death was unknown to these beings.

## Creation of the Earth

During these earliest times, the beings decided to create earth. Several variations exist in Yuchi mythology as to which beings actually made the decision, but by most accounts it was Crawfish who accomplished the task. In one account, Crawfish decides to retrieve the land from beneath the water (U1). In another account it was all of the beings in council with the Creator who decided to retrieve the land (U2). In still other accounts it was Men, Animals, and Insects (U3), the Birds and the Sun (U4), or all of the flying creatures together who made the decision (U5a). In all of the Yuchi myths it was Crawfish who actually dove beneath the water and retrieved land. With one possible exception (U2), the Creator who originally created the beings was involved neither with the decision nor the process of bringing the land from beneath the water; it was the beings themselves who were responsible.

The Tuskegee (T1) myth is very similar to those of the Yuchi. In this myth, Eagle was appointed the chief of the beings and decided that land should be retrieved from beneath the water, and again it was Crawfish who retrieved it. However, it must be noted that the origin of the Tuskegees and even the attribution of this myth to the Tuskegees must be questioned. The Tuskegees are generally associated with the Muskogees, but evidence suggests that they may have a cultural heritage different from that of the Muskogees.

Benjamin Hawkins, one of the earliest writers to mention the Tuskegees (about 1800), describes their town and remarks only that the Tuskegees “have lost their language, and speak Creek, and have adopted the customs and manners of the Creeks.”<sup>2</sup> Gatschet suggests the name is Cherokee and is linguistically identical with “Toskegee,” a Cherokee town on the southern shore of the Tennessee River.<sup>3</sup> Several other Cherokee towns of the same name are mentioned by Mooney, who describes the Tuskegee as a foreign people among the Cherokee.<sup>4</sup> The evidence seems to suggest that, whatever the origin of the Tuskegee, remnants of the tribe settled among both the Muskogees and the Cherokees.<sup>5</sup>

That the Tuskegee origin myth presented in this work originated with the Tuskegee is also questioned. Forced removal from the Southeast to west of the Mississippi River resulted in the resettlement of the Tuskegee

and the Yuchi as close neighbors. Considerable contact between these two groups after removal has led some to suggest that the myth is, in fact, a Yuchi myth that gained popularity among the Tuskegees.<sup>6</sup>

Mention of the earth before the arrival of human beings is practically nonexistent among the Alabamas and Muskogeas. Alabama myths (A1 and A2) are of the earth diver type, but a close evaluation of these stories reveals that they are suspiciously like Yuchi stories. It is also reported that during the 1930s or 1940s there was one, possibly two, Yuchi schoolteachers among the Alabamas of Texas where these two myths were collected, which could account for the origin of these stories.<sup>7</sup>

Some Alabamas have expressed the belief that the Great Spirit created the universe and all things just as they exist,<sup>8</sup> and one Alabama myth (A4) briefly mentions that before creation there existed only water. None of the Muskogee stories makes mention of the earth before human beings.

### The Origin of Human Beings

According to the Yuchis, not long after the creation of dry land was the creation of human beings. Yuchi belief holds that the first Yuchis sprang from a drop of blood. In most Yuchi accounts of the primordial event, soon after the creation of land, a drop of blood fell from the Sun as she trekked across the sky to provide light (U1, U5c, U6) for the newly created land. From this drop of blood and the earth where it fell descended the human beings. One account (U5d) differs slightly in that it was the Moon who was in her menstrual courses when a drop of blood fell to the earth. The Sun (who in this account is male) took the drop of blood home, where later it developed into a human baby whom the Sun raised as his son. From this first human being all Yuchis are believed descended.

Alabama and Muskogee mythology provides an entirely different account of the origins of the first human beings, that of emergence from underground. This type of explanation for the origin of people is associated with horticultural people.<sup>9</sup> According to the Alabamas and Koasatis, the first people were created underground (A3–A8), some say from clay (A3, A7, A8), where they lived for a while before emerging onto the surface of the land. Some myths account only for the emergence of the Alabamas (A3–A5), while others describe how the Alabamas and Koasatis emerged together at the same place (A6–A8). These last three explain that there was a tree at the mouth of the cave where they emerged, the Alabamas emerging on one side of a root and the Koasatis on the other, which accounts for slight differences between them. All of the accounts

suggest that after emergence from the earth, the first Alabamas and Koasatis settled near the mouth of the emergence cave, the location of which is identified as in Alabama (A4, A5).

Muskogee accounts of the first people are almost identical to those of the Alabamas and Koasatis except for the location where emergence took place. The location of Muskogee emergence from the earth is identified only as in the west (M1), at a place in the west referred to as the foundation of all things (M4), or at the “backbone” of the earth, which is identified with the Rocky Mountains (M6).

One myth recounts only the emergence of the Kashitas and their eventual migration eastward (M1). Another describes the simultaneous emergence of the Kashitas and the Chickasaws (who in many of the myths are identified as Muskogees) and their eventual eastward migration, the Cowetas being delayed during their emergence by a root of a tree that grew in the mouth of the cave (M4). A third myth accounts only for Coweta emergence and eventual eastward migration (M6).

The Tuckabatchees, who were considered one of the leading ceremonial groups among the Muskogees, are problematic with respect to cosmology. Unfortunately, only one creation myth that can confidently be attributed to the Tuckabatchees could be obtained. This myth, completely inconsistent with Muskogee myths, recounts how the first Tuckabatchees were sent down from the world above to some unspecified place in the west (MT1). After first migrating northward, then southward, the Tuckabatchees eventually migrated eastward. Historically, the Tuckabatchees were closely affiliated with the Shawnees. An examination of the oldest known Shawnee cosmogony reveals similarities to the Tuckabatchee myth. A portion of this myth, as told by the Shawnee Prophet Tenskwtawa to C. C. Trowbridge in 1824, follows: “[A]fter this the great Spirit put the twelve Indians & the two old men (he had created two to supply their place in the original number) in a large thing like a basket & told them he was going to put them on the Island. The old man first named carried with him all the good things entrusted to his care for the benefit of the Indians, in a pack, on his shoulders.”<sup>10</sup>

Although they represented one of the largest and most respected of the Muskogee towns, evidence suggests that the Tuckabatchees were not originally Muskogee. Some Tuckabatchees identified themselves only as non-Creek, while some specifically identified themselves as Shawnee.<sup>11</sup>

The town of Tuckabatchee, like other important Creek towns, had a special ceremonial name, *Ispokogi*, which was also sometimes used to identify the people of Tuckabatchee (M8). The original *Ispokogis* are

identified as beings that had descended from the Upper World and brought to the Tuckabatchees their medicine (M9). Swanton suggests a relationship between this word and *Kispogogi*, the name of one of the Shawnee bands.<sup>12</sup> Tradition also holds that the Tuckabatchee ceremonial items are to be returned to the Shawnees if ever they are no longer able to perform their Annual Busk.<sup>13</sup> That a close connection exists between the Tuckabatchees and the Shawnees is evident; that they were the same people seems highly probable.

Of the origin of the Shawnees, Creeks (Muskogees), Choctaws, and Yuchis, a portion of a Yuchi myth provides a good summary (U8): “Now the people had come upon the earth. The Shawnee came from above. The Creeks came from the ground. The Choctaw came from the water. The Yuchi came from the sun.”<sup>14</sup>

### Posthuman Creation

During the time immediately after the creation of humans, according to the Yuchis, there was a close intimacy between humans and animals, who still exhibited very humanlike characteristics. Magic was very common, and many of the primordial acts of animals and ancestors account for the way things are perceived in modern times.<sup>15</sup> Toward the end of this period death is brought to humans through disobedience, tobacco originates, other tribes are brought into existence, and fire is secured and distributed among the people. There exists a body of folklore, beyond the scope of this work, associated with this period, which offers many accounts of why certain things are as they are in the present.

### Apocalyptic Prophecy

Tradition holds that should the Yuchi ever cease to perform the sacred ceremonies taught to them by the Sun (U5c) or if the Yuchi should ever disappear (U5d and U6), the Sun will set in the east, there will be darkness, and the world will end.<sup>16</sup> Yuchi mythology also holds that some day the Wind will sweep across all of the earth destroying all in its path (U13–U14).

With respect to Alabama apocalyptic tradition, D. W. Eakins reports: “They have no cycle, or fixed or stated period, at the end of which they believe the world will come to a close. But they say it will be destroyed by fire; and when this period arrives, the earth will be filled with war; and a body of people will appear among the Indians, and they will be destroyed;

and then the Great Spirit will destroy the earth, to keep others from getting possession of it. They do not believe that the Indian priests cause its renewal.”<sup>17</sup>

According to the Chickasaws, the earth was already once destroyed by a flood: “The water covered all the earth; that some made rafts to save themselves; but something like large white beavers would cut the strings off the raft and drown them. They say that one family was saved, and two of all kinds of animals. They say when, (or before,) the world will be destroyed by fire, it will rain down blood and oil.”<sup>18</sup>

Continuing, Henry Schoolcraft reports that the Chickasaws believed that all souls would eventually return to their homeland, where they would reunite with all the souls that had died there and then return to the west when the earth will be destroyed by fire.<sup>19</sup> James Adair also encountered beliefs that a time will come when all souls of the dead will eventually return to “repossess their beloved tract of land, and enjoy their terrestrial paradise.”<sup>20</sup>

Flood accounts also existed among the Yuchis, Alabamas, Koasatis, and Muskogeas.<sup>21</sup> That these stories show considerable Christian influence is obvious; it is likely, however, that flood stories and apocalyptic prophecies existed among the Creeks before the arrival of Christianity.

Upon emergence of the Muskogeas from the earth, the Creator revealed to them that “The earth that lies here is the foundation of all things” (M4). Continuing, it is told to them that a last day will come, fire will destroy the world, the dead will rise, fearful things will arise out of the earth, and everything will gather together in the interior of the earth and death will cease to exist. At that time the Breath Holder will come to seek out those individuals who have led good lives and “take them up.”

According to some accounts, all Creeks will eventually return to the opening in the earth, the navel of the world, from which they emerged.<sup>22</sup> Before this happens tradition will suffer from neglect, the people will refuse to obey orders, and all ceremony will cease. According to other accounts, the destruction of the world will be caused by a loss of the Creek women, who will be taken away to an island. A Tuckabatchee tradition holds that at the end of all things the world will shrivel up to “the mother of trees,” which is at or identical with the “navel of the world.” Then all people will be destroyed, save four who will be carried up into the Upper World on a block of wood. It is also said that the Wind will, one day when the end comes, with great power sweep all to one place from the four corners of the earth: “I am going away to the other end of the world. I will sometimes send some of my servants back to visit you. Some will be soft

and gentle, some will be rough and loud. When the end comes, the last day, I will come with great power and will sweep all to one place from the four corners of the earth. So the wind went away.”<sup>23</sup>

The passage of time and the influence of European contact have made it all but impossible to distinguish native tradition from Christian influence with respect to the final destruction of the world. However, since flood stories and apocalyptic prophecies exist in virtually all, if not all, cultures, there is no reason to suspect that they did not exist among the Creeks before European influence.



## Creek Cosmology

For the Creeks, like most native North American cultures, there existed three worlds: the Upper World, the Lower World, and the Middle World. The Upper World, the world beyond the sky, was the realm of powerful spiritual beings and departed souls. It was permeated with powers of perfection, order, permanence, clarity, and periodicity.<sup>1</sup> The Lower World, the world below the earth and the waters, was also perceived as the habitat of many powerful spiritual beings. It was the realm of powers exactly contrary to those of the Upper World: reversals, madness, creativity, fertility, and chaos.<sup>2</sup> These two worlds, permeated with different and opposing forces, should not, however, be thought of in the European sense of good and evil, but only as different and opposing.

The Middle World, the world inhabited by humans, was perceived as a flat plane, overarched by a solid vault.<sup>3</sup> As described by the Alabamas, the land of the Middle World was a square figure entirely surrounded by water, and the sky was a material mass that was of a half-circular form whose truncations did not touch the land.<sup>4</sup> The sky was believed to rise and fall at intervals, so that by watching, a person could pass under its edge.<sup>5</sup> The stars were perceived as stuck on the underside of the sky and the galaxy thought of as *poya fik-tcâlk innini*—the “spirits road.”

The Middle World existed in a “precarious balance” between those powers that structure nature and human life and those that rupture order and empower freedom.<sup>6</sup> Powers of both Upper and Lower Worlds could be called upon by humans, but only without allowing the two to come into contact with each other.

### The Cosmic or Creative Force

Most early recorders of Creek custom mention a “great good spirit” ruling in the Upper World. Whether due to contact with Europeans or for

other reasons, the perception of a personified creator among the Creeks is misleading or perhaps a late construct.<sup>7</sup> A more appropriate conception of the “life giver” would be as an impersonal creative or cosmic force that permeates the universe, neither good nor evil but the embodiment of the Upper World forces of perfection, order, permanence, clarity, and periodicity.

The Yuchi centered their ceremonial life around *Tsō*, who could easily have been interpreted as a supreme being or deity by Europeans and perhaps had come to be thought of as such among the Yuchi. He was also known as “The One Who Is Breath” and “Makes Indians,”<sup>8</sup> but these names do not confer on *Tsō* the position of a universal or even earthly creator. According to Yuchi mythology and tradition, before there was an earth, many beings existed in a realm of water and air called *yūbahé* (“in the far heights”). Besides those beings already mentioned with respect to Yuchi cosmogony, several seem to have had human form—Sun, Wind (*Widá*), Old Woman (*Wä<sup>h</sup>hané*), Old Man (*Gohané*), Iron or Metal Man (*Gohä<sup>t</sup>toné* or *Gyät hä*), the four cardinal points, and the four winds—but apparently none of these ruled supreme over the others.

It was among these beings in the realm of the far heights that *Tsō* came to exist. In the Yuchi cosmogony, *Tsō* originated from a drop of blood that fell from the Sun as she made her first trek across the primordial sky. Raised by a woman among the sky beings, *Tsō* was taken to the Rainbow, where he participated in certain ceremonies. Though how or why are not clearly understood, *Tsō* and his mother left the sky world for earth, where he taught the first Yuchi the ceremonies he had undergone at the Rainbow in the sky world and brought to them their medicines: the button snake-root and the red root. After instructing the early Yuchi in their ceremonial life, *Tsō* departed from earth again with the promise that once a year he would pass overhead to see if they were obeying his instructions and performing the annual ceremonies correctly.<sup>9</sup>

Frank Speck’s identification of *Tsō* as a supreme being is problematic, since *Tsō* originated from the Sun, one of many beings who took part in the creation of the earth. If *Tsō* or even his mother the Sun is taken as a supreme being, they cannot be identified as the original creator of the beings of the earliest times. *Tsō* should then be understood as the earthly representative of the sky world and the spiritual patriarch of the Yuchi.

The Mikasuki identified the creator of people as *fisahki:kómihcî* (“breath” or “life maker”), but William Sturtevant describes this being as otherwise unimportant.<sup>10</sup> Jean Bossu reports that the Alabama called the

“supreme deity” *Soulbiéche*, which Swanton suggests is from *solopi* for “ghost” or “spirit” and *esa* or *īsa* for “to live” or “dwell.”<sup>11</sup> Swanton identifies the “supreme being” of the Creeks, almost certainly referring to the Muskogee, as *Hisagita īmisi*, “the breath holder.” John Pope collected the name *Sawgee Putscheasse* from an informant he identifies as the Little King of the town of Broken Arrow.<sup>12</sup> Probably one of the oldest known and most commonly used names for the Muskogee personification of the cosmic force is *Ibofānaga*, the “One Above Us.”

Older Creeks of the early twentieth century asserted that the name of the being as it was then known to them, *Hisagita īmisi*, “the breath holder,” was not the original term used but was one that came into being only after contact with Europeans.<sup>13</sup> This assertion suggests that the Creek perception, or at least their description of the cosmic or creative force, underwent a transformation after European contact.

## The Chaotic Force

The concept of an impersonal cosmic force, neither good nor evil, rather than an intervening supreme being of good, negates the possibility of an evil counterpart to this being. There are, however, two beings in Yuchi mythology that could at first glance be mistaken for evil counterparts to a supreme being: an evil wizard of obvious worldly origin and the Iron Monster, who is obviously a spiritual being but is not depicted in Yuchi mythology as a counterpart to the supreme being.

The evil wizard is encountered in U11. The myth speaks of a time when the Sun’s movement across the morning sky was impeded. An unknown mysterious being, who was on earth at that time teaching the Yuchis matters of religion, sent two men to investigate the cause of the Sun’s impediment. Upon discovering that it was a “wizard” who was causing the trouble, the men set about to kill this being by knocking its head off. The unknown mysterious being directed them to tie the head onto one of the upper limbs of a tree, but the next morning the wizard still lived. After they repeated this action with several trees, the head was tied onto the limb of a cedar tree and the wizard died. This being, however, is referred to as a “wizard,” which suggests a worldly origin rather than an Upper or Lower World origin.

In two other Yuchi accounts (U13, U14), the Wind, who is seeking his lost sons, encounters the Iron Monster, who is described as an evil one who was made of iron and could not be killed. Knowing that the Iron

Monster had killed his lost sons, the Wind seeks to kill the Iron Monster and accomplishes it by blowing smoke on him from a pipe fashioned from a bullfrog with a snake for a stem.

These myths are rich with symbolism and may offer the closest representation of an evil counterpart to the supreme being that is to be found in Creek mythology. The Iron Monster, the Wind finds, lives across a river and offers to ferry the Wind across in his boat. It is also into this river that the Iron Monster has cast the Wind's dead sons. This water, symbolic of chaos and disorder, is also reminiscent of a mysterious water mentioned in Alabama mythology (A10–A15) that must be crossed in the afterworld. After killing the Iron Monster and retrieving his lost sons from the water, the Wind finds them transformed (though it is not clear into what). The Wind decides to stay there in the mysterious water with the prophetic admonishment that someday he will return to the place from whence he came, sweeping across the world and destroying all in his path.

Swan suggests that there is a good spirit that inhabits some “distant, unknown region, where game in plenty, and goods very cheap! where corn grows all the year round, and the springs of pure water are never dried up.”<sup>14</sup> He also refers to an evil spirit who dwells “a great way off, in some dismal swamp, which is full of galling briars, and that he is commonly half starved, having no game, or bear's oil, in all his territories.”

Swan attributes droughts, floods, famines, and miscarriages in war to the evil spirit.<sup>15</sup> However, when queried, Pope's informant denied the existence of an evil counterpart to the supreme being.<sup>16</sup> Swan is the only writer who mentions the existence of an evil spirit, save modern accounts in which Christian influence is obvious.<sup>17</sup> It is likely that Swan's report actually refers to the final disposition of souls either to a place of plenty and comfort or to one of scarcity and discomfort, rather than referring to good and evil deities. (Compare Swan's account with the discussion of souls that follows.)

## The Horned Serpent

Though no “evil” counterpart to a supreme “good” existed among the Creeks, a counterpart did exist for the impersonal Cosmic Force. This counterpart, the Chaotic Force, was frequently depicted in the form of the *Horned Serpent* or *Tie Snake*. Joel Martin, who does not differentiate between “Tie Snake” and “Horned Serpent,” describes the Tie Snake as the foremost power of the Lower World, “armoured with crystalline scales that shined iridescently, its forehead crowned with an extraordinar-

ily bright crystal. Highly prized as aids in divination, these dazzling scales and crystals could be obtained only by a shaman purified for contact with the dangerous powers of the lower world.”<sup>18</sup> Some accounts, however, do differentiate between the Horned Serpent and the Tie Snake, and Martin’s description likely applies to the Horned Serpent. Swanton’s informant, Jackson Lewis, describes the Horned Serpent as follows: “This snake lives in water and has horns like the stag. It is not a bad snake. It crawls out and suns itself near its hole. . . . It does not harm human beings but seems to have a magnetic power over game. If any game animal, such as a deer, comes near the place where this snake is lying it is drawn irresistibly into the water and destroyed. It eats only the ends of the noses of the animals which it has killed.”<sup>19</sup> The Tie Snake, as described by Lewis, is a long slender snake that makes progress by a succession of jumps or flips and is so powerful that it could carry a full-grown horse along with it. Lewis’s description of the Tie Snake continues: “The ‘tie-snake’ is an inch and a half in diameter and short, but it is very strong. It is white under the throat, but black over the rest of the body, and its head is crooked over like the beak of a hawk. It lives in deep water, usually in small deep water holes from which it makes excursions into the woods, drawing its prey down into the water to its den.”<sup>20</sup> In agreement with Lewis, Willie Lena asserts that the Horned Serpent and the Tie Snake are in fact different beings but that the two are often called by the same name.<sup>21</sup> According to Lena, the Horned Serpent resembles a Tie Snake but is much larger. It lives in deep pools and its horns are greatly valued as a powerful medicine. The Alabama refer to this being as *tcinto sãktco* (“crawfish snake”), distinguishing four kinds based on the color of its horns: yellow, white, red, or blue.<sup>22</sup>

Believed to have originally been a man who was transformed into a serpentlike being, the Horned Serpent combines features of beings from all three worlds. Horned Serpents are described as having the body of a serpent (a Lower World being), the antlers of a deer (a Middle World being), and wings like a bird (an Upper World being).<sup>23</sup> Snakes transcend all three worlds: swimming on or under the water and burrowing into the ground, crawling on the surface of the ground, and climbing high into the trees approaching the sky.

The horns of this serpent were greatly prized as powerful medicine for hunting and also were used to attract women. Fragments of the horns were said to resemble red sealing wax and could be obtained only with the greatest exposure to peril.<sup>24</sup> Fragments of the horns could be obtained only by someone with the appropriate spiritual training with the aid of a rattle, a short log of green wood, a special knife for scraping the snake’s horn, a

circle of buckskin to catch the scrapings, and a supply of freshly cut stems of smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*) to feed the snake.<sup>25</sup>

Placing the short log near the edge of the water parallel to the shoreline, the spiritualist knelt behind it. With the rattle in his right hand and the sumac in his left, he sang four magical songs to call the snake. Because he was the chief of powers below, birds would become agitated when the Horned Serpent appeared. Charmed by the songs, the serpent would rest its head on the log and eat the sumac. The spiritualist then could scrape the horns with the special knife, catching the scrapings in buckskin.<sup>26</sup> Similar to Lena's account, Hawkins's account relates a traditional method of obtaining the horns from a Horned Serpent: "The snake was in the water, the old people sung and he showed himself. They sung again, and he showed himself a little out of the water. The third time he showed his horns, and they cut one; again he showed himself a fourth time, and they cut off the other horn. A piece of these horns and of the bones of the lion, is the great war physic."<sup>27</sup>

Because fragments of the Horned Serpent horns were considered very powerful, the owner of such powerful medicine likely stored the prize in a hollow tree away from his house to prevent injury to his family. The fragments were stored along with red paint in a buckskin pouch. When hunting, a small amount of the paint could be applied below each eye to assure success in the hunt.

Several myths among the Creek describe the origin of Tie Snakes and the Horned Serpent. These myths vary somewhat in detail but are very similar in structure. In all but one of them two men are traveling or hunting when one of the men decides to eat some strange or forbidden food—usually fish found in the hollow of a tree or stump (U15, H3, MC2, MC3, M11, M12, M15). In other myths he eats the brains of certain animals (M10, M13), an unusual catfish caught in a fish trap (A17), or a large egg (M14). Having consumed the taboo food, the man (or woman) is transformed overnight into a snake—Tie Snake, or Horned Serpent—and proceeds to live in a nearby stream or pond.

Closely affiliated and perhaps synonymous with the Horned Serpent was the Lion, or Man Eater. The bones of the Lion were believed to be as powerful a medicine as the scrapings from the horn of the Horned Serpent and were kept in sacred medicine bundles: "They have in their shot bags, a charm, a protection against all ills, called the war physic, composed of *Chitto Gab-by* and *Is-te-pau-pau*, the bones of the snake and lion."<sup>28</sup> Tradition and mythology hold that in old times the lion (*Is-te-pau-pau*) fre-

quently devoured the people (M1). In order to capture and kill this being, they dug a pit and caught him in it. Covering him with lightwood knots, they burnt him to death, saving his bones.

Both mythological and iconographic traditions attest to the relationship between the Horned Serpent and a Lionlike being, sometimes called the Water Cougar. On some archaeologically recovered gorgets, the Horned Serpent has the head of a cougar instead of the head and horns of a deer. Charles Hudson suggests that this represents the Water Cougar, described as having four legs, no feet, long hair, and a long fishlike tail.<sup>29</sup>

As the embodiment of the Chaotic Force, the Horned Serpent and the Water Cougar are traditionally associated with the Lower World and particularly with floods and destruction. As principles of the Lower World, they stand in opposition to birds of the Upper World.

It is significant to note that two legends (MC2, MC3) specifically attribute the destruction of the ancient Muskogee town of Coosa (MC1–MC5, M1) to the Horned Serpent. Two other legends specifically associate the Water Cougar or Leopard with the destruction of this town (MC4, MC5).

In legends MC2 and MC3, a man is transformed into a serpent due to his violation of a food taboo. He then asks that the people from the town of Coosa gather in four days at the town's ceremonial grounds (the *Busk Ground*, also called "the square" or "Square Ground"). Coming forth from the water with a stream of water following him, he enters the Busk Ground and the ground sinks, forming the Coosa River.

In the last two of these legends (MC4, MC5) a woman from the town of Coosa bears the child(ren) of a Water Tiger. Some of the people of the town, fearing the child(ren), want to kill it (them). The Water Cougar warns those who would defend the child(ren) to move away from the town and then destroys the town and the rest of the people with a flood. According to legend MC4, a whirlpool formed at the spot where Coosa sank and no bird could fly over this spot except a small yellow bird, which made a sound like "*koskoza*." Legend MC1 also mentions the destruction of the town but offers no cause for the flood. Like MC4, this legend suggests that only one bird could fly over the spot where the town sank, a large crane that made the sound "*koos, koos, koos*."

Coosa became known as "Town-lost-in-the-water." According to legend, the town had sunk into the water until nothing could be seen of it except the ball post.<sup>30</sup> Others say that the town was swallowed up by an earthquake, and, "owing to some powerful attraction," no birds could fly

over the spot except one called *Koskosa*, for which the river and the town are named. The legend holds that the survivors of this disaster were found in the river in their canoes.<sup>31</sup>

Two more legends do not involve the transformation of a person into a snake but a human visit to the underwater realm of the King of the Tie Snakes (MT3, MT4). The first of these is associated specifically with the town of Tuckabatchee. While the second one does not specifically name the town, it so closely parallels the first that it is obviously a version of the same story. In these legends, the town of Tuckabatchee is under siege and the chief sends his son to ask the help of a nearby friendly chief. As a token of his friendship, the chief sends with the young man one of the tribal pots. Along the way the young man loses the pot in a river and while searching for it is taken underwater to meet the King of the Tie Snakes. The King of the Tie Snakes presents the young man with a number of gifts and the promise that the Tie Snakes will help his besieged people. When he relays this promise to his father, the chief calls upon the Tie Snakes for their help and defeats his enemies.

The plethora of stories throughout the New World concerning the Horned Serpent, the Tie Snake, Water Cougar, or similar beings hints at the antiquity of the belief. Distribution of these stories is widespread: they can be found among groups throughout the eastern woodlands, the upper and lower plains, and the American Southwest; they also appear to be related to plumed serpent myths from Central and South America.<sup>32</sup> Particularly interesting is a legend from the Sumu, who inhabited the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua:

Two brothers Suko . . . and Kuru . . . went out fishing. . . . They caught many excellent food fishes. . . . Then they had a gigantic river catfish . . . at the hook. Suko immediately wanted to eat a piece of the latter, but Kuru objected, as it appeared to him to be a sort of spirit. Suko, however, did not listen to his brother, and he roasted a piece of the fish and ate it. But hardly had he finished his meal when he became very thirsty. Having eaten too much, he could scarcely move, and he asked his brother for some water. The latter did as he was told, but the more Suko drank the thirstier he became, and he kept his brother continually on the run to fetch water. Finally Kuru became tired of this and helped his brother to get to the edge of the creek, so that he might drink as much as he wanted. Arrived at the waterside, Suko lay down on the ground, and reaching with his head down in the water, he kept on drinking without stopping. Gradually



his body assumed the shape of a gigantic boa constrictor, . . . while the head retained its normal size and shape. Kuru became scared and he went home, but did not dare tell anything about what had happened. When the people inquired about his brother, he answered that he was still engaged in fishing and would come a little later. But the neighbors noticed that something had happened and they made off all together to look for Suko. Arrived at the fishing ground, they found the boa constrictor on the branches of a very high ceiba or silk-cotton tree. But hardly had they perceived him when a big flood came which inundated the whole country. Everyone was drowned with the exception of Suko and the latter's wife and children.<sup>33</sup>

As Robert Rands points out, a number of elements of this myth are identical with those of the Creek legends:

- (1) Two male companions who go hunting or fishing.
- (2) The eating of fish by one of the men, against the advice of the other.
- (3) As a consequence, the transformation of the fish-eater into a snake.
- (4) The presence of deer antlers on the serpent.
- (5) The passage of the snake to a stream.
- (6) The return of the other man home and the coming of the snake-man's relatives or neighbors to the same or an appointed place.
- (7) A destructive flood resulting in loss of life when these people meet the serpent.<sup>34</sup>

E. Conzemius describes the plumed serpent of this legend as "a very large waula or boa constrictor . . . with horns on the head like a deer is said to inhabit certain lagoons in the pine ridges, far from the nearest Indian village. . . . Man has no power to kill such a boa constrictor, as bullets have no effect on it; it can be destroyed only by a stroke of lightning."<sup>35</sup> He continues with the consequences of invading the waula's territory: "[A] rumbling of thunder is heard; then the water reverses its course, flowing at a tremendous speed back to the lagoon directly into the mouth of the boa constrictor, which swallows the canoe with the intruder." Rands points out the association between the serpent and powerful, destructive currents of water. To this discussion George Lankford adds that the ceiba or silk-cotton tree in some South American mythology is often associated with the source of water and other necessities of life.<sup>36</sup> Lankford offers for example the Cuna, who tell of the cutting of such a tree by the culture

heroes, and when it fell “from its top came fresh and salt water, croplands, plants, reptiles, mammals, fishes and birds.”<sup>37</sup> Among the Carib and Arawak tribes, the tree was associated not only with fruits and vegetables but with a flood.<sup>38</sup> Lankford also points out that in some of these legends, when the tree is cut down, the trunk is found to be hollow, filled with water “in which the fry of every sort of fresh-water fish was swimming about.” Thus Lankford suggests that this tree may once have been viewed as a Cosmic Tree, which holds together the various levels of the world structure, the floods issuing forth from beneath the land, which is perceived as floating on water.

That the themes of the Horned Serpent/Tie Snake and Water Cougar have a long history in southeastern North America is not doubted. Depictions of these beings are recovered archaeologically from the Mississippian and possibly the Hopewellian Periods, which suggests that the theme may have been present in the region for as long as two thousand years.<sup>39</sup>

The importance of these beings in Creek cosmology is suggested by their persistence into the twentieth century. Swanton reports that in the past there was a Snake Dance among the Alabama in which only women participated and that they may have carried with them a wooden snake effigy.<sup>40</sup> As late as 1905 the Horned Serpent was represented in Yuchi ceremonies where a stuffed deerskin effigy, colored blue with yellow horns on its head, rested before the warrior’s lodge on the north side of the Busk Ground.<sup>41</sup> Among the Yuchi this being was associated with the rainbow, storms, thunder, lightning, and disease and was venerated with a dance now known as the “Big Turtle Dance.”<sup>42</sup>

### Yahola and Hayu’ya

Yahola and Hayu’ya are two male spiritual beings mentioned only in Muskogee mythology. These two beings were believed to reside together in the air without any other companionship. Their names were invoked as guardians to novices being instructed in sacred medical formulas and other mysteries. Songs describe these two as perfect, clean, and undefiled, and they are said to endow one with strength, physical activity, and clearness of vision and thought.<sup>43</sup> Yahola was also appealed to in sickness and childbirth. Swanton describes Yahola and Hayu’ya as deities who preside over Busk Ground activities.<sup>44</sup>

These two beings are probably two of the four *Hi-you-yul-gee* mentioned in Muskogee myth M6. In this myth, four beings from the four corners of the earth appear to the Muskogees and bring to them sacred fire

and medicine plants, after which they disappear into a cloud. Myth M1 does not describe these beings as Hi-you-yul-gee but does state that at a mountain that thundered, white fire came from the east, blue fire from the south, black fire from the west, and red and yellow fire from the north. The white, blue, and black fire the Muskogee would not use, but the red and yellow fire from the north they mixed with their own fire and used. Coming from the four corners of the world, these beings can also be associated with the four winds or the four cardinal points.

## The Sun and Moon

Somewhat different perceptions of the Sun and Moon existed among the various cultures that became the Creeks. Among the Yuchis and the Florida Mikasukis, the Sun was usually depicted as feminine and the Moon as masculine. As discussed in chapter 2, the feminine Sun plays an important role in the origin of humans in the Yuchi myths (U1, U5c, U6). *Tsō*, the son of the Sun, was the original Yuchi who gave the Yuchis their medicine and taught them their ceremonies. The Yuchis believed that should they ever cease to perform the annual ceremonies taught them by *Tsō*, the Sun would set in the east, thus ending the world.

Florida Mikasukis also perceived the Sun as feminine and believed she walked across the sky during summer months wearing rabbitskin shoes that quickly rotted, forcing her to stop to repair them often—thus the long days of summer. During the winter she was believed to wear shoes of bearskin that were very durable and did not need repairing, making her trek across the winter sky much shorter—thus the shortened days of winter.<sup>45</sup>

The Muskogees viewed the Sun as representative of the Cosmic Force, which was believed to be centered beyond the clouds and was manifested on earth in the form of the sacred fire rekindled annually during the Annual Busk.<sup>46</sup> In almost all cases, the Sun is referred to as masculine and the Moon as feminine among the Muskogees: “I have observed the young fellows very merry and jocose, at the appearance of the new moon, saying, how ashamed she looks under the veil, since sleeping with the sun these two or three nights, she is ashamed to show her face, &c.”<sup>47</sup> With respect to the appearance of the new moon: “They pay great regard to the first appearance of every new moon and, on the occasion, always repeat some joyful sounds, and stretch out their hands towards her—but at such times they offer no public sacrifice.”<sup>48</sup> Solar and lunar eclipses were often explained by the Muskogees as a great frog or toad swallowing the Sun or

Moon. In order to help drive this great frog or toad, they discharged their guns and shot arrows into the air.<sup>49</sup> An almost identical belief is reported among the Yuchis.<sup>50</sup>

Eakins reports a similar story from the Alabamas, except that in their case it was believed a great dog was swallowing the moon.<sup>51</sup> Caleb Swan reports that a total lunar eclipse occurred on October 22, 1790, while he was at Little Tallassie on the Alabama River, and that “Indians in all the surrounding villages are yelling with fear and firing guns in all directions.”<sup>52</sup> By way of explanation they believed that a frog was swallowing the moon and the noise was to frighten away the frog.

## Birds

Birds are an important class of Upper World beings among all Creek groups. They have the ability to transcend all three worlds. Birds swim in and under the water, walk on the ground, burrow underground, and fly high in the air near to the Creator. Birds also played many important roles in primordial times.

In the Tuskegee cosmogony, it was Eagle who was selected as chief of the primordial beings who created dry land (T1). After the land had been retrieved, it was Buzzard who in four of the Yuchi stories was responsible for drying the land and who inadvertently created mountains and valleys (U1, U3–U5a).

Both the eagle and the sparrow hawk were often referred to as “King of Birds.” Feathers from the eagle were highly prized and used in dances and games and as war emblems.<sup>53</sup> James Howard suggests that while the eagle was important in southeastern beliefs, the hawk was probably more important.<sup>54</sup> Often encountered in the iconographic record, these birds are interpreted as symbols of war.

The eagle, at least among the Alabamas, also played an important role in the spiritual world as one of the beings that must be confronted while making the trip to the land of the spirits (A14). To help the departed succeed in his battle with the eagle, a butcher knife was often placed in the grave of the deceased.<sup>55</sup>

The pileated or ivory-billed woodpecker is another important bird often represented in iconography. Like the falcon, it is interpreted as a symbol of war. Woodpeckers are also taken as omens of impending war, death, rain, or “approaching danger, especially danger from a snake.”<sup>56</sup>

The turkey, perhaps the most spirit-laden sky creature, played many roles in the Creek world. Howard suggests that it, like the raptors and the

woodpeckers, should be interpreted as a symbol of war and that warriors often imitated the call of the turkey as a war cry.<sup>57</sup> Based on Muskogee mythology (M22), Howard identifies the turkey as the “Blue Long-tailed King of the Birds” that came every day and ate the Muskogee people during their eastward migration (M1). Many other legends among the Hitchitis, Alabamas, and Muskogees seem to refer to this creature. The Hitchiti legends refer to this creature as a “man eating bird” (H4), “Big-crow” (H5), or a turkey (H6). In Alabama legends the creature is identified as an eagle (A19, A20) or as “life eater” (A21). In a Muskogee legend, attributed to the Seminole, the creature is identified as a turkey (M16). Though the details vary, these legends share a common theme: a magical, birdlike creature comes and carries men away. And, in yet another Muskogee legend (M17), the Turkey, the Rattlesnake, and the Turtle conspire to kill their common enemy, man.

These stories seem to describe a *Lohka*, a being who, according to Swanton, sometimes appeared in the shape of a cat, sometimes as a chicken.<sup>58</sup> The Oklahoma Seminoles described the being as a spirit animal that could live in a person, going out at night and changing into the shape of a chicken or turkeylike bird. In this form it practiced witchcraft, stealing and eating people’s hearts.<sup>59</sup>

Also important among the Creeks were owls. Among the Alabama the Hoot Owl was believed to inform prophets of an impending death or some other misfortune.<sup>60</sup> Witches were also believed to sometimes take the form of the Horned Owl, which was called *stikini* (“man-owl”).<sup>61</sup> In such form, witches could steal and eat the hearts of their victims, thereby extending the duration of their own lives.<sup>62</sup>

## Mythological or Primordial Beings

### Corn Woman

Frequently mentioned as a goddess, but perhaps more properly thought of as a primordial being, is Corn Woman. No mention is made of this woman in Yuchi or Hitchiti mythology, but one Alabama legend (A23) and several Muskogee legends (M21–M24) attribute the mythological origins of corn to this woman (see the discussion of the origin of corn in chapter 7).

### Thunder Beings/Snake Beings

A number of primordial beings associated with thunder are described as *Snake Beings* by Swanton and as *Thunder Beings* by Sturtevant.<sup>63</sup> The *Thunder Snake* is described by Swanton as a long snake that could pro-

duce the same noises as thunder but was accompanied by blue lightning without a bolt. Swanton suggests that this could be the same as the *Long Snake*, which would coil himself up round and round to a height of perhaps three feet. Sturtevant's *Stout Thunder*, described as heavy bodied with short legs, is likely the same being.

The *Celestial One* or *Good Snake*, according to Swanton, lived underground and sometimes emerged with a great noise, leaving a large hole in the land. It consisted principally of a head and lacked a body. Living on dew from grass and leaves, it swirled round and round in the air and went upward until it disappeared. This description seems to correspond to Sturtevant's *The Uncle* (mother's brother) of the rest of the thunders, who had no bones. This is the only Thunder Being described by the Mikasukis as not antagonistic toward humans.

The rainbow, according to Swanton, was believed by the Muskogees to be a great snake called *Oskin-tatcâ* (the "cutter off of the rain").<sup>64</sup> This being, without doubt, is the *Little Thunder* of the Mikasukis, described by Sturtevant as rainbow-colored and small. The *Great Yellow Snake*, mentioned by Swanton, ordinarily lived underground but sometimes burrowed its way into the water. This description seems consistent with Sturtevant's *Twisted Thunder*, which is described as yellow in color.

According to the Mikasukis, all Thunder Beings could cause sickness, and all but *The Uncle* were antagonistic toward humans. The Thunder Beings' home was in water in the east, where they stayed during the winter months. During the spring they traveled through the sky to their summer home in rocks in the west.<sup>65</sup>

### The Sharp-Breasted Snake

The Florida Mikasukis described large, invisible winged snakes with sharp-keeled chests that accompanied the Thunder Beings as their mounts.<sup>66</sup> Jackson Lewis, the source of much of Swanton's information, described the sharp-breasted snake as follows:

The sharp-breasted snake is a serpent which goes along with its head up and its breast advanced. It is rarely seen but you can tell where it has passed along. These snakes are not thought to be very long, but they appear to vary in size. The largest would probably measure a foot and a half in diameter. With its sharp breast this snake tears up the earth, making a deep furrow. It is supposed to be covered with crust of scales, and where it has touched against stones, and even

rocks, it can be seen that they give way to its great power. It can cut through the roots of trees, making the trees keel over, and throw mud high up on the trunks of trees nearby. These snakes, when they move in this way, appear to be changing their places of residence and this is always done during a rainstorm. You can see where lightning has struck all along where this snake has been.<sup>67</sup>

### Little People

Little people lived in hollow trees, on treetops, and in holes in the rocks. Oklahoma Seminoles described Little People as ugly but otherwise looking very much like “old time” Muskogees and speaking the Muskogee language.<sup>68</sup> Sometimes they allowed themselves to be seen by humans and could confuse humans, causing a temporary insanity and leading them off.<sup>69</sup>

The Florida Mikasukis recognized four classes of Little People. There were “small little people” who were three to four inches high and very handsome. There were “stout little people” who were about eight inches tall and yellow in color. There were “untrue or dishonest little people,” about twelve inches tall, who could disappear and reappear like lightning. And there were “not seen little people,” who were about twelve inches tall, invisible, and had normal trunks but short legs, long arms, large hands, and white hair.<sup>70</sup>

### Giants

Giants, whose eyes opened vertically instead of horizontally, treated people much the same way as the little people did.<sup>71</sup> *Tall Man*, as described by the Oklahoma Seminoles, resembled a human in form but was ten feet or more in height and covered with gray hair. He was usually seen carrying a wooden club and was reported to have a penetrating odor like the smell of a “stagnant muddy pond.”<sup>72</sup>

### Isti-papa or Man Eater

This creature was identified with the lion (the panther is usually identified with the tiger). Swanton suggests that this creature might preserve the memory of when the jaguar came as far north as the Brazos River and probably to the Mississippi.<sup>73</sup> The Alabamas identified Man Eater (*atipacoba*) with the elephant, and a similar being was recognized among the Florida Mikasukis as “person eater.”<sup>74</sup>

### Hâtcko-tcâpko or Long Ears

Long Ears was about the size of a mule, with immense ears, a very hideous appearance, and a disagreeable odor; it caused a dangerous disease. Two colors of this creature are described: dark brown, and nearly black and slate color.<sup>75</sup> The Oklahoma Seminoles described the being as gray, about three feet tall, with a head like that of a wolf, the tail of a horse, and enormous long ears. Like *Tall Man*, it was said to smell like stagnant muddy water.<sup>76</sup>

### Nokos oma or Like-a-Bear

Like-a-Bear was about the size of an ordinary black bear but always carried its head near the earth and had immense tusks that crossed each other.<sup>77</sup> The Oklahoma Seminoles described this being as about two feet tall and smelling worse than a skunk.<sup>78</sup>

### Hâtcko fâski or Sharp Ears

Sharp Ears were usually seen in pairs and never traveled east or west. Seen especially near the sources of small streams, they had sharp noses, bushy tails, and globular feet.<sup>79</sup> The Oklahoma Seminoles called these *Fire Dogs*. Lena states that these creatures were about a foot tall and had ears, and that the male and female always traveled together.<sup>80</sup>

### Wak omo or Like-a-Cow

Like-a-Cow was piebald. Several traveled together, moving in a single file and alternately. One moved for a distance and stopped, then moved again. The one behind then moved up.<sup>81</sup> According to Lena, Like-a-Cow was a type of bird, its name referring to its similarity to a cowbird.<sup>82</sup> It was described as the most dangerous of all birds and was believed even to attack and kill wolves.

### Chief-of-Deer

Chief-of-Deer was described as a small deer about two feet high that was either speckled or white with lofty horns.<sup>83</sup> Lena, however, described it as only about two or three inches tall and relates the belief that anyone lucky enough to see a male would have the gift of learning sacred formulas easily.<sup>84</sup>

### Other Beings

Swanton mentions, with little description, several water beings. Among these are the water bear, water calf, water bison, water tiger, and water



person. The last of these, the water person, was described as about four feet tall and having long hair. Also mentioned by Swanton with little description are *Wiofû'tc miko* (water king deer), which caused certain diseases, and a Spirit of War that appears to have been in human form. There was also a monster lizard that lived in hollow trees like a bear and was called *Atcukliba*, which was the same name used to refer to a “small, inoffensive striped lizard” found on trees.<sup>85</sup>

## Souls

Little reliable information was recorded concerning early historic concepts of souls among the Creeks. Most Creeks, however, believed in two souls or a dual soul, except for the Yuchis, who believed in four souls.

The Yuchis believed that the four souls existed in each person. One remained at the spot where death occurred, two others hovered around the tribe's folk and family, and the fourth started a four-day journey along the "rainbow" trail to the "far overhead" or the haven of souls.<sup>1</sup> At the edge of the land this trail passed between the land and the sky, which would rise and fall. Some passed successfully between the land and sky, some were crushed by the sky, and some were damned to wander the earth for fear of trying. Those souls who were damned to wander the earth were held in fear by the living.

Yuchi tradition holds that there was in the Spirit World an Old Woman who was in charge of souls and who was thought to control rebirth and the return of some souls to earth. Children were believed sometimes to inherit the spirit of a maternal ancestor and to exhibit the same characteristics as these departed relatives.<sup>2</sup>

More common among the Muskogees was a belief in the duality of man's spiritual being. These two aspects of spiritual being could perhaps best be termed the "soul" and the "ghost."<sup>3</sup> The soul (Hewitt: *Inu'tska*; Sturtevant: *innōˆ:chî*) was believed located in the head or heart.<sup>4</sup> The root of this word is unclear; Sturtevant suggests it could be from the word *pussul'kv* (dream), *nuc'kv* (sleep), or *nókkē* (illness). J.N.B. Hewitt suggests that the soul stayed with a person through life and talked to him in his dreams, while Sturtevant describes the soul as leaving the body only at death. The word could, therefore, derive from the word *pvsut'kan* (the dead), death occurring when the soul leaves the body.

The soul was associated with talent, ability, and genius, and was believed responsible for thought, planning, and devising.<sup>5</sup> This soul was as-

sociated with breath, which identifies the soul with the “Breath Giver” or Creator.<sup>6</sup> Represented by the color white, the soul is, therefore, of the Upper World, has characteristics of the Upper World, and hence seeks its return to the Upper World upon death.<sup>7</sup> Louis Capron identifies the soul as the portion of man’s spiritual being that, if the person had led an acceptable life, would pass into the Upper World to reunite with its source.<sup>8</sup>

The other portion of man’s spiritual being, the ghost (Hewitt: *yafiktca*; Sturtevant: *solō:pî:*), was often reported to be located in the intestines.<sup>9</sup> *Yafiktca*, from the Muskogee word *Fekcē*, means “entrails” or “intestines,” and the word *solō:pî:* is derived from the word *E-lúpē*, meaning “liver.” The ghost, which Hewitt identifies as the “life spirit,” was associated with sentiments, passions, and feelings of good and evil. The ghost, completing the duality of man’s spiritual being, was associated with the Lower World, had characteristics of the Lower World, and was associated with the color black.<sup>10</sup>

Both Hewitt and Sturtevant identify the ghost as that portion of the soul that could leave the body during sleep and dreams. Its failure to return upon waking could cause illness and even death. According to Capron, the “ghost” leaves the body via the anus and travels about at night having experiences.<sup>11</sup> These experiences are remembered as dreams when the person wakes.

The ghost travels first toward the north, where there are many other ghosts who try to persuade it to stay among them. If the ghost returns to the body at daybreak, no harm is done. If the ghost goes too far to the north and then to the east, it finds the beginning of the Milky Way (“Soul’s Path”), which leads to the afterworld (“Soul’s Town”) in the west and proceeds over it. At this point the other soul leaves the body to join the first, and the person dies.<sup>12</sup> If the soul meets a member of the opposite sex during its travels or if the other ghosts persuade the ghost to stay among them, the body becomes sick. A spiritual specialist must then be employed to recall the wandering ghost or to journey into the afterworld to recover it. Josie Billie, a prominent Florida Mikasuki medicine man of the mid-twentieth century, explains it as follows: “The spirit goes up north and like it there. One spirit goes north and around to east. Get east then go over Milky Way to west and city of dead. Then person die. In four days other ghost goes at night fall. . . . At night sometimes one ghost goes north—likes it there but comes back before dawn. Person all right since dream. If goes north and little way east, somebody sick, body shakes. Medicine man sing, call ghost back. Blow on pipes and go after ghost bring it back to east, then south to middle. Get ghost back, person get well.”<sup>13</sup>

## Disposition of Souls

By most accounts, the soul leaves the body immediately upon death and travels from east to west over the Milky Way, also known as the Spirits' Road, the Soul's Path, the Dog's Path, or the Rainbow Trail by the Yuchis.<sup>14</sup> Passing between the land and the sky, the soul then travels upward to the land of the souls.

According to the Mikasukis, the soul, on its journey to the Spirit World, encounters a large bird or eagle that tries to eat it, thus preventing it from completing its journey.<sup>15</sup> By some accounts, the soul must cross a deep creek or river over which rests a log. The Mikasukis believed that an alligator waits in the creek; at the near end of the log sits a hog and at the far end a dog. If the person has led a good life, the hog and the dog will let the soul pass over the log into the afterworld. If the person has led a bad life, the hog "roots at the log and shakes him off into the water where the alligator eats him."<sup>16</sup> If the person has killed a dog during his lifetime, the dog will not let the soul pass. The Alabamas, also expecting several dangerous encounters on the journey through the Spirit World, often buried with the body a butcher knife to fight off an especially threatening great eagle.<sup>17</sup>

When the soul reached the Spirit World, his dead relatives greeted him, and he lived much as he did on earth.<sup>18</sup> Ifa Hadjo, a Tukabatchee chief, related to Hawkins: "The spirit (*po-yau-fic-chau* [literally our soul or spirit]) goes the way the sun goes, to the west, and there joins its family and friends, who went before it . . . those who behaved well, are taken under the care of E-sau-ge-túh Emis-see and assisted; and those who have behaved ill, are left there to shift for themselves; and that there is no other punishment."<sup>19</sup>

The Upper World was believed to be inhabited by good spirits that helped the virtuous.<sup>20</sup> Swanton suggests that "good" spirits probably included those from anywhere who become human helpers, while bad spirits were associated with the western world through which the soul passed after death.<sup>21</sup> The Alabamas believed that if they had not taken away another man's wife, committed theft, or killed anyone during their lives they would go, after death, into an extremely fertile country where they would lack neither women nor good grounds for hunting.<sup>22</sup>

There also may have been a belief extant in William Bartram's time that all living creatures had spirits or souls that existed in a future state and that a "pattern or spiritual likeness of everything living, as well as inanimate, exists in another world."<sup>23</sup>

Those souls, however, who did not successfully pass the Great Eagle and other dangerous encounters on the trail to the Spirit World were damned to remain in the realm of ghosts and other evil spirits in the west.<sup>24</sup> Bartram suggests that in the afterlife “[V]irtue and merit will be rewarded with felicity; and that wickedness, on the contrary, will be attended with infamy and misery.”<sup>25</sup> The “accursed people” were thought to occupy the dark regions of the west and to hold power over the “vicious.”<sup>26</sup> Those who had done foolish things or had made fun of the “Great Spirit,” according to Alabama belief, were damned to a sterile country full of thorns and brambles where there would be neither hunting nor women.<sup>27</sup>

### Disposition of Ghosts

At death, it was believed, only the soul initially started down the spirit path, crossing over the Milky Way and the Spirit River into the Spirit World, where the ghost might, according to some, join it at nightfall of the fourth day. By other accounts, the ghost left the body but stayed nearby. According to the Mikasukis, the ghost remained near the place of burial, living its ghostly life “invisible to all mortals except fortune tellers.”<sup>28</sup>

Ghosts, it was believed, lived very much as they had before death, subsisting on mushrooms and the small bugs that were seen around dead bodies. The small burial chamber built to hold the body became the ghost’s home. Should this chamber be destroyed by fire or other causes, the ghost remained homeless unless it could acquire another home by marrying a woman who had one. At the “ghostly Green Corn Dance,” the ghost could request help from the “ghostly Medicine Man,” who might provide him with a “wife” to share her home.

Certain diseases were also attributed to dead bodies and ghosts. According to Swanton, to drive away ghosts while passing a graveyard, ginseng (*bilis hâtki*) was chewed and spit out on each side alternately four times.<sup>29</sup> Food that was kept overnight was avoided for fear that ghosts might have partaken of it. Speaking of the site of Old Okmulgee, Adair reports that, when Creeks camped there, “they always hear, at the dawn of the morning, the usual noise of Indians singing their joyful religious notes, and dancing, as if going down to the river to purify themselves, and then returning to the old town-house: with a great deal more to the same effect.”<sup>30</sup>

According to Pope, Creeks always encamped on the right-hand side of a path, leaving the left for the ghosts of the departed who had either lost their scalps or remained unburied.<sup>31</sup> The ghost of a person in either pre-

dicament was refused admittance into the Spirit World and took up its “invisible and darksome abode” in the “dreary caverns of the wilderness” until the indignity was retaliated by friends inflicting it on the enemy.<sup>32</sup>

## Mythological Journeys into the Spirit World

Several Yuchi and Alabama myths recount journeys into the Spirit World. The Yuchi myths recount how four men who had lost their wives journey to the Spirit World in an attempt to retrieve them (U7 and U8). These two myths are very similar in form but somewhat different in detail. After turning themselves into a deer, a panther, and a bear, three of the men successfully pass between the sky and the land into the Spirit World. According to the first myth, the fourth man is killed by giant fleas before reaching the edge of the land. According to the second account, he is killed attempting to pass between the edge of the sky and the land.

After passing between the sky and the land, the men next encounter an old woman who sets before them a small amount of food. As they eat, more food appears before them. The old woman, who myth U8 identifies as the Sun, also hides them from an evil spirit. At an all-night dance, this old woman puts their wives in gourd shells and gives the men orders not to open them until they return to their homes and go to a dance. One of the men opens his before returning home and going to the dance, and nothing but wind comes out of the gourd. After falling asleep, the men awake back in their homes with the gourds, and, according to U7, are much younger men than when they started.

Like the Yuchi myths, the Alabama myths that describe journeys to the Upper World vary in detail but for the most part agree in form; they are rich with symbolism and reveal much about the Alabama perception of the Upper World (A10–A15). The Alabama accounts can be divided into two categories, those in which a deceased woman is sought and those in which seeds are brought from the Spirit World to earth.

In the first set of Alabama myths, which seem to recount journeys into the Spirit World to retrieve lost souls, two men seek the return of the mother of a child(ren) (A10, A11), or their deceased sister (A12). Like in Yuchi myths, the men must pass certain obstacles during their journey before arriving at the abode of the Creator. In A10 and A12 these obstacles are encountered after passing between the sky and the land; in A11 many of the obstacles are encountered before passing beneath the sky. In A10 the men turn themselves into animals (panther and bear) before passing between the sky and the land; in A11 they turn into a panther and wildcat.

During their journey an old woman is encountered who feeds them with food that replenishes itself (A11). They must pass a river or some other body of water, which they accomplish by parting the water by splashing some of the water to the left and right with a dipper (A10–A12). They also pass through an area of snakes (A11–A12), which they accomplish by tying bark around their legs to prevent the snakes from biting them. At one point they encounter a war that is being fought among ducks, geese, and cranes (A11), and at another place they must pass a battle among humans, which they accomplish by blowing cigarette smoke toward those fighting (A11–A12).

Myths A11 and A12 recount how the men eat watermelon given them by the Creator being, who restores the watermelon to its original state after they have finished. In all three of the first set of myths, the men are shown by the Creator, through some magical means, their earthly homes, which appear very near to where they are. In all of these myths the woman they seek is placed in a jug or bottle, the men sleep and awake at their earthly homes, and, when they loosen the top of the container, the woman escapes from the bottle. In A10 the woman in the bottle declares that the men will not restore her to life properly and escapes back to the Spirit World. A11 suggests that, if the woman had been allowed to die in the bottle, people would still come back to earth; thus this myth may account for the origin of death.

The second set of Alabama myths depicts journeys into the Spirit World for no apparent reason, but in each of these stories the men return with seeds given to them by the Creator. Many of the elements found in the first set of myths are also encountered in this set. In A14 a long journey is undertaken by three men before coming to the edge of the sky, where one of the men is killed trying to pass beneath the sky. In A15 four men begin their journey at the edge of the sky, where three of them turn themselves into a panther, a wolf, and a wildcat and successfully pass beneath the sky. The fourth man, who doesn't turn himself into an animal, is killed in the attempt to pass beneath.

In these myths, like the previous ones, the men encounter the old woman who feeds them with food that replenishes itself (A13 and A14) and pass the river or body of water by parting the water with a dipper (A13, A15). In myth A14, this water is passed on the back of a Horned Serpent. Continuing their journey, they pass the place of snakes (A13–A15); the war among ducks, geese, and cranes (A13); and the battle among humans (A13, A15).

As in some of the myths already discussed, the men are fed watermelon,

the seeds and remains of which are restored (A13), and the men are magically shown their homes, which seem very near (A13 and A15). In these accounts, the men sleep and awake with seeds given to them by the Creator. The men return with corn, watermelon, and bean seeds (A13); with watermelon, bean, potato, and barley seeds (A14); and with various seeds including corn and sweet potato (A15).

Myth A14 describes some encounters during the journey that are not mentioned in other myths. During this journey the men kill a wild turkey, but when they approach it turns out to be only a mosquito with an arrow lying across it. Next they encounter a bear that transforms into a caterpillar. They meet a giant eagle and kill it with a long knife, and before they arrive at the edge of the land, what appears to be a mountain in the distance turns out to be only a tortoise. The men in this account also encounter every kind of bird and beast that is on earth, the people in the afterworld live together peacefully, and suffering is unknown. The men are warned not to touch anything, but one man accidentally touches a horse and another touches a boy, both of which immediately turn to skeletons. The men realize that the world which they have entered contains only spirits, which may allude to Bartram's understanding that a "pattern or spiritual likeness of everything living, as well as inanimate, exists in another world."<sup>33</sup>

The journeys in myths A11, A13, and A15 are particularly interesting in that they seem to incorporate elements of the Annual Busk. In A11 the men must pass some "dens," a place identified in A13 as a dog's town. In both A11 and A13 they must then pass a woman's town. Then, in A13, they pass an old man's town. The den or dog's town may represent the young men's arbor in the Busk Ground in that the young men are sometimes referred to as dog beaters because of their duty to keep dogs off the Busk Ground during ceremonies.<sup>34</sup> The woman's town likely represents the women's arbor, and the old man's town the arbor where sit the older respected men of the Busk Ground. Another element of the Annual Busk may be represented in myths A13 and A15. In A13, when the men reach the abode of the Creator, he pours warm water from a pot over them and scrapes them, which leaves them feeling "light." The same episode is present in A15 except that it is an old woman who pours warm water from a pot over them and scrubs them, leaving them with the same feeling. This washing may allude to the process of scratching that is practiced at some Annual Busks (see chapter 9).



## Spiritual Specialists

Among the Creeks, some people were recognized as having special relationships with the spiritual world. In some cases these special abilities were innate; in others they were learned. A single person could have the ability and knowledge to fill several of these special roles.

### The Knowers or Prophets

The *Kīlas*, always men, generally determined the kind of disease someone had through an examination of a piece of clothing belonging to the sick person. The younger of a set of twins was thought to make the best *kīlas*. *Kīlas* could foretell death, sickness, or crime.<sup>1</sup> They could also tell a person where to find a stolen horse, could make a road shorter by drawing it together, could make objects float on water, and could determine whether a person's life would be short or long.<sup>2</sup> According to the Alabama, *kīlas* could also make it rain or stop the rain. Swanton relates an Alabama myth of a *kīla* who once sent a boy to catch fish and then dived with the fish to the bottom of a creek, where he gave the fish to “certain long, horned snakes” that could go under both water and land (*tcinto sâktco*) so that they would make it rain.

### Healers

The *Alektca*—fasters or doctors (*isti poskâlgi*)—were those who were knowledgeable about medical secrets, secrets of warfare, and the sacred myths. This knowledge required extensive training over many years. Groups of from one to four young men being taught the secrets of healing would repair to a stream with their instructor. *Mico hoyanīdja* (red root) was dug by each candidate, pounded up, and put into a pot. The pot was filled with water, and the instructor would blow sacred power into the

medicine through a cane to give the medicine virtue. The students, then left alone by their instructor, drank the *mico hoyanīdja* four times during the morning. Upon the instructor's return at noon, teaching through talks and songs commenced. Following an afternoon break, instruction resumed until just before dark.<sup>3</sup>

Traditionally, the first thing taught to the student was how to treat gunshot wounds—what to do and which songs to sing to give virtue to the medicine used. The rest of the four-day session was devoted to whichever diseases interested the students.<sup>4</sup> At the end of the session, a blanket was placed around the student and water was poured upon hot stones inside the blanket to produce steam, after which the student bathed in a cold creek.

After the fifth or sixth four-day teaching session, a student could request an eight-day session, after which he could request a twelve-day session, which was the last. Very few ever passed through the twelve-day course.<sup>5</sup>

The twelve-day course required fasting and isolation from noise. It was expected that as the student fasted he would have a dream or vision.<sup>6</sup> Hawkins relates the following from his observations:

At the age of from fifteen to seventeen, this ceremony is usually performed. It is called Boos-ke-tau, in like manner as the annual Boosketau of the nation. A youth of proper age gathers two handsfull of the Sou-watch-cau, a very bitter root, which he eats a whole day; then he steeps the leaves in water and drinks it. In the dusk of the evening, he eats two or three spoonfuls of boiled grits. This is repeated for four days, and during this time he remains in a house. The Sou-watch-cau has the effect of intoxicating and maddening. The fourth day he goes out, but must put on a pair of new moccasins (Stil-la-pica). For twelve moons, he abstains from eating bucks, except old ones, and from turkey cocks, fowls, peas, and salt. During this period he must not pick his ears, or scratch his head with his fingers, but use a small stick. For four moons he must have a fire to himself, to cook his food, and a little girl, a virgin, may cook for him; his food is boiled grits. The fifth moon, any person may cook for him, but he must serve himself first, and use one spoon and pan. Every new moon, he drinks for four days the possau, (button snake root,) an emetic, and abstains for these days, from all food, except in the evening, a little boiled grits, (humpetuh hutke.) The twelfth moon, he performs for four days, what he commenced with on the

first. The fifth day, he comes out of his house, gathers corn cobs, burns them to ashes, and with these, rubs his body all over. At the end of this moon, he sweats under blankets, then goes into water, and this ends the ceremony. This ceremony is sometimes extended to four, six, or eight moons, or even to twelve days only, but the course is the same.

During the whole of this ceremony, the physic is administered by the Is-te-puc-cau-chau, (great leader), who in speaking of a youth under initiation, says, 'I am physicing him,' (Boo-se-ji-jite saut li-to-misce-cha,) or 'I am teaching him all that is proper for him to know' (nauk o-mul-gau e-much-e-thli-jite saut litomise cha.) The youth, during this initiation, does not touch any one except young persons, who are under a like course with himself, and if he dreams, he drinks possau.<sup>7</sup>

Upon completion of the course of education, the instructor would dig a trench in the ground, put a cane in the student's mouth so that he could breathe, and cover him over in the trench with earth. Placing leaves over this and setting fire to them, the instructor ordered the student to arise. Having done so, the student was then prepared for any emergency in life.<sup>8</sup>

## Priests

"At the head of each 'priesthood' in each town was the *hilis-haya* or medicine makers. The *hilis-haya* communicated spiritual qualities to the medicines used at the annual busk, had general charge of public health, and provided protection from ghosts."<sup>9</sup>

The *hilis-haya* ("medicine makers") were ceremonial leaders or liturgists. Concerned with the general welfare of the people, it was their responsibility to see that the Annual Busk and all other ceremonies were performed at the proper time and in the proper manner. Important men in Creek society, it also fell to them to greet visitors and sometimes to act as spokesmen for the town.

## Weather Controllers

There also were those who could induce rain in times of drought.<sup>10</sup> The power of influencing weather was a duty owed to the community and which the community could demand. To induce rain a weather specialist would "go to a piece of shallow water and roll and wallow in the muddy

water every morning for four mornings in succession. They have a pot of medicine in one hand and a buffalo tail in the other, shaking the tail and singing all the time for an hour or more; during these days these people take black drink every morning.”<sup>11</sup>

Adair reports that there was also a transparent stone of great power, which, when put in a basin of water, could induce rain.<sup>12</sup> This power was believed to be imparted to this stone by a much older one to which the power had originally been committed.

The influence of the rainmaker was only over the summer rain, not the winter rain. Winter rain was believed given unsought.<sup>13</sup> Some claimed they could make the waters in swollen streams subside, and still others claimed they could prevent or induce dew to form. Dew makers were expected to act only if formally invited.<sup>14</sup> Some early accounts also suggest that some weather specialists claimed control over thunder and lightning.

## Witchcraft

When those trained in secret knowledge perverted their power, they were deemed witches. People trained in secret knowledge were constantly open to the suspicion of performing witchcraft. If a patient died, the doctor might be accused of witchcraft and put to death,<sup>15</sup> or the doctor might attribute the sickness to the witchcraft of others: “In their prophetic incantations they could know who were witches and who dealt with evil-disposed spirits. The people generally would believe such, as they are superstitious. A man would be announced to be acquainted with the diabolical art for such actions as flying about the country to poison people who were inimical to him, blowing a contagious air into a house in passing by it at night, blowing into the nostrils and lungs of a person he did not like when asleep, causing instant death. Witches were said to be seen at twilight only, flying about to do mischief.”<sup>16</sup>

According to Ethan Hitchcock, “witches and wizards can take the form of owls and fly about at night and at day return home in the form of women and men; that they can take the heart and the spirit out of living men and cause their death; that they can cripple people by shooting through a reed or out of their mouth a rag or blood into the legs of people.”<sup>17</sup>

Witchcraft was a frequent topic of discussion during idle winter nights, and witches, whether men or women, were killed.<sup>18</sup> According to the Alabamas and Koasatis, the witch was filled with lizards, which compelled him to kill on a regular basis. If he did not, the lizards would begin to bite

him and finally devour him. A person could be cured of witchcraft by undergoing a cure to expel the lizards.<sup>19</sup> If, after training, a would-be witch would not kill as his instructor directed, the initiate would be directed to kill a fox squirrel and throw it on top of the house. After it had been there so long that it stank, the initiate was directed to eat the squirrel, after which he threw up and discharged lizards and with them the witching power.<sup>20</sup>

A conjurer might also be employed to attract the affection of someone of the opposite sex. To secure the attention of the intended, a conjurer would take some tobacco, put it in a small deerskin sack, sing, repeat the name of the person whose affection was sought, and blow into the tobacco through a short cane. This process was repeated four times and the tobacco given to the client. The youth, dressed in his finest clothes, would sprinkle some of the tobacco over his clothing, make a cigarette, and blow the smoke all over himself to attract the object of his desire.<sup>21</sup>

If this effort failed, the conjurer might go to a small brook and make a little water hole. Blowing into the water four times through a cane, he repeated the name of the intended each time. The youth would then drink the water and throw it up again into the pool four times. The dam, which separated the pool from the stream, was then broken so that the water in the pool would run away. After removing his clothing and diving under the water four times, the youth then lay in the bushes all day. About a week later he would visit his intended with the expectation that she would fall in love with him.<sup>22</sup>

## Miscellaneous Beliefs

### Mana and Taboo

An important concept in understanding mana and taboos among the Creeks was the belief that “similarity in appearance means similarity in nature, that similarity in one property involves similarity in all other properties, and that association of any kind will result in communicating properties from one thing or person to another.”<sup>1</sup> This belief was particularly true concerning things that were taken into the system by eating and drinking, but applies in other ways as well. Creeks believed that nature transferred to men the qualities of the food they ate and of those objects with which they came into contact.<sup>2</sup>

### Sabīa

*Sabīa* were small objects that looked like crystals. According to Jackson Lewis, five colors were used: white, blue, red, yellow, and black. Red and yellow were considered the strongest, or male; white and blue, female.<sup>3</sup> According to tradition the *sabīa* and how they should be used came from the Yamasee, and the sacred song that was associated with them mentions the Yamasee. *Sabīa* were kept in a piece of buckskin with red paint. When hunting, a man could put a little of the red paint on his cheek to attract deer.<sup>4</sup>

While some *sabīa* were said to have been obtained from the Yamasee, others were obtained from plants. One such plant is described as growing in remote places and having minute seeds that fall off and form crystals when ripe.

The roots of a plant called *sabīa hākgi* or “*sabīa*’s wife” were used in a similar manner; the plant was described by Swanton as one of the first

plants to come out in spring.<sup>5</sup> The roots of another plant, the *sabīa hagi* (“like a *sabīa*”), which has a globular root and white flowers, was also prized for its power.<sup>6</sup>

*Sabīa hâtcki* (“white *sabīa*”), a plant with small leaves and a bunch of black berries at the top, reaches a height of about one and a half feet. It was believed that if a man chewed a little of this while hunting, he would immediately encounter a deer. It also had the power to attract women. Alabama hunters carried a piece of the root of the *wâtola imbâkca* (“crane’s cord”).<sup>7</sup> If the hunter was not enjoying success in his hunt, he would sing and talk to it, blow on it, then chew it—and was sure to find and kill a deer. Swanton identifies this plant as possibly *Triosteum perfoliatum*, the horse gentian.<sup>8</sup> Caley Proctor, a Swanton informant, identified the source of *sabīa* crystals as the bulb of a rare plant. Pulled from the ground, each layer of the bulb of the plant was stripped off, revealing in the center what looks like a small piece of broken glass, which is red, amber, or some other color.<sup>9</sup>

## The Medicine Bundle

Each town had in its possession a medicine bundle, which contained objects that were of spiritual significance to them, objects felt to exude power. Adair recorded the following observations of a medicine bundle, which he refers to as an “Ark”: The Ark, which they carried to war, is “made with pieces of wood securely fastened together and carried on the back of the war chieftain and his attendant who are purified longer than the rest.”<sup>10</sup>

The medicine bundle was believed so sacred and power laden that even to touch it without the proper preparation could result in death. These bundles were the objects at the center of the town’s spiritual life. Some contemporary Creeks have described the medicine bundle as “the soul of the people.” With respect to Seminole medicine bundles, Capron suggests: “If the Seminole group is the ‘body,’ then the council of old men is the ‘brain,’ and the Medicine Bundle, which is the concrete symbol of God’s care for the Indian, is the ‘soul.’ The Medicine is alive.”<sup>11</sup>

The contents of each town’s medicine bundle probably varied considerably. Certainly each would have contained the town’s sacred vessels and venerated objects necessary to perform the Annual Busk ceremonies. Each would also have contained sacred medicines used in ceremonies or for curing. The perception that the medicine is alive is demonstrated in the Seminole belief that the medicine can die through several years of discon-

tinuance of the Annual Busk. The death of the medicine would also mean the death of the people. Capron observed medicine bundles that contained six or seven hundred different things, including pieces of horn, feathers, stones, dried animal parts, and fragments of the horn of the Horned Serpent.<sup>12</sup>

The *Chitto gab-by* (horn of the Horned Serpent) and the *Is-te-pau-pau* (the bones of the lion) are virtually always mentioned as essential elements of medicine bundles.<sup>13</sup> These were powerful medicines consisting of the remains of the Horned Serpent and a mystical “lion,” mentioned often in myth, that had been killed by the ancestors of the Muskogees (see chapter 3).

Unique among the Tuckabatchees’ sacred objects were a number of brass and copper plates. The origin of these plates, the means by which the Tuckabatchees came to possess them, and the exact number that existed have been lost with time. Tuckabatchee Micco suggested to Hitchcock in 1842 that the original seven people who descended from the sky had with them the plates when they descended (see myth MT1).<sup>14</sup>

There are also traditions that attribute the origin of the plates to the Shawnee. According to George Stiggins, at a time when the Shawnee and the Ispocoga (Creeks) lived adjacent to each other and performed their Annual Busks together, the Shawnee deposited with the keepers of the Busk Grounds their calumet tobacco pipes, bells, war club, and twelve pieces of brass.<sup>15</sup> Stiggins describes six of the plates as oval, about eight inches long and seven inches wide.<sup>16</sup> The other six he describes as nine inches long and five inches wide, “bearing a resemblance to ancient soldier breastplates.” Stiggins reports that the plates were exhibited at the Annual Busks in sets of three oval plates and three square plates. According to Stiggins, upon migrating northward from the Savannah (Georgia) area, the Shawnee took one set of these plates with them. This set was reported still in the possession of the Shawnee after their migration west of the Mississippi.<sup>17</sup>

The exact number of plates possessed by the Tuckabatchee is unclear. Stiggins says that there were originally twelve plates. Schoolcraft suggests there were nine (seven copper and two brass).<sup>18</sup> Pickett, whose information comes from Adair, reports seven plates (five copper and two brass).<sup>19</sup>

Adair’s account of the plates is probably the most reliable.<sup>20</sup> He obtained his account from Will Bolsover, who obtained the information in the town of Tuckabatchee (Alabama) in July 1759 from Old Bracket, an “Indian of perhaps one hundred years old.” According to this account, there were, at that time, five copper and two brass plates that were kept



under the chief's cabin in the ceremonial square of the town. The largest of the copper plates is described as approximately eighteen inches long and seven inches wide at the widest part. The other four are described as somewhat smaller. Adair describes the two brass plates as approximately eighteen inches in diameter, and at least one is said to bear the Roman letter Æ. Old Bracket expressed the belief that the plates had been given to the Tuckabatchees by God and that there had been many more (some with writing on them) in their possession in the past. Some were buried with particular men, and Bracket could remember three that had been buried with his family members.

The plates were to be handled only by certain men who were ritually prepared for the occasion, and women were not allowed near the plates. According to Old Bracket, only the Tuckabatchees, who were a different people from the Creeks (Muskogeas), had possession of any such plates.

In 1836, upon their migration westward to the Arkansas Territory, the plates were transported by six men "remarkable for their sobriety and moral character," led by Chief Spoke Oak.<sup>21</sup> Sacred medicine was made especially for the trip and carried along. Each man had one plate wrapped in buckskin strapped to his back. During the march, they walked one mile ahead of the main body of the tribe and spoke to no one except themselves.<sup>22</sup>

Most early observers agree that the plates were probably originally obtained from the Spanish. Stiggins suggests that the Tuckabatchees may have taken them from de Soto's expedition in the mid-1500s.<sup>23</sup> Swanton suggests the Tuckabatchees may have obtained them from the Shawnee, who came to possess them through their contacts with the Spanish in St. Augustine (Florida) during the late seventeenth century.<sup>24</sup> Whatever their origin, they came to play an important role in the Tuckabatchees' Annual Busks.

## Taboos

Because of their beliefs that the qualities of the animals they used as food could be transmitted to them, Creeks would not eat birds of prey or birds of the night (specifically eagles, ravens, crows, buzzards, swallows, bats, nor any species of owl).<sup>25</sup> Animals that were carnivorous or animals such as wolves, panthers, foxes, cats, mice, rats, amphibious quadrupeds, horses, fowls, moles, opossums, and reptiles, which were perceived to subsist on unclean foods, were also avoided. Hogs and domestic fowl were probably also taboo when first introduced by Europeans as these too were

viewed as filthy and uneatable.<sup>26</sup> It was believed that diseases or conditions (the undesirable characteristics) of these animals could be communicated to humans through consumption or sometimes even through contact (touching).<sup>27</sup> Also taboo were animals that had died from natural causes, young animals newly weaned, and the consumption of blood.

## Dreams and Visions

The world of the spirits was of considerable interest to the Creeks, and dreams and visions seen in trances were means of learning about this world firsthand. According to Bartram: “They believe in *visions, dreams, and trances*. They relate [an] abundance of stories of men that have been dead or thought dead for many hours and days, who have revived again, giving an account of their transit to and from the world of souls, and describing the condition and situation of the place and spirits residing there. And these people have always returned to life with doctrines and admonitions tending to encourage and enforce virtue and morality.”<sup>28</sup> Spiritual specialists, who had undertaken many years of training, sometimes sought knowledge obtained through dreams and visions or sometimes traveled into the Spirit World to retrieve lost souls.

## Sacrifices

A portion of every animal killed was offered as thanksgiving or for successful hunting or for divine “care and goodness” yet to come.<sup>29</sup> Creeks regularly make burnt offerings to the fire of the best part of every animal taken in hunting. Adair adds that women always throw a small piece of the fattest meat into the fire when eating or just before they begin, to assure good things or to avert evil.<sup>30</sup>

## Sacred Plants or Medicines

Sacred to the Creeks were a number of plants that were used to treat medical ailments and that were incorporated into their ceremonies. A discussion of the medicinal use of plants among the Creek would, in itself, constitute a lengthy volume and is beyond the scope of this book. It would, however, be remiss not to mention the sacred plants or “medicine” plants that are such an integral part of the Creek annual ceremonies and belief system.

Some plants, beyond their ordinary use as treatments for medical ailments, are revered for the power and well-being they impart to those who use them properly. These plants, used in the Annual Busks, render the user pure and properly prepared for participation in his ritual encounters with the sacred. The array of plants used for these purposes varied somewhat from town to town, but all probably included button snakeroot, red root, tobacco, and, with the possible exception of the Yuchi, yaupon.

### Yuchi Medicines

The origin of the Yuchi medicines can mythologically be traced to the Upper World. During the time that *Tsō*, the first Yuchi, was still living in the Upper World, his Sun mother took him to the Rainbow, where he was made to participate in the Busk Ground ceremonials. The medicines that were used in that ceremony, *To t̄ā lā* (red root) and *f<sup>s</sup>âde'* (button snake-root), his mother later told him to continue to use as medicines (U5c). *Tsō* brought these medicines and their ceremonial use to earth and taught them to the first Yuchis, warning them that if ever they ceased to practice these ceremonies, darkness would befall the earth, signaling the end of time.

Another important Yuchi medicine, cedar, was revealed to the Yuchis by an “unknown mysterious being” who once came to earth among the ancestors of the Yuchi (U11). In trying to kill an evil wizard who was

affecting the movement of the Sun across the sky each morning, two men beheaded the wizard, and the Unknown ordered them to tie the head to the uppermost limbs of a tree. The next morning the wizard still lived. After several attempts with several different trees, the wizard was finally killed when his head was tied to a cedar tree. The cedar, stained red by the blood of the wizard, became a medicine tree (U11).

### Tuckabatchee Medicines

Tuckabatchee mythology, like that of the Yuchi, traces the origin of medicine to the Upper World. When the Tuckabatchees were originally set down upon the earth, they had with them their two principle medicines, the button snakeroot and the red root (MT1). According to myth MT2, the Cowetas introduced spicewood to them. This tradition is confirmed by Alindja, whom Swanton describes as one of the best informed Tuckabatchees.<sup>1</sup>

Other traditions, however, hold that the red root was the medicine of the Cowetas and that the Tuckabatchees united their button snakeroot with the red root of the Cowetas to form a new medicine called *sawatcka* (M9).

### Muskogee Medicines

Unlike that of the Yuchis and the Tuckabatchees, Muskogee mythology refers to a time *before* they learned of sacred plants and ceremonials. Muskogee myths M1 and M6 speak of a mountain, referred to as the King of Mountains in M1, where the knowledge of sacred plants, sacred fire, and sacred ceremonies was learned during their eastward migration. M1 speaks the most directly about this place, describing a mountain located by a red, bloody river, which thundered and on which was the sound of singing. While at this mountain the Muskogees learned of sacred fire: from the east, white fire came to them but they would not use it; from the south, blue fire came to them, which again they would not use; from the west came black fire, which they would not use; but from the north came a fire that was red and yellow, which they mixed with the fire they had taken from the mountain and used. It was also at this place that four sacred plants sang and “disclosed their virtues” to the Muskogees. The first of these was the button snakeroot, the second red root, the third *sowatchko* (described in M9 as button snakeroot and red root combined; however, this is likely an inaccurate identification of this medicine), and

the fourth “little tobacco.” These herbs, it was learned, were the best to purify themselves for their annual ceremonies.

This place of such mythical importance to the Muskogeas is located by another myth as at the forks of the Red River, west of the Mississippi River at two mounds of earth (M6). The Muskogeas, the myth relates, were “at a loss for fire” and were visited by the *Hi-you-yul-gee*, four men from the four corners of the earth who brought to them fire and admonished them to pay particular attention to the fire as it would preserve them and be a means of communication with Sacred Power. These beings also taught the Muskogeas of seven sacred plants, the names of four of which are recorded in the myth: the button snakeroot, the red root, the cedar, and sweet bay.

This place may also be alluded to in one other myth. M2 relates that during their eastward migration, the Muskogee discovered fire, stayed at this place for four years, and fasted eight days each year, taking with them fire when they left. The eight days of annual fasting probably allude to the fast associated with the Creek’s Annual Busk.

Taken together, it is obvious that the sacred plants and sacred fire referred to in these legends are elements of the Creek Busk. It is equally obvious that the legends refer to a time *before* the Muskogeas had knowledge of these things and that they were learned on their eastward migration. This suggests that they migrated from a place where these plants were not used, probably west of the region where they were common.

Hawkins provides a list of fourteen plants he observed used in the Annual Busk, identified by their Creek names only.<sup>2</sup> The fourteen plants as reported by Hawkins, followed by their common and Latin identifications, are

*Mic-co-ho-yon-e-juh* (red root, *Salix humilis* Marsh)

*Toloh* (sweet bay, *Magnolia glanea*)

*A-che-nau* (Cedar)

*Cup-pau-pos-cau* (spicewood, *Lindera benzoin* L.)

*Chu-lis-sau* (pine needles)

*Tuck-thlau-lus-te* (bur marigold, *Bidens tripartita* L.)

*Tote-cul-hil-lis-so-wau* (cardinal flower, *Lobelia cardinalis* L.)

*Chofeinsuck-cau-fuck-au* (rabbit-basket-string, *Potentilla canadensis*)

*Cho-fe-mus-see* (Scribner’s panicum, *Panicum oligosanthus*)

*Hil-lis-but-ke* (nightshade family, *Solanum nigrum* L., or ginseng, *Panax quinquefolium*)

*To-te-chu* (a moss species; Gatschet identifies this as “fire-mouth-hair” or “fire beard” and as a fungus, not a moss)<sup>3</sup>  
*Welan-nuh* (wormseed, *Chenopodium ambrosioides* L.)  
*Oak-chou-utch-co* (identified as a rock moss)<sup>4</sup>  
*Co-hal-le-wau-gee* (river cane, *Arundinaria macrosperma*).

## Black Drink

Commonly practiced as an informal ceremonial as well as a vital element of formal ceremonies was the consumption of “Black Drink,” as it was commonly called by Europeans. The drink, a tea made from the leaves of *Ilex vomitoria*, has been known by many names. Despite the European term “Black Drink,” Creeks referred to this drink as the “White Drink” or *Ási*?. The plant has also been known as “the Beloved Tree,” cassina, yaupon, and emetic holly, to name only a few.<sup>5</sup>

Black Drink was consumed daily in a social context in the rotunda or at the Busk Ground while discussing matters of town business or to welcome visitors (M1, M4, M15).<sup>6</sup> Adair asserts: “The Indians cannot shew greater honour to the greatest potentate on earth, than to place him in the white seat—invoke YO HE WAH, while he is drinking the Cusseena, and dance before him with the eagles tails.”<sup>7</sup> In this context the drink was symbolic of friendliness and peaceful intentions.<sup>8</sup> Swan describes Black Drink as “the only solid cement of friendship, benevolence and hospitality.”<sup>9</sup> It was believed to purify from all sin, leaving the drinker in a state of pure innocence; it was also thought to inspire the drinker with invincible prowess in war.<sup>10</sup>

A symbol of purity, Black Drink was viewed as an esoteric preparation, the virtues of which were communicated to the Creeks by the Great Spirit, and its use was often restricted to males and sometimes only to men of the greatest prestige.<sup>11</sup> By consuming Black Drink regularly in the rotunda or Busk Ground, Muskogee men repeatedly reaffirmed their connection to the “Maker of Breath.”<sup>12</sup>

Even the preparation of the drink was ritualized. Specially designated men brewed and served the drink. Served in specially prepared clay vessels or ornately carved shell cups, it was offered first to the most prestigious of those present and successively to those of decreasing social status.<sup>13</sup> Stiggins describes as typical the daily preparation and consumption of the drink at the town of Tuckabatchee (early nineteenth century): “It is parched first in a large pot of their own manufacture of clay, until the leaves are brown. Then water is applied to the full of the pot and boiled by

a man appointed to that service. After boiling, it is cooled in large cooling pans of the same manufacture by one of the oldest chiefs of the town. When it can be poured over his finger without scalding, it is cool enough to drink. It is then put into two gourds that hold nearly a gallon, each with a hole in it of about three quarters of an inch in diameter, at which hole they suck it out. The gourds of assee are ceremoniously handed round the square to every man by men selected for the purpose.”<sup>14</sup> Bartram describes an occasion of drinking Black Drink in the rotunda at Atassi (late eighteenth century):

The assembly being now seated in order, and the house illuminated, two middle aged men, who perform the office of slaves or servants, pro tempore, come in together at the door, each having very large conch shells full of black drink, and advance with slow, uniform and steady steps, their eyes or countenances lifted up, singing very low but sweetly; they come within six or eight paces of the king’s and white people’s cabins,<sup>15</sup> when they stop together, and each rests his shell on a tripos or little table, but presently takes it up again, and, bowing very low, advances obsequiously, crossing or intersecting each other about midway: he who rested his shell before the white people now stands before the king, and the other who stopped before the king stands before the white people; when each presents his shell, one to the king and the other to the chief of the white people, and as soon as he raises it to his mouth, the slave utters or sings two notes, each of which continues as long as he has breath; and as long as these notes continue, so long must the person drink, or at least keep the shell to his mouth. These two long notes are very solemn, and at once strike the imagination with a religious awe or homage to the Supreme, sounding somewhat like a-hoo—ojah and a-lu-yah. After this manner the whole assembly are treated, as long as the drink and light continue to hold out; and as soon as the drinking begins, tobacco and pipes are brought.<sup>16</sup>

Similar accounts are provided by Adair and Bossu.<sup>17</sup>

Jackson Lewis explains that the Black Drink was originally taken at the same time as the Busk medicines.<sup>18</sup> While those taking the Busk medicines went to the medicine pots, the Black Drink was brought to the drinkers by four bearers. The bearer would utter a cry, known as the cry of the Yahola, as the Black Drink was consumed, and the drinker had to continue to consume the drink until the cry came to an end. Yahola, along with his companion Hayuya, presided particularly over the Busk Ground. The cry

of the Yahola, apparently, was also given on other occasions during Busk Ground activities.

While Swanton does mention that the name Hayuya “gives us some clue to the four Hi-you-yul-gee,”<sup>19</sup> he apparently fails to see the parallel between Lewis’s description of the four bearers of the Black Drink and the four Hi-you-yul-gee of mythology. “Then he puts a few roots of the button-snake-root, with some green leaves of an uncommon small sort of tobacco, and a little of the new fruits, at the bottom of the fire-place, which he orders to be covered up with white marley clay, and wetted over with clean water.”<sup>20</sup>

## Tobacco

The smoking of tobacco, along with the daily consumption of Black Drink, was the most commonly practiced informal ceremonial. Pipe smoking was practiced to greet friends or make peace.<sup>21</sup> Bartram provides the following account from Atassi where he spent an evening in the *ro-tunda* drinking Black Drink and smoking tobacco:

The skin of a wild cat or young tyger stuffed with tobacco is brought, and laid at the king’s feet, with the great or royal pipe beautifully adorned; the skin is usually of the animals of the king’s family or tribe, as the wild-cat, otter, bear, rattle-snake, &c. A skin of tobacco is likewise brought and cast at the feet of the white chief of the town, and from him it passes from one to another to fill their pipes from, though each person has besides his own peculiar skin of tobacco. The king or chief smokes first in the great pipe a few whiffs, blowing it off ceremoniously, first towards the sun, or as it is generally supposed to the Great Spirit, for it is puffed upwards, next towards the four cardinal points, then towards the white people in the house; then the great pipe is taken from the hand of the mico by a slave and presented to the chief white man, and then to the great war chief, whence it circulates through the rank of head men and warriors, then returns to the king. After this each one fills his pipe from his own or his neighbour’s skin.<sup>22</sup>

Although the consumption of Black Drink seems to have been of less importance to the Yuchis than to other groups,<sup>23</sup> pipe smoking was of great importance. Yuchi men, women, and children smoked for pleasure, their pipes often carved in the form of a frog (which relates to Wind myths U13 and U14). In addition to recreational use, tobacco smoking was a



means of welcoming strangers, and pipes were smoked during important discussions. According to Speck, “It was believed that if one smoked while deliberating in sincerity over a question and, at the same time, entertained malice or insincerity toward it in his mind he would die. Smoking, among the Yuchis, was regarded as an oath and an ordeal to test veracity or guilt.”<sup>24</sup>

The mythological origin of tobacco among all Creek groups is almost always linked to a liaison between a man and a woman. Myths U16, H7, M17, M18, and M19 trace the discovery of tobacco to a place in the forest where a sexual encounter occurred between a man and a woman. Myth U16 states specifically that tobacco grew from the semen of the man. It was later encountered growing in this place, and its use in smoking was soon discovered. One myth, A22, suggests that tobacco seeds were originally given to a young man by two spiritual beings, who also revealed to him corn.

Two of the Yuchi myths relate how the Wind used snake dung (U13) or snake witch (U14) in his pipe made from a bullfrog with a bull snake stem. In both of these myths, the evil Iron Monster is killed by the Wind, who blows smoke on him from his pipe.

Several Alabama myths describe how tobacco was used to pass a battle during a journey into the Spirit World (A11–A13, A15). Blowing smoke from cigarettes at the battle, the men passed unnoticed. *Eschalapootchke* (little tobacco) is identified as one of the four sacred plants discovered by the Muskogees at the Sacred Mountain they encounter during their eastward migration.

## The Origin of Corn

No explanation for the origin of corn is found among Yuchi or Hitchiti myths. The Alabamas, however, offer two different explanations for the origin of corn. In the first Alabama explanation (A22), a young boy is traveling alone when he meets two men who invite him into their camp and feed him. In teaching him how to hunt bear, the three begin following a blood trail left by a wounded animal and find kernels of corn along the trail. Eventually, the trail leads to a field of ripened corn, where the two men teach the young boy how to build corncribs and give him tobacco seeds before leaving him there.

In the second Alabama explanation for the origin of corn (A23), there was an old woman who was so dirty and covered with sores that no one wanted to see her. She took up residence with a group of orphans, and to

feed them she rubbed herself and made bread from what came off her body. She was corn. Upon her instructions, the orphans swept out an old corncrib, closed it up, and went to sleep. Upon waking the next day they found the crib filled with corn.

Muskogee explanations for the origin of corn are similar to the Alabama explanation (A23). In one account, a woman rubbed her feet and what came off her feet was corn (M21). Following her instructions, her friends locked her in a corncrib for four days and upon returning found the crib filled with different kinds of corn. She then instructed them in how to plant corn to grow it for themselves. Myth M22 presents a similar account, and M24 closely parallels M22. In M22 an old woman, who was raising a male child from a drop of blood she had found, would scratch one of her thighs and corn would pour down; when she scratched the other thigh, beans would pour down. Upon discovering the origin of these foods, the young child would not eat them. Before sending the child away, the old woman had him lock her in a log cabin and set fire to it. After much time had passed and many adventures had been undertaken, the child, now grown, returned to the place of the cabin to find that all kinds of corn had grown up around it. The old woman, his grandmother, was corn. Myth M23 seems a combination of two accounts of the origin of corn. At first, corn is portrayed as an old woman with no people. After being refused by several camps, the old woman finds refuge with the Alligator camp. While the men of this camp are away hunting, she makes corn from the scrapings produced from rubbing sores on her body. She directs the men of this camp to build two corncribs and to lock her in one of them overnight. The next morning they find one crib filled with flour corn and the other with flint corn. The story then evolves into another account of the woman who adopts a young male child. As in M22, the old woman eventually sends the child away, but with instructions that before he leaves he is to drag the old woman around (on the ground) and then burn her body and return in three months. Upon returning he finds “red silk corn (probably yellow corn)” growing along with wormseed and beans.

## Sacred Time and Space

### Temporal versus Sacred Time

Among the Creeks, time must be thought of as existing in two forms: linear (temporal) and cyclic (sacred). The temporal aspects of Creek time have been recorded by several early writers. According to Adair, the Creek new year begins at the first new moon after the vernal equinox.<sup>1</sup> According to Swan the new year begins at the time of the Annual Busk, which he places in August.<sup>2</sup> Swanton suggests that these two accounts seem at odds but provides his own reconciliation of the two views.<sup>3</sup> He suggests Creek temporal time could be divided into two seasons of six months each.<sup>4</sup> The Annual Busk, from which all sacred events were counted, marked the ending of the old year and the summer season (February through July) and the beginning of the new year and winter season (August through January). Another division could be made at right angles to this one, which marked the ceremonial season. Most, if not all, public ceremonies occurred from April to October.

Ellis Childers, the last chief of the Chiaha and one of Swanton's sources, gives his account of the ceremonial season as follows: "When the new moon at the end of April or beginning of May approaches the medicine man (*hilis-haya*) tells the *miko* to call his people. He also tells the *miko* in what phase of the moon to send out. Immediately the *miko* sends a *ta'pala* or 'messenger' through the town to notify everyone to meet at the square ground that night."<sup>5</sup> Over a four-day period follows a series of dances; the collection and taking of medicine, which included the *miko hoyanidja*, *pasa*, cedar, and *bitū'tābi* (ice weed); and the delivery of speeches and announcements or messages from other towns. At the next new moon the same procedure is followed. At the third new moon the chief and a chosen number from each "bed" decide the date for the Annual Busk. A cane is

split into small pieces representing the number of days until the Busk. One bundle is tied over the chief's seat on the Busk Ground and one bundle is sent to each friendly town as an invitation to share in the Busk.<sup>6</sup>

According to Speck, the Yuchis divided the year into four seasons: the spring (when summer is near), the summer (related to "south"), the autumn (when the tree leaves are yellow), and winter (snow comes).<sup>7</sup> Speck's list of month names, along with those provided for other groups by Swan and Swanton,<sup>8</sup> are as follows:

- January:     Ground Frozen Month (Yuchi)  
              Little Winter Moon (Swan)  
              none given (Alabama)  
              Little Winter (Koasati)
- February:    Wind Month (Yuchi)  
              The Windy Moon (Swan)  
              none given (Alabama)  
              none given (Koasati)
- March:       Little Summer (Yuchi)  
              Little Spring Moon (Swan)  
              Wind Moon (Alabama)  
              Wind Moon (Koasati)
- April:        Big Summer (Yuchi)  
              Big Spring Moon (Swan)  
              Planting Moon (Alabama)  
              Planting Moon (Koasati)
- May:         Mulberry Ripening Month (Yuchi)  
              Mulberry Moon (Swan)  
              May Haws Ripe (Alabama)  
              May Haws Ripe (Koasati)
- June:         Blackberry Ripening Month (Yuchi)  
              Blackberry Moon (Swan)  
              Half Way Month (Alabama)  
              ? (Koasati)
- July:         Middle of Summer (Yuchi)  
              Little Ripening Moon (Swan)  
              Mulberries Ripe (Alabama)  
              Mulberries Ripe (Koasati)
- August:      Dog Day (Yuchi)  
              Big Ripening Moon (Swan)  
              Wild Peaches Ripe (Alabama)  
              none given (Koasati)

- September: Hay Cutting Month (Yuchi)  
 Little Chestnut Moon (Swan)  
 none given (Alabama)  
 none given (Koasati)
- October: Corn Ripening Month (Yuchi)  
 Big Chestnut Moon (Swan)  
 Frog Moon (Alabama)  
 none given (Koasati)
- November: none given (Yuchi)  
 Falling Leaf Moon (Swan)  
 Black Water (Alabama)  
 Whippoorwill Moon (Koasati)
- December: Middle of Winter (Yuchi)  
 Big Winter Moon (Swan)  
 none given (Alabama)  
 Big Winter (Koasati)

The passage of temporal time was punctuated with sacred times that were out of the ordinary, qualitatively different kinds of time when things were not as they seemed and humans were in touch with sacred powers.<sup>9</sup> In the earliest of times, soon after creation, sacred power abounded. All that existed, existed as a manifestation of sacred power. Animals and humans shared similar characteristics and spoke the same language. All existence was equally saturated with sacred power. As time passed, though, direct encounters with sacred power became limited to certain times or were achievable only through intensive training or participation in rituals. Warfare and hunting were perceived as sacred times and were elaborated with ritual and intense cultural meaning.<sup>10</sup> A woman's first menses signaled a move from childhood to adulthood and was accompanied by ceremony associated with her power to bring forth life.

Certain rites and rituals also became necessary for the maintenance of universal balance and the perpetuation of time. Rites and rituals that were communicated to humans through sacred means became the basis of the ritual life of the Creeks.

## Sacred Space

The symbolic center of the world, or the *axis mundi* in Eliade's terms,<sup>11</sup> can be discerned throughout Creek mythology. This center is an important feature of cosmology, as it is the datum by which all of creation is referenced, the original point of order brought forth into an existence of disorder.

der. For the Yuchis, it is the cedar tree upon which their ancestors, under the direction of the “Mysterious Being” or the “Unknown,” defeated the evil wizard (U11). Though not named in myth U11, it is apparent that the “Unknown” who had descended from the sky to teach the Yuchis “many acts of life, and in matters of religion” refers to Tsō, the son of the Sun and the center of Yuchi spiritual life. It was under his direction that chaos was symbolically overcome by placing the body of the evil wizard over the cedar tree, thus discovering cedar, one of their most important medicines.

For the Alabamas (A6–A8) and the Muskogees (M4), the axis mundi can be recognized as the tree that grows at the mouth of the cave from which they emerged. For the Alabama, this cave and sacred tree are geographically located, by tradition, in Alabama (A4, A5) between the Cahaba and Alabama Rivers (A4).

For the Muskogees, the geographical location of the emergence cave and sacred tree is identified only as in the west (M1), a place referred to as the “foundation of all things” (M4) and the “backbone” of the earth (M6). The identification of the emergence cave and sacred tree as an axis mundi is reinforced by Muskogee tradition that at the end of the world, when all the annual ceremonies have ceased, all Creeks will return to the opening in the earth, the “navel of the world” from which they emerged.<sup>12</sup>

Muskogee tradition, however, identifies another axis mundi, one that was not theirs before they adopted it. This second axis mundi was encountered during their migration from the west into the southeast and is identified as the Sacred Mountain (M1, M6), atop which a great fire blazed that made a singing noise, and there was a pole that was “very restless and made a noise (M1).” The Muskogees sacrificed a child to this pole and then took the pole with them as a war medicine (M1). The geographical location of this mountain is identified in M1 as near a “bloody river.” Myth M6 identifies the location as in the forks of the Red River (*We-o-coof-ke*, muddy water) where stood two mounds of earth. It is at this Sacred Mountain that the Muskogees are visited by the four spiritual beings who taught them about Sacred Fire (M6) and where they learn of Sacred Medicines (M1, M6). Clearly it is here that the Muskogees encounter and incorporate into their own ceremonial system the beliefs and ritual of the southeastern cultures. We can speculate that it is here the Muskogees first encountered and began practicing the Annual Busk common throughout southeastern cultures.

## The Busk Ground

Central to all larger Creek towns was a plaza or town square that contained the “communal building known as the hothouse or rotunda and the complex known as the Square Ground or Busk Ground.”<sup>13</sup> The Busk Ground, central to Creek spiritual life, can be interpreted as symbolically representing the original axis mundi, and in fact functions exactly as that, the central point around which all Creek life revolves, the place where the sacred merges with the profane, where the powers of cosmos encounter the powers of chaos.

The Busk Ground was a “quadrangular space, enclosed by four open buildings, with rows of benches rising above one another.”<sup>14</sup> It was here that “visitors were received, communal decisions formulated, and it was the center of Creek ceremonial life. Everything within the Busk Ground signified something vital. Here was stored those things concerning religion: sacred vessels used in the annual ceremonies, rattles and other ‘apparatus of conjuration,’ the calumet or great peace pipe, and the ‘imperial standard.’”<sup>15</sup>

For the Yuchis, the Busk Ground symbolized the Rainbow, the spiritual Busk Ground in the sky world where *Tsō* was first initiated into the Yuchi ceremonies.<sup>16</sup> The three lodges on the north, south, and west sides of the square symbolized the Rainbow. The natural brown earth color of the floor, the green brush roofs of the lodges, the gray ashes of the fire, and the red flames represented the colors of the Rainbow.

## Ceremony and Ritual

### Music and Dancing

Most Creek ceremony was accompanied by music. Flutes made from cane, the tibia of a deer, or cedar were used by individuals but not in communal ceremonials.<sup>1</sup> Of the flute music Bartram says: "It is only the young fellows who amuse themselves on this howling instrument; but the tambour and rattle, accompanied with their sweet low voices, produce a pathetic harmony, keeping exact time together, and the countenance of the musician, at proper times, seems to express the solemn elevated state of mind; at that time there seems not only a harmony between him and his instrument, but it instantly touches the feelings of the attentive audience, as the influence of an active and powerful spirit; there is then an united universal sensation of delight and peaceful union of souls throughout the assembly."<sup>2</sup> Drums made of cypress and rattles made from gourds or turtle shells were a part of most ceremonies and usually accompanied dances,<sup>3</sup> which could be social or sacred and usually proceeded sinistrally or the way the sun goes.

### Communal Ceremonies

Communal ceremonies might be held in response to specific events. Bartram relates an incident at Atassi when people were fasting, taking medicine, and praying to "avert sickness which had afflicted them."<sup>4</sup> They fasted for seven or eight days during which time they ate or drank nothing but a "megre gruel" made from corn flour and water and took medicine of the roots of *Iris versicolor*, a powerful cathartic. More often, though, ceremonies were planned and conducted on an annual basis, although the



number of yearly ceremonies and performance of them probably varied considerably from town to town.

The Koasatis celebrated the ripening of mulberries in May,<sup>5</sup> and according to Stiggins they similarly celebrated the new crop of beans.<sup>6</sup> Bartram observed that they have “feasts or festivals almost every month in the year, which are chiefly dedicated to hunting and agriculture.”<sup>7</sup>

The Oklahoma Seminole ceremonial cycle began in spring (April or May) with an all-night stomp dance and sacrifices of meat to the sacred fire.<sup>8</sup> Stomp dances followed in May and June leading up to the Busk (Green Corn) in June or July. The Annual Busk was followed by dances in August, a ball game in September, and the Soup Dance (another all-night stomp dance) that concluded the ceremonial cycle.

### The Annual Busk or Poskita

The most important ceremonial event of the year was the Poskita, or “Busk” as it has been corrupted by Europeans. The term *Poskita* means a “fast” and can refer to two things. It is the term applied to the fast undergone by those who are becoming doctors or learned men, and it is also applied to the annual ceremony of the Creek New Year.<sup>9</sup>

### Yuchi Origin and Description of the Busk

By Yuchi tradition, the Annual Busk ceremonies originated in the Sky World. Yuchi mythology recounts how *Tsō*, the primordial Yuchi, was taken to the Rainbow (the Yuchi ceremonial grounds in the Sky World), where he is made to participate in the activities and is scratched (ritual bloodletting). For reasons not elucidated by the mythology, *Tsō* and his Sun Mother are driven from the Sky World to the earth, where *Tsō* becomes the ancestor to human beings.<sup>10</sup>

*Tsō* taught his people, the Yuchis, the ceremonies he learned in the Sky World to protect them from evil and to honor the beings of the realm over the earth. Toward this end, he also gave them their medicine plants—the button snakeroot and red root—to use in their ceremonies. Additionally, *Tsō* taught the Yuchis the rite of scratching and of distributing new and sacred fire annually, and showed them how to make ceremonial grounds like the one in the Sky World and how to decorate them to symbolize the Rainbow. After “conditioning their prosperity upon their obedience,” he left them, saying that once per year he would soar through the heavens over them and look down to see if they were obeying.<sup>11</sup>

The following description of a Yuchi Busk is based entirely on Speck's observances from the Yuchi towns of Sand Creek and Polecat, Oklahoma, about 1904 and 1905.<sup>12</sup> The Yuchi rites consisted of dancing, fasting, observance of taboos, kindling of new fire, scarification of men, taking of medicine, and the performance of ball games. The ceremony, called "In the Rainbow" or "In the big house," was held when corn first ripened (early to mid-July) and, when possible, when the moon was full.

From the beginning of the festival, no salt was used by anyone. Sexual communication was tabooed and a general fast was observed by all men for twelve hours before taking medicine.

On the second day, men could not leave the square, nor sleep, nor lean their heads against any support. Four young initiates were assigned to assure that these activities did not happen. These four also assisted by securing the logs for the fire and the medicine roots. No women, dogs, or strangers were allowed to enter the Busk Grounds. New fire was kindled at sunrise of the second day. Among the Muskogees and most other groups, all fires among the households were extinguished at this time and restarted with New Fire, but apparently, for the Yuchis, the ritual kindling of New Fire was symbolic for all.

After the kindling of the New Fire came the taking of medicine, which was preceded and followed by the performance of the Feather Dance. The Feather Dance, originally performed only by the Polecat town, was a daylight dance during which the men held sticks, to the end of which six white heron feathers were attached. Approaching sunwise the pile of earth at the eastern side of the square, where sweepings from the square were piled in a heap, and facing the sun, they leaped over the pile. This dance symbolized the Sun's journey over the Busk Ground. The Yuchis believed that the Sun watched closely and would cease its movement across the sky should this dance not be performed properly.

After the Feather Dance, the townspeople came before two pots, one containing button snakeroot and the other red root. Town officials ritually scratched the males on the arm or breast, allowing the blood to flow and drop upon the Busk Ground, symbolizing the original creation of the Yuchis. The Yuchis believed the scratching also acted as a purgative. The traditional Yuchi scratching instrument consisted of a quill fastened to a piece of leaf of button snakeroot set with six pins. The scratcher was dipped in a pot of medicine before each scratching, purifying the instrument with the juice of sacred plants.

Button snakeroot and red root, the two traditional Yuchi medicines, were taken to purify their bodies against sickness. To eat of the first corn

of the season without having partaken of these sacred medicines, it was believed, would result in sickness. The men came to the medicine pots four at a time to take medicine, repeating the rite several times. All of the townspeople except the chief, after taking medicine, went to a nearby water source, washed, and returned to the square. While the others were washing, the chief, who had remained behind, placed an ear of corn on each log of the new fire. Upon returning from washing, all rubbed their hands over the corn and then over their faces, and some of the last year's corncoobs were thrown into the fire as incense, symbolizing the passing out of use of the old crop. The rite concluded with a feast of new corn, the smoking of tobacco, and a ball game.

The group disbanded and went home for rest on the third day, spent the fourth day at home, and reassembled at the Busk Ground on the fifth day. At noon on the sixth day commenced a feast of meat. The ceremonies concluded on the seventh day, and the group disbanded.

### **Tuskegee Origin and Description of the Busk**

The Tuskegees attribute the origin of the ceremony directly to the "Master of Breath." All creations and nearly all reasons for existence are attributed directly to "Master of Breath." Speck provides the following account of the Tuskegee Busks that he observed in 1904 and 1905 in Taskigi Town, Creek Nation (Oklahoma).<sup>13</sup>

As the new corn crop approached maturity, a time was decided for the celebration. Use of the new corn before the Annual Busk was prohibited. The events of the Busk occurred in a regular order. A few social dances were performed, and the top layer of soil was cleared from the Busk Ground before the festival began. The soil, symbolizing the earth, was placed in a pile in the southeast corner of the Busk Ground. Lodges of the square were repaired and put in good order, and each family departed for home with a bundle of sticks, one representing each day before the beginning of the festival.

Families encamped around the square on the first day of the Busk. The town chief and his attendants took their seats in the west lodge; the northern and eastern lodges were occupied by the warriors and the southern lodge by women, children, and spectators from other towns. The use of salt was taboo throughout the ceremony. In the morning two men, whose faces were colored with black soot, left to collect red root, and two other men left to collect button snakeroot. The Taskigi believed these two roots to have been given to them by the "Master of Breath" as purifiers and insurers of good health. The rest of the first day was spent dancing.

Most of the important activities took place on the second day. The medicine plants were steeped, each in its own pot, and a medicine maker blew his breath through a hollow cane into the medicine, imparting to it additional power. Men passed the day fasting until noon, when the medicines were taken. The chief and other occupants of his lodge took medicine first, then those of the western lodge, then those of the northern lodge, and then the women and children washed only their hands and heads in it. The taking of medicine was followed by a women's dance. Again during the afternoon, medicine was taken, alternating with the Feather Dance. The Feather Dance, performed with wands to which were attached the feather of the white egret, snowy heron, or wood ibis, was to honor the feather that shielded the people from attacks of human or spiritual enemies. After the medicine rite was concluded, the chief swept away the pile of ashes from previous fires in the center of the Busk Ground, and fresh wood was brought. The chief kindled a new fire, and women carried it to the hearths in their homes from which the old fires had previously been brushed away. The creation of New Fire corresponded to the beginning of the new year. All personal differences were forgotten, and everyone began the new year with peace and friendship. All the townspeople donned their best clothing, all old and damaged property was discarded, and the chief formally addressed his people. During the late afternoon a ball game was held, after which the men proceeded to the nearest water, where they plunged in and washed off all their paint. Before sunset a feast of corn and other vegetables commenced and the salt taboo was ended. The night was spent dancing.

Those families who had come from a distance began returning home on the morning of the third day while others rested. The townspeople reassembled at the Busk Grounds after four days (on the seventh day) for more medicine taking, but without much ceremony.

Due to the close proximity of the Taskigi and the Yuchi resettlement west of the Mississippi, Speck suggests the probability of some exchange of ideas between the two groups. One of Swanton's informants, described only as the last chief of the Tuskegee, informed him that the Tuskegee also had a scratching rite similar to that of the Yuchi. Those who were going to fast "rubbed their bodies with medicine and were scratched on the calves of the legs, the hips, and the hands up and down and crosswise, and also crosswise of their breast."<sup>14</sup> Swanton suggests the Tuskegee may have adopted this rite from the Yuchi, their close neighbors in the Creek Nation (Oklahoma).

## Tuckabatchee Origins and Description of the Busk

The Tuckabatchee, like the Tuskegee, assert that the Busk ceremonies were communicated directly to them by the “Supreme Being.” Alindja, a Tukabatchee, suggests that Ibofānga himself laid the foundation of the first Busk fire and gave the Tuckabatchees the medicines that go with it.<sup>15</sup> Hitchcock provides a description of a Tuckabatchee Busk that he observed about 1842 on the Main Canadian, Creek Nation (Oklahoma).<sup>16</sup>

During July, the chiefs met to plan for the Annual Busk. At this meeting they gave orders for any additional pots and utensils to be made that might be needed for the ceremonies. They met again in seven days, again in four, then again in two to make the rest of the necessary preparations. The broken days were given out (a bundle of cane slivers, one representing each of the seven days until the Busk would begin) during the fourth meeting. On the fifth night participants encamped near the Busk Ground, and the women danced for about three hours during the middle of the sixth day. The night of the sixth day was passed with men and women dancing together without much ceremony.

The first day of ceremonies was sacred. Men fasted all day and took medicine. New Fire was kindled in a small house within a corner of the Busk Ground at dawn of the first day. Medicine, with which the men cleansed themselves, was made over the New Fire. Only those taking the medicine and those with appointed duties were allowed on the Busk Ground during the first day. Soon after noon, the sacred plates (see the discussion on medicine bundles in chapter 6) and other sacred objects were brought into the square, preceded by two men with coconut shell rattles and followed by others with long reeds, from the ends of which white feathers streamed. The participants danced around the Busk Ground four times and then passed outside and danced around another spot four times, and then again entered the Ground, repeating this pattern four times.

The War Dance was performed by two men on the second day, while others enacted an attack on effigies, usually representing two men and one woman. When the dance concluded the dancers bathed in running water, returned to the Busk Ground, and broke the fast by eating green corn and other vegetables but no meat or salt. The rest of the day passed with rest or amusement.

The men danced with the sacred plates on the third day and then hunted deer but still ate no meat for the rest of that day. The meat was prepared with salt for breakfast on the fourth day, after which the women

danced. Toward the close of the fourth day the Buffalo Dance was performed by both men and women, and most returned to their homes during the night of the fourth day. A few appointed ones remained and slept on the Busk Ground for three or four nights.

### **Muskogee Origins and Description of the Busk**

The Yuchis assert that the Muskogees “borrowed nearly the whole of the annual ceremonies of the Yuchi when they overran the Southeast, subduing and incorporating the latter.”<sup>17</sup> The Muskogees, however, claim an independent origin for their ceremonies. Tål mutcâsi, a medicine maker of the Asilanabi and Łalogalga (Okchai towns), suggests that as seven selected men were putting together the four logs to make a foundation for the fire “there was a fire built and of the four main logs it was said they shall be the white path. There shall be peace and harmony.”<sup>18</sup> It was at that time that laws were established and the medicine roots were given. Sanger Beaver, from Tcatoksofka (an Okfuskee town), relates the following: “[I]n ancient times the people were continually fighting, scalping, and killing, were without law, and went about nearly naked, clothed only in the skin breechclout. A certain man among them meditated much on this troublesome way of living. He fasted and thought for a long time, and finally he declared that he had received ‘the white day’ (ni’ta hâtki). This had been given to man through him by Ibofânga along with the miko hoyanidja, the pasa, the sawâtcka, and the âsi, and songs for each medicine.”<sup>19</sup> Beaver adds that most of this story was contained in a kind of song that had been handed down from the old man who had received “the white day.” The people were instructed that “so long as they adhered to the use of these medicines and customs they would grow strong, but if at any time they became lax in attending them, they would grow weak and perish.”<sup>20</sup>

### **Hawkins’s Busk Description**

Fortunately, several accounts of early Muskogee Busks are available.<sup>21</sup> One of the earliest and most complete accounts of a Muskogee Busk is provided by Hawkins from the Muskogee town of Kashita (Alabama, 1798/1799).<sup>22</sup>

The yard of the Busk Ground was cleaned off by the warriors and sprinkled with white sand on the first day. Four logs were placed so that they formed a cross with the end of each meeting in the center of the fire and the opposite ends pointing toward the four cardinal points. New Fire was kindled in the center of the cross. Women of the Turkey Clan then performed the Turkey Dance. Button snakeroot was taken from noon to

the middle of the afternoon, followed by the Tadpole Dance, performed by four men and four women. During the evening the men danced the “dance of the people second in command.”

Around ten in the morning of the second day, the women danced the Gun Dance. Around noon, the men approached the fire and rubbed ashes from the New Fire on their chin, neck, and belly; jumped into the river to wash; and then returned to the Busk Grounds. Upon their return, the men took some of the new corn prepared for the feast by the women, rubbed it between their hands and on their faces and breasts, and then commenced the feast.

The third day passed with the men sitting in the square. Early in the morning of the fourth day the women cleaned out their hearths, sprinkled them with sand, and made new fires from the New Fire. The men finished burning out the first four logs of the New Fire, rubbed the ashes on their chin, neck, and belly, and removed to the water and washed. The taboo against the consumption of salt was ended on this day, and the Long Dance was performed.

Four new logs were added to the fire on the fifth day and Black Drink was consumed. The sixth and seventh days passed with the men remaining on the Busk Ground.

During the eighth day, medicine was prepared that consisted of the following plants: *Mic-co-ho-yon-e-juh*, *Toloh*, *A-che-nau*, *Cup-pau-pos-cau*, *Chu-lis-sau* (roots), *Tuck-thlau-lus-te*, *Tote-cul-hil-lis-so-wau*, *Cho-feinsuck-cau-fuck-au*, *Hil-lis-hut-ke*, *To-te-cuh*, *Chooc-his-see*, *Welau-nuh*, *Oak-chon-utch-co*, and *Co-hal-le-wau-gee*.<sup>23</sup> All of these were put into a pot with water and crushed. The medicine makers blew breath into the medicine through a small reed, imparting power to it. The men consumed the medicine and rubbed it over their joints till the afternoon. They next collected old corncobs and pine burs, put them into a pot, and burned them to ashes. Four young virgins brought ashes from their houses and put them in the pot, and all was stirred together. The men took white clay and mixed it with water in two pans. One pan of clay and one pan of ashes were taken to the cabin of the mico (chief), and the other two to that of the warriors, who rubbed themselves with the clay and ashes. Two men brought some flowers of small tobacco (“old man’s tobacco”) and gave a little to everyone present. The mico and advisors proceeded four times around the fire and, when facing east, threw some of the flowers into the fire. They then stood to the west while the warriors repeated the same ritual.

A cane was stuck up at the cabin of the mico with two white feathers in

the end of it. A member of the Fish Clan took it just as the sun went down and proceeded toward the river with everyone following. Half way there he gave the death whoop, which was repeated four times between the square and the water's edge. With all standing beside the water, he stuck the cane in the water's edge, and they all put a grain of the "old man's tobacco" on their heads and in each ear. At a signal given four times, they threw some of the tobacco into the river and every man plunged into the water, picking up four stones from the bottom. With these they crossed themselves on their breast four times, each time throwing a stone into the river and giving the death whoop. They then washed themselves, took up the cane and feathers, returned to the Busk Ground, and stuck the cane into the ground there. After this they visited throughout the town. That night they danced the "Mad Dance," which concluded the ceremony.

### Swan's Busk Description

Swan observed a four-day Busk at Hickory Ground (Alabama) in 1791.<sup>24</sup> According to Swan, the Busk was held when the corn had ripened and the *cassina* ("new black drink") had come to perfection. On the morning of the first day, a ceremonial leader wearing white leather moccasins and stockings with a white dressed deerskin over his shoulders went alone to the square at daybreak to kindle the New Fire. After the fire was kindled, four young men entered the square from the four corners, each having a log that was formally placed on the fire. Another four young men entered the square, each with an ear of new corn that the leader placed in the fire. Four young warriors then entered the square with new *cassina*, a small part of which was given to the New Fire and the rest cooked and prepared for drinking. After the consumption of the *cassina*, some of the New Fire was deposited outside the square for public use. Women, who had previously extinguished all old fire and cleaned out the hearths, rekindled fires with New Fire. No women were allowed in the square on the first day, and the men slept in the square that night.

The second day was devoted to taking the "war-physic" or button snakeroot. Young men hunted or fished on the third day, while the older men remained in the square resting and drinking *cassina* or button snake-root as they chose. During the first three days of the Busk, the men abstained from even touching a woman, both men and women fasted, and salt was avoided.

The whole town assembled in the square on the fourth day. The game that the young men had killed the previous day was distributed to the



public, and new corn and other foods were prepared with New Fire by the women. Following a feast, the night was spent dancing.

### **Bartram's Busk Description**

Bartram's account, probably from Atassi (Alabama, 1777–78), is as follows:

When a town celebrates the Busk, having previously provided themselves with new cloaths, new pots, pans, and other household utensils and furniture, they collect all their worn-out cloaths and other despicable things, sweep and cleanse their houses, squares, and the whole town, of their filth, which with all the remaining grain and other old provisions, they cast together into one common heap, and consume it with fire. After having taken medicine, and fasted for three days, all the fire in the town is extinguished. During this fast they abstain from the gratification of every appetite and passion whatever. A general amnesty is proclaimed, all malefactors may return to their town, and they are absolved from their crimes, which are now forgotten, and they restored to favour.

On the fourth morning, the high priest, by rubbing wood together, produces new fire in the public square, from whence every habitation in the town is supplied with the new and pure flame.

Then the women go forth to the harvest field, and bring from thence new corn and fruits, which being prepared in the best manner, in various dishes, and drink withal, is brought with solemnity to the square, where the people are assembled, apparelled in their new cloaths and decorations. The men having regaled themselves, the remainder is carried off and distributed amongst the families of the town. The women and children solace themselves in their separate families, and in the evening repair to the public square, where they dance, sing and rejoice during the whole night, observing a proper and exemplary decorum: this continues three days, and the four following days they receive visits, and rejoice with their friends from neighbouring towns, who have purified and prepared themselves.<sup>25</sup>

### **Adair's Busk Description**

According to Adair, the Creeks formerly observed “the grand festival of the annual expiation of sin” at the beginning of the first new moon in which their corn became ripe.<sup>26</sup> The Busk Grounds were cleaned; the white

cabin was painted with white clay and the war cabin with red clay. The hearth was cleaned out and swept, and roots of button snakeroot, green leaves of little tobacco, and a little of the “new fruits” were placed at the bottom of the fireplace, which was then covered over with white clay and wet with clean water.

Women worked cleaning out their homes, renewing old hearths, and preparing to receive the New Fire and sanctified new fruits. Adair observed that the religious men and warriors abstained from eating any of the new crop before it had been sanctified, but that in the past (pre-1770s) no one would eat or even handle any part of the new harvest until some of it had been offered at the yearly festival.

The first day of the festival consisted of an all-day feast of the ending year’s food, after which all remains of the feast and all dishes and utensils that had been used with the food were removed from the square. No women, except a few old beloved women, were then allowed in the square until the fourth day. All ritually pure warriors and beloved men were called into the square to begin a fast that would last for two nights and a day. Four guards were posted at each corner of the square to keep out all those who had violated the “law of first fruit offering and that of marriage since the previous annual busk.” The fast was observed until sunrise of the third day. Button snakeroot was prepared and taken until the end of the fast in order to vomit and purify themselves.

A quantity of small-leafed green tobacco was placed outside the square for those not allowed in. An old beloved woman distributed it to the women, children, and “worthless men” according to her estimation of their “capacity to sin.” They chewed and swallowed it in order to purify themselves.

The ceremonial leader fasted and ate the small-leafed tobacco and drank button snakeroot in a separate hut for three days and nights before the Busk began, and also joined with the men in drinking medicine. Even after the first fruit was sanctified, the spiritual leader would still take only the juice from watermelons to quench his thirst until the end of the Busk.

The fast ended on the third day with the women bringing a supply of the old year’s food to the outside of the square. The food was then brought into the square for those who had been fasting. Before noon the square had been cleared of everything the women brought. Just afternoon on this (the third) day, the ceremonial leader announced that New Fire should be brought to the alter, ordering everyone to stay within their homes, to abstain from doing any bad thing, and to extinguish all old fires.

The leader and his attendant then went into the “beloved place or holiest,” kindled New Fire by friction from poplar, willow, or white oak, and brought forth the New Fire in a clay vessel and placed it on the alter under an arbor.

An old beloved woman was ordered to bring a basket full of newly ripened fruits to the square and placed it outside a corner of the square. The ceremonial leader walked northward three times around the fire reciting “ceremonial words.” Taking a little of each kind of the new crop, he rubbed them with bear oil and, with some meat, offered them to the New Fire as a first fruit offering and for the annual oblation of sin. He then consecrated the button snakeroot and cassina by pouring a little of each into the fire.

With all those outside the square standing at the square’s edge, the leader addressed the crowd, charging them to remain faithful to tradition. He then caused some of the New Fire to be passed outside the square for the women to take to their homes to restart their household fires.

Cassina was then collected, prepared, and taken, and the salt taboo was broken. Toward the end of the festival a mock battle was staged, after which the women were called to join in the dancing.

At the conclusion of the festival, everyone painted themselves with white clay and went to purify themselves (wash off the clay) in running water. The ceremonial leader led the procession to the water, followed by his attendants, beloved men, warriors, women, children, and lastly, those who had violated the taboo against unsanctified fruits. Upon washing away the paint, everyone returned to the square singing and dancing, which ended the festival.

### **Pope’s Busk Description**

Pope’s brief description of a Busk is likely based on his observances at Broken Arrow (Alabama), one of the Lower Creek towns, around 1791.<sup>27</sup> According to Pope’s experiences, the Annual Busk was usually held in mid-July. Men abstained from all intercourse with women, fasted for three days, and took cathartics and emetics to cleanse themselves of impurities. Extinguishing all fires throughout their district, they rekindled more by the friction of a round sassafras stick in an auger hole bored into dry poplar. The New Fire was kindled by the chief priest and passed by torches to every household throughout the district. New corn was cooked over the New Fire and brought to the center of the Busk Ground and distributed. The rest of the night was spent dancing.

## Elements of the Busk

A review of the earliest recorded observations of Creek Busks reveals that while considerable variation in details of the performance of the Busk existed between towns, there were also certain vital elements that each Busk shared.

Fasting and abstaining from sexual contact were important elements of the Busk. These acts were followed as means of purification, to prepare oneself for the Busk. By disassociating oneself from Middle World activities, one's attention could be focused entirely on the spiritual matters at hand.

The "taking of medicine" was also an important part of each Busk. The medicines are usually described as emetics, which induce vomiting; however, not all preparations of medicines had an emetic effect. The vomiting that followed the taking of medicine may have been as much learned behavior as medically induced. Whether vomiting was the result of the purgative effects of the medicines or a learned behavior, the goal of consuming the medicines was to purify oneself and to be made worthy of participating in the Busk.

The rite of scratching or ritual bloodletting may have originated among the Yuchis and diffused to other groups among the Creeks. Among the Yuchis this rite was performed as a reenactment of the origins of *Tsō* from a drop of blood and also of his participation in this rite in the Sky World before his descent to the earth. It is interesting to note that the only other definitive mention of the practice of this rite is among the Tuskegees, the postremoval neighbors of the Yuchis.

Scratching is not reported among the Tuckabatchees nor is it mentioned in the five Muskogee Busk descriptions reported here, with the possible exception of Hawkins's account. In this late-eighteenth-century account from the town of Kashita, Hawkins describes how, at the end of the Busk, all participants removed to a nearby river, where they took four stones and crossed themselves on the chest.<sup>28</sup> There are considerable differences between this act witnessed by Hawkins and the more formalized Yuchi scratching ceremony. At Kashita it was individuals who scratched themselves, the ceremony was not performed within the Busk Ground, and Hawkins makes no mention of the scratching's drawing blood. While it is possible that this rite is derived from the Yuchi ceremony, it seems unlikely. None of the other four Muskogee Busk descriptions mentions any act that can be interpreted as a scratching rite. It seems likely that if scratching

were a regular part of early historic Muskogee Busks, observers would have deemed it worthy of mention.

Another important element of the Busk is the sacrifice of the new crop to the fire. Martin interprets the sacrifice of corn as the central element of the Creek Busk.<sup>29</sup> According to Martin, Creeks knew that corn had once belonged entirely to the sacred realm and that it must be periodically returned to the sacred. While it is true that an offering of corn to the fire is a common element of the Busk, it likely is a late addition to the festival. The importance of corn in Creek subsistence cannot be overstressed, but it should be noted that corn was not the only food substance offered to the fire. According to Swan, not only was corn offered to the fire but also cassina.<sup>30</sup> Every kind of new crop, meat, button snakeroot, and cassina were offered to the fire according to Adair's observations.<sup>31</sup> This rite likely originated as a "first fruits" rite that may not even have included corn. Its prominence in the Busk ceremony probably paralleled its importance in Creek subsistence strategy. As corn gradually replaced other foods as the principal staple of the Creek diet, the offering of corn to the fire during the Busk was likely enhanced while the sacrifice of other foods was deemphasized.

Without doubt, the most vital element of the Busk is the extinction of the old fire and the starting of New Fire. Of the origin and nature of fire, the only remarks that can be attributed to the Yuchis are that fire was believed to have been stolen by a mythical rabbit from a "people across the waters" and brought to the Yuchis.<sup>32</sup> Speck also states that in their Annual Busk, the fires of the village households are not extinguished and restarted from New Fire produced in the annual celebration.<sup>33</sup>

To the Muskogees, the Sacred Fire was considered their grandfather and the supreme father of mankind, *Esakata-Emishe*, "the Breath Master."<sup>34</sup> The Sacred Fire "represents the entire community and the people's connection to their ancestors and the Maker of Breath."<sup>35</sup> The fire, however, could become polluted. Acts of violence, misuse of spiritual power, mistreatment of game, violations of taboos concerning sex or the unsanctioned consumption of the newly ripened or "green corn" symbolically polluted the fire.<sup>36</sup> Martin describes the Sacred Fire as an extraordinarily powerful embodiment of the sacred that possessed the power to resanctify things, relationships, and the entire community. The Sacred Fire should be considered at least a connection between the Creeks and the Cosmic Force and by some accounts the earthly manifestation of the Cosmic Force.<sup>37</sup> "A pure fire enabled the people to communicate their wants

to the Maker of Breath . . . the purifying power that rebalanced the cosmos.”<sup>38</sup>

Fasting, feasting, taboos, and sacrifice would be without purpose in the Busk without the New Fire rite. With the extinction of the old fire and kindling of the New Fire, all transgressions, except some forms of murder, were forgiven. All disturbances were adjusted, and thus unity and peace of the state reestablished.<sup>39</sup> The Busk is thus described as a great peace ceremonial, “the white day,” and the Busk Ground as “the yard of peace” by Swanton. But the New Fire rite suggests more than just the settling of old grievances. The Middle World—earthly existence—is perceived as the product of a precarious balance between the powers of the Upper World and those of the Lower World, between cosmos and chaos, degeneration and fertility, male and female. The Busk, then, can be interpreted as a temporary unraveling of that balance and a division of those opposing forces into contradiction, male separated from female, order from disorder. For a brief time during the Busk, existence returns to the state of nothingness that existed before creation; the universe is ended, only to be restarted with the creation of New Fire. The first spark of the New Fire represents a theophany, an eruption of the Cosmic Force into nonexistence, reestablishing balance. During the Busk, participants are in direct contact with that original creative force as manifested in the New Fire. Fasting and the taking of medicine are undertaken to prepare and to protect oneself from such direct contact with power, feasting to celebrate the contact; offering is made not to the fire, but to the forces that originally brought forth balance where nothing existed; cosmos is retrieved from chaos.

## Conclusions

One of the most striking observations that can be made from an evaluation of the myths contained in this volume is that significantly different ways of accounting for the beginning of time and the creation of earth and people existed among the many cultural groups that became known as the Creeks. Table 1 illustrated the diverse distributions mentioned in the different cosmogonies. The Yuchis accounted for creation through a process of earth diving; they trace the origin of humans to the Sky World, where the primordial ancestor of the Yuchis was formed from a drop of blood from the Sun.

The Alabamas, the Koasatis, and the Muskogee offer no explanation for the creation of the world, but suggest that humans were formed underground and emerged on the surface of the land through a cave. Emergence took place in Alabama for the Alabamas and the Koasati, and somewhere in the west for the Muskogee. This explanation is usually found among people who have a strong horticultural background.<sup>1</sup> That myths accounting for the origin of corn are common among the Alabamas and Muskogees and absent among the Yuchis and the Hitchitis supports a stronger emphasis on horticulture among the Alabamas and Muskogees.

The Yuchis assert that the origin of their ceremonial life was communicated directly to them from their primordial ancestor *Tsō*, who learned these things in the Sky World. They further assert that upon migrating into the Southeast, the Muskogees adopted their ceremonies almost completely. In fact, Muskogee mythology clearly speaks of a time before the Muskogees knew of Sacred Fire, sacred plants, and the Busk ceremonies, and clearly indicates that these were things that they learned during their migration into the Southeast.

There are, however, some important differences between Muskogee and Yuchi Busks. One very important aspect of the Yuchi Busk was that of scratching or the sacrificial letting of blood to commemorate the genesis of

## Distribution of Earth Diver and Emergence Cosmogonies

People	#	Cosmogonies			Agent/place of origin
		ED	Em	Mi	
Yuchi	U1	ED	—	—	Crawfish
Yuchi	U2	ED	—	—	Crawfish
Yuchi	U3	ED	—	—	Crawfish
Yuchi	U4	ED	—	—	Crawfish
Yuchi	U5a	ED	—	—	Crawfish
Tuskegee	T1	ED	—	—	Crawfish
Alabama (likely Yuchi)	A1	ED	—	—	Crawfish
Alabama (likely Yuchi)	A2	ED	—	—	Crawfish
Alabama	A3	—	Em	—	—
Alabama	A4	—	Em	—	Alabama
Alabama	A5	—	Em	—	Alabama
Alabama-Koasati	A6	—	Em	—	—
Alabama-Koasati	A7	—	Em	—	—
Alabama-Koasati	A8	—	Em	—	—
Choctaw	Cho1	—	Em	—	Nanne Wayah
Choctaw	Cho2	—	Em	—	Nanne Wayah
Kasihta	M1	—	Em	Mi	West/West
Kasihta-Chickasaw- Coweta	M2	—	Em	Mi	West/West
Coweta	M3	—	Em	Mi	Mt.Top near Rocky
Kasihta	M4	—	—	Mi	Mexico
Kasihta-Chickasaw- Coweta	M5	—	—	Mi	West
Kasihta-Chickasaw- Coweta	M6	—	—	Mi	Forks of Red River
Coosa	MC1	—	—	Mi	West
Chickasaw	Chi1	—	—	Mi	West
Choctaw	Cho3	—	—	Mi	f West t Nanne Wayah
Choctaw-Chickasaw	Cho4	—	—	Mi	f West t Nanne Wayah
Choctaw	Cho5	—	—	Mi	to Nanne Wayah
Apalachicola	CC1	ED	Em	—	Turtle
Apalachicola	CC2	ED	Em	—	Turtle
Contemporary Creek	CC3	ED	Em	—	Crawfish/Appalachian

Note: ED = Earth Diver; Em = Emergence; Mi = Migration.



their ancestor *Tsō*. Scratching, as a part of the Busk, was not observed, or at least not recorded, in any of the early historic Muskogee Busk descriptions.

The Muskogeese also seem to have placed greater emphasis on the Sacred Fire than did the Yuchis. During their Busks, the Muskogeese restarted each fire in the community from New Fire kindled during the Busk ceremony. Apparently, among the Yuchis, the kindling of New Fire within the Busk Ground was sufficient.

The consumption of Black Drink, an essential part of the Muskogee Busk, seems to have been of less importance to the Yuchis.<sup>2</sup> While Black Drink is frequently mentioned in Muskogee myths and legends, not a single mention of it occurs in Yuchi mythology.

Cultural diffusion due to the passage of time and the many unique historical circumstances that produced Creek society make difficult the task of discovering the origin of many aspects of Creek cosmology and beliefs. A careful review of Creek mythology, however, does provide some insight into how these beliefs evolved. At least two very different mythological traditions are involved: that of cultural groups like the Yuchis, Hitchitis, and the Mikasukis, who already occupied the Southeast, and that of the Alabamas, who occupied regions west of these groups, and the Muskogeese, who migrated into the region from even farther west.

Whether the Muskogeese adopted Yuchi ceremonial life as the Yuchis assert or that of some other groups is unclear. What is clear is that the Muskogeese did adopt all or parts of a ceremonial complex that they encountered during their migration into the Southeast.

Almost certainly, mixing of the different traditions occurred over time through contact and was probably accelerated by population decimation, loss of land, and population compression due to the westward expansion of Europeans. Finally, forced relocation west of the Mississippi River caused even greater cultural sharing and in many cases loss of tradition.

A review of the few contemporary myths in this work reveals many similarities to older myths. The myths collected from members of the Pine Arbor community in northern Florida are also current among at least some members of the Mikasuki Reservation in south-central Florida. An unpublished Oklahoma version of the creation myth (CC3) as told by Ellen McIntosh McCombs Smith in the 1950s was kindly shared with the author by her granddaughter, Rosemary Maxey. This particular myth is interesting in that it exemplifies the mixing of cosmological beliefs from both traditions. The myth contains elements of both earth diving as a means of creation and the emergence of people from beneath the earth.

That diffusion of cosmological beliefs would occur over time is not unexpected. Given the extreme set of historical circumstances that produced the social unit that became known as the Creeks, it is surprising that many elements of Yuchi, Hitchiti, Mikasuki, Alabama, Koasati, Shawnee, and Muskogee cosmology have survived relatively intact. Others obviously have been lost, many never to be recovered. According to Tema Tiger from the Fish Pond Grounds in Oklahoma, many aspects of Creek mythology and cosmology were lost during the forced migration of a portion of the Creek population to Oklahoma during the 1800s. Fortunately, some aspects of traditional Creek beliefs were recorded by early European observers, and vestiges of this belief system have survived in many of the Creek and mixed-blood families that still inhabit Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. The goal of this book has been to collect into a single volume as much information about traditional Creek mythology and cosmology as possible from these many sources, with the hope that it might not be forgotten.

## Part II

### Myths and Legends

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## Earth Diver Myths

### Yuchi:Yuchi Origin (U1)

Tuggle 1973:173-74

The following rendition of the Yuchi origin myth is found in the Tuggle collection. Unfortunately, Tuggle's source for this myth is unknown.

- 1 In the beginning the water covered everything. It was said: "Who will make the land appear." Sock-chew, the Crawfish, said: "I will make the land appear."

So he went down to the bottom of the water and began to stir up the mud with his tail & hands. He then brought up the mud to a certain place and piled it up.

The owners of the land at the bottom of the water said: "Who is disturbing our land?" They watched and discovered the Crawfish. They came near him. He

- 10 suddenly stirred the mud with his tail and they could see him no more.

Sock-chew continued his work. He carried the mud & piled it until at last he held up his hands in the air and so the land appeared above the water.

The land was soft.

It was said: "Who will spread out the land and make it dry & hard?" Some said: "Ah-yok, the Hawk should spread out the soft land and make it dry."

Others said “Yah-tee (the buzzard) has larger wings. He  
20 can spread out the land & make it dry & hard.”

Yah-tee undertook to spread out and dry the earth. He flew above the earth & spread out his long wings over it. He sailed over the earth. He spread it out. After a long while he grew tired of holding out his wings. He began to flap them and thus he caused the hills and valleys, as the land was still soft.

“Who will make the light?” it was said. It was very dark.

Yōh-ah, the Star, said: “I will make the light.”

30 It was so agreed. The Star shone forth. It was light only near him.  
“Who will make more light?” it was said.

Shar-pah, the Moon, said: “I will make more light.” Shar-pah made more light, but it was still dark.

T-chō, the Sun, said: “You are my children. I am your mother. I will make the light. I will shine for you.”

She went to the East. Suddenly light spread over all the earth.

As she passed over the earth a drop of blood fell from  
40 her to the ground, & from this blood & earth spread the first people, the children of the Sun, the Uchees.

The people wished to find their medicine. A great monster serpent destroyed the people. They cut his head from his body. The next day the body and head were together. They again slew the monster. His head again grew to his body.

They cut off his head and placed it over a tree on the top so the body could not reach it. The next morning the tree was dead and the head was united to the body. They

- 50 again severed it and put it over another tree. In the morning the tree was dead and the head and body were reunited.

So the people continued to try all the trees in the forest. At last they placed the head over Tan, the cedar tree, and in the morning the head was dead. The cedar was alive, but covered with blood, which had trickled down from the head.

Thus Great Medicine was found.

Fire was made by boring a stick into a hard weed.

- 60 The people selected a sacred family. Each member of this family had engraved on his door a picture of the sun.

In the beginning all the animals could talk. One language was used. All were at peace.

The deer lived in a cave. A keeper watched over them. When the people were hungry, the keeper selected a deer and killed it.

Finally the deer were set free. They roved over the earth.

All animals were set free from man. Names were given to

- 70 them so they could be known.

### Yuchi: The Origin of Dry Land (U2)

Gatschet 1893:279–80

Gatschet obtained the following origin myth from a pupil of the mission school at Wialaka, located on the Arkansas River where the Yuchis were then settled.

- 1 When the Creator resolved to make a home for the living beings he had no solid matter to start with, and hence called a council of various animals to deliberate upon the matter. Among those that he gathered were the wolf, the raccoon, the bear, the turkey buzzard, the crawfish,

the loon, and the ring-necked duck. They decided that earth should be taken from the bottom of the waters, and selected the loon for the purpose, as he was known to be the best diver. The loon put white beads around his neck

- 10 and plunged into the water, but the water was deep and its pressure forced the beads into the skin of his neck, so that they could not be removed, and they are sticking there even now. As he returned to the surface without obtaining any earth or mud, the beaver was ordered to accomplish the task. He dived, but the water suffocated him and his dead body reappeared on the surface largely swelled up. This is the reason why all beavers now show a thick, swollen exterior. Another beast had to plunge down on the same errand. The crawfish took a dive and
- 20 soon yellow dirt appeared on the water's surface. He came near being drowned, but on reappearing he stretched up his claws, which were examined by the animals assembled. They found some mud sticking on the inside of them, between the extremities, and handed it over to the Creator, who rolled it out to a flat mass, spread it on the surface of the waters, and it became land. The fish, whose domain was the bottom of the water, noticed the coming down of the crawfish and pursued him for the theft, but the crawfish managed to elude him and escaped
- 30 to the surface.

### Yuchi: How the Land Was First Made (U3)

Gatschet 1893:280

The following myth Gatschet obtained from George W. Grayson of Eufaula, Indian Territory, who, according to Gatschet, obtained it from Noah Gregory "some years ago."

- 1 The earth was all water. Men, animals, and all insects and created beings met and agreed to adopt some plan to enable them to inhabit the earth. They understood that beneath the water there was earth, and the problem to



be solved was how to get the earth to the top and spread it that it might become habitable.

They chose first one and then another animal, but none of them could hold its breath long enough to accomplish the work. Finally they selected crawfish, who went down and

- 10 after a long time brought up in his claws a ball of earth. This was kneaded, manipulated, and spread over the waters (the great deep). Thus the land was formed. At first it was in a semi-fluid state and not well habitable. Now the turkey-buzzard was sent out to inspect the work. He was directed not to flap his wings while soaring over the lands and inspecting them. The turkey-buzzard on his tour of inspection obeyed orders perfectly well, but when he had almost completed the inspection, he became so exhausted as to be forced to
- 20 flap his wings in order to support himself. The effect of this upon the almost fluid earth is to be seen to this day in the hills, mountains, and valleys of the earth.

### Yuchi: The Creation of the World (U4)

Wagner 1931:2–12

The creation of the world as told to Wagner by Maxey Simms.

- 1 In the beginning not a thing existed; there was only water and some animal creatures, as the old people used to tell. The fowl of the air and the sun met together: They held council what they could do to find the earth. The sun took the lead at their meeting. They asked the animals in the water to search for earth; they expected the beaver could find some earth, but he could not. And then they expected the fishotter to dive, but he also could not do it. Thereupon they asked the crawfish who
- 10 said, "If I dive into the water, the following signs will show you: if I cannot come back to the surface of the water, blood will rise up. If, however, I come back with

earth, some dirty yellow water will rise to the surface.” He did not know, whether he could get to where the earth was, but they sent him anyway. He went down into the water, and after they had waited for a long time, they saw some dirty yellow water coming to the surface, and then the crawfish himself appeared with a little dirt between his claws. It was only very little dirt; they

- 20 took it and hit it against something that was sticking out of the water, and the earth was made. Some story-tellers, however, say that they just threw the earth upon the water and then the earth was made. The crawfish had dived for earth for a long time, and when he came back to the surface of the water the dirt had almost melted, just a little was left over; after the earth was made, the other animals were also created. At first there was no light on earth, and so they all met under the leadership of the sun to look for someone who would light the earth.
- 30 They expected the glow-worm could do it; it flew around, but it only made very faint gleams of light. Then they asked the star. He also made only a dim light, and then they asked the moon too; she gave light, but it was still too dark. Then they expected the sun could do it, and up she went. Just as soon as she came up, the earth was flooded with light; all the creatures on earth were glad and sang aloud. Right at noon the sun stopped on her way. When they saw it, they said the sun should light the earth that way. And then some were saying, it only
- 40 should be day and never night; in this way they talked with one another. After a while the ground squirrel said, “I say, the night also should be for the people to have intercourse so that they can increase.” And then they all agreed with each other that day should be and night as well. The sun should make the light during the daytime and the moon and the stars during the night; they all agreed that day and night should be separate. Then the ground squirrel said, “I said it and it is done that way;” every now and then he said this, and then the

- 50 wildcat got mad at him; “Oh pshaw, even if you did say it, you should say it only once,” he said; he jumped on him and scratched him all over, and so the ground squirrel became spotted. When the earth was just made it was soft, and they thought it would be good if the ground were flat. Nobody was to go over it so that it could dry. They sent the buzzard to inspect the earth; he was not to flop with his wings but only to spread them out and fly around; while he was flying he noticed tracks where somebody must have gone; he traced them and it
- 60 happened to be a bullfrog whom he overtook. “Nobody is to go on the ground and here you are!” he said; he whipped him with his wings, and the bullfrog cried, and his eyebrows swelled. The buzzard flew on, and while he was flying he saw again some tracks; he traced them and when he overtook them he saw it had been a raccoon’s who was fishing for crawfish; he whipped him too and the raccoon’s face became spotted; the buzzard was only to spread his wings, he was not to fly to the other side of the earth, but he got tired and almost fell to the
- 70 ground, and then he flopped; when he ascended again, the mountains were made. They had sent him to inspect the earth; he flew around but he got tired, and so he flopped and the mountains were made.

### Yuchi: Origin of the Earth (U5a)

Speck 1909:103–7

The following four myths were recorded by F. G. Speck.

- 1 Water covered the face of the earth. Beneath the water they knew there was land, but they knew of no one who could get it. The flying creatures of the air were baffled. But they decided to get something to help them find it. The swimming creatures in the waters did not believe it could be done, because they knew the land was too far down. So they doubted.

Now the Crawfish was the one who claimed that he could find land. He told them to give him time. He told them

- 10 to look for him in four days. Then he went down, and soon the water came up colored with mud. Everyone knew that before he had started the water had been clear. For four days they waited; on the fourth day the Crawfish came up. He was nearly dead when they picked him up, but in his claws they saw there was some earth. They carefully picked it out. Then they made it round like a ball, but it looked very small. Now one of the great birds had long claws, and when that bird lifted up his leg, they threw the ball of earth at him. And when it
- 20 struck him, the ball splashed and spread out, but it was very thin. That is where the earth was made in the beginning.

Now all the creatures wanted to walk on it, but they gave instructions that no one should walk on it yet. For four days it lay thus, growing larger and larger. Now they wanted to have it level. So they called for someone.

The Buzzard answered and said that he would go over the earth and stretch his wings. That is the way he would make it level. The Buzzard started, when they agreed to

- 30 it, but he had not gone far before he became tired of stretching his wings so much. He began to flutter and waver a great deal. On account of this the Buzzard could not level it all. And that is what made the mountain ridges. Now the earth was made and they occupied it.

### Yuchi: Origin of Light, Sun, Moon, and Stars (U5b)

Speck 1909:103–7

- 1 And everywhere was darkness. The earth had been made, but there was no light. The different animals gathered together. They appointed a day for deliberation, to decide who should furnish light for the newly made earth.

The Panther was the first. They appointed him to find light because he runs backward and forward in the heavens from one end to the other. They instructed him to go east and come back. So he ran to the east and turned, crossed the heavens and went down in the west. When he

- 10 had done this and returned to the gathering he asked if it was all right. They told him it was not. Then they appointed another. They sent the Star (spider). Now they told the Star to go east and come back. The Star did as he was told. He made a light in the east but it was too dim. He went west and then came back to the gathering and asked them if it was all right. Then they told him, "No. Your light is too dim." So they appointed another. They appointed the Moon. They told the Moon to go east then come back through the sky and go
- 20 down in the west. The Moon started out as they directed. When it was coming back it made a better light than that made by the Star, but it was not enough. Then the Moon asked if it would do. They said it would not. Then they appointed another. They chose the Sun, and told him what to do. When the Sun came back westward it gave a good light, and when it went down it was all right. So the Sun was appointed to light the earth and he gave an everlasting light.

Now when they told him about it, the Chipmunk wanted to

- 30 have some night. He said to them: "If it is daylight all the time, persons could not increase." He said, "If there is night, then people can rest from their work and procreate."

So he urged in favor of night. They agreed with him in part, because they saw that what he said was true. And night came in, dividing up the day. Then when it was dark it was so dark that persons could not see to travel or to procreate. And they saw it would not do because creatures would not increase. So they put the Stars

- 40 (spiders) and the Moon in with the night to enable people to see enough for those things, and it was all right. Thus the Chipmunk had made the night on the strength of his own senses, and they agreed and allowed it to remain.

When they said that, the Panther became angry and jumped upon the Chipmunk and caught him. He caught him by the neck and scratched him on the back. That is what made the red stripes on the Chipmunk's back, which he has yet. So the earth was lighted by the sun, moon and stars, and night came in too.

### Yuchi: Origin of the Yuchi and the Ceremonies (U5c)

Speck 1909:103-7

- 1 The Sun deity was in her menstrual courses. She went to dip up some water (up in the sky world). She went down to the creek. Then some blood fell on the ground. She looked at the water. When she reached the top of the hill she set it down. She thought that something had happened. She went down the hill again. A small baby was sitting there. She took it along with her and kept it. She raised it and it grew. That was an Indian. She took him to the Rainbow where the others were and he
- 10 was scratched and it was the ceremony at the square-ground. In the ancient time he was scratched. The drops of blood fell and lay on the ground. She placed him on the ground. The drops of blood fell and lay on the ground. She put him on the ground. Then she walked away from the square-ground with him, going toward the east. She reached the edge of the square. Indians came along following them. The lightning struck and frightened them. It drove them back. The Sun mother went on home with the boy. Then he went to sleep. As he grew up he
- 20 became lonesome. He had no one to play with; he had no one to look at. He was lonesome. While he was sleeping and lying there, his mother pulled out one of his ribs.

While he was lying there she took it out. She made a woman out of it. Then the boy awoke. He saw her. He was glad now. Then they multiplied and increased in numbers.

The Red root (to tcâlá) and Button Snake root (*f<sup>s</sup>âdê'*) standing near, (which had been used when the boy was scratched and made to perform the ceremony among the sky

- 30 people), she told him to use. It was made for that use. And the Yuchi are using it yet just as he told them. It is here yet. This is his medicine. While they try to keep up the ceremony and use of the medicines God (*wetânA'*) goes with the people. Her son was the child of the Sun, that is what the Yuchi are named, Children of the Sun.

On that day no trouble comes to the people when they have taken the medicines. When the Sun comes up he looks down to see if they are doing the ceremonies. If he comes up

- 40 high here and sees no Indians performing the ceremonies on the earth at high noon, he would stop. He would cry. It would be the end of peacefulness. The Sun would cover his face with his hands and go down again in the east. Then it would become dark and the end. It has been declared so. This is what we heard in the past.

### Yuchi: Origin of the Yuchi (U5d)

Speck 1909:103–7

- 1 There was a Sun and there was a Moon. Then the Moon was in her menstrual courses. When she got up, a drop of blood fell from her and descended to the earth. The Sun saw it. He secured it and wrapped it up, laying it away thus for four days. On the fourth day he went and got it, and unwrapped it. When the bundle was opened, he saw that it had turned into a human being. Then he said: “You are my son. You shall be called Tsōyahá.” And he gave him the name Tsōyahá, Sun people or Offspring of the

10 Sun. From him all the Yuchi had their origin.

Now his descendants increased until they became a powerful people. They are weakening now, but if they ever disappear from the earth a terrible thing will happen. For the Sun said: "If the Yuchi perish, I will not face this world. I will turn my face away, and there will be darkness upon the earth, and it will even be the last of the earth."

So it will come to pass if all the Yuchi die out. But now there are certain Yuchi who are known to be sons of

20 this Sun. Whenever one of them dies the Sun turns his face away from the earth for a little while. That accounts for the eclipse. These Yuchi may be known by the color of their skin, which is nearly black. The black-skinned Yuchi are the Sun's sons. There are a few living now.

### Yuchi: The Origin of the Yuchi (U6)

Wagner 1931:146–50

1 Once there was a woman; when she was going down to the creek to dip water she noticed some drops of blood on the ground which she took and put away. Out of the blood a baby came to life, it is told. There was nobody whose blood could have fallen down, but the blood was there in spite of all. The sun was in her courses; she had dropped the blood which the woman found. It is told that the woman who found the blood must herself have been the sun. She would not let her little baby touch the ground;

10 while they were drinking medicine at the "square ground," she got there with her baby who happened to be a boy; and she told them that only after his blood had fallen down on the earth she would put him down. She wanted to bring him to a warrior to be scratched; the blue hawk was a



warrior, he had painted his face black on one side and red on the other side. When he got there the woman took her baby from under her dress; the blue hawk scratched him and she put him on the ground. After he had been scratched she went with him to the eastern edge of the

- 20 clean ground. When the creatures who had gathered in the square ground saw the boy, they all rushed on him; when they surrounded him too closely the woman told the gunmen to stop them from rushing on to the boy. The gunmen topped all the creatures which were approaching. The boy grew up, but he did not seem to be happy. Then the woman made him sleep heavily; when he was asleep she took one of the ribs out of his side and made a woman out of it. Then he was happy. He increased and they became many people. That boy was an Indian; he was a son of the
- 30 sun, *Tsoya'ha* was his name. And so it has come about, that the Yuchi are living on the earth. One part of the Yuchi were called *Tsoya'ha*, and the other part *TiTôgo'*. There was only one tribe, but some may have been called *Tsoya'ha*; they were the children of the sun, as the old people used to say. And so some day the sun will rise in the east and look for her children; when she sees that not even one of the *Tsoya'ha* is living, she will look for her children; at noon she will cry and cover her face, back towards the east she will be declining, and the day
- 40 will end. And therefore, if the sun sometimes gets dark, they say she dies; the *Tsoya'ha* that are left on earth pray to their mother and cry; others paint themselves red; they shoot at the sun and she lights up again. When the sun dies the big toad swallows her, and the Indians shoot at her to free her again.

And so the people increased; the sun taught them all about the animals and plants which they were to use. The buffalo was their cow, but the Indians did not watch him, and so he ran wild. And the sun told them all about the

- 50 other things too which they should eat.

## Tuskegee: Taskigi Origin (TI)

Speck 1907:145–46

1 The time was, in the beginning, when the earth was overflowed with water. There was no earth, no beast of the earth, no human being. They held a council to know which would be best, to have some land or to have all water. When the council had met, some said, “Let us have land, so that we can get food,” because they would starve to death. But other said, “Let us have all water,” because they wanted it that way.

So they appointed Eagle as chief. He was told to decide

- 10 one way or another. Then he decided. He decided for land. So they looked around for some one whom they could send out to get land. The first one to propose himself was Dove, who thought that he could do it. Accordingly they sent him. He was given four days in which to perform his task. Now, when Dove came back on the fourth day, he said that he could find no land. They concluded to try another plan. Then they obtained the services of Crawfish (sákdju). He went down through the water into the ground beneath, and he too was gone four
- 20 days. On the fourth morning he arose and appeared on the surface of the waters. In his claws they saw that he held some dirt. He had at last secured the land. Then they took the earth from his claws and made a ball of it. Then this was completed they handed it over to the chief, Eagle, who took it and went out from their presence with it. When he came back to the council, he told them that there was land, an island. So all the beast went in the direction pointed out, and found that there was land there as Eagle had said. But what they found was very
- 30 small. They lived there until the water receded from this earth. Then the land all joined into one.

## Alabama: The Creation of the Earth (A1)

Martin 1977:2–3

The following two creation myths, A1 and A2, are reported by Martin to be Alabama. That these two myths are in fact Alabama in origin is extremely doubtful since there is not a single other reference in the published literature that attributes an earth diver creation myth to the Alabama. Alabama tradition holds that the Alabama emerged from the earth in what is now the state of Alabama. It is reported that during the 1930s and 1940s there was at least one Yuchi schoolteacher living among the Alabama in Texas where Martin collected these myths.<sup>1</sup> This information, and the fact that these myths closely parallel Yuchi creation myths recorded by other scholars, suggests that they are Yuchi in origin.

- 1 Once, long ago, before the time of the oldest people, water covered everything. The only living creatures above the water were some small animals and birds who occupied a log raft drifting about on the great ocean. Nothing else could be seen above the surface of the water.

Each day the occupants on the large raft looked in all directions, but all they saw was water and the sky. The birds would fly out from the raft hoping to find land,

- 10 but always there was just water. Soon the occupants of the raft grew restless and began talking about how to find land. They chose Horned Owl to be their council chief.

During their discussion one day, Horned Owl said, “Land is somewhere beneath the water. We must make it appear or we will starve. Who will look for land?”

Beaver spoke first and said, “I am a good swimmer. I will try.”

Then Beaver dived into the water and swam toward the

- 20 bottom. He was a strong swimmer, and at first he moved rapidly through the water. The water was very deep,

however, and after he had been swimming for a long time and still did not reach the bottom, he began to tire. Eventually he had to give up the search for land and return to the raft.

Horned Owl called for another volunteer. This time Frog said he would look for land. He jumped into the water and started swimming for the bottom, but Garfish chased him and forced Frog to return to the raft.

- 30 Again Horned Owl spoke with the raft creatures of the need to make land appear. At the end of his talk, Horned Owl asked Crawfish to look for land.

“Yes, I am ready,” answered Crawfish. “I will go now.” Then Crawfish jumped into the water and swam toward the bottom. Garfish did not think he looked good to eat and did not chase him. Crawfish was also a better swimmer than Beaver and did not tire so easily, and so he came to the bottom of the great ocean.

Now, Crawfish has a wide tail which he can use as a

- 40 scoop. When he reached the bottom of the water, he used his tail to scoop mud into a great chimney. He worked rapidly, building it higher and higher, until the top of the mud chimney stuck up above the water, where it began to spread and form a mass of soft earth.

The birds and animals on the raft looked at the new earth and agreed that Crawfish had done a good job, but they thought the earth was too smooth. So Horned Owl sent Buzzard out to shape the earth’s surface.

Buzzard was a huge bird with long, powerful wings. He

- 50 flew along just above the soft earth, flapping his wings. When he swung his wings down, he made valleys and mountains. During the time that Buzzard glided along without flapping his wings, he made level country and plains.

After the earth had hardened, the animals and birds left their raft and make homes in the new land, each according to his needs.

## Alabama: The Creation of the Earth (A2)

Martin 1946:65–66

- 1 In the beginning everything was covered by water. The only living things were a few small animals who occupied a raft floating about on the water.

One day the animals decided that they wanted to make the land appear; so they called for a volunteer to make the attempt. Crawfish volunteered, and he dived off the raft. The water was so deep, however, that he was unable to reach the bottom of the great ocean.

Three days later Crawfish again tried to reach the

- 10 bottom, but again failed. On the third trial, though, he reached the bottom. Using his tail to scoop up the mud, he began building a great mud chimney. He worked rapidly, building it higher and higher, until the top of the mud chimney stuck up above the surface of the water. The mud began spreading to all sides, forming a great mass of soft earth.

The animals looked in all directions. They agreed that Crawfish had done a good job, but they thought that the surface of the earth was too smooth. So Buzzard was sent

- 20 out to shape the earth's surface. Now Buzzard was a huge bird with long, powerful wings. He flew along just above the top of the soft earth, flapping his wings. When his wings swung down, they cut deep holes or valleys in the soft earth. When his wings swung up, they formed the hills and mountains. When Buzzard didn't flap his wings and just sailed along, he made the level country or plains. And so the surface of the earth is made up of plains, valleys, and mountains.

## Emergence Myths

Emergence myths identify the origin of people with emergence from the earth. This type of origin explanation is especially common in the American Southwest and Mexico.<sup>1</sup> Emergence myths were recorded in the Southeast among the Alabama, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Muskogee.

### Alabama: Origin of the Indians (A3)

Swanton 1929:118

- 1 Many Indians once lived far down in the earth where they had been made out of the clay. Half of them decided to come up and began the ascent. As it was dark where they were they procured pine torches and fastened them on their horses. They camped four times on the journey and then came out at noon into the bright sunshine. They were very glad to get out and find a good place on the firm ground in which to camp.

### Alabama: Alabama Origin-Migration (A4)

Schoolcraft 1851–57:(I)266

The following mythic legend was reported by Schoolcraft, who identifies the source as Se-ko-pe-chi (Perseverance), whom he describes as “one of the oldest Creeks . . . in their new location west of the Mississippi” about the year 1847. The legend was recorded by D. W. Eakins, who, according to Schoolcraft, was a resident of the territory they occupied west of Arkansas.<sup>2</sup>

- 1 1. The origin of the Alabama Indians, as handed down by oral tradition, is, that they sprang out of the ground, between the Cahawba and Alabama Rivers.
2. The Muscogeese formerly called themselves Alabamians, but other tribes called them Oke-choy-atte, (life). The earliest migration recollected as handed down by oral tradition, is, that they emigrated from the Cahawba and Alabama Rivers, to the junction of the Tuscaloosa and Coosa river. Their numbers at that period, were not
- 10 known. The extent of the territory occupied at that time was indefinite. At the point formed by the junction of the Tuscaloosa and Coosa Rivers, the tribe sojourned for the space of two years. After which, their location was at the junction of the Coosa and Alabama Rivers, on the west side of what was subsequently the site of Fort Jackson. It is supposed that at this time they numbered fifty effective men. They claimed the country from Fort Jackson to New Orleans for their hunting-grounds.
3. They are of the opinion that the Great Spirit brought
- 20 them from the ground, and that they are of right possessors of this soil.
4. They believe that before the Creation there existed a great body of water. Two pigeons were sent forth in search of land, and found excrements of the earthworm; but on going forth the second time, they procured a blade of grass, after which, the waters subsided, and the land appeared. They do not believe that their ancestors occupied any other lands, but always had their locality in North America. They believe that domestic animals
- 30 were introduced by the whites. They have no knowledge of the land being pre-occupied by the whites, or a more civilized people than themselves. But they do believe that the land was pre-occupied by a people of whom they have no definite knowledge.

*Comments*

8–9 . . . they emigrated from the Cahawba and Alabama Rivers, to the junction of the Tuscaloosa and Coosa river . . . Swanton suggests that the name Coosa was also applied to the Alabama as well as the present-day Coosa and that the Tombigbee may occasionally have been called the Tuscaloosa.<sup>3</sup>

**Alabama:Alabama Origin (A5)**

Swanton 1922:192

Swanton reports that Gatschet obtained the following account from Ward Coachman, an old Alabama Indian in Oklahoma.<sup>4</sup>

- 1 Old Alabama men used to say that the Alabama came out of the ground near the Alabama River a little up stream from its junction with the Tombigbee, close to Holsifa (Choctaw Bluff). After they had come out an owl hooted. They were scared and most of them went back into the ground. That is why the Alabama are few in number. The Alabama towns are Tawasa, Pawokti, Oktcayutci, Atauga, Hatcafa'ski (River Point, at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa), and Wetumka.

**Alabama:Alabama-Koasati Origin (A6)**

Swanton 1922:192

Collected by Swanton as a myth told by an old Indian now dead. The myth was probably collected from the Alabama living in Texas.

- 1 The Alabama and Koasati came out of the earth on opposite sides of the root of a certain tree and settled there in two bodies. Consequently these differed somewhat in speech, though they always kept near each other. At first they came out of the earth only during the night time, going down again when day came. Presently a white man came to the place, saw the tracks, and wanted to find the people. He went there several times, but could discover none of them above ground. By and by he decided



- 10 upon a ruse, so he left a barrel of whisky near the place where he saw the footsteps. When the Indians came out again to play they saw the barrel, and were curious about it, but at first no one would touch it. Finally, however, one man tasted of its contents, and presently he began to feel good and to sing and dance about. Then the others drank also and became so drunk that the white man was able to catch them. Afterward the Indians remained on the surface of the earth.

### Alabama: Origin of the Alabama and Coushatta Tribes (A7)

Martin 1977:3

- 1 The Alabamas and Coushattas were made from clay in a big cave under the earth. They lived in this cave a long time before some of them decided to go to the surface of the earth. After they started upward, they camped three times on the way. Finally, they reached the mouth of the cave.

Here they saw that a large tree stood in the cave entrance. The Alabamas and Coushattas went out of the cave on opposite sides of a root of this big tree. This

- 10 is why these two tribes differ somewhat in speech, though they always have lived near each other.

At first these people stayed outside only during the night, returning to the cave when day came. One night when they left the cave to play, they heard an owl hooting. Most of the people became so scared that they ran back into the cave and never returned to the surface of the earth. This is why the Alabamas and Coushattas are so few. Had the owl not hooted, all the people would have remained on the surface of the earth, and the

- 20 Alabamas and Coushattas would be more numerous.

## Alabama: The Origin of the Alabama-Coushatta Indians (A8)

Martin 1946:66

- 1 Indians were made from clay down in a big cave under the earth. In this cave they lived a long time before some of them decided to go up to the surface of the earth. After they started upward, they camped three times on the way. Finally, they reached the mouth of the cave.

There they found a large tree standing. The Alabamas and Coushattas went out of the cave on opposite sides of a root of this big tree. Thus, these two tribes differed somewhat in speech, but they have always lived near each

- 10 other.

At first the Indians would stay outside only during the night, returning to the cave when day came. One night when they came out to play, they heard an owl hooting. Most of the Indians were so frightened that they ran back into the cave and never returned to the surface of the earth. That is why the Alabamas and Coushattas are so few. If the owl had not hooted, then all the Indians would have remained on the surface of the earth, and the Alabamas and Coushattas would have been more numerous.

- 20 One day a white man came to the cave and saw some tracks in the sand. He wanted to find out who had made the tracks, so he went to the place three times but did not see anyone. He finally decided to play a trick on these strange people. Early one morning he put a barrel of whiskey near the place where he found the footprints. When the Indians came out of the cave that night to play, they saw the barrel and wondered what was in it. One of them tasted the contents. Soon he began to feel good and sing and dance. Then the others drank also and became so
- 30 drunk that the white man was able to catch them. After that the Alabamas and Coushattas had to stay on top of the earth and were not allowed to go near the big cave.

## Muskogee: Kasihta Origin-Migration (MI)

Gatschet 1888:9[41]–19[51]

The following account of Creek origins and migration into the Southeast was delivered in 1735 by a Creek named Chekilli to Governor Oglethorpe of the colonial authorities at Savannah.<sup>5</sup> According to Gatschet, the *American Gazetteer*, published in London in 1762 (Vol. II), reported:

This speech was curiously written in red and black characters, on the skin of a young buffalo, and translated into English, as soon as delivered in the Indian language. . . . The said skin was set in a frame, and hung up in the Georgia Office, in Westminster. It contained the Indians' grateful acknowledgments for the honors and civilities paid to Tomochichi, etc.

A search for the original skin was made of the several government offices in London and at the British Museum.<sup>6</sup> The search produced a letter written by Chekilli in March 1734, but the skin could not be located. Apparently, the earliest surviving version of the myth/legend was a German translation from English that appeared in a collection of published pamphlets (1735–41) relating to American colonial affairs. Gatschet gives the title of the first volume of the pamphlet as *Ausfuehrliche Nachricht von den Saltzburgischen Emigranten die sich in America niedergelassen haben. Worin, etc. etc., Herausgegeben von Samuel Urlsperger, Halle, MDCCXXXV*.<sup>7</sup> The myth/legend appears on pages 869 through 876 of this volume as the sixth chapter of the “Journal” of von Reck, entitled *Herrn Philipp Georg Friederichs von Reck Diarium von Seiner Reise nach Georgien im Jahr 1735*. Gatschet identifies von Reck as the “commissary of those German-Protestant emigrants whom religious persecution had expelled from Salzburg, in Styria, their native city.”

The oldest known translation of this legend from German to English is offered by Brinton.<sup>8</sup> Two editions of Brinton's translation were produced, the first as an article entitled “The National Legend of the Chahta-Muskokee Tribes” in the *New York Historical Magazine*, in April 1870, and the second as a private printing under the same title that is described as intended for private circulation. The latter was consulted for this work.

Swanton reports that Gatschet had the German version translated into both English and Creek, and a version of this myth/legend, reportedly taken from one of Gatschet's personal copies, is offered by Swanton.<sup>9</sup> English, Creek, and Hitchiti translations were published by Gatschet.<sup>10</sup>

The Creek and Hitchiti translations he attributes to G. W. Stidham. Brinton's 1870 and Gatschet's 1884 and 1888 English translations differ only minimally. It is Gatschet's 1888 translation that appears below.

- 1 WHAT CHEKILLI, THE HEAD-CHIEF OF THE UPPER AND LOWER CREEKS SAID, IN A TALK HELD AT SAVANNAH, ANNO, 1735, AND WHICH WAS HANDED OVER BY THE INTERPRETER, WRITTEN UPON A BUFFALOSKIN, WAS WORD FOR WORD, AS FOLLOWS:  
[Speech, which, in the year 1735, was delivered at Savannah, in Georgia, by] Chekilli, Emperor of the Upper and Lower Creeks; Antiche, highest Chief of the town of the Cowetas, Eliche, King; Ousta, Head Chief of the Cussitaws, Tomechaw, War King; Wali, War Captain of the
- 10 Palachucolas, Poepiche, King; Tomehuichi, Dog King of the Euchitaws; Mittakawye, Head War-Chief of the Okonees, Tuwechiche, King; Whoyauni, Head War Chief of the Chewahs and of the Hokmulge Nation; Stimelacoweche, King of the Osoches; Opithli, King of the Fawocolos; Ewenauki, King; Tahmokmi, War Captain of the Eufantees; and thirty other Warriors.

At a certain time the Earth opened in the West, where its mouth is. The earth opened and the Cussitaws came out of its mouth, and settled near by. But the earth became

- 20 angry and ate up their children; therefore, they moved further West. A part of them, however, turned back, and came again to the same place where they had been, and settled there. The greater number remained behind, because they thought it best to do so.

Their children, nevertheless, were eaten by the Earth, so that, full of dissatisfaction, they journeyed toward the sunrise.

They came to a thick, muddy, slimy river—came there, camped there, rested there, and stayed over night there.

- 30 The next day they continued their journey and came, in one day, to a red, *bloody* river. They lived by this

river, and ate of its fishes for two years; but there were low springs there; and it did not please them to remain. They went toward the end of this bloody river, and heard a noise as of thunder. They approached to see whence the noise came. At first they perceived a red smoke, and then a mountain *which thundered*; and on the mountain was a sound as of singing. They sent to see what this was; and it was a great fire which blazed upward,

40 and made this singing noise. This mountain they named the King of Mountains. It thunders to this day; and men are very much afraid of it.

They here met a people of three different Nations. They had taken and saved some of the fire from the mountain; and, at this place, they also obtained a knowledge of herbs and of many other things.

From the East, a white fire came to them; which, however, they would not use. From Wahalle came a fire which was blue; neither did they use it. From the West came a fire

50 which was black; nor would they use it. At last, came a fire from the North, which was red and yellow. This they mingled with the fire they had taken from the mountain; and this is the fire they use to-day; and this, too, sometimes sings. On the mountain was a pole which was very restless and made a noise, nor could any one say how it could be quieted. At length they took a motherless child, and struck it against the pole; and thus killed the child. They then took the pole, and carry it with them when they go to war. It was like a *wooden* tomahawk,

60 such as they now use, and of the same wood.

Here they also found four *herbs* or roots, which sang and disclosed their virtues: first, Pasaw, the *rattlesnake root*; second, Micoweanochaw, *red-root*; third, Sowatchko *which grows like wild fennel*; and fourth, Eschalapootchke, *little tobacco*. These herbs, especially the first and third, they use as the best medicine to

purify themselves at their Busk. At this Busk, which is held yearly, they fast, and make offerings of the first-fruits. Since they learned the virtues of these herbs,

- 70 their women, at certain times, have a separate fire, and remain *apart from the men* five, six, and seven days, *for the sake of purification*. If they neglect this, the power of the herbs would depart; and the women would not be healthy.

About that time a dispute arose, as to which was the oldest, and which should rule; and they agreed, as they were four Nations, they would set up four poles, and make them red with clay, which is yellow at first, but becomes red by burning. They would then go to war; and whichever

- 80 Nation should first cover its pole, from top to bottom, with the scalps of their enemies, should be the oldest.

They all tried, but the Cussitaws covered their pole first, and so thickly that it was hidden from sight. Therefore, they were looked upon, by the whole Nation, as the oldest. The Chickasaws covered their pole next; then the Atilamas; but the Obikaws did not cover their pole higher than the knee. At that time there was a bird of large size, blue in color, with a long tail, and swifter than an eagle, which came every day and killed and ate

- 90 their people. They made an image in the shape of a woman, and placed it in the way of this bird. The bird carried it off, and kept it a long time, and then brought it back. They left it alone, hoping it would bring something forth. After a long time a red rat came forth from it, and they believe the bird was the father of the rat. They took council with the rat how to destroy its father. Now the bird had a bow and arrows; and the rat gnawed the bow-string, so that the bird could not defend itself, and the people killed it. They called this bird

- 100 the King of Birds. They think the eagle is also a great

King; and they carry its feathers when they go to War or make Peace: the red mean War; the white, Peace. If an enemy approaches with white feathers and a white mouth, and cries like an eagle, they dare not kill him.

After this they left that place, and came to a white foot-path. The grass and everything around were white; and they plainly perceived that people had been there. They crossed the path, and slept near there. Afterward they turned back to see what sort of path that was, and

- 110 who the people were who had been there, in the belief that it might be better for them to follow that path. They went along it to a creek, called Coloose-hutche that is, Coloose-creek, because it was rocky there and smoked. They crossed it, going toward the sunrise, and came to a people and a town named Coosaw. Here they remained four years. The Coosaws complained that they were preyed upon by a wild beast, which they called man-eater or lion, which lived in a rock.

The Cussitaws said they would try to kill the beast.

- 120 They dugged a pit and stretched over it a net made of hickory-bark. They then laid a number of branches, *crosswise*, so that the lion could not follow them, and, going to the place where he lay, they threw a rattle into his den. The lion rushed forth in great anger, and pursued them through the branches. Then they thought it better that one should die rather than all; so they took a motherless child, and threw it before the lion as he came near the pit. The lion rushed at it and fell in the pit, *over which they threw the net*, and killed him with
- 130 blazing pine-wood. His bones, however, they keep to this day; on one side, they are red, on the other, blue.

The lion used to come every seventh day to kill the people; therefore, they remained there seven days after they had killed him. In remembrance of him, when they

prepare for War, they fast six days and start on the seventh. If they take his bones with them, they have good fortune.

After four years they left the Coosaws, and came to a River which they called Nowphawpe, now Callasi-hutche.

- 140 There they tarried two years; and, as they had no corn, they lived on roots and fishes, and made bows, pointing the arrows with beaver-teeth and flint-stones, and for knives they used split canes.

They left this place, and came to a creek called Wattoolahawka-hutche, Whooping-creek, so called from the whooping of cranes, a great many being there; they slept there one night. They next came to a river in which there was a waterfall; this they named the Owatunka river. The next day they reached another river, which

- 150 they called the Aphoosa pheeskaw.

The following day they crossed it, and came to a high mountain, where were people who, they believed, were the same who made the white path. They, therefore, made white arrows and shot them, to see if they were good people. But the people took their white arrows, painted them red, and shot them back. When they showed these to their chief, he said that it was not a good sign; if the arrows returned had been white, they could have gone there and brought food for their children, but as they

- 160 were red they must not go. Nevertheless, some of them went to see what sort of people they were; and found their houses deserted. They also saw a trail which led into the river; and as they could not see the trail on the opposite bank, they believed that the people had gone into the river, and would not again come forth. At that place is a mountain, called Moterell, which makes a noise like beating on a drum and they think this people live there. They hear this noise on all sides when they go to War.



170 They went along the river till they came to a waterfall, where they saw great rocks, and on the rocks were bows lying; and they believed the people who made the white path had been there.

They always have, on their journeys, two scouts who go before the main body. These scouts ascended a high mountain and saw a town. They shot white arrows into the town; but the people of the town shot back red arrows. Then the Cussitaws became angry, and determined to attack the town, and each one have a house when it was captured.

180 They threw stones into the river until they could cross it, and took the town (the people had flattened heads), and killed all but two persons. In pursuing these they found a white dog, which they slew. They followed the two who escaped, until they came again to the white path, and saw the smoke of a town, and thought that this must be the people they had so long been seeking. This is the place where now the tribe of Palachucolas live, from whom Tomochichi is descended.

The Cussitaws continued bloody-minded; but the

190 Palachucolas gave them black drink as a sign of friendship, and said to them: "Our hearts are white, and yours must be white, and you must lay down the bloody tomahawk, and show your bodies as a proof that they shall be white." Nevertheless, they were for the tomahawk; but the Palachucolas got it by persuasion, and buried it under their beds. The Palachucolas likewise gave them white feathers, and asked to have a chief in common. Since then they have always lived together.

Some settled on one side of the River, some on the other.

200 Those on one side are called Cussetaws, those on the other Cowetas; yet they are one people, and the principal towns of the Upper and Lower Creeks. Nevertheless, as the Cussetaws first saw the red smoke and the red fire, and make bloody towns, they cannot yet leave their red

hearts, which are, however, white on one side and red on the other. They now know that the white path was the best for them: for, although Tomochichi was a stranger, they see he has done them good; because he went to see the great King with Esquire Oglethorpe, and hear his

210 talk, and had related it to them, and they had listened to it, and believed it.

### Comments

1 . . . Chekilli . . . Swanton offers the following translation: Tcalaki ilitci, Cherokee killer.<sup>11</sup>

5–16 . . . Speech . . . Warriors . . . Swanton cites G. W. Grayson and A. S. Gatschet for the following transliterations and translations: *Anatici*, to wound; *Ilitci*, to kill, or putting something down; *Osta*, four; *Tometca*, (a number of creatures) flying; *Wali*, south; *Poepitce*, to cause to win; *Hoyahâni*, to pass by; *Stimalakoetci*, somebody having caused something to come; *Hopili*, fog.<sup>12</sup>

15 . . . Eusantees . . . Swanton suggests this may be a misprint for Eufaulces.<sup>13</sup>

139 . . . *Nowphawpe* . . . Swanton reports that on a 1760 French list of towns and on several early maps there is a place called Nafape or Nafabe, which he suggests was a Tulsa outvillage on a creek of the same name flowing into Ufaupée Creek.<sup>14</sup>

139 . . . *Callasi-hutche* . . . Swanton considers this a misprint for Tallasi-hutche.<sup>15</sup>

145 . . . *Wattoolahawka-hutche* . . . Swanton offers the following translation: *Watula*, sandhill crane; *haki*, sound, noise; *hatchee*, creek, river.<sup>16</sup>

148 . . . *Owatunka-river* . . . Swanton identifies this with the Owatâmkâ River.<sup>17</sup>

150 . . . *Aphoosa pheeskaw* . . . Swanton offers the following translations: *afuswa*, thread; *fesketâ*, to sprinkle, scatter out.<sup>18</sup>

207 . . . Tomochichi . . . Swanton identifies Tomochichi as the chief of the Yamacraw tribe who, at the time when Oglethorpe established his colony, were settled where Savannah now stands.<sup>19</sup>

## Muskogee: Kasihta-Chickasaw-Coweta Origin-Migration (M2)

Swanton 1928a:55–63

Swanton published the following translation of a Muskogee origin and migration legend from the manuscript notebooks of Albert S. Gatschet. Swanton identifies the source of the myth/legend as Ispahihtca, of the Kasihta town, a former chief of the Creek Nation (Oklahoma).

1 It was in the beginning when people were first created. This is the history of the three tribes known as Kasihta, Chickasaw, and Coweta. Far off toward the west many people came out of the ground. And the Coweta were delayed by the root of a tree which stretched across their road. Then the Kasihta and Chickasaw towns came out of the earth together. At that time the people were without clothing or fire. And they sewed together leaves of trees with which to cover themselves. And while they

10 were there the Breath-holder (Hisa'kita immi'si) spoke to them and said: "The earth which lies here is the foundation of all things." And he said: "The earth being created, the second thing is water, the third the trees and grass, and the fourth the things having life." Even down to the smallest things they were created.

And, continuing, he said: "A last day will come." That is what he said to him. Continuing, he said: "Fire will destroy this world, and when it comes the dead people will arise out of the earth and fearful things that were

20 existing within it will arise out of it. Everything will gather together in the interior of the earth. At that time there will be no more death."

"When that occurs I too will come." he said. "I shall come to seek those who have not killed anyone, and those who have not told a lie, people who are really humble, those who love people much, and persons who are unselfish, and persons who abase themselves. And when I take them up, 'Take me up, too,' the others will say, holding their hands up. Then those left on that day

30 which is bright and hanging will be lost together.”

And when he departed they stood still looking about, and when they saw the rising sun, they wanted to see the place from which it came, and they started thither. And while they were on the way, they considered, supposing the sun to be hot, how they should light a fire with it. Then they took a stick of wood dried in the sun's heat and bored into it with another dry stick until it caught fire. Then they named the wood with which they had made the fire “the slimy wood” (afo's'lipa'kfa - the slippery

40 elm).

Afterward they remained there four years, fasting for eight days [each year?]. When the four years were completed, providing themselves with the fire, they again set out toward [the sun]. And while they were still traveling east the Chickasaw stopped saying, “My moccasins are worn out, and I will stop to mend them; even if you go on I will catch you.” “All right,” he [Kasihta] said. He made a spring for him, by sticking his elbow down into the ground and turning around it four

50 times. Having made a big spring for him, he said “Stay here drinking this until you can go.” Then [the Kasihta] went away. But [the Chickasaw] settled there for good.

When they came to the end of the dark grass they continued to obtain things for themselves.

Whenever they stopped they remained there for four years; they marched with an advance guard moving about in front. When they saw the ocean and found that they could not go farther they stopped there. They rested by a large river. Then they learned that some people were living on

60 the other side. They wanted to know what sort of people were living there and went near, when a fog covered them so that they were moving about in it and so stopped not able to see anything. They discovered that the strangers

had something which smelt very good and they wanted it, and they considered how they could get it.

While they were considering over it they made a long mound and another round mound. They said that this action would give them help. When they were ready they caused a wind to blow on the people covered with fog

- 70 living there, and the fog was cleared away. Then they killed [part of the stranger people] and took many captive and exterminated that town. They built a town there of their own. While doing this they were in the habit of sending out guards. They made the guards go out for one year, and when those returned [who had been away during the war] and found that [stranger] people had been killed, they said, "You did not save any for us," and they wept in anger at having been deprived of the opportunity to kill. The two men were projected across
- 80 the river, hanging to the ends of arrows, and going along the stream they trailed [their enemies]. Presently they found two persons lying asleep who had been throwing up the earth into mounds. They killed them there and by so doing wiped away their tears. Then the locality was named "Shoveling place." After four years [the Kasihta] left their women and children together in that place and set out to get scalps. Not anticipating any danger the men all started out. The women continued to live there alone. Afterwards the Coweta people, following their
- 90 trail, came to the big river and camped on the nearer side. Then they sent out scouts who reported that people were staying near by. Then they said "We had better kill them," and they said, "Watch them closely." Watching them closely they discovered that only women were in that place. Then they went near and spoke to them. And they said to them "What has become of the males?" They answered "They went away to war a long time ago. It is now nearly four years since they left." And [the new comers] answered "They can not be alive," But an old

- 100 woman put a stone into the fire, and when it was red all over she took it out and laid it down pointing in the direction in which the Kasihta had gone, and she stood upon it; and after she had stood there for a while she came back and said “The men are alive.” Although she said so they did not believe her. And when they said “She is lying” some of the women thought “It is probably so,” and finally some married these men. The little old woman tried to dissuade them, and many obeyed her. After a time she said “Now the warriors are near,” but they did
- 110 not believe her. “Now they are close by,” she said, “Fix yourselves. Comb yourselves.” She kept on encouraging the whole town. When the warriors had gotten near to the town she went out to their camp and said “Things have been thus and so while we have settled here,” and she informed them about all that had happened. But when the people had been to war it was their custom not to enter the town on their return too hurriedly. Therefore they waited some time to attend to [i.e., purify] themselves and then passed into the town. Then they held a council and said
- 120 “What shall we do with these men? If we kill them it will be of no benefit and they may be of use to us.” And while they were sitting in council they gathered the male Coweta together. Then they built a large fire and made them dance, pushing them down into the fire so that they jumped over it to escape. They did this for some time. They also took sticks and beat them on the front parts of their calves, and they cut off their ears, and they made a law of this.

Then they continued to play tricks on the Coweta by

- 130 putting strings of dog excrement around their necks. They said “It shall be our law that if a man cohabits with a married woman his ears shall be cut off and also his nose. And if a person is whipped inordinately and he dies the leader of the whipping party shall be killed. And if a man cohabits with a married woman in the middle of the summer at the time of the big harvest when the

busk is over, and the aggrieved party finds it out, if the man runs a way and lives by himself for a whole year, in midsummer after the busks of all the towns are over,

- 140 the man and the woman can not receive the penalty of the law.” Then they continued “We have constructed a long mound and a round mound in order to protect ourselves. You must sit down and watch them.” So the tall Coweta were told. They also made a chief for [the Coweta]. Then they were told to live inside of the two mounds. And on top of these hollow mounds they drank åsi every morning. And the åsi was cooked a great pan of it was set out before them at daybreak every morning. Every morning when it was taken they set it away for them.
- 150 They established themselves there permanently as a tribe. They told each other what they had been doing. Then the Kasihta put a question to the Coweta, and they answered: “We came along the trail on which others had gone. We came because we wanted to see what they were doing.” And the people said “since it came (awit) afterward the tribe shall be named Awita,” and it was so named. And, continuing, the Kasihta said “We came out of the center of the earth.” The Coweta answered “We came out at the same place but, the root of a tree extending in
- 160 front of us, we emerged only after a delay.” Then they learned that they had been created one people. And they said “We shall have to return again the way we came, and when we reach the place of our creation we shall be annihilated.” The names of the two rivers near that town were Big River (Hâtcî Lâko) and Confluent River (Hâtcî Afa’ski).

There was a place for killing fish at that point; it was found out that it was a place to which fish would come. The Kasihta having found it broke off a pine limb and

- 170 laid it upon a rock. And the Coweta found it afterward and broke off a black weed called ata’k la-lasti and laid it down in the same place. Then the Coweta said “I have

found a fish-killing place.” The Kasihta said “I found it first I broke off a pine limb to mark it and laid it upon a rock.” And the Coweta said “I, too, broke off a black weed and laid it there.” They wrangled with each other about it. Then they said to each other “Let us examine the place.” And when they went to see the marks they found two lying there. When they had examined the

180 matter they found two fish-killing places close together and one was abandoned to the Coweta. Near by was their own fish-killing place where they lived catching and eating fish. They continued there, beginning and carrying on things for their amusement. There they built their big house. They erected four structures which they call houses (*tcuko*). They placed one to the west, another across from this, another toward the south, another toward the east, and another toward the north. They made the length [of each?] eighty times the length

190 of a person’s foot and the breadth thirty times. And they made the measure of the arena between them eighty foot-measures each way. The round big-house stood toward the west. They constructed it with a pointed roof, and they covered it with pine bark stripped from the trees. They made only one door, looking toward the east. And they built a fire exactly in the middle so that when it was raining or snowing they could dance there. And in the one of the four houses which stood toward the west the house of the mikos (*mi’kålgı i’ntchuka*). And those

200 who sat in the house to the south were known as “the owners of the white (*hå’tki ipu’tcasi*).” If the miko and vice-miko both died they appointed new ones. The one lying across toward the east was called the house of the women (*hu’ktagı i’ntcuka*). And that on the north side was called “the house of the warriors” (*tåstånågålgı i’ntcuka*). They were their war talkers (*inhul’upuna’ya*). And behind the house, lying toward the south, they had what they called the *tådjo*. It was round; a ridge of earth was about its edge; and in the middle their ball



210 post was erected. It was a source of amusement, and when it became dark they danced there through the night. The women danced with them.

And in the middle of summer at the time of the big harvest they met together at what was called the poskita, and they had what was called the “big feast” on one day, when they went about eating until evening. The day after that they fasted, took medicine, and vomited it up, and they sat there until evening as moving was prohibited. They remained there without sleeping until morning. And

220 when they had sat through until the eighth morning, fire produced by boring with a stick was taken to each house.

After that they considered what amusements they could institute. On the evening of the day of the “all-day eating” (hâ'mpi isya'fkita), they danced what was called the gun dance (taputcka obânga). And if one had been treated by doctors he went to this dance with his body naked, the bullet wound painted red, and on his back the pay of the doctor, a back load.

The next morning they kindled a fire by boring with a

230 stick of “slimy switch” (afo'slipakfa - the slippery elm), drank medicine which had been compounded there, and fasted; and they remained there fasting ceremonially, not eating any kind of food. And they were prohibited from eating meat, salt, and honey, and from touching women and children. When four days were passed they danced different kinds of dances. At noon they had the women dance by themselves the shooting dance (its obânga), and afterward the men by themselves danced the long dance (obâ'nga tcâ'pko). The men and women together danced the

240 old buffalo dance (yana's' atch'li) holding sticks. The women also danced what was called the old dance (obânga atculi) with turtle-shell rattles tied to their legs. After dark the men and women danced [again and they kept it up] until morning. Then they went to their homes.

[Following the dances] they played what they called “Shooting the ball” (puk’ i’tcita), holding two bent ball sticks with which they caught and threw the ball. And if they were going to bet, if two towns had dared provoke each other, they advanced to the meeting place, and when

250 they got near they made a camp and stayed there until dark. [On each side] two men, one holding a drum, another a rattle, sat singing for them, the women standing behind them and dancing. Then the men kindled a fire and marched around it whooping and praising themselves continually. From time to time they stopped and the fourth time they retired and slept until daybreak. Then they went up to each other, undressed, and met. They wagered such things as horses, money, coats, handkerchiefs. The distance between them in

260 either direction was two hundred yards. The sticks of the ball posts were planted in the ground side by side. Then the ball was thrown up, they ran after it, and they wrestled if they wished. They stood up twenty counting sticks against each other and whichever side first made twenty points won the game. They threw the ball between the posts which had been planted on each side. Afterward those who had won the wagers went off, taking them along.

The Muskogee, Cherokee, Choctaw, Nokfila, Yamasee, Natchez, and people like them continued their mutual

270 enmity. For some time they kept on killing one another. And one tribe, the Nokfila, was lost. The tribe was in part killed out and in part enslaved.

The Yamasee were good people. They did not want to fight, but, being harassed, they walked deep into the water very humbly, singing pretty songs, and so that tribe was lost. The old people said that this happened because it was in the thought of God that it should be so.

While that was taking place the mutual killing went on.

280 And since it had to cease, finally it did cease. The peace that was first made came about in this wise.

There was a man of the Kasihta tribe known as Good-child Chief, celebrated for his ability and praised on account of the awe which he inspired. His ears were split and his body marked with tattooings [of his war honors]. At intervals he would kill Cherokee, strip off their scalps, and carry them home. Upon one occasion he went out as usual to kill people and reached the land of the Cherokee. There he saw human footprints. Observing that

290 they were fresh he followed them. And then he saw a deer having widely branching horns and he shot at it. Afterward it ran on and was lost in the distance. Then he thought "It would be better to kill *people*," and he went forward. He followed a stream until he came to a foot log lying across it. Then, seeing that the human tracks by it were fresh, he thought "I will kill [the people] when they cross upon that log." He saw a bush covered with leaves near the water, its branches reaching toward him, and, thinking "I will hide in there and when

300 they cross over I will kill them," he sat down beside it.

The people came, he saw them cross, and he pointed his gun at them but put it down again and they passed on leaving him sitting in the same place. Then it happened that he heard someone on top of the bluff scolding at a dog in his own language. He became interested and went out. Presently he saw a Muskogee family sitting [by their dwelling] talking. When he got to the place he saw a great camp extending to the creek. The person to whom he went said "Sit down" and he sat down. Then the

310 Cherokee surrounded him and he sat still unable to do anything. They said to him "What do you want?" and he answered "I am here because I was directed to go and see the Cherokee chief. They said to me 'When you reach Ikan tãpiksi (Level land), anywhere in that country you can obtain an interpreter.'" Then the Cherokee said "The

chief is living at a distance, but he will arrive four days after having been sent for.” Then he remained there as a prisoner.

It was a custom of the Cherokee to send out scouts and as

320 soon as they had come home ask each of them what he had learned concerning their enemies. They did so at this time, and he sat listening to them. And when the returning scouts had all gotten through they thought that nothing was the matter. While he was sitting there their returning scouts were all examined as to whether they had seen anything that might give concern to the town, and they finished. Then they examined them again saying “Did you hear a shot fired?” and one said “I heard one.” And each of the Cherokee said in turn “I have not fired a

330 gun.” Then they said to Good-child Chief who was sitting near “Did you shoot?”

He answered “I did.” “At what did you shoot?” they asked him. “I shot at a deer” said he. “Did you shoot near by?” they asked. “I shot at him very near he said, “and I thought I hit him but I came here instead of going to see.” Then they said “Let us go and see where you did this,” and they took him along. Presently he said “I shot it here and it went on and died without going very far away.” Then they tried to find it and did so, and

340 they brought it back. “He has spoken the truth” they thought, and they watched him closely during the four days. At intervals the young men of the Cherokee came in whooping saying that the chief of the Cherokee was coming. On the fourth day he came and they prepared very large round sticks of wood. When all were in the house Good-child Chief and his interpreter were called in. Then his interpreter said to him “Where the Cherokee are assembled to observe their customs sit still without paying any attention to them.” Then they said “It [the

350 council] is ready.” So the two went up and sat down.

What the interpreter had said about the way they exercised their law was going to be carried out. One man danced the whooping dance holding the ax with which people were killed. He stuck the ax into the ground between [the prisoner's] feet. After he had done this for a considerable time he twisted his breechclout to one side and pushed his buttocks toward the stranger's face. Although Good-child Chief did not like this he could not resent it and remained seated. After the man had danced

- 360 around for a while he stopped and sat down. Then they gave Good-child Chief permission to speak. "Let him make known what he wants" they said. Then he said: "Brothers, we have caused each other suffering for a long time. I was told to come and see the Cherokee chief. [My people] said 'While our mother is the same and our father is the same we punish each other, and it has come to such a pass that even our children are inspired with terror. Hereafter it shall not be so. The white path shall extend from our doors,' my people said.
- 370 'Even if red is on that path we shall not think it is human blood,' they said, 'and even if we find blood near streams we shall not think it is human blood. We shall think thus. We shall think it is the blood of the many things that are to be found in the water,' they said. 'And afterward, if we find on the white paths that converge to our doors the blood of anything sticking, we shall suppose it is the blood of the many four-footed game animals that have it,' they said. 'And after this, if he (a former enemy) shakes hands with me he must smoke
- 380 of my tobacco. If I shall see a cloud arising and hanging in the air, we will think, "He is shaking hands with me,"'" they said. Then he handed to them white beads strung together which he had with him and said "They said 'This is the image of the earth island.'" When this speech was ended the Cherokee chief agreed. And the Cherokee chief said to his men "Take him to the place from which he came and leave him there." And they conducted him thither and left him. Then he returned to

his tribe. And he said: “I have spoken to the Cherokee  
 390 chief,” and he informed them what he had done. Then  
 peace making spread and became general.

### Comments

- 8–30 . . . And they sewed together leaves . . . As Swanton points out, these lines represent Christian influence.<sup>20</sup>
- 72 . . . exterminated that town . . . Based on Gatschet’s notes, Swanton suggests the people were Yuchi.<sup>21</sup>
- 127–28 . . . and they made a law of this . . . a law against adultery.<sup>22</sup>
- 171 . . . ata’k la-lasti . . . Swanton states that this plant has “yellow flowers which appear at the time of the fall hunt,” but gives no authority.<sup>23</sup>
- 185 . . . their big house . . . Swanton identifies this as the ceremonial square.<sup>24</sup>
- 192–93 . . . The round big-house stood toward the west . . . *tcokofa* or town “hot house.”<sup>25</sup>
- 236–37 . . . At noon they had the women dance by themselves the shooting dance (its obânga) . . . Swanton suggests that this is a mistranslation.<sup>26</sup>
- 271 . . . the Nokfila . . . is also given as an old Muskogee designation of the white people.<sup>27</sup>
- 273 . . . Yamasee . . . Swanton comments that the Muskogee word *yâmâsi* means gentle.<sup>28</sup>

## Muskogee: Coweta Origin-Migration (M3)

Swanton 1928a:53

Legus Perryman, who had been an interpreter for the Creek chief Pleasant Porter and who had at one time been chief of the Creeks himself, reported to Swanton the following myth/legend as told by the Cowetas.

- 1 The Coweta say that they came out from under the earth and found the surface soft and muddy, difficult to travel upon. By and by it became dry and hard. They were on the top of a mountain from which they could see the setting and the rising of the sun. Then they debated whether to go toward the sunset or the sunrise but finally they agreed to go toward the sunrise. So they traveled eastward slowly, stopping a long time where the hunting was good and then going on again, until they came

- 10 at last to a river. This river was very muddy and so wide that they stayed on its banks longer than anywhere else, and there they inaugurated the ball play. At last they made boats and crossed. Then they traveled on again eastward until they came to the ocean ('big water'). They found that the water of the ocean would come up and go out again, enabling them to collect oysters and other things good to eat, and they stopped there and lived on those products, being unable to pass beyond. They claim
- 20 that they traveled side by side with the Kasihta, and some add the Abihka, which some deny. The place from which they started they call Il'afoni, 'the backbone,' and they identify this with the Rocky Mountains.

### Muskogee:Tuckabatchee Origin-Migration (MTI)

Swanton 1928a:64

The Tuckabatchees became assimilated into Creek society. Although not an emergence-type myth, this myth relates how the first Tuckabatchees were sent down from the world above to the earth. Alindja, a Tuckabatchee, related this myth to Swanton.

- 1 The Indians were sent down from the world above to some place in the west. They had with them the two principle busk medicines, the pasa and miko hoyanīdja, and among them were seven mikos. They also had fire. Originally there were two camps of them, but after a while one camp decided that they would return. They kept their intentions to themselves, however, until toward night. Then they said "We are ready. We are going," and up they went into the sky. By that time it was so late that the
- 10 people in the other camp, among whom were the seven mikos, said "we will go tomorrow." But before morning one of their number died, and, as they could not leave the body in this world or take it with them, they had to remain.

After they had stayed in that place for a while they said “let us travel,” and they got up and started off. First they went toward the north, but after they had proceeded some distance they set a walking stick up in the ground. Forthwith it leaned toward the south and they said “That

- 20 must be the way we should go.” They set off toward the south, and presently they set up the walking stick again. This time it leaned toward the east, so they went east. They went on eastward for a time and set the stick up again. It remained exactly perpendicular and they said “Here is the place,” and they settled there, having traveled across the whole world to reach it. The word is that our companions, our blood relatives, are in the world above. The chiefs who remained were to be the kings of this continent and they were the seven mikos of
- 30 Tukabahchee town.

### Choctaw: Choctaw Creation (ChoI)

Gatschet 1884:106–7

Gatschet reports the following from the *Missionary Herald*, Boston, 1828.

- 1 When the earth was a level plain in the condition of a quagmire, a superior being, in appearance a *red man*, came down from above, and alighting near the centre of the Choctaw nation, threw up a large mound or hill, called Nanne Wayah, *stooping* or *sloping hill*. Then he caused the red people to come out of it, and when he supposed that a sufficient number had come out, he stamped on the ground with his foot. When this signal of his power was given, some were partly formed, others were just raising
- 10 their heads about the mud, emerging into light, and struggling into life . . . Thus seated on the area of the their hill, they were told by their Creator they should live forever. But they did not seem to understand what he had told them; therefore he took away from them the grant of immortality, and made them subject to death. The earth then indurated, the hills were formed by the



agitation of the waters and winds on the soft mud. The Creator then told the people that the earth would bring forth the chestnut, hickory nut and acorn; it is likely

- 20 that maize was discovered, but long afterward, by crow. Men began to cover themselves by the long moss (abundant in southern climates), which they tied around their waists; then were invented bow and arrows, and the skins of the game used for clothing.

### Choctaw: Choctaw Creation (Cho2)

Lewis 1938:214–15

Lewis reports several traditional myths of Choctaw origins. Some are reported by Lewis verbatim and others paraphrased.

- 1 The earth was a vast plain, destitute of hills or mountains. While the earth was in this condition the Great Spirit came down to earth and alighted near the center of the Choctaws' country and threw up a hill or mountain, calling it Nunih Waiya. When this was done, he caused the red man to come out by stomping on the ground. When the signal was given some appeared only partly formed, others with their heads above the water, struggling for life. Some were perfectly formed. Thus
- 10 were the Choctaws created. The Great Spirit told them that they should live forever. They did not understand what He had said, so they asked him to repeat it. This seemed to anger Him and He took away the grant and told them that they were to become subject to death.

After the formation of man from the ground, the hills were formed, the earth hardened and it was made firm for the habitation of man.

## Migration Legends

The migration legends in this section explain how various groups of people migrated into southeastern North America. Portions of many of these legends parallel the emergence/migration myths already presented. Since these, however, make no mention of the origin of the earth or people, they are presented in a separate chapter.

### Hitchiti: Hitchiti Origin (HI)

Swanton 1922:172–73

The following migration legend was related to Swanton by Jackson Lewis, a Creek contemporary with Swanton but deceased at the time of publication (1922).

- 1 The origin of the Hitchiti is given in various ways, but this is what I have heard regarding them. The true name of these people was A'tcik há'ta. They claim that they came to some place where the sea was narrow and frozen over. Crossing upon the ice they traveled from place to place toward the east until they reached the Atlantic Ocean. They traveled to see from where the sun came. Now they found themselves blocked by the ocean and, being tired, they lingered along the coast for some days. The
- 10 women and children went down on the beach to gather shells and other things that were beautiful to look at. They were shown to the old men who said, "These are pretty things, and we are tired and cannot proceed farther on account of the ocean, which has intercepted us. We will stop and rest here." They took the

beautiful shells, pebbles, etc., which the women and children had brought up and made rattles, and the old men said, "Inasmuch as we cannot go farther we will try to find some way of enjoying ourselves and stop where we now

- 20 are." They amused themselves, using those rattles as they did so, and while they were there on the shore with them people came across the water to visit them. These were the white people, and the Indians treated them hospitably, and at that time they were on very friendly terms with each other. The white people disappeared, however, and when they did so they left a keg of something which we now know was whisky. A cup was left with this, and the Indians began pouring whisky into this cup and smelling of it, all being much pleased with the
- 30 odor. Some went so far as to drink a little. They became intoxicated and began to reel and stagger around and butt each other with their heads. Then the white people came back and the Indians began trading peltries, etc., for things which the white people had. Then the Muskogee, who claim to have emerged from the navel of the earth somewhere out west near the Rocky Mountains, came to the place where the Hitchiti were living. The Muskogee were very warlike, and the Hitchiti concluded it would be best to make friends with them and
- 40 become a part of them. Ever since they have been together as one people. Hitchiti is the Muskogee word meaning "to see," and was given them because they went to see from whence the sun came. So their name was changed from A'tcik-hã'ta. The two people became allied somewhere in Florida.

### Hitchiti: Hitchiti Migration (H2)

Gatschet 1884:77-78

The following was reported to Gatschet by Hitchiti informants Checote and G. W. Stidham.

- 1 Their ancestors first appeared in the country by coming out of a canebrake or reed thicket (útski in Hitchiti) near the sea coast. They sunned and dried their children during four days, then set out, arrived at a lake and stopped there. Some thought it was the sea, but it was a lake; they set out again, traveled up stream and settled there for a permanency.

## Alabama: How the Alabamas Came Southward (A9)

Bludworth 1937:298–99

Bludworth reports that the following legend came to him through John Lee Smith of Throckmorton, Texas, who apparently obtained it from a Cherokee named Colberta. Bludworth asserts that the Cherokees and Alabamas “were once closely associated with each other in Texas.” That this legend is attributable to the Alabama is doubtful. That it is not an accurate reflection of Alabama tradition regarding their origin and migrations is certain.

- 1 The Alabamas long ago dwelt in peace in the cold land of the Northwest, perhaps in the region of Saskatchewan. For them there was a great plenty of bear, elk, moose and other flesh as well as fish and seal that frequented the waters. But the bitter, bitter north wind often made it next to impossible for them to hunt, and then they suffered. They had heard through other tribes of a country far to the south where the Sun God the year around shed his rays upon the forests, mountains and
- 10 streams, giving warmth to both the animals hunted and the hunters. Here also men could grow crops of grain and gather fruits.

The Chief of the Alabamas, desirous of bettering the conditions of his people, took the matter to Abba Mingo, “Chief of the Sky.” In response he received the mandate in the form of a vision that if he would proceed with his tribe towards the south, the Great Chief of the Sky would

guide his travels into a better hunting ground. The vision further instructed the Alabamas to carry with them

- 20 all their possessions, including their totem pole, which was to be planted every night in an upright position directly south of their camps. Each morning they were to proceed in the direction their totem pole pointed.

The Alabamas made preparations and began their long journey. Every morning their totem pole would be leaning southward but veering a little to the east. On they marched, finding ample game for their subsistence and coming into lands warmed by the Sun God and replenished by the Rain God, where flowers and fruits were profuse.

- 30 At last they arrived at the bank of a great river the like of which they had never beheld. This to them was an insurmountable barrier, and they understood not why the Chief of the Sky should have guided them such a weary way to such a blockade. True to their belief, however, they camped on the very banks of the stream, its turbid waters swishing at their feet. The Chief and his braves scarcely slept that night.

Upon arising the next day they found their faithful totem pole leaning more than was its usual custom, but this

- 40 time directly to the east. Nothing remained but to cross the wide, wide stream. Undaunted, they spent several days making canoes from timbers found in the vicinity. Then they took from its moorings their totem pole, which all the time had maintained its posture, pointing directly across the river. Their crossing was safe and, after returning thanks to Abba Mingo, Chief of the Sky, for directing them safely, they continued their travels. The totem pole now pointed eastward each day until they arrived in the country that later took their name—

- 50 Alabama.

## Muskogee: Coosa Origin (MCI)

Swanton 1928a:52–53

Legus Perryman, who had been an interpreter for the Creek chief Pleasant Porter and who had himself at one time been chief of the Creeks, attributes the following legends to the Coosas/Tulasas.

- 1 The people who were afterward known as Coosa or Tulsa Indians traveled eastward toward the rising sun until they came to a big water too wide to cross. They went back from this to a certain place and lived there a long time. By and by they came to the same water again but here it was narrow. The other shore was well wooded and pleased them, and they wanted to get over to it. Their leader, however, said: “We ought to cross, but I am going to try an arrow.” If it landed on the other side he knew
- 10 they would get over. He shot, therefore, and his arrow went into the woods. The people remained there until they had gotten together some boats and rafts on which they crossed in safety. Then they established themselves where they found quantities of game. After a while they began moving east again, and they did this at intervals, always in the same direction. At last they settled permanently, became very numerous, and established square grounds.

One night, a long time afterward, a dance was held at

- 20 which all persons were present except a newly married couple who were in some manner delayed. When these arrived at the square, late at night, they found nothing there but a lake. They remained on the shores of the lake watching and noticed that the birds which tried to fly across fell in and were drowned. One big crane, however, flew all the way over. It said “koos, koos, koos,” and they thought that that was its name. As time went on this couple had children and their descendants formed another big town; and because the bird did fly

- 30 over the submerged village in safety they named the town after it, saying “We shall be called Coosas.” And in the town orations to-day their descendants, the people of Tulsa, begin by saying “We are the Coosa people.”

### Muskogee: Kasihta Migration (M4)

Swanton 1928a:40–46

Although most scholars discredit Milfort’s account of Creek origins as plagued with misstatements and fabrications, Swanton and Gatschet agree that it is probably based on an actual legend.<sup>1</sup> Milfort lived among the Creeks from 1776 to 1796 and was reportedly married to Alexander McGillivray’s sister. According to Swanton, Milfort’s version was probably the version current at Otciafafa, McGillivray’s hometown. Milfort’s version, as reported by Swanton, follows.

- 1 When the Spaniards conquered Mexico everyone knows that this fair country of North America was inhabited by a gentle people which, having no knowledge of firearms, was easily subjugated. It had only courage and numbers to oppose the murderous arms of its enemies; in a word, it was defenceless; for what availed a bow and arrows against the artillery of an army, feeble in numbers indeed but warlike, intrepid, and led on by an insatiable thirst for gold, which this too trusting people had been
- 10 unfortunate enough to display to their eyes.

Montezuma reigned then in Mexico; seeing that it was impossible to arrest the progress of the Spaniards, he called to his assistance the peoples which were neighbors to his states. The nation of the Moskoquis, known now under the name of Creeks, who formed a separate republic in the northwestern part of Mexico, and who had numerous warriors, offered him assistance, formidable for any enemy other than a disciplined army, such as that of the Spaniards commanded by Fernan-Cortéz.

- 20 The courage of this warlike people resulted, then, only in its more prompt destruction, and was not able to save

Montezuma, who lost his life and his empire, which was almost entirely depopulated. After the death of Montezuma and many other chiefs, the Moskoquis, considerably weakened by this terrible war, which they were no longer in a condition to maintain, determined to abandon a country which offered them in exchange for their past happiness only the most terrible slavery, to search for one which would secure to them the abundance

- 30 and peace of which the Spaniards had just deprived them. They directed their march toward the north, and ascended in fifteen days as far as the source of Red River, that is to say a distance of about a hundred leagues. This river throws its waters into the northern part of America, across immense prairies, a fact which fixed their determination to follow its course. They traveled therefore eight days in this direction through a plain brilliant with the most beautiful flowers, and covered with wild animals, which offered them all the resources
- 40 necessary for their existence. This country would have attracted them to settle in it for all time on account of its richness in every respect; but, fearing still for their safety, in a country which did not offer them any natural defense, they continued their journey. In the different excursions which they made along this river, they did not discover any other, not even a stream joining it; but they often found lakes and ponds, many of which had salt water; these were generally covered with aquatic birds of all kinds, notably such as are met along
- 50 the shore of the ocean. The prairies were alive with partridges, hares, rabbits, turkeys, and other animals. There are such great quantities of this sort of game in these countries, that, when it is pursued from different points at the same time, and is forced to flee, the air is obscured and the land covered with it.

After having traveled thus for many days they found some groves where they made a halt. The young warriors were sent in different directions by the old men to examine



the face of the country. At the end of a month they

60 returned announcing that they had discovered a forest, on the edges of which, and at the same time along Red River, were fine subterranean dwellings. The entire nation set out; and, when they arrived near these caves, they discovered that they had been dug by bison, or wild oxen, and other animals who inhabited them because the earth there was a little salty.

The Moskoquis found in this country the peace and quiet which they needed in order to repair the considerable losses which they had suffered in the Mexican wars. The

70 colony having brought along a little corn which was left to it, it was planted immediately in order to assure them a means of subsistence. As they lacked the necessary utensils with which to make a settlement they made use of sharp stones, instead of axes, to cut and sharpen sticks of wood which they afterward hardened in the fire and used in cultivating the ground.

When the Moskoquis had thus performed the first labors connected with their new settlement, they marked out a field, as large as was necessary for the common needs of

80 the colony, and they surrounded it with old pieces of wood and stakes planted in the earth, in order to guard against the incursions of bison and other wild animals, which are very fond of corn. They then allotted to the families the ground contained in this enclosure, and sowed it for their sustenance. The young people of both sexes worked the ground together while the old men smoked their pipes. In this manner they lived for many years, enjoying perfect tranquillity, living by hunting and fishing, and on the products of their land, and

90 regretting little their separation from the country where they had suffered so much. They would no doubt have remained there permanently if the unhappy fortune which seemed to pursue them had not compelled them to undertake a second emigration.

They were discovered by the Albamos or Alibamons, who killed many of their people. Then the old men, the natural chiefs of the nation, called together the young warriors, and sent them on the trail of the murderers, but without success, because there was no unity in their

100 operations, and they lacked a common chief; they then felt the necessity of selecting one. The old men of the nation assembled and chose the one among them who had rendered the greatest service to the fatherland, and they named him their Tastanégy or grand war chief. . . .

The Moskoquis are very warlike and are not cast down by defeat; the day after an unsuccessful battle, they marched to meet the enemy as courageously as before. It was after this arrangement that they resolved to continue their course toward the northwest. After having marched

110 in this direction for some time, and crossed immense plains, they stopped in a little forest on the banks of the Missouri. There they encountered the Alibamons, whom they had pursued for a long time. They made preparations for the combat. The Tastanégy, or great war chief, arranged the march in the following order: The family of the Wind, from which he had been chosen, crossed the river in the first line; it was followed by the family of the Bear, and then by that of the Tiger [Panther], and so on. When this river was crossed, as the entire nation

120 was on the march, it was necessary to take measures to avoid a surprise on the part of the enemy; and, in case of an encounter with the enemy, to protect all those who were unable to fight. For this purpose, the young people, with their war chiefs, formed the van; the old men the rear guard; those of an age less advanced were on the flanks; the women and the children in the center. They marched in this order until the moment when they encountered the enemy. Then the young men advanced alone with their Tastanégy at their head, and left the main

130 body of the nation in a place of safety, and under the

protection of the old men. By a stealthy and well planned march they surprised their enemy, and reached the caves which the Alibamons inhabited, before the lat[t]er were warned; and, not allowing them time to rally, they made a great slaughter. The fright into which such a surprise threw the foe caused them to abandon their dwellings; they fled along the Missouri, and rallied on the banks of this river, while the Moskoquis were gone to rejoin their countrymen, in order to march again on the

- 140 trail of the enemy. The Alibamons, fearing a new surprise, had made their old men, women, and children march in advance, the young warriors forming the rear-guard; then they continued for some time to descend this river on its right bank. The Moskoquis, following their trail, caught up with them, and defeated them many times. The Alibamons, seeing they were thus pursued, had made the body of their nation pass over to the left bank of the Missouri, and had given them time to get some distance in advance, by delaying the march of the enemy
- 150 by various skirmishes. But, fearing that they would be unable to resist their attacks, they took advantage of the darkness one night to rejoin their fathers, the Moskoquis not observing them. The lat[t]er not finding any enemy when day came and suspecting the course they had taken, crossed the river in order to pursue them again. After a march of some days they again encountered them, and forced them to accept a general battle in which the Alibamons were defeated and fled to the banks of the Mississippi. The Moskoquis, pursuing them with fury,
- 160 forced them to throw themselves into the river, where very great number perished. The young Moskoqui warriors, having thus weakened their enemy considerably, ceased to pursue them until they had been rejoined by the body of the nation, which followed by short stages. They remained eight days on the bank of this river in order to rest.

During all this time the Alibamons had marched rapidly

and gotten far in advance. The Moskoquis, trying to catch them, buried themselves in an immense forest which

- 170 is on the left bank of the Mississippi; they camped, but, as there appeared to be no advantage in establishing themselves there, the old men decided to continue the march, and, for this purpose, to send the young warriors in pursuit of the enemy. They marched many days without meeting them; but at length, having discovered their tracks, they returned to report to the council of old men who decided that they would go in pursuit. They advanced again; and, after a march of some days, they came to the river Ohio, which the French call Belle-Rivière. They
- 180 went up along the banks near the Wabash; and perceiving that the Alibamons had crossed the Ohio, they also crossed it. When they were on the other side, finding a region with a very beautiful climate, and very rich in all kinds of game, they determined to establish themselves there, and fixed their dwelling in what is known as Yazau country. As the season was much advanced, they ceased their pursuit, and contented themselves with sending some young warriors to try to discover the route which the Alibamons had taken. The Moskoquis, profiting
- 190 by some caves which they found and some which they made, took possession of the Yazau lands, where they passed many years, and where the caves which they excavated exist to this day.

The Alibamons had advanced as far as the banks of the river Coussa; not seeing themselves pursued, and finding themselves in fertile country, they stopped there; but as they were always in fear of some surprise they sent youths to find out what had become of the Moskoquis and whether they were still pursuing them. Although the war

- 200 which the Moskoquis waged at this time on the Alibamons had originated in an aggression on the part of the latter, who had killed Moskoqui warriors, the youths who had been sent to discover the Moskoqui had the imprudence

to kill the first whom they met. The old men, having been informed of this new aggression, had them march against the Alibamons. The Moskoqui warriors, having learned that the country which their enemy inhabited was toward the rising sun, in a region where the rigors of winter are little felt, and where a great quantity of

210 game of all kinds is to be found, resolved to pursue them a third time, and to populate that country, which is between the two Floridas. With this objective they crossed the river Cumberland and the Tennessee, and followed from the north the river Coussa, on the banks of which the remains of the Alibamons had established themselves. The lat[t]er, having learned of the march of the Moskoquis, did not think it well to await them; they abandoned their position and scattered. Some went to seek an asylum among the Tchactas, and the rest repaired

220 to Mobile, under the protection of the French, who had then just taken possession.

The Moskoquis, no longer finding enemies to fight, took peaceful possession of the country which they had just conquered. They established themselves on the rivers *Coosa*, *Tallapoosa*, *Chattahooche*, *Flint*, *Ocmulgee*, little and great *Oconee* and *Ogechee*, and pushed their settlements as far as the river Savannah in Georgia, where the city of Augusta is now built.

After having taken possession of this immense territory

230 in this manner and having established their settlements, the youth were sent as far as Mobile in pursuit of the Alibamons; but, as they had placed themselves under the protection of the French, the French commandant endeavored to obtain peace for the Alibamons from the chiefs of the Moskoqui warriors. The chiefs of the Moskoqui warriors, not wishing to take it upon themselves to make a treaty without the consent of their nation, referred the matter to the decision of the council of old men; and, while awaiting this decision, they consented to

- 240 a suspension of hostilities, promising not to kill any Alibamons before they had received the reply of their council, to which they even promised to recommend their enemies, on the express condition that the Alibamons, on their side, would equally respect the Moskoquis, and would avoid as much as possible frequenting the hunting grounds where they must pass the winter, marking out for both separate territories. This truce lasted six months, at the end of which time the old Moskoqui men went down to Mobile with their warriors; and, not only was peace
- 250 made between the two nations, in presence of the French commandant, but the Moskoquis also agreed to unite the Alibamons with themselves; and, to induce them to do this, they gave them a piece of land on the river of Mobile, which is still called river of the Alibamons. The lat[t]er accepted the proposition, under the condition that they might preserve their customs and their usages. Then all of the separated portions were reunited and came to establish themselves on the river which has received their name, and form one little town which bears the name
- 260 Coussehaté, and, since this time, they have formed an integral part of the Moskoqui nation, which took at this period the name of Creek nation. This name signifies source river, and is derived from the situation of the country which they inhabit, which, as has been shown above, is surrounded or cut by a great number of good sized rivers.

About the same time an Indian tribe which had been almost destroyed by the Iroquois and the Hurons came to ask for the protection of the Moskoquis, whom I will now call the

- 270 Creeks. The latter received them among themselves and assigned to them a territory in the center of the nation. They built a town which is now very considerable, which is named Tuket-Batchet from the name of the Indian tribe. The great assemblies of the Creek nation, of which it is an integral part, are sometimes held within its walls.

The war-like reputation of the Creeks, and knowledge of the good reception which they had given the Alibamons and the Indian tribe of which I have just spoken, rapidly spread among the other savage people of North America;

280 and those among them who were too weak to resist the attacks of an enemy, came at once to beg for their help. The Tasquiguy and the Oxiailles [Okchai], who had experienced from their neighbors the same fate as the Tuket-Batchet, having learned of the good treatment which the latter had experienced from the Creeks, came to ask of them an asylum and protection. They were both received into the nation; lands were given them to cultivate, and they [the Tasquiguy] established themselves at the junction of the rivers *Coosa* and

290 Tallapoosa, where they made a village which still bears the name Tasquiguy. The Oxialilles went ten leagues to the north and established their dwelling in a beautiful plain on the banks of a little river; they formed a town there to which they also gave their name.

A short time afterward the remains of the little Udgi [Yuchi] nation, which had been partially destroyed by the English, also came to seek refuge among the Creeks, who assigned them lands on the banks of the Chattahoochee. A part of the Chickasaw nation also came to seek refuge

300 among the Creeks, who gave them lands on the river Yazau, at the head of the river of the Wolves [the Neshoba]. They built their settlements there, extending them as far as the mountains of the Cherokee, behind which runs the Tennessee River, which takes its rise in these mountains, near Tougoulou, back of South Carolina, at a short distance from the source of the Savannah in Georgia. The immense extent of territory of which the Moskoquis, now Creeks, had taken possession after the flight of the Alibamons, provided them with means of receiving in this

310 manner all of the peoples who asked the favor of them,

and giving them lands to clear. They thus augmented their reputation and their means of sustaining it.

Although the nations received by the Creeks became integral parts of them encounters took place in which they alone were concerned; but, in case of defeat, they were allowed to claim the protection of the Creeks who aided them either by their arms, or their mediations. . . .

### *Comments*

14–16 . . . The nation of the Moskoquis, known now under the name of Creeks, who formed a separate republic in the northwestern part of Mexico . . . Gatschet argues that the “Moskoquis” could not have possibly lived in Mexico during Montezuma’s and Cortez’s time and were encountered by de Soto twenty years later on the Coosa River in Alabama.<sup>2</sup>

95 . . . They were discovered by the Albamos or Alibamons . . . Gatschet concedes that while it is not impossible that the “Moskoquis” could have encountered the Alibamu [Alabamas] west of the Mississippi, it would be incredible to think “they pursued them for nearly a thousand miles up that river to the Missouri, and then down again on the other or eastern side of the Mississippi.”<sup>3</sup>

213 . . . crossed the river Cumberland and the Tennessee . . . Swanton points out that in going from Yazoo country to the Coosa, the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers are not encountered.<sup>4</sup>

260 . . . Coussehaté . . . Swanton notes that the Coussehaté (Koasati) constitute a separate, but related, tribe.<sup>5</sup>

265–66 . . . cut by a great number of good sized rivers . . . Swanton and other scholars attribute the term “Creek” to the English.<sup>6</sup> The term was probably shortened from “Ocheese Creek Indians,” which refers to those Lower Creeks whom the English first encountered living on the Ocmulgee River.

### **Muskogee: Kasihta-Chickasaw-Coweta Migration (M5)**

Swanton 1928a:53–55

The following legend was told by Ispahihtca of the Kasihta town, a former chief of the Creek Nation,<sup>7</sup> to James R. Gregory, who repeated it to Swanton in May 1912.



- 1 Some people anciently lived together in the west. In course of time they became so evil that they could find nothing pure in the world except the sun, and they determined to travel eastward to find the place from whence it came. On the way they became separated into three bodies. The first of these were called Chickasaw because on the morning when they were to set out they were the first to see the sun rise and said Tcika ha'sâ [hitcika hasâ], "See the sun!" The second body said to
- 10 the first Kohasita, "Where is the sun?" from which circumstance they received the name Kasihta. The Chickasaw moved first, the Kasihta following them, but the third body of people had some difficulty in passing around a brier thicket and were left a long distance behind, so that the parties in advance began to call them Ko-aoita, "Those that are following us," whence the name Coweta.

During their travels these tribes came to a great river which they crossed, and presently the Chickasaw entered

- 20 upon a beautiful country where were small prairies abundantly supplied with strawberries and other wild fruits and having deep pools of water. Then the Chickasaw did not want to go farther and said that they did not care where the sun came from. So they settled in that country, while the remaining bands held on their course. By and by the Kasihta, who were still in advance, crossed a river smaller than the first. On the other side they raised a mound, leaving a great chamber in the center in which to fast and purify their bodies.
- 30 They left their women, children, and other noncombatants there and went on toward the east. Afterward, the Coweta arrived on the opposite side of the river and sent word over that they intended to cross and kill everyone in the place because the Kasihta warriors had not waited to have them join in the expedition. But among the Kasihta women was one who had a magic white stone or pebble, the mate to which was in the keeping of her husband among the

warriors. By means of this stone she informed him of the serious state of affairs, and the Kasihta warriors

- 40 immediately retraced their steps, cut switches, and, passing over to the Coweta warriors, whipped them severely. But they did not strike them with a weapon of war. They then told the Coweta to take charge of the mound, and, gathering together their own noncombatants, they went eastward once more.

After the Kasihta had left, the Coweta made medicine and went inside of the great mound in order to purify themselves, but while they were there a Cherokee war party attacked the camp. Great was their surprise,

- 50 however, when the Coweta warriors poured up from the bowels of the earth, and they were defeated with great slaughter. From this circumstance the Coweta town became the great war town of the Creek Nation. Then the Kasihta sent back for the Coweta but, without waiting for them to catch up, continued in the same direction as before.

Presently they reached a country populated by naked people who would attack them and then run off. The naked people did this repeatedly until they at length ran into a dense fog. The Kasihta followed them and, emerging on

- 60 the other side, found themselves on the shore of the ocean from which the fog had risen. Unable to go farther they camped where they were, and in the morning saw the sun rise out of the sea. They concluded that that was why it was so bright and pure. By and by the Coweta came up, and the two peoples agreed that the country from which they had started was so far off that they would not return to it. So they remained where they were, fought with the inhabitants of the land, and brought them under their own system of laws.

- 70 In the course of time no people were left willing to resist them, and they longed for someone with whom to fight. Hereupon Coweta challenged Kasihta to a game of ball in order to obtain revenge for having been beaten

with switches by the lat[t]er. The custom of having ball contests originated at this time and in this manner and has continued to the present day. Now arose the division between the war towns and the peace towns. The war towns have separated from the Coweta and the peace towns from the Kasihta, except in the cases of towns which have been

80 brought in from outside. These have usually been brought in by the peace towns, and hence are generally white.

### Muskogee: Kasihta-Chickasaw-Coweta Migration (M6)

Hawkins 1982:81–83

Hawkins describes the following legend as “The Opinion of Tus-se-kiah Mic-co, on the Origin of the Creeks, and the New Fire.”

- 1 There are in the forks of the Red river, (We-chā-te-hat-che Au-fus-kee,) west of Mississippi, (We-o-coof-ke, *muddy water*,) two mounds of earth. At this place, the Cussetuh, Cowetuh, and Chickasaws found themselves. They were at a loss for fire. Here they were visited by the Hi-you-yul-gee, four men who came from the four corners of the world. One of these people asked the Indians, where they would have their fire, (tote-kit-cau.) They pointed to a place; it was made; and they sat down around
- 10 it. The Hi-you-yul-gee directed, that they should pay particular attention to the fire, that it would preserve them and let E-sau-ge-tuh E-mis see, (master of breath,) know their wants. One of these visitors took them and showed them the pas-sau; another showed them Mic-co-ho yon ejau, then the Au-che-nau, (cedar,) and Too-loh, (sweet bay.) [There are one or two other plants, not recollected. Each of these seven plants was to belong to a particular tribe,] (E-mau-li-ge-tuh.) After this, the four visitors disappeared in a cloud, going from whence
- 20 they came.

The three towns then appointed their rulers. The

Cussetuhs chose the Noo-coose-ul-gee, (bear tribe,) to be their Mic-ul-gee, (mic-cos,) and the Is-tau-nul-gee, to be the E-ne-hau-thluc-ul-gee, (people second in command.) The Cowetuhs chose the Thlot-lo-ul-gee, (fish tribe,) to be their Mic-ul-gee, (miccos.)

After these arrangements, some other indians came from the west, met them, and had a great wrestle with the three towns; they made ball sticks and played with them,

- 30 with bows and arrows, and the war club, (Au-tus-sau.) They fell out, fought, and killed each other. After this warring, the three towns moved eastwardly, and they met the Au-be-cuh at Coosau river. Here they agreed to go to war for four years, against their enemy; they made shields, (Te-po-lux-o,) of Buffalo hides, and it was agreed that the warriors of each town, should dry and bring forward, the scalps (E-cau halpe) of the enemy and pile them; the Aubecuh had a small pile, the Chickasaws were above them, the Cowetuhs above them, and the
- 40 Cussetuhs above all. The two last towns raised the scalp pole, (Itlo châte, *red wood*,) and do not suffer any other town to raise it. Cussetuh is first in rank.

After this, they settled the rank of the four towns among themselves. Cussetuh, called Au-be-cuh and Chickasaw cha-chu-see, (younger brothers.) The Chickasaws and Aubecuhs, called Cussetuh and Cowetuh, chat-la-hau, (oldest brothers.) Au-be-cuh, called Chickasaw, Um-mau-mau-yuh, (elders, or people a head of them.) Chickasaws sometimes use the same expression to Aubecuh.

- 50 This being done, they commenced their settlements on Coosau and Tal-la-poo-sau, and crossing the falls of Tallapoosa about Tool-cau-bat-che, they visited the Chat-o-hoche, and found a race of people with flat heads, in possession of the mounds in the Cussetuh fields. These people used bows and arrows, with strings made of sinews. The great physic makers, (Au-lic-chul-gee,) sent some

rats in the night time, which gnawed the strings, and in the morning, they attacked and defeated the flats. They crossed the river at the island, near the mound, and took

- 60 possession of the country. After this, they spread out eastwardly, to O-cheese-hat-che, (Ocmulgee,) Oconee, O-ge-gee, (How-ge-chuh,) Chic-ke-tal-lo-fau-hat-che, (Savannah,) called sometimes Sau-va-no-gee, the name for Shaw-a-nee. They met the white people on the sea coast, who drove them back to their present situation.

Cussetuh and Chickasaw consider themselves as people of one fire, (tote-kit-cau humgoce,) from the earliest account of their origin. Cussetuh appointed the first Micco for them, directed him to sit down in the big

- 70 Savanna, where they now are, and govern them. Some of the Chickasaws straggled off and settled near Augusta, from whence they returned and sat down near Cussetah, and thence back to their nation. Cussetuh and Chickasaw have remained friends ever since their first acquaintance.

### Choctaw: Chickasaw Migration (Chi I)

Schoolcraft 1851-57:(III)309-11

The following account, reported by Schoolcraft, of Chickasaw migration was related by old men of the tribe to the United States agent stationed among them.<sup>8</sup>

- 1 By tradition, they say they came from the West; a part of their tribe remained in the West. When about to start eastward, they were provided with a large dog as a guard, and a pole as guide; the dog would give them notice whenever an enemy was near at hand, and thus enable them to make their arrangements to receive them. The pole they would plant in the ground every night, and the next morning they would look at it, and go in the direction it leaned. They continued their journey in this way until
- 10 they crossed the great Mississippi River; and, on the

waters of the Alabama River, arrived in the country about where Huntsville, Alabama, now is: there the pole was unsettled for several days: but, finally, it settled, and pointed in a southwest direction. They then started on that course, planting the pole every night, until they got to what is called the Chickasaw Old Fields, where the pole stood perfectly erect. All then came to the conclusion that that was the Promised Land, and there they accordingly remained until they emigrated west of

20 the State of Arkansas, in the years 1837 and 1838.

While the pole was in an unsettled situation, a part of their tribe moved on East, and got with the Creek Indians, but so soon as the majority of the tribe settled at the OLD FIELDS, they sent for the party that had gone East, who answered that they were very tired, and would rest where they were a while. This clan was called Cushman-tah. They have never joined the parent tribe, but they always remained as friends until they had intercourse with the whites; then they became a separate

30 nation.

The great dog was lost in the Mississippi, and they always believed that the dog had got into a large sink-hole and there remained; the Chickasaws said they could hear the dog howl just before the evening came. Whenever any of their warriors get scalps, they give them to the boys to go and throw them into the sink where the dog was. After throwing the scalps, the boys would run off in great fright, and if one should fall, in running off, the Chickasaws were certain he would be killed or taken

40 prisoner by their enemies. Some of the half-breeds, and nearly all of the full-bloods, now believe it.

In traveling from the west to the east, they have no recollection of crossing any large water-course except the Mississippi River. When they were travelling from the West to the Promised Land in the East, they had

enemies on all sides, and had to fight their way through, but they cannot give the names of the people they fought with while travelling.

They were informed, when they left the West, that they

- 50 might look for whites; that they would come from the East; and they were to be on their guard, and to avoid the whites, lest they should bring all manner of vice among them.

### Comments

16 . . . Chickasaw Old Fields . . . Gatschet gives this location, as reported by a Mr. C. C. Royce, as on the eastern bank of the Tennessee River at the islands (Lat. 34°35' and Long. 86°31').<sup>9</sup>

31 . . . The great dog was lost in the Mississippi . . . Gatschet suggests this should be read as *the dog was lost in the State of Mississippi*.<sup>10</sup>

### Choctaw: Choctaw Migration (Cho3)

Gatschet 1884:219–20

The following legend Gatschet reports from the *Missionary Herald*, published in Boston in 1828.<sup>11</sup>

- 1 When they emigrated from a distant country in the west, the Creeks were in front, the Cha'hta in the rear. They travelled to a "good country" in the east; this was the inducement to go. On the way, they stopped to plant corn. Their great leader and prophet directed all their movements, carried the *hobuna* or sacred bag (containing "medicines") and a long white pole as the badge of his authority. When he planted the white pole, it was a signal for their encampment. He was always careful to
- 10 set this pole perpendicularly and to suspend upon it the sacred bag. None were allowed to come near it and no one but himself might touch it. When the pole inclined towards the east, this was the signal for them to proceed on their journey; it steadily inclined east until they reached Nánni Wáya. There they settled.

*Comments*

5 . . . Their great leader and prophet . . . Gatschet offers the following translation of the word prophet: “*Prophet*, in Cha’hta, is hopáyi and corresponds in his name to the ahopáya, hopáya of the Creeks.”<sup>12</sup>

**Choctaw: Choctaw Origins (Cho4)**

Lewis 1938:215–16

Lewis reports the following as a paraphrased version of the Choctaw origin myth. Unfortunately, she gives no indication of her source.

- 1 . . . their ancestors dwelt in a country far distant toward the setting sun. Then a time came when they had to find a new country. A general council was held and after many days of grave deliberation, a day was chosen when they should all bid farewell to their old homes and under the leadership of the two brothers, Chahtah and Chikashah, seek a new country. The evening before they were ready to leave a “Fabussa” pole was set up in the middle of the encampment by the chief medicine man and prophet. He
- 10 told them that this pole would be their guide.

The next morning the pole leaned toward the rising sun and this was the direction they went. Each night the pole was set up and each morning it turned toward the east. Weeks and months passed and they continued east, and to their astonishment they came to a great river. They had never seen or heard of so great a stream. Where it came from or where it went, they did not know. So they named it Misha Sipokni, which in their language meant Beyond Age, whose source and terminus are unknown.

- 20 After some difficulty they crossed the river because the pole indicated that they must go farther east. After weeks more of traveling the pole one morning stood upright. “Fohah hupis hno yah”—“rest all of us here”; and this sacred mound Nunih Waiya came into being.



Chahtah and Chikasih agreed to part. The pole was to decide, and it was placed between the two brothers; it fell toward Chikasih and he and his followers went north as the pole indicated.

*Comments*

25–28 . . . Chahtah and Chikasih agreed to part . . . Lewis adds from another version “that since there were so many of them in the migration that they went in groups in order to find food as they marched.”<sup>13</sup> When the Choctaws reached Nunih Waiya, the party under Chikasih had already crossed over a creek. That night a terrible rain came and a messenger could not over take Chikasih and his party to tell them that the pole was standing erect at the base of a hill, Nuhih Waiya, so that was the way the two tribes came into existence.

**Choctaw: Choctaw Migration (Cho5)**

Lewis 1938:216–17

The following legend reported by Lewis may have originally appeared in Gideon Linoecum’s “Choctaw Traditions about Their Settlement in Mississippi and the Origins of Their Mounds.”<sup>14</sup>

- 1 After they had marched many weary miles and had consumed in all probability years, many of the people were dead. The bones of the dead were carried along, as this was a part of their burial custom. The Choctaws halted on the bank of a little river so their scouts could be sent to explore the region of the country around, and so the aged and feeble and those over-burdened might have time to catch up and rest. Many of the families were loaded with the bones of their dead. These could not be left behind.
- 10 Some had almost more bones than they could pack but could not be parted from them.

It took several days before all the migrants had reached the encampment; some slowed down with a double load of bones on their backs. They moaned, “Oh when will this journey end? To pack the bones further will kill us and

we shall have no name amongst the iksas of this great nation.”

Winter was coming on so the leaders decided to rest here a while. The land was beautiful and there was much

- 20 rejoicing. The chiefs gave instructions for the land to be prepared to plant what seed corn they had and it was found that there were only a few ears. These had been preserved by the old people who had no teeth, so the soil was prepared.

One end of the encampment was a mound with a hole in one side. As it leaned toward the creek people called it leaning hill—Nunih Waiya. They passed the winter at Nunih Waiya and they planted their crops and gathered them. Now it was time to go on.

- 30 A great council was met to discuss the question of what to do with the bones of their dead. The leaders knew that some of them could not carry the bones farther, neither would they be willing to leave them behind. So it was decided to make Nunih Waiya their home and to bury the bones of the dead nearby. After this was done a feast was made and they could sing:

“Behold the wonderful work of our hands and let us be glad. Look upon the great mound; its top is above the trees and its black shadow lies on the ground. It is

- 40 surmounted by the golden emblem of the sun, its glitter dazzles the eyes of the multitude. It inhumes the bones of fathers and relatives. They died on our sojourn in the wilderness. They died in a far off wild country. They rest at Nunih Waiya. Our journey lasted many winters; it ends at Nunih Waiya.”

## Relationships Between the Tribes

A number of legends, while intended to explain relationships between various tribes, also provide important insight into beliefs about both mythological and geographical origins of the Creeks.

### Yuchi: Dispute among the Yuchi, Chickasaw, and Shawnee (as to Their Priority on Earth) (U7)

Wagner 1931:165–67

- 1 The Yuchi, the Shawnee and the Chickasaw came together; they were having a dispute. The Chickasaw said they were first on earth, and the Shawnee claimed to have been first on earth. The Yuchi were the first on earth, but they were backward; only the Shawnee put themselves forward. They said to the Chickasaw, “If you were first on earth, what did you do?” They answered that they broke a grass blade and the Shawnee said that they had broken a cedar twig. When they brought the grass that
- 10 they had broken, it just began to fade, but when the Shawnee brought the cedar that they had broken, it was dead already. The Yuchi had broken the cedar twig but the Shawnee acted as though they had done it, it is told. But the Chickasaw would not give up yet; they kept on arguing. When they claimed that they were first on earth, the Shawnee said, “Well then, if you were first on earth, shoot at the sun; we will see what happens.” The shadow of the sun was in the water, right there they shot at it. When they shot, the sun’s blood was only yellow

- 20 muddy water. They told them to make medicine to cure the sun again, but even that they could not do. And then the Shawnee doctored the sun and she got well. Then the Shawnee shot at the sun, and the earth was covered all over with black blood, and the fierce monsters in the mountains made a loud noise. It sounded like drums and then the Creeks came out of the ground to the surface of the earth; their drums were buffalo-horns; they were shouting everywhere; now too many were coming out of the ground, and then they doctored the sun; she brightened
- 30 again and people ceased coming forth from the ground.

The Yuchi have done all these things, but the Shawnee always made their name lead (and so only their name appeared in the story).

### *Comments*

- 13 . . . the Shawnee acted as though they had done it . . . Wagner suggests the Shawnees were the representatives of the Yuchis.<sup>1</sup>

### **Yuchi: Origin of the Other Tribes, and a Chief's Visit to Receive the Creator's Prophecy (U8)**

Speck 1909:143

- 1 Now the people had come upon the earth. The Shawnee came from above. The Creeks came from the ground. The Choctaw came from the water. The Yuchi came from the sun.
- So *Gohäntoné* appointed a day for them to meet and mingle because he thought at first that it would be better for them to do that. Accordingly they met at the place of sunrise, in the east, and mingled together in friendship. They smoked together and held council. After considering, they concluded that it would be better
- 10 for all if they did not mix up. And henceforth they separated, each tribe going its own way and living alone.

The Shawnee said, “Our name is Shawnee, and we’ll go off by ourselves.”

The Creeks said, “We are Muskogi, and we’ll go off by ourselves.”

The Choctaw said, “We’re Choctaw.” And they went away.

The Yuchi were there too, and they said, “Our name is Yuchi.” And they in turn left. Each tribe selected its own place to live in, and went there.

- 20 Now after a while, when they had been separated some time, *Gohäntoné* thought the thing over and said, “You have nothing. So I’ll give you something. I’ll give you all the earth.”

Then he gave them the earth, and they scattered over it.

Now after a while *Gohäntoné* thought the matter over again. Then a Creek chief died. When the chief was dead he appeared before *Gohäntoné*, who said to him, “This land belongs to you and your children forever. This land will be yours forever, but these whites who have just come

- 30 will overwhelm you and inherit your land. They will increase and the Indian will decrease and at last die out. Then only white people will remain. But there will be terrible times.”

So spoke *Gohäntoné* to the dead Creek chief. For four days he lay dead, then he came to life again. When he woke up he was well. He immediately called a great council. Shawnee, Choctaw, Creeks and Yuchi all assembled to hear him, and he told them all that he had seen and heard. He told them that the land would belong

- 40 to the Indian forever, but the white man would overrun it. So the thing is coming to pass as *Gohäntoné* said it would.

## Muskogee: Coweta-Tuckabatchee Alliance (M7)

Swanton 1928a:68

Swanton obtained the following legend from an old Lower Creek Indian named Fulotkee.

- 1 Upon one occasion after a number of Indians had been reading those parts of the Bible which relate the story of Adam and Eve, they asked an old Indian of the town of Tulsa Canadian what his forefathers used to say about the origin of man. He answered:

In olden times two Coweta men came from the northwest, each carrying a war club (atâsâ). They ran and whooped, so that the earth quaked and echoes rolled in all directions. In some mysterious manner this produced more

- 10 people who came flocking around. After that they saw a flash of lighting in the north and the thunder following echoed along toward the southwest. It had a sound like that of people, so they sent out four men to search, and these four men saw people in the air. They talked to these people, and presently they came down and accompanied them back. They were the Tukabahchee. Then the men of the two towns said "We have seen each other's power; let us unite. The Coweta shall be the leaders."

After this they drifted eastward until they came to the

- 20 sea. And in course of time people emerged from the waves, seeming to come up out of the foam. Therefore the Indians believed they had been hatched from it and they called them Nokfilâlgi, "People of the foam or ocean drift." These were the white people and they fought with the Indians but were at first prevented from gaining a foothold. The whites were very clever, however, and behaved so humbly that in time the Indians began to make treaties with them and allow them to come to land.

**Muskogee:Tukabahchee-Łiwahali Alliance (M8)**

Swanton 1928a:69

Related to Swanton by an old Indian named Kasihta Yahola, a Łaplåko (a branch of Łiwahali), the following legend describes the relationship between the Tuckabatchee and the Łiwahali, which Swanton describes as probably the most ancient Red Town among the Upper Creeks.

- 1 The ancestors of the Tukabahchee and the Łiwahali were once in a fog or vapor which prevented them from seeing each other. The Łiwahali wanted to see the Tukabahchee very much, and finally the fog was blown away so that they could do so. For some time the Ispokogis (Tukabahchee Indians) would not speak to them. At last they said, "Who are you?" They answered, "We are the Holiwahalis ('those who cut the war in two')." Then the Łiwahali asked in their turn who the strangers might be
- 10 and they answered, "We are the Ispokogis and Tukabahchee." Then said the Tukabahchee, "All right, you shall be our younger brothers."

**Muskogee:Tukabatchee-Coweta Alliance (MT2)**

Swanton 1928a:67

Swanton reports the following as told by Alindja, a Tuckabatchee, interpreted by Mr. Grayson, who was himself a Coweta who lived among the Eufala.

- 1 Anciently the Tukabahchee were at odds with all of their neighbors and were continually fighting but were uniformly successful. The Coweta heard of them, and, themselves being powerful, wanted to meet them in order to measure their strength. After a long time they heard that they were in their neighborhood and they sent some messengers to speak with them. When the messengers arrived they asked whether they had any chiefs. "Yes," they said, "we have a few." "Where are they?" Then two
- 10 small, insignificant looking persons were pointed out to

them sitting with their heads bowed down. Then the visitors addressed the chiefs saying “We hear that you have a very powerful medicine which enables you to conquer everybody, therefore we have come to learn about it. Have you any warriors?” “Yes,” said they, “we have a few.” “Let us see them.” “We must whoop four times in order to call them up,” they said. “All right,” answered the Coweta. Then they sent a messenger who returned presently with something wrapped up in a white deerskin.

- 20 They unrolled this and produced a short stick of miko hoyanidja. Holding this they whooped once and the earth trembled and it thundered and lightened. After they had whooped the second time, the Coweta said, “That will do. You need not whoop any more.” But the Tukabahchee answered that they must go through to the fourth now that they had begun and they did so. The Coweta said, “Let us become friends and exchange medicines.” They did this and have been firm friends ever since. The Tukabahchee medicine was, as we have seen, the miko hoyanidja; the
- 30 Coweta medicine was the kapapaska (spicewood).

### Muskogee:Tukabatchee-Coweta Alliance (M9)

Swanton 1928a:65–66

The following legend was reported to Swanton by Zachariah Cook, who heard it from Judge Nokosi, a Creek.

- 1 In the beginning the Indians came pouring out of the earth like ants. Those who got out first looked back, saw in what crowds the others were coming on, and said “It will not be good. It must be stopped.” And it stopped. In those days they laid down the towaka (logs) about the stomp ground. After they had arranged these and were seated upon them—they were then in the country where later they built their towns—up came the tall Coweta and found them. The Coweta said “Who are you?” “I
- 10 am the little Tukabahchee.” “What have you?” “I have



only the miko hoyanidja and my whoop.” The Tukabahchee miko held the miko hoyanidja in his right hand. “Let us hear you whoop,” said the Coweta. “No.” “Yes, let us hear you whoop.” The Tukabahchee behaved very humbly and refused to whoop for some time but finally they agreed in order to please the strangers. Then their leader arose, stamped upon the ground, and whooped, and the earth quivered as if there were an earthquake. After the second whoop the Coweta leader said, “My friend, that

20 will do,” but, having started, the Tukabahchee was obliged to complete the four cries. When he was through the Coweta chief said “we will be friends. Here is my medicine; let us combine the two.” So they united the pasa (Button-snake-root) of the Coweta with the miko hoyanidja of the Tukabahchee, and the combined medicine is the sawatcka. Thereafter each used both.

About this time two Ispokogis came down from above, approached the ball ground and saw that there were people there and that it was good, so they remained with the

30 people. One of these Ispokogis made a dugout canoe, and, when it was complete, he got in and began floating up into the air. But, when it was some distance off, he looked back and saw all of the people standing still gazing after him. Then the other Ispokogi lay down and died. The surviving Ispokogi remained with the people after that, and with reference to this event the word was “There shall be a link of brothers, life without ending.” This meant that when one Ispokogi died there should always be another to take his place. Old Tukabahchee

40 miko, who is known to have visited Washington, and who died on Red River about the year 1864, was the last Muskogee to preserve a knowledge of the identity of the Ispokogi. Theoretically there always is such a chief, but since the death of Tukabahchee miko the knowledge of him has become lost. This knowledge was anciently preserved by means of a certain council formed about the sacred fire in the busk ground.

*Comments*

26 . . . sawatcka . . . Alindja, whom Swanton describes as one of the best informed Tuckabatchees, stated that the pasa and the miko hoyanīdja were the two standard medicines and that the Coweta medicine was the kapapaska or spicewood. Swanton states that by some the sawatcka is given as the third medicine.<sup>2</sup>

## Journeys into the Sky World

Myths relating journeys beyond the sky into the Upper World are common throughout North America. It is interesting to note that among the earliest recorded Creek myths and legends this theme apparently appears only among the Yuchis and Alabamas. Greenlee recorded an extremely Christianized version of this myth among the Florida Seminole in the 1930s.<sup>1</sup> The myth probably was told to Greenlee by Josie Billie, a Seminole maker of medicine.

### Yuchi: Four Men Go to the Land of Spirits (to Recover Their Wives) (U9)

Wagner 1931:82–89

The following was related to Wagner by Maxey Simms.

- 1     Once there lived four people. They had all lost their wives. These people wanted very much to see their former wives, but they could do nothing to that purpose. They said to each other they would get them back, and then they went off. They went towards evening, and after they had gone for a long while they noticed something. There were big flees, jumping about, turning somersaults, and making a lot of noise as they were going by. When they saw them they said to one another, “Do not laugh at
- 10    them.” But the flees did whatever they could do to make the people laugh. Then one of them laughed a little within his throat, but [t]he flees noticed it, piled on him, and killed him. Then only three people were left. They went on towards evening. Now they got very close to

where the sky touches the earth. All the time they could hear a loud noise, and then they got there. They arrived at the place where the sky was. There the sky touched the earth, and then went up again; where it touched the ground it was very deep; they had to go through there to

- 20 get to their wives. One of them said, “Do not jump across, the sky might fall down on you.” But they answered, “He ought not to say that, and forecast something bad.” And then one by one they jumped through the sky, after they had given themselves names. One of them threw his burden on the other side of the ditch, then he said that his body should become a deer, and just when the sky went up again he jumped on the other side. The next one said, “Panther my body,” and likewise jumped through, just when the sky rose again. When the last one
- 30 threw his burden across, the sky fell down with it. Then he said to himself, “Bear my body,” and while he was jumping across, the sky came to the ground, threw him down, and killed him. These three people had first thrown their burdens upon the other side, and then, as soon as the sky rose again, two of them jumped across, but the last one did badly; his burden fell down, and the sky smashed him on the earth and killed him; only two were left and went on. While they were going on, they got to a house. An old woman was living there. The
- 40 woman invited them to sit down, and so they sat down. While they were there two people came. “These people are very mean,” the old woman said, and then she hid her visitors. She put them under her dress, and while she was sitting there, the others got there and one of them said, “I smell green people.” But the woman answered, “No green people are here,” and then they went off again. Then she said she would make something to eat for her visitors. She went out into the yard, and planted corn and squashes also. The two men watched her and thought,
- 50 “Will we ever get something to eat that way?” But the old woman said, “Shall we really get something ripe to

eat, you are thinking, but soon enough you will eat,” and what she had planted grew up very quickly indeed; then the old woman threw some dirt at it, and very soon it got ripe. She only had four ears of corn and four squashes, she cooked them, put them in a dish and set them before her visitors. When they got ready to eat they saw that there were only four pieces of corn and four pieces of squashes, and they thought, “Will this be enough?” “You

60 doubt whether this much will be enough,” the old woman said, “But you will never eat up all of it.” They began to eat, and everytime they took four pieces of corn and four pieces of squash the same number was still in the dish; at last they got enough and even left some over. Then the old woman told them that their wives were here, and that they would get them back. “At night they will dance, and then you will see them, if you can see them, and I will catch them for you,” she said. When the dance had started they could hear the people dancing and the

70 metalpieces on their dresses rattling, but they could not see them; “Yonder they go,” the old woman said and pointed at them, but they could not see them; then she took a coal of fire and hit the women with it, and then they could see the red light of the coal moving along, but they could not see the women. After she had caught them the old woman put them in a gourd shell, and brought them back. Then she opened the house and made her visitors look out and said, “Yonder you came from,” and when they were looking around they could see their

80 houses; “Now lie down,” she said, “And when you have slept you will wake up in your house. When you get home take these gourds with you to a big dance and hit them on the ground, but do not open them before, and then do not think, that these women ever died,” she said. But one of them could not sleep in the night, and he wanted to know whatever might be in the gourd; when he opened it, wind jumped out and went upward. Then they slept, and when they woke up they were lying in their houses. When they woke up they were very young, and when they had gone they

- 90 had been very old. And then, when it came to dance they took the gourds with them and during a swift dance one of them ran with it and hit it on the ground. Right there his former wife came forth, and then the other man also ran with his gourd and hit it on the ground, but nothing happened. He should not open gourd the old woman had said, but he opened it, and she had already gone upward. Thus, only one of them had brought his wife back. Long time passed, and they had children together. But one day the man was thinking, “This my wife died once,” and he
- 100 remembered her death. Right then in the night the woman got sick and died again; so they used to tell.

*Comments*

- 24–31 . . . after they had given themselves names . . . Wagner suggests that this is the origin of the deer, panther, and bear clan names.<sup>2</sup>
- 45 . . . green people . . . Wagner suggests that this means white people.<sup>3</sup>
- 70 . . . metalpieces on their dresses rattling . . . “strings of round shining metal pieces which give a rattling sound while dancing.”<sup>4</sup>

**Yuchi: Four Men Visit the Spirit Land to Recover Their Wives (and Death Originates) (U10)**

Speck 1909:144–46

- 1 Four Yuchi who had wives decided one day to kill them. So they killed the four women. “There is no such thing as death. So let us go and hunt them,” said they.

Accordingly the four husbands set out to find their wives. They said, “Let us go where the Creator is.” They set out westward and traveled a long while, coming at length to a place where there was a great cave. Before its mouth swayed a great cloud, in such a manner that they could not get by it or around it, for it was moving

- 10 up and down. They saw that their journey would end here unless they could devise some means of passing the cloud. It was decided that they imitate something very swift and get in that way. Said one of the men, “I’ll be a deer.”

So he became a deer, and when the cloud raised up the next time, he jumped in. The next said, "I'll be a panther." And when the cloud raised up, he jumped in. The third man said, "I'll be a bear." And the next time the cloud raised up, he too jumped in. They had all jumped at the right time, and had succeeded. Now the

- 20 fourth man said, "I am a man, and I'll be a man." And when he tried to get in, the cloud fell on his head and crushed him.

Then the three men who had reached the inside of the cave took their natural shape as men, and began to climb up the back of the cloud within the cave. After they had been some time climbing, they came to a wonderful scene, and as they went on they beheld an old woman seated there. The old woman was the sun. When she saw them she spoke to them.

- 30 "My sons, are you come. Are you not hungry?"

And the men said that they were hungry. Accordingly she planted a hill of corn, a hill of beans, and a hill of squash for each man. Now then they saw her doing this, they thought, "Well, as we are so hungry shall we have to wait for these things to grow before we can eat?" But the old woman knew their thoughts, and replied as though they had spoken out loud. She said, "You think you won't eat very soon, but you won't have long to wait."

Even then the plants began to sprout and grow up, and

- 40 soon they fruited, and it was not long before they gathered the corn, beans and squashes, and were ready to eat. The old woman then put a small quantity of the vegetables before each man. But they said, "Do you think that little will fill us?"

When they had finished eating, it was as she had said. There was some left over. Now the old woman spoke to the men again.

“What did you come here for? What do you want?” she asked them.

50 “We had four wives who are dead. We lost them, and they told us to hunt for them. So we are here.”

“Well, they are here,” said the old woman, “we are going to have an all-night dance, and the women will be there. Then you will see them.”

Now the men were deciding whether to stay for the dance, or to go on. And while they were thinking over it, a panther monster came up, and they were very much afraid. But as soon as they saw him, the old woman lifted up her dress and told the men to come and get beneath it; they

60 went under and she protected them. When the great monster came near, he said to her, “I smell people.” But the old woman said, “You smell me.” The monster was deceived and went away. Then when it became time the men went to the dance. They arrived at the place where they were dancing, and the men could hear the dance but they couldn’t see anything. They said to the old woman, “We can hear, but we cannot see. So give us a sign so that we may know that our wives are here.”

Then the old woman got a coal from the fire and put it on

70 the hip of one of the women who was now dancing with the rest. She did the same with each woman until the four had coals of fire on their hips. Now all that the men could see was the coal, when the women were dancing. But they stayed there watching. Soon the old woman said to them, “If you cannot see, lay down and go to sleep.”

So they did as they were told, and went to sleep. The old woman left then, and getting four large gourds, made holes in them and put one woman in each gourd. Then she carried the gourds to where the men were, and woke them

80 up, saying, “Here are your women.” She laid the gourds down, one near each man, and said, “Now lie down and



sleep again. When you wake up you will be back on earth. But when you wake up, don't open the gourds." She told them, "When you get back to your people, go to a dance and take these gourds with you."

Then they went to sleep again, and after a while woke up. They were back on earth. They went on until they reached their people. But on the way, one of the men became impatient, and opened his gourd. Immediately a great

90 wind came out and went up in the air. So the other three kept theirs and didn't open them. At last they reached their own land. When the time for a dance came around they took their gourds with them. While they were dancing they hit their gourds on the ground and broke them. The women jumped out and joined them in the dance. But the man who broke his beforehand, when he saw the other women restored to their men, wept. Now that's the way it was done.

The three who had done as the old woman told them, had a  
100 good time and were afterwards called by the others, "the people hunters." They were considered to be very wise, and in a short time all became great chiefs and councillors in their tribe.

### Alabama: The Men Who Went to the Sky (A10)

Swanton 1929:141-42

1 Some people were living at a certain place and one of their women died. When she was gone her children who had been left behind cried continually. Therefore, two persons set out to hunt for her. They started westward, kept on traveling, and reached the place where the sky stood. While they were there the sky went far up and came down again. Then one of them ran, in the form of a panther, and got through. The other got through in the same manner in the form of a bear.

- 10 Then they started on. Presently they reached the place where an old woman lived and spent the night there. She told them of a good trail and they went along upon it. They went on and made camp. They camped again. After they had camped eight times they reached a sheet of water. They dipped up water in a dipper and after they had thrown a little to each side the water divided and they got past and went on. After they had traveled on a long distance they came to where a man was living. “Why do you come here?” he asked. “Only because the
- 20 children’s mother came here and we are in search of her,” they said. “She is here,” he answered. “She is living not far off. Tell us when you are ready to go back.” He gave them a corncob and said, “Throw this upon her.” He also gave them a big bottle and sent them on. And they started off.

When they reached the place they found the woman dancing. They threw the corncob at her but missed. Finally they hit her and made her fall down and they seized her. They put her into the big bottle and brought her back. They

- 30 brought her to the place where they had been staying and set the bottle down.

“Did you think that you came a very great distance?” the man said. “Yes.” “Come here and look down,” he replied, and when they went and looked their house was close by. They lay down and slept and when they awoke next day they were lying rightly by their house, the big bottle with them. When the sun got high and it was nearly noon, something inside the bottle cried, and they thought the woman wanted to get out, so they took the bottle, set it

- 40 down in a shady place, and unscrewed the top a trifle. But when they set it down the sound was no longer to be heard. “What is the matter?” they thought. They opened it and found that she was gone. “You will not restore me to life properly,” she had said, and it was so.

## Alabama: The Men Who Went to the Sky (A I I)

Swanton 1929:142–43

- 1 There were two men and a woman living in a certain place. The woman had a little child. By and by the child's mother died. Then the two men determined to try and get her back, and about March they started off to heaven. They traveled on and on until at last they came to where an old woman lived and stayed at her house all night. She gave each of them a boiled pumpkin to eat, and they thought that these would not be enough, but the minute one of them was consumed another appeared in its place,
- 10 and they ate on until they were full. Going on farther, they came to some little people who were going to war on ducks and geese. Passing on, they came to where another old woman lived, and they spent the night with her. She said to them, "You are not to cross rivers on the way." She gave each a gourd with which they were to dip away the water of the streams they came to so that they could pass through them. Then they came to a third old woman and spent the night with her also. She said, "On the way are many great snakes," so she gave them bark of the bass
- 20 tree [båksa] to tie about their legs. Having fastened this on, they continued their journey and came to masses of snakes piled together. They walked through these and the snakes bit them but did them no harm. By the time they had gotten through, however, their barks were worn out with the biting. Again they came to an old woman with whom they passed the night. She said, "There is a battle on the way. If you have tobacco, cut it up ready for smoking." They cut their tobacco up and she made cigarettes for them. She said, "When you see the battle,
- 30 smoke cigarettes." They went on and by and by found the battle. Then they smoked cigarettes and the smoke covered everyone as with clouds, so they passed safely through. Finally they came to the end of the land and found the sky, which was moving up and down. One of them

said, “I am a panther,” and jumped up upon it. The other said, “I am a wildcat,” and did the same thing. Then they were carried far up and found some people living there. One day, as they traveled on, they came to a man and some dens. The man told them not to stop at the dens

40 but to go by, which they did. Next night they came to another man and spent the night with him. He said, “The women’s town is next. They will try to stop you, but do not stop.” They found this town as he had said and the women tried to stop them, but they passed right on.

Finally they came to where God (abå’ski djo’kole, “high living”) dwelt. He said, “Why did you come here?” and they told him that they had come for the mother of the child. Then he told them to stay there to the dance and he gave them a watermelon to eat. The men thought that

50 the watermelon seed would be a good thing to save and plant at home, but he told them not to keep a single seed. He had it divided for them, and when they were through eating they put the seeds back, and God put the rind together and made it into a whole watermelon once more. He said, “You have come a long way,” and they agreed that this must have been the case, for they had traveled an entire year. Then God took the cover off from something and let them look inside. They saw the house from which they had come just beneath. At the

60 dance they saw the woman they were in search of but could not catch her. Then God gave them pieces of corncob and said, “When you see that woman again throw these at her.” When they again saw her at the dance they threw the pieces of corncob at her. The last piece struck her, she fell down, and they seized her. Then God brought a big jug, put the woman into it, and screwed on the top. He said, “When you want to go back tell me.” They said, “We will go tomorrow.” Then they went to sleep, but when they woke up they found they were sleeping in their own

70 house. The woman inside of the jar was groaning, saying,

“You have brought me here and killed me.” They were so sorry for her that they put the jar in the shade and unscrewed the top a little, whereupon she stopped groaning. Then they thought they would go to sleep, but when they woke up and opened the jar she was gone. She went back to heaven. If they had left the cover screwed on until she died she would have come back again. God gave the woman to them but they lost her again. If they had left this cover screwed down, people would still come

80 back to earth; but since they did not, people do not come back anymore.

**Alabama (Koasati): Two Brothers Who Tried to Restore Their Sister to Life (A12)**

Swanton 1929:189–90

1 Two Indian brothers were living with their sister. Their sister, who had some children, died. Then the brothers went to search for her. They went on until they came to the sky. Then one of them stood upon it and the sky flew upward with him and set him down. When it came back, the other stood upon it and it carried him up and set him down also. Then they traveled on. They traveled until they came to where an old woman lived. They spent the night there and when they awoke the next morning they

10 started on again along the trail which she pointed out to them. They went on until they came to a place where many snakes lay across it. Then they peeled off slippery-elm bark and went on with this tied about their legs. They got through and went on still farther. On the way they came to where another person lived. They spent one night there. Then the person told them something. “On the trail is something bad,” he said. And he gave them cigarettes. So they went along the trail and presently came to where people were fighting with clubs. They blew

20 out tobacco smoke and everything was covered with smoke

as from fires, so that they passed through. Then they came to where another old woman lived and spent the night. She said to them, “There is a stream ahead so deep that you can not ford it. Dip it out!” She gave them a dipper. With this they went on, and when they got to the water they dipped in with the dipper and threw a little water out. Upon this the water divided, and they got through. When they got through the water came together again. Then they went on and stayed all night

30 with another person. Next morning they went on and got

to the place where God (Never-dying) lives. “Are you very tired?” he said. “Sit down. Are you hungry?” He split a big watermelon in two, and they ate. They wanted some watermelon seeds but he would not let them have any. The seed and the rind were all put back into the place from which they had been taken. In the evening he said, “Come this way! You traveled a long distance in coming here, did you not?” Then he got something that turned about, moved it around and said, “Look through this.”

40 They looked down. When they looked they saw their house not far away. “When you want to leave, tell me,” he said. They slept there three nights and on the fourth told him they wanted to go back. That night they took their sister in a big jug with the top screwed in and carried her off. “Lie down here,” Never-dying said to them, and they lay down, slept, and awoke at their own house. They were sorry to leave. The jug lay by them. When the sun rose the men heard groaning inside. The voice said, “I can not well live here. I want to stand

50 up; I am almost killed.” When they heard that they pitied her. They took the bottle to a shady place and loosened the top a little, upon which the voice ceased. They thought, “She is inside but no longer makes a noise or groans.” They looked to see whether she was still there, but she was gone.

## Alabama: The Men Who Went to the Sky (A13)

Swanton 1929:139–41

- 1 Two men started off to visit The-One-Sitting-Above (God). They went on. They went a long distance and came to where a Sharp-buttocks lived. He set out a chair with a hole in it and they sat down. “A battle is about to be fought here,” he said. So they made arrows. After they had done this ducks came as the Sharp-buttocks had foretold, along with geese and white cranes. They fought together and hung upon and threw one another down on the ground. The two men fought and afterwards they roasted
- 10 and ate the fowl. Then they started on.

While they were traveling along they came to where an old woman lived and spent the night there, and she gave them food. When she fed them she put a small piece of a small pumpkin on the table. “Only that for the two of us,” they thought, but after they had eaten it another was in the plate. They kept on eating and more came to be in the plate until they had enough.

When they were going to start she said, “On the road you will come to some deep water which you can not cross.”

- 20 She gave them a gourd which was hanging up in the house and they set out with it. She had said to them, “You throw the water to each side,” and when they got to the water they threw it to each side and it divided. When they started forward it came together behind them. So they got through and went on. After they had gone on for a while they saw something black coming after them and they stopped and looked at it. They became frightened. “Something wants to kill us,” they said. They turned round and waited for it to come close, but when it got
- 30 near it fell into a steep-sided hollow.

Then they started on and presently they came to where a

man lived who said, “You can not pass along this trail without assistance. There is a battle going on there.” He gave them cigarettes and they proceeded. When they reached the place they smoked and blew the smoke about. When the smoke covered everything they could not be seen and passed through. Going on, they came to the home of another man. “On the trail is something very bad,” he said. “Hunt bark cord (båksa) and tie it about your

40 feet.” So they hunted båksa, tied it about their feet, and went on. Soon they came to a town inhabited by snakes. When they tried to go past the snakes jumped at them and tried to bite them, but they got through, though the cord was worn out.

Then they traveled along until they came to where an old woman stayed. She said, “This road is the one to take. On it is a Dog town where dogs dance all of the time. Look at it and pass through, and when you have gone on you will come to a Girls’ town. Do not look at it. They

50 will stand in front of you to stop you, but pass through without looking at them.” They started on, and passed these two places. After they had gone on for a while they came to the Old-men’s town, where they were always dancing. They passed through and went on. On the way were numerous crossings where many persons had been traveling. They passed through, went on farther and came to the home of Above-sitter.

When they arrived he said, “Sit down. Are you hungry?” He got a watermelon and split it in half, and when they

60 ate, they thought, “The seeds of this will be good to plant,” but he said, “Don’t take any.” He put it back, with all of its seeds and the rind, and covered it up, and it was just as it had been before.

A big pot stood there, and he said, “Fill it with water and put it in the fireplace.” They got it and filled it with water. “Kindle a fire under it,” he said, so they



put fire under it. When the water boiled he said, “Come this way and stand here.” They started to obey, saying, “We think we are going to die. It was just for that that

70 we came hither.” They went to the place and stood there. He took a dipper, dipped up some water and poured it over them while it was still boiling. It appeared to be hot but it was not; it was only slightly warm. After he had poured it over them he took a knife and scraped their bodies and all of the dirt fell off. They kept eating. Then their bodies became light.

After they had remained there for a while he said, “The trail by which you came is too long. Come over here.” They went to the place and he took out something that

80 moved around like a telescope. After he had moved it about he said, “Look through this!” And when they looked down they saw their house with its cane platform not far off beneath them.

Then they asked him for some seed. After they had teased for a considerable time he said, “I will give it to you when you are ready to go. You shall start to-morrow.” He made them lie down and after they had lain down and slept they awoke at their old home. The seeds were lying by the crowns of their heads. (These are said to have

90 been seeds of corn, watermelons, and beans.)

### Alabama: A Journey to the Sky (A14)

Martin 1977:67–70

The 1977 version of the myth originally published in 1946 is virtually the same.<sup>5</sup>

1 Long ago three little boys lived near each other in a village. Every day these boys played together. While they were playing one day, they made plans to travel to the end of the world when they grew up.

As the years passed, and the boys grew to be young men, they still remembered their plan to travel to the end of the world. They continued to talk about this trip and, meeting one afternoon near the village square-ground, decided to start their journey the next morning.

- 10 Just as the sun rose, they picked up their deerskin bags and started out. Each bag contained a blanket and food. Also, they carried knives, bows and arrows for protection, because their path would lead them through dense forests full of wild animals.

The young men decided to travel with the sun. Had they gone toward the east, the sun would have been too hot. They reasoned that the sun, as it approached the place where it disappeared from earth, already would have used its heat during the day.

- 20 On the second day, they saw a wild turkey perched on the limb of a tall tree. The first traveler brought the turkey down with an arrow. When the travelers went forward to get the fowl, however, they found only a dead mosquito with an arrow lying across its back. This discovery caused them great surprise; they could think of no explanation for this event.

They resumed their journey and soon encountered a black bear, which immediately became a black hairy caterpillar. This transformation seemed miraculous, but they had no

- 30 time to investigate.

A few days later a huge eagle attacked the three young men. The eagle was a good fighter, but he couldn't whip three men. One of them plunged a long knife into the heart of the eagle.

Eventually the men approached the edge of a wide plain. In the distance they saw a mountain standing in their path. Several days elapsed before they reached the mountain, and behold! it was only a small land tortoise crawling across the plain. By this time, they were no

40 longer astonished: the inexplicable had ceased to surprise them.

After they crossed the plain, the travelers entered a dark forest where rattlesnakes lived—so many that there seemed to be one rattlesnake for each step they took. To protect their legs, they stripped bark from a slippery elm tree and made leggings. Snakes by the thousands attacked them until the elm bark was in shreds and appeared like hair on their legs.

So many strange things had happened by now that they grew

50 cautious as they approached what appeared from a distance to be a great patch of blue sky near the earth. As they drew nearer, they could see a body of water so wide that the opposite shore was out of sight. There seemed no way to cross this ocean.

When the three friends had almost abandoned hope of continuing their journey, an enormous Snake-Crawfish (Horned Snake) approached the shore. This snake was as large around as a tree trunk, with horns on his head and scales that glittered like sparks of fire. Alternating

60 red, yellow, and black rings covered the awesome creature's body.

The men started looking in their food bags. All they found was half a small animal they had cooked that morning. One of the men threw a bone to the edge of the water. When Horned Snake came for the bone, the travelers jumped on his back. They threw another bone a short distance from the shore, and Horned Snake immediately swam toward it.

After Horned Snake had finished the second bone, one of

70 the adventurers threw another bone farther ahead. Soon Horned Snake swam toward the third bone. They continued in this way until they approached the opposite shore. Only one bone remained, and the strongest man was

selected to throw it. This man braced himself and threw the bone to the edge of the water. The great Horned Snake made his way to the shore, and the travelers dismounted and thanked Horned Snake for the ride. But the big creature didn't realize that he had been tricked. He had only been looking for something to eat; yet he had

80 carried the three men across the ocean.

The years went by, and the adventurers became old men with gray beards on their chins. They did not lose hope; to the contrary, they continued walking with enthusiasm. One day they heard a noise so far away that they could barely hear it. Two huge objects seemed to be clashing together at regular intervals. As they journeyed, the noise grew louder, and they realized that each day they were approaching a great conflict of some sort.

The noise became so loud that the men were almost

90 deafened. Finally, they walked out of a dense forest, and in the distance they saw a startling phenomenon: over and over, the sky would fall, strike the earth, and then go up again. When the sky made its upward movement, there was an open space between the earth and sky. Almost immediately the sky fell again, producing a dull thud. This swinging action was repeated at intervals so that it seemed an eternal combat raged between the earth and sky.

While the adventurers watched this great contest, the

100 fact dawned on them that they had come to the end of the earth. They forgot their other experiences as they watched the sky hitting the earth.

When the men began to recover from their amazement, the first traveler suggested that they could run under the sky as it made its upward movement. He said that after going across they would be in a new world and could continue their explorations. The second traveler agreed, but the third traveler was afraid to make the attempt.

As the sky came down and then went up, the first two men

110 ran to the other side. The third traveler saw that his friends had crossed safely; and since he knew that he could not return alone through the thick woods, he decided to go across, also. But he waited too long to start. When he was halfway across, the sky came down again and crushed him.

The two remaining adventurers jumped on the sky as it went up. After a swift journey into space, they reached the beautiful country of another world. What they saw held them spell bound. Every kind of bird and beast

120 roamed contentedly through the forests and over the meadows. People lived together peacefully, and hatred and suffering were unknown. Indeed, conditions were so nearly perfect that the travelers could not fully describe later what they had seen.

As the two friends wandered from place to place, they were warned not to touch any of the animals or any of the people. By accident, however, one traveler touched a horse, which immediately turned into a skeleton. The other traveler touched a young boy, who also became a

130 skeleton. The adventurers then realized that this new world contained only the spirits of animals and people who once had lived on earth.

After the travelers completed their investigation of this strange land, they were given seeds of plants that produced such foods as watermelons, beans, potatoes, and barley. Then Aba Mikko, the Great Chief, invited them to sleep in a beautiful house. When the travelers awoke the following morning, they found that they were back in the same log cabins they had lived in before starting their

140 journey.

Since the two friends were now very old, the people of the village did not immediately recognize them. But

eventually some of the oldest men and women remembered them. The travelers recounted their experiences and distributed the seeds among their friends. Thus began the cultivation of several new food plants.

### Alabama: The Visit to the Sky (A15)

Densmore 1937:276–77

The following version of the journey beyond the sky was related to Frances Densmore by Charlie Martin Thompson, who was elected chief of the Alabama Indians in Texas in 1928. She reports his name as *Son' ke mĩ' kko* (Sun-Kee). A version of the myth, not substantially different from the following, was also collected from Charles Thompson by Elma Heard.<sup>6</sup>

- 1 In the beginning four old men walked toward the west. They heard a sound—*boom, boom*. The sky opened and went up. One after another they ran through the sky.
 

One said, “I am the panther, running through.” Another said, “I am the wolf, running through.” Another said, “I am the wildcat, running through.” The last one said nothing, but he got caught and was killed. The others went on until they came to a place where an old woman lived by herself. There was a river near by. The old
- 10 woman told a boy to make a dipper and give it to these men. One after another they dipped up water and threw it in different directions. Then they crossed the river on dry ground.
 

They went a long way and found some people fighting; so they could not pass. The three men made cigarettes and smoked, and blew the smoke all over the land. It became such a thick fog that the people could not see to fight, and the men passed through.

They came to a great many snakes piled up—about a mile
- 20 of them. The men tied slippery elm bark all over their

legs and then they could walk among the snakes. Afterwards they took off the slippery elm bark and threw it away.

They went on and on. At last they came to another old woman. They had eaten nothing and were hungry. The old woman cooked squashes and put three on each plate. As soon as a man had eaten these squashes three more appeared on his plate.

The woman said, “You are dirty.” She said, “Go fill a

- 30 bucket with water and put it on the fire.” When the water was boiling, she made them stand in a row with their backs to her, and she poured the boiling water on their backs and scrubbed them hard. They felt *light* after this and went on and on.

They went up on high to the Lord’s place. The Lord asked, “Do you think you came a long way?” The Lord had a big telescope and said, “Come, look in here.” They looked and saw their old home down below. The Lord said, “Do you want to go back?” They said, “Yes.” The Lord

- 40 gave them all kinds of seeds—corn, sweet potato, and so forth, and made them sleep that night. In the morning they waked up in their old homes and had all this seed with them.

## Visitors from the Sky World

### Yuchi: Why the Cedar Tree Is Red-Grained (U11)

Gatschet 1893:281–82

From a young Yuchi at Wialaka (Oklahoma), Gatschet obtained in 1885 the following myth in the Yuchi language.

- 1 An unknown mysterious being once came down upon the earth and met people there, who were the ancestors of the Yuchi Indians. To them this being (*Hi'ki* or *Ka'la hi'ki*) taught many of the acts of life, and in matters of religion admonished them to call the sun their *mother* as a matter of worship. Every morning the sun, after rising above the horizon, makes short stops, and then goes faster until it reaches the noon point. So the Unknown inquired of them what was the matter with the sun. They
- 10 denied having any knowledge about it, and said, "Somebody has to go there to see and examine." "Who would go there, and what could he do after he gets there?" The people said, "We are afraid to go up there." But the Unknown selected two men to make the ascent, gave to each a club, and instructed them that as soon as the wizard who was playing these tricks on the sun was leaving his cavern in the earth and appeared on the surface they should kill him on the spot. "It is a wizard who causes the sun to go so fast in the morning, for at sunrise he
- 20 makes dashes at it, and the sun, being afraid of him,



tries to flee from his presence.” The two brave men went to the rising place of the sun to watch the orifice from which the sun emerges. The wizard appeared at the mouth of the cave, and at the same time the sun was to rise from another orifice beyond it. The wizard watched for the fiery disk, and put himself in position to rush and jump at it at the moment of its appearance. When the wizard held up his head the two men knocked it off from his body with their clubs, took it to their tribe, and

- 30 proclaimed that they had killed the sorcerer who had for so long a time urged the sun to a quicker motion. But the wizard’s head was not dead yet. It was stirring and moving about, and to stop this the man of mysterious origin advised the people to tie the head on the uppermost limbs of a tree. They did so, and on the next morning the head fell to the ground, for it was not dead yet. He then ordered them to tie the head to another tree. It still lived and fell to the ground the next day. To insure success, the Unknown then made them tie
- 40 it to a red cedar tree. There it remained, and its life became extinct. The blood of the head ran through the cedar. Henceforth the grain of the wood assumed a reddish color, and the cedar tree became a medicine tree.

### *Comments*

- 3 . . . Hi’ki or Ka’la hi’ki . . . Gatschet states that in popular belief among the Yuchi, the *Hiki* or mysterious being is sometimes depicted as an ogre, a dangerous monster, or an animal with human or superhuman faculties.<sup>1</sup>

### **Yuchi: A Hunter Who Captured a Woman from the Sky (U12)**

Wagner 1931:230–33

The following was recorded by Wagner from Ida Clinton.

- 1 A person lived here who used to go hunting only; once he came to the ‘clean ground,’ and while he was standing there and looking at it something was sounding above him,

and he looked up. He could see something black coming there, and while he was standing there looking at it, it came right toward the clean ground; then he lay down behind a log and hid himself. And then the thing alighted and people were inside; they happened to be on the ball ground part of the clean ground. Then they

- 10 played ball, and very pretty women were with them. Two of them were falling down towards him, and then they ran back again, and the man thought, "If I catch those they would pile on me and kill me." But while he was lying there one of them fell down towards him, and right then he tackled her and tied her. The others were afraid and all got back in the vessel; when they hit it, it sounded, and they went up again. The woman cried aloud and said, "Turn me loose, you would not know the proper food for me." But he would not let her go, and then he went back
- 20 with her, and while she was there she starved and got tired. And then she said, "Only the heads and entrails of raccoons I can eat." Then the man went hunting, and the woman got tame, and they had two children, but after a while the woman wanted to get back to the sky again. And then she thought she would make a vessel like the one she had come down with and would get in there. And while the man went hunting she was making the vessel, and about the time when the man would come back again she would put it away. One evening, when he was about to come home she
- 30 finished it. And then she said to her children, "If you want to see me you must make something like this; when you get in there you will go upward and see me; but your father also is here." And then the woman got in the vessel; she hit it and it sounded, and while she was going up the man came back right there. He ran behind and reached up for her but just then she went upward. Then he lived together with his children only, but he did not care for them much. And then they wanted to see their mother, and they said, "Let us make something of
- 40 the kind she was sitting in, and then let us get in there

and we will get there and see her, she has said.” Then they made it, and after they had finished it they got in; when they hit it, it sounded and went upward with them, and they got up there. Their mother was sitting there eating a raccoon’s head, and they said, “Ah, our mother, give us a raccoon’s head and let us eat.” But she said, “I had no children, I thought.” Then one of her children said, “He may bite, and she may die,” and then the raccoon’s head bit the woman’s lips. “My children, take

50 it from me,” she said, but they answered, “We had no mother, we thought,” it is told.

### Alabama: The Celestial Skiff (A16)

Swanton 1929:138–39

1 Some people descended from above in a canoe singing and laughing. When they reached the earth they got out and played ball on a little prairie. As soon as they were through they got into the canoe again, singing and laughing continually, ascended toward the sky, and disappeared. After an interval they descended to the same place, singing and laughing, got out, and played ball again. When they were through they went back, got into the canoe, ascended toward the sky, and disappeared.

10 After this had gone on for some time a man came near a little while before they descended, stood on a tree concealed behind some bushes and saw them come down, singing and laughing, to the ground and get out. While they were playing the ball was thrown so as to fall close to the man and one woman came running toward it. When she got near he seized her and the other people got into the canoe, ascended toward the sky, singing continually, and disappeared.

The woman, however, he married. One time, after they had

20 had several children, the children said, “Father, we want

some fresh meat. Go and hunt deer for us.” He started off, but he had not gotten far when he stopped and returned home. The mother said to her children, “Say, ‘Father, go farther off and kill and bring back some deer. We need venison very much.’” And the children said, “Father, go farther off and kill and bring back some deer. We need venison very much.” When he did so, the children and their mother got into the canoe and started up, singing, but he came running back, pulled the

30 canoe down, and laid it on the ground again.

After that the woman made a small canoe and laid it on the ground. When their father went hunting she got into one canoe and put the children into the small canoe and they started upward singing. As they were going up the man came running back, but pulled only his children down, while their mother, singing continually, disappeared above.

But the children which the father had kept back wanted to follow their mother. They and their father got into the

40 canoe, started off, singing continually, and vanished. Presently they came to where an old woman lived. The man said to her, “We have come because the children want to see their mother,” and the old woman answered, “Their mother is dancing over yonder all the time, having small round squashes for breasts.”

Then the old woman gave them food. She cooked some small squashes and gave pieces to each. When she set these before them, they thought, “It is too little for us.”

But when they took one away another appeared in the same

50 place. When they took that one away it was as before. They ate for a long time but the food was still left. Then the old woman broke a corncob in pieces and gave a piece to each of them.

They went on and came to another person’s house. This person said to them, “She stays here dancing.” When they

were there she went dancing around. They threw a piece of corncob at her but did not hit her. She passed through them running. The next time they threw at her when she came, she said, "I smell something," and passed through

60 on the run. But the last one they threw hit her and she said, "My children have come," and she came running up to them. Then all got into the canoe and came back to this world.

One time after this when their father was away all got into the canoe, started up toward the sky, and disappeared. The children's father came back and after he had remained there for a while he got into the other canoe, sang, and started upward toward the sky. He went on for a while, singing, but looked down to the ground.

70 Then he fell back and was killed.

### Yuchi: Wind Seeks His Lost Sons and Kills the Iron Monster (UI3)

Speck 1909:147-48

1 The Wind came out of the east and was lying somewhere, they say. He had four young men; they were his sons. One of them once said, "Let us go and look at the earth." That's why they went, and they haven't come back yet. So the young man went west and was gone a long time; he has never come back. Soon after, the second young man went and did not come back. Then the third young man went and did not come back. None of them came back.

Now the Wind said, "I will go myself." He prepared and

10 got everything ready. He told them to bring him a chair. They brought him a large terrapin. Then he ordered his pipe, telling them to bring him a bull frog. Then he called for his pipe-stem. They brought a kind of snake and made a pipe-stem. He told them to get his tobacco. They brought him snake dung for tobacco. He told them to get his ammunition bag. They got him another snake for

the ammunition bag. And when he told them to bring a belt for the ammunition bag, they brought him a bullsnake's hide for that. Then the Wind was ready.

- 20 He got up and started toward the west, the way the young men had gone before him. He followed their trail, traveling a long while, and at last came to a creek. Across the creek on the opposite bank he saw a white rooster. A short distance back there was a house. Now when the rooster saw him it flew over and alighted on the roof of the house. Then someone came out and crossed the creek in a little boat to meet him. Then the man in the boat told Wind to get in with him and go across. But Wind said that he had his own way to get across. So he
- 30 put the terrapin in the creek and got on his back and the terrapin carried him across. Then they went on and soon reached the house. When Wind got to the house, the man gave him a chair and told him to sit down. Wind said that he had his own chair. He took the terrapin and sat down on him. The man then asked Wind to smoke with him. Wind said that he was willing, but that he had his own tobacco. And taking the snake dung, he put it in the frog's mouth, filling it up.

“Now all that I need is a little fire to light my tobacco

- 40 with,” said Wind. But he had his own fire. Taking the joint of snake he had with him he struck a fire, and soon had a light for his pipe. He lighted it in that way. Then taking the other snake which was the pipe-stem, he inserted this in the frog's anus. So the pipe was finished, and in that way Wind could smoke with his host.

Now the owner of the house was a bad man; a man who could not be killed. He was made of iron. So he was Iron Man. Wind knew all about that, and he even knew that Iron Man had killed his four young men. Then Wind decided to kill

- 50 him. When he smoked, he drew in a great deal of smoke and blew it on Iron Man. And that is the way he killed

him. When Iron Man was dead, his wife came up and said to Wind, "You killed my man. Let's marry."

But Wind said that he would not. He asked her where his four young men were and what had become of them. Then she told him all about them. She told him to go where he would find a certain dead tree near the water. She told him that if he would go and cut this tree down and throw it in the water, the four young men would come up from

60 it. Then she guided Wind to the tree and said to him, "Cut it down." She got an axe and Wind cut the tree down. Then he threw it in the water as Iron Man's wife had told him. And the four young men came out of the water. When they stood on the ground they all looked black. They recognized Wind, but they told him that they were not under his control any longer. "Well, I'll make something different out of you, then," he said to them. Then one of the young men said, "What shall I be?" But Wind did not answer him, for that.

70 "I'll be a wolf," said the second. So the Wind told him to go into the woods, and he went.

Wind asked the third what he would be. "I'll be a crow," said he.

Then the Wind asked the fourth what he would be. "I'll be a raven," said the fourth young man. Wind told him to go into the forest. Now the first young man who had spoken too soon was the only one left. And Wind said to him, "What will you be?" "I'll be a dog," said he. "Well, you go and stay with the wolf," said Wind to him.

80 And he went.

Now Wind was through with the young men. He said, "Some day I will go back where I came from. As I go I'll leave nothing in my way."

Wind has never come back; he is there yet. But some day he will come. That is what the old Yuchi say.

## Yuchi: Wind Seeks His Lost Sons and Kills the Iron Monster (UI4)

Wagner 1931:77–82

- 1 The wind sent his youngsters across the world to see the earth. He himself had no arms and no legs, and was just lying there, so he sent his youngsters away. One after the other he had sent away, and everytime he had sent one the young one did not come back. And then Wind said, “What can be so fierce that, everytime I send one of my youngsters, he never comes back? I will go and see.” Then he made himself and his clothes ready to go. Turtles, “tcon<sup>Σ</sup>,” were his shoes, soft turtle shell was
- 10 his side bag, rattlesnakes were his side bag strings, a diamond snake was his belt, “rattlesnake-servants-to-tie-round” were his legs, a bull frog was his pipe, the snake witch was his tobacco, breaking snakes were his matches, the “roast-snake-get-in” was to be his pipestem, and the big-head-turtle was his chair. Then he went off. He wanted to find out why his youngsters did not come home, and so he went across the world. While he was going he came to a river; on the other side of it there was a house with a white rooster standing there and
- 20 watching the road; right after he saw the wind he ran back, got on top of the house and crowed. Right then a man come out, got into a boat and came over. “Stay there, I will come across with the boat and you can get in,” he said. But Wind did not stop, and when the man got there with the boat he again said, “Get in my boat!” But Wind answered, “Be it so, I got my own boat,” and he walked across the top of the water. And when they got to the house, he set a chair before him and said, “Though it be only a chair, please sit on it!” “Be it
- 30 so, I got my own chair,” he said. Then he threw down the big-head-turtle, he just stretched himself, and then he sat down on him. The man set the pipe before him and said, “Sir, if only the pipe, please smoke my tobacco!”



“Be it so, I got my own pipe,” he said; he took out the bullfrog and for a pipestem the roast-snake-get-in, and then he stuck it into the bullfrog. “Sir, if only the tobacco, please smoke mine,” he said. “Be it so, I got my own tobacco,” he said; he took out the snake witch, and put it into the mouth of the bullfrog. “If only the

40 matches, please use mine,” he said. “Be it so, I got my own matches,” he said. The breaking snake was his match; he lighted it, and the tobacco he also lighted. He smoked the tobacco, and when the smoke spread, the snakes got mad and jumped about. When the man whose house it was saw this, he said, “You are a very fierce person, indeed!” But Wind answered, “Be it so, you will get to know me.” While they were sitting there they talked together, and the wind said, “Everytime I sent my youngsters around the world they did not come back; so I

50 came to see what is so fierce to keep them back.” “They are here, but they never think back,” the man answered. While Wind was sitting there and smoking tobacco, the man smelled the smoke, then he fell over and made a rattling noise. It proved to be the iron monster that had fallen down; his wife was outdoors and pounded corn, and the wind asked her, “Where did he send those youngsters?” When she said, “Yonder he threw them all into the water,” he asked, “Which way did he say they would come back?” She answered, “He said to cut down the tree yonder and

60 let it fall into the water, then they will come back.” “Well then, cut it down and let it fall into the water,” he said, and the woman chopped the tree, and let it fall into the water. When it fell into the water the young people whom the iron monster had thrown in appeared right away on the surface. They came to the bank but they were not like they used to be; he had made something else of them, and he sent them far and wide. Then the wind cut up the tree which the woman had chopped down, built a fire and threw the wood into the fire until it was

70 blazing high, then he caught the woman and threw her into

the fire. Everytime she came out he threw her back again until she was very small, then he made a rat out of her. Then he said, “Right here I will be lying in the water, but some day I will go back across the world; all over the world I will sweep,” then he lay down again. And so some day the wind will come out and sweep across the world, they used to say.

## Snake Man Legends

### Yuchi: A Man Becomes a Snake (U15)

Wagner 1931:67-70

A common myth type, found throughout the Southeast as well as other regions of the New World in variant forms, is that of the transformation of a man into a snake or other being. The transformations portrayed in these myths almost always are the result of the violation of a food taboo. The following myth was recorded by Wagner from Maxey Simms.

- 1 A long time ago two people who were hunting found a hollow tree, filled with water, in which two perches happened to be. One of the hunters wanted to eat the perches, but the other one said one should not eat them. However, he wanted very much to eat them, and so he took them, then he cooked and ate them. Then they went home. In the night the one who had eaten the fish did not feel well and called, "Why is it that way with me?" And the others saw how he turned into a long snake. He was
- 10 sitting in the corner of the house, tightly coiled around, and changed into a snake. He ate only one kind of food. The soft end of a grain of corn only he used to eat. Young women who had never sat away yet picked the soft ends of corn for him to eat, they put them into a dish, and he used to eat them. Now it had been for a long time that they were picking the soft ends of corn for him. And then one of the young women who were picking the soft ends of corn was getting tired of always

- doing the same thing. The snake knew what she was
- 20 thinking. He said, “Those who are getting something to eat for me are all tired of me, and so I will go away. Four nights I will teach medicine songs.” The people should gather and listen to him, he said. Every night many people came together, and listened to his teaching of medicine songs. Four nights he was teaching medicine songs, And then it was time for him to go back into the water. All his kinfolk gathered to follow him down to the water. They made a piece of cane, reaching from where the snake was lying into the water. There was a
- 30 whirl in the water, right there they put the cane in. Then the snake went along on the cane. On each side his kinfolk were going with him. While they went with him they were beating the drum. They held their hand above him while he went into the water. But one woman had forgotten her comb; she ran back to the house to get it. She got back very quickly, but now only the end of the snake’s tail was not yet sunk under water; she could do nothing. While the drum was sounding loudly, they all went into the water; the woman also wanted to go into the
- 40 water, she threw herself upon the water but she could not sink, then she sat down at the bank of the water and cried until she turned into stone. And so some of the Yuchi are living in the water, it is told. The man who had turned into a snake taught medicine songs when he went into the water, and the people heard them and learned them from him, it is said.

*Comments*

- 13 . . . Young women who had never sat away yet . . . those who had never gone away to menstruate.<sup>1</sup>

### Hitchiti: The Man Who Became a Snake (H3)

Swanton 1929:97-98

- 1 Two men out hunting came to a creek and in a hollow log lying in the water found two fish which one of the men took out. When he had done so they say the other said, "They may not be fish." But the first would not leave them. He took them along and when they camped he boiled the fish. When he was about to eat them the other told him not to, but he would not listen. He ate. "Eat one with me," he said to his companion, but he would not do so. After he had eaten they went to bed, one lying on
- 10 one side of the fire and the other on the other side, but during the night he who had eaten the fish awoke groaning. "Throw the light over me," he said, "to see what is the matter with me," and, when his companion threw light on him and looked, he saw that his legs had grown together. This went on until he turned entirely into a snake.

While this was going on the transformed man said, "Do not be afraid of me. Follow the course I take and, when I stop at a certain place, go home." By the next day that

- 20 man had turned entirely into a snake and at daybreak, as he had foretold, he started off and the other followed. Finally he saw him enter a pond. Then he started home, and when he got there he told the man's mother that her son had turned into snake. "He told me to say to you, 'If she wants to see me she must go there and call me by name.'"

When he said this to his mother, she said, "Show me the place," and she started off with him. When they got to the creek, he said to her, "Here is where the man who

- 30 became a snake went in." So his mother went down to the creek. She walked to the edge of the water and sat down. When she called his name there was a commotion in the

water and he came out. He laid his head on her knees, but he could not talk. Then his mother cried. After remaining there a while the man who had turned into a snake returned into the water and his mother went home.

That is the way it is told.

### Alabama: The Man Who Became a Snake (A17)

Martin 1977:84–85

- 1 Two brothers went hunting together, and just before sunset one day they camped near a big river. While the older brother gathered bark to put up a shelter, the younger one went to catch fish.

The fisherman cut several canes near the water's edge. He split the canes and tied the strips together to form a cage-trap with a funnel-shaped entrance. Then he waded into the river and secured the trap to a tree stump with a long strip of deerskin.

- 10 When the fisherman checked his trap after sunset, he found an unusual catfish. This creature was yellow with red and black spots scattered over its body.

The man who had trapped the fish wanted to cook and eat it. But his brother said, "The old people say that a fish colored like this one is not good. Something terrible will happen to you. Throw it in the river."

"I don't believe what the old people say," the other man said. "I am hungry and will eat the fish." So he cooked the catfish and ate it.

- 20 Soon afterward night came, and the brothers lay down on opposite sides of the fire. Late that night the older brother awoke to find his companion groaning and rolling around on the ground in agony.

“What is wrong?” he asked.

“I have a strange feeling,” replied the other. “Look at me and see what is happening.”

The older man lighted a pine knot and examined his brother. He saw that the body of the fish eater was beginning to assume a curious shape. Soon the legs of

30 the unfortunate man began to grow together, and the lower part of his body turned into a snake.

Next, the man’s arms sank into his body, and the skin took on a scaly appearance that mounted gradually to the neck. Finally, his head changed into a tie-snake’s head. Then the tie-snake crawled away from the fire and plunged into the river, where he has lived since that time.

### Alabama: The Woman Who Turned into a Snake (A18)

Swanton 1929:154

- 1 A woman got some bison grease and walked along with it. On the bank of a river she picked up some turtle and terrapin eggs and she fried them. Her husband told her not to fry the turtle and terrapin eggs together with the grease but she did so and ate them. Immediately her legs twisted together and became like the tail of a snake. She went down into the water, her husband’s people following her, wailing. When they called four times to her she came out. She looked wholly like a snake. Then
- 10 she went back into the water and stayed there and was never seen again.

## Muskogee: Coosa Flood (Snake-Man) (MC2)

Swanton 1928a:71–72

The following is a version of the Coosa legend recorded by G. W. Grayson from Caley Proctor, one of the leading “reactionaries” among the Creeks at the time of recording.

- 1 Cosa, according to this legend, was the original name of the Muscogeese, two of whom, at a very early day, went away from home on a hunting expedition in the wild woods as was the habit of the people in those times. Having gone as far as they cared to travel the first day, they encamped near a stream of water. Near their camp stood a large tree, from a certain part of which the men noticed that drops of water occasionally fell. Regarding this as a rather strange phenomenon, one of the men
- 10 determined to investigate it, and he climbed the tree to ascertain the cause, while his companion awaited the result below. He found the tree to be hollow at a certain point, containing a considerable quantity of water collected therein from rainfall, from which descended the drops of water they had observed. In this water were a number of fishes. With his hands he caught some of these which he brought down, cooked and ate against the protests of his companion, who said, “We have always been counseled not to undertake to do anything
- 20 unusual without the advice or consent of person older than we and of greater experience, and I think you should not eat the fishes taken in so strange a manner lest something terrible befall you.” But the young man could not undo his rash act, and soon its effects began to show clearly; in a little while, that same evening, his human head and face changed into the head of an immense snake, while his arms and legs also changed, completing his metamorphosis into a large serpent of horrible appearance.



- 30 Next morning he bewailed his plight to his companion, saying: "You in all friendliness advised me not to eat of the fishes lest evil befall me, but, not regarding your friendly caution, I ate them and am now suffering the consequences of my obstinacy. Go now and inform my parents of my plight, tell them how it came about, and say to them, if they desire to see me, to come here. I will be in the creek nearby. When they come let them discharge a gun as a signal of their arrival and I shall come out of the water to meet them."
- 40 So saying he entered the waters of the creek and disappeared, leaving his friend alone in camp. The lat[t]er thereupon returned to the town of Cosa, and to the parents and relatives of the now metamorphosed man he related all that had occurred and told how he had been deputed by his unfortunate friend to relate the story of his mishap and how they might once more see him if they desired.
- The parents and relatives and all other who had heard the story were greatly concerned and, assembling in full
- 50 force, repaired at once to the place indicated where they discharged the gun as their friend had directed. On hearing this signal the snake man came forth from the creek and stretched himself affectionately across the laps of his parents as they sat in the midst of the assemblage. Upon this they gave way to their grief and set up a great *wahketa*, expressive of sorrow for the loss of their son. The monster said sadly: "You see me in this pitiable condition, the circumstances of which have, I presume, been explained to you so that you understand
- 60 how it came about. I now suggest that my relatives and friends return to their homes and on the fourth day from the present gather at the Tcook-u'thlocco ("Big House" i.e., the Square Ground) where I will meet them later." Saying this, the snake-man returned to the water and his relatives and friends went back to their homes.

On the fourth day the relatives and friends of the snake-man gathered at the Tcook-u'thlocco, as had been requested, and many others came near but remained on the outside. Presently the snake-man made his appearance,

- 70 coming from the stream in which he had taken refuge, and he was followed by a stream of water. When he entered the grounds occupied by the public buildings they all sank along with the people gathered there, and this was the origin of Coosa River.

Those who did not enter the Square Grounds with the friends and relatives of the snake-man were not destroyed, but gathered themselves together and became what was subsequently known as Cosa town, the members calling themselves Cos-is-tuggees, "people of the Cosa

- 80 town," though the name is more properly Cos-ulgee. The residue of the Cosa people, having thus formed a town, bitterly lamented on account of the calamity that had thus robbed them of so many of their valuable citizens. In grievous distress they cried out, "Woe is our nation! We were the greatest of all the nations; our *tus-e-ki-yâs* were numerous, reaching out and known and dreaded the world over. But it is not so now. We have lost even our Tcook-u'thlocco, and a great number of our common people and great is the humiliation that has fallen on us.
- 90 Shame and humiliation is now our portion. We can occupy only the place of the e-yas-ke (the humble, lowly, weak, unpretending.)" The Cosas indulged in other similar jeremiads and changed their name to Tulsee, *ulsee* signifying in the Muscogee language "to be ashamed," "bashful," while from it may be derived *ul is ke ta*, "shame," "disgrace," but how the letter *t* could have become prefixed to *ulsee* is neither explained nor conjectured.

### Comments

56 . . . a great *wahketa* . . . Swanton describes this as a lamentation for the dead.<sup>2</sup>

## Muskogee: Tie Snake Legend (MC3)

Nelson 1950:201

Nelson reports the following from Blanche C. Fleetwood, Federal Writer's Project File, Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama. Note the similarity to the preceding legend.

- 1 Coosa River runs through Talladega County. Coosa was the original name of the Muscogees, two of whom went on a hunting expedition into the woods. They camped near a stream of water by which stood a large tree, from a certain part of which fell drops of water. One of the men climbed the tree to examine it and found it was hollow at a certain point and contained water collected there from rainfall. In this water were a number of fish. He caught some with his hands, brought them down,
- 10 cooked and ate them. His companion counseled him not to eat the fish taken in such a strange manner but the young man could not undo his rash act. Soon the effects began to show: his human head and face began to change, completing his shape into a horrible serpent. Next morning he said to his companion, "You advised me not to eat of these fish lest evil befall me but I would not listen to your friendly caution. Go now and inform my parents of my plight and say to them if they desire to see, come here. I will await them in a near by creek.
- 20 When they come discharge a gun and I will come out of the water to meet them." So saying, he entered the waters of the creek and disappeared. His friend returned to the town of Coosa and related all that had occurred and how they might see him if they desired. The parents and relatives were very much concerned and went at once to the place indicated. There they discharged the gun and at the signal the snake man came forth from the creek and stretched himself across the lap of his parents affectionately. Upon this they gave way to great grief
- 30 and sorrow. The monster said sadly, "You see me in this

pitiable condition, the circumstances of which have been explained to you. I now suggest that you all return home and on the fourth day from the present, gather at the Big House i.e. the Square Ground, where I will meet you later.” Saying this the snake man returned to the water and his relatives returned home. On the fourth day relatives and friends of the snake man gathered at the creek as requested. In a few minutes the snake man made his appearance, coming from the stream in which he had

40 taken refuge and was followed by a stream of water. When he entered the grounds occupied by the public buildings they all sank with the people gathered there, and this was the origin of Coosa River.

### Muskogee: Coosa Flood (Water Cougar) (MC4)

Swanton 1928a:70–71

Swanton collected the following legend from an old man of Hilibi named Woksi Miko. In this and the following legend, the story is virtually the same except that the man becomes a water cougar, a being often interchanged with the serpent in Creek cosmology.

- 1 An unmarried woman in the town of Coosa (Kosa or Koza) went to draw water from the spring and was afterward found to be pregnant. When her child was born it was spotted. Then her brothers and some of her relatives thought this was the offspring of a water tiger (wi katca), which the Muskogee now identify with the leopard, became angry with her, and wanted to kill it. But she had some old relatives who opposed them and finally prevailed. The busk ground and “hot house” where they
- 10 counselled about this stood near the river, and the girl ran to the water tiger and said “There is an effort being made to kill my child, but they have not killed it yet.” Then the water tiger said “Let those who are disposed to defend the child move away from the rest.” The woman

told these what the water tiger had said, so they moved away from the town, and that night the water tiger brought on a great inundation which covered Coosa, with its square ground and all, but for years after people could see there the main timbers that braced the old

- 20 tcokofa. The water tiger took the woman home to live with him. Then the few persons who were left alive came together and said “We were once a great town but now there are very, very few of us and we are ashamed of having fallen off so in numbers (*istå’kosi*). Nevertheless let us get together and make another town for ourselves,” and they did so, establishing the town we now know as Tulsa (*istalsosi*). Those who were engulfed in the river did not all die, and afterward people could hear a drum beaten there when they were dancing and
- 30 having their times. There is now a whirlpool on the site of the old town and close to the river. Sometimes people used to see beams whirling round in this eddy, and occasionally men sitting upon them. No bird could fly over the whirlpool, and those which tried always fell into the center of it and were drowned. But there is a small bird with a yellow breast which seems to say “koskoza” and this could fly across with perfect ease. Some maintained that the people beneath the water favored these birds and let them fly across. We name them from
- 40 the noise which they make.

### Comments

24–27 . . . having fallen off so in numbers (*istå’kosi*) . . . the town we now know as Tulsa (*istalsosi*) . . . Swanton suggests *istå’kosi* is a contraction of *isti ålsakosim*, “many people ashamed,” and *istalsosi* is *isti alsosi*, “one (or a few) ashamed.”<sup>3</sup> The first, he suggests, is a pun on Coosa and the second on Tulsa.

## Muskogee: The Water Panther (Leopard) (MC5)

Swanton 1929:21–22

- 1 A girl whose father and mother were dead lived at a certain place with some relatives. Every day she went for water to a spring, the trail to which ran through a deep hollow. One time, after she had grown up, a Water Panther (Oī-kātca) appeared to her there and she came to be with child by him. As she had been very carefully watched the people did not know what to make of this. Some said, “Let us kill her,” but others replied, “No, it was probably nature.”
- 10 Finally the woman gave birth to three Water Panthers, and then some of the people again said, “Let us kill them.” “No,” replied the others, “their mother is a human being,” and after consultation they agreed to let them live.

The woman saw her Water Panther husband from time to time and she reported what had been done. She said she was very anxious because some of the people had threatened to kill her young ones. Then the Water Panther said, “Let the friends of the young ones separate from the others

- 20 and live by themselves,” so they moved off to another place. Afterwards the old town in which the enemies lived sank and the place turned into a great pool of water. The post of the hot house continued to stand out above the water of the lake for some time afterwards. That town is thought to have been Coosa, although it is possible it may have been Fus-hatchee. It is called Kosa-talāksûmgi, “Sunk Coosa.” The people who wanted the young Water Panthers killed were taken into the dwelling of the Water Panther farther beneath the waves; what
- 30 became of the others is unknown.

## Muskogee: The Man Who Became a Snake (M10)

Swanton 1929:31–32

- 1 Two young men once went out hunting together. One was a jolly fellow, the other more thoughtful. The former always wanted to do everything he heard of anyone else doing. As they were going along the sober one said he had heard that if anyone ate the brains of a male squirrel and of a gobbler he would turn into a tie-snake. The jolly one said, "I have a notion to try that." The other tried to dissuade him, but he went secretly and ate these brains. After they had made their camp that night
- 10 and had gone to sleep the thoughtful youth was awakened by hearing his companion groaning and acting as if in misery. He asked him if he were sick, but the young man answered, "No, I am not sick, but that thing you told me not to eat I ate." His friend answered, "The old Indians always told people not to do that." He made a light and found that his companion was already becoming a tie-snake. When the transformation was completed the Tie-snake asked him to go and look for some water. His friend went and reported that all he could find was a
- 20 small pool. The Snake followed him to it and curled himself up in the water. Then the Snake told him to go to his mother and tell her that he had become a snake, but that she must not be afraid and must come and see him. Before he started off the youth told his snake friend that when he returned he would give four whoops as a signal for him to come out of the water. Then he went away. When he came back, along with his companion's mother, he found that the pool had become a big lake. They sat down by the shore of this lake and he uttered
- 30 four whoops. At first the water in the center of the lake began to rise up, and at the fourth the Snake came right up to his mother. Then they saw that horns had grown upon his head like those of a stag. His friend

tried to talk to him but he could not reply. He merely laid his head across his mother's lap. Then the friend tied the Snake's gun across his horns so that it could not slip off, and told him that he should stay there and see what would happen. So he and the Snake's mother started home and the Snake disappeared in the water.

### Muskogee: The Man Who Became a Snake (M11)

Swanton 1929:33–34

- 1 Two men went to war, but after they had had some encounters with the enemy one of them fell sick and they decided they had better return home. While they were camping about on their way back the one who was sick said that he wanted something very much. "What is it?" asked his companion. "Fish," he replied. Later, when his companion was away from camp, the sick man found a place where a tree had been uprooted, leaving a hollow filled with water, and in this was a fine fish. He cooked this,
- 10 ate as much as he wanted of it, and saved some for his friend. When his friend returned he said to him, "You know how much I wanted some fish. I found one and have eaten a part but I save some for you. I discovered it in some water at the root of that tree that is blown over." But his friend answered, "It might not be good, but as long as you have eaten some take the rest." So the sick man finished it.

Soon after this night came on and they lay down on opposite sides of the fire. But some time in the night

- 20 the sick man called out to his friend repeatedly until he awoke him. "What is the matter?" said his friend. "I have a curious feeling," replied the other. "Look at me and see what is wrong." So the well man lighted a pine knot and examined his companion and he found that he had turned into a snake from the hips down.



The snake man said, "Do not be afraid of me. There is a spring over yonder and when it is morning you must accompany me thither. Take along two pine knots. I will call out when I get tired." By morning the sick man

- 30 had turned completely into a serpent which hung from one tree to another above him. When his friend struck the two pine knots together he came down and the other led the way toward the spring. About noon the Snake called out and his human companion stopped. After a rest they again set out and, sure enough, they arrived presently at a nice little spring. Telling his companion to remain where he was, the Snake went down into the water and as he did so the sides caved in all about so that the spring expanded into a big water hole in which the man stood
- 40 ankle deep.

After that the man went home and when the mother and sisters of his friend saw him come alone they thought that the other had been killed in the war. "He has not been killed," he said, "but has turned into a snake and made for himself a water hole. If you wish we will go to see him." So all of them set out. There was now a big blue water hole at the place, and when they arrived their guide got his knots, which he had placed somewhere for safe-keeping, and struck them together in the water,

- 50 making a great wave. Then the Snake came out in the middle of the pond. He had blue horns. After circling about in the water he came to land near them and laid his head in his mother's lap. They hung the belt and other ornaments he had used on his horns. Then he circled the pond again and when he came back seized his youngest sister and carried her down into the water with him. Ever after people avoided that pond. It was a fearful place and about it were snakes of all sorts.

## Muskogee: The Man Who Became a Snake (M12)

Swanton 1929:32–33

- 1 Two old men once went hunting and camped at a certain spot. One of them was very fond of fish and said, “I want some fish.” Just then they noticed water dripping from the top of a tree near by, and the man who was fond of fish said he would go up to see what caused it. Arrived there, he found water in the top of the tree and some fish swimming in it, splashing the water over by dashing around. He said, “That is what I have been wanting,” and threw them down. Then he climbed down and
- 10 ate them. The other said, “There may be something wrong about fish found up in a tree that way,” but his companion cooked and ate them nevertheless. The other did not like fish, so he did not touch them. But after the first man had eaten he stretched out and said that his bones ached and that something was the matter. The other said, “I told you they might not be good but you would eat them.” Then the body of the fish eater began to assume a curious shape, more and more like that of a snake, until he had altogether turned into one.
- 20 He could still talk, however, and he said, “I have many kindred. Tell them I will be at the square ground (tcuko lâko) and ask them to come there.” Then he went into a little stream near by, whereupon the water bubbled up into a great boiling spring. The man that turned into a snake belonged to the Deer clan.

At the time appointed the kindred of this man assembled at the square ground to see him, and when he came it was with a powerful current of water as if a dam had broken and they were all swept away; perhaps they were turned

- 30 into snakes. Thus the water snake was a kind of person. These water snakes had horns of different colors, yellow, blue, white, green, etc.

## Muskogee: The Man Who Became a Snake (M13)

Swanton 1929:30–31

1 Two men went hunting together. They traveled all day and when they encamped for the night exchanged stories with each other. One said that if you mixed together the brains of a black snake, a black squirrel, and a wild turkey and ate them you would turn into a snake. The other replied, "If that is the case I believe I will try it." "That is the story," said his companion, "and I do not believe it would be well to try it." The other was anxious to test its truth, however, so he got the three

10 different kinds of brains, mixed them together, and ate them. "I have eaten the thing we were talking about," he said to his comrade, and the latter answered, "When I told the story I did not think you would do that. You have done wrong." They were very fond of each other.

Then the hunters lay down to sleep and during the night the one who had eaten the brains called out, "My friend, the story you heard was a true one. It is coming to pass." From his thighs down he was already a serpent. The next time he spoke to his friend his entire body had

20 turned into a snake. He told him to go along with him, saying, "I must now find a place to which I can retire." They went on until they came to a small, deep pool made by an uprooted tree, and the Snake said, "When you return to camp move some distance back. Come to see me in the morning and discharge your gun and we will have a talk before you go home."

The hunter did as he had been directed and when he returned to the place next day found that the pool had expanded into a large, deep pond. He discharged his gun

30 and the Snake came up in the middle of the sheet of water, Then he sank out of sight and soon came crawling up the bank. He said, "When you get through hunting and

return home tell my parents of the accident which has befallen me. If they want to come to see me tell them to discharge a gun at this place. Tell my parents not to be afraid of me. I am their child.”

The friend could do nothing more, so he returned home and related what had happened. But all thought that he had killed his friend and they would not be satisfied until

- 40 they saw for themselves, so they went back with him. He conducted them to the place where their camp had been and said, “Right here is where he lay when he turned into a snake.” Then they went to the shore of the lake and discharged a gun. The Snake then showed himself in the middle and disappeared again. “That is he,” said the man. “He will come out right here at the edge of the water and you must not be afraid of him.” So the father and mother sat down there side by side. Presently the Snake came up and crawled over them and then returned and
- 50 laid its head against its mother’s jaw. It shed tears, but could not speak. It wrapped itself around them in all kinds of ways and then unfolded and returned to the lake. The parents wept but they could not help themselves, so they returned home. That was what they call the tie-snake.

### Muskogee: The Man Who Became a Snake (M14)

Swanton 1929:34

- 1 Two friends went out hunting. They came to the shore of a great lake, and on the shore found a big egg, which one of them brought back to camp. His friend told him it might not be good, but he said “I am going to cook it anyhow.” So he cooked and ate it, and then the two lay down to sleep on opposite sides of the fire. During the night the one who had eaten the egg awakened his companion. “My friend, what is the matter?” said the other. “Look and see what is the matter with me.” His

- 10 friend looked and saw that the legs of the other were glued together. By and by the same one called to his friend to look at him again, and he found that from his body on down was the tail of a snake. At daybreak he said again, "Look at me now," and behold he had turned completely into a snake which lay there in a big coil. Then the Snake said, "You must leave me, but first pilot me to the hole from which we got water." They got there and the Snake went in, whereupon the earth, trees, and everything else caved in, producing a big water hole.
- 20 Then the Snake raised his head out of the water and said, "Tell my parents and my sisters to come and see me." So the friend went home and told them, and they asked him to guide them back to the place where the Snake had been left. When they got to the shore the Snake showed himself in the middle of the pond. He came to the bank and crawled out, and he crawled over the laps of his parents and his other friends, shedding tears. Then he returned into the water and they went home. So the tie-snake was created from a human being.

### Muskogee: Horned Serpent Legend (M15)

Hewitt 1939:157-59

The following myth was recorded by Hewitt in Washington, D.C., on June 24, 1883.<sup>4</sup> Swanton suggests that perhaps the myth was related to Hewitt by Porter or Perryman but more likely by Jeremiah Curtin.

- 1 Two Indians, one of whom was named Kowe, went upon a hunting expedition and were singularly unsuccessful. Before they killed anything their supplies of food became exhausted and they had nothing to eat. One evening, as they were walking along through the forests, feeling very hungry and dejected, Kowe noticing nearby the hollow stump of a tree which had been broken off near the ground, approached it and found that it contained water. Upon closer examination he found a few small fishes

- 10 swimming about in the water which he captured in order to use them as food.

When night came on and they could not well proceed farther, the hunters halted and established a camp or resting place for the night. Dressing the fish and preparing them for the evening meal, Kowe invited his companion to join him in eating them. The latter, however, declined, saying that as the fish had been caught in a very unnatural place, he feared that they had become in some way unfit for human food, and would have

- 20 a bad effect on anyone eating them. He advised Kowe himself not to eat them but the latter was very hungry and was not deterred by his friend's fear.

At the time they retired to rest no ill consequences showed themselves, but late in the night Kowe was heard to groan and make sounds as if he were in great misery, so that his friend was awakened. On inquiring the trouble, Kowe replied: "You cautioned me last evening against eating those fishes, but I did not heed you and ate them, and that, I apprehend, is the cause of my

- 30 present calamity. I am now spontaneously and steadily taking on a hideous form, an end which I can neither avert nor control, and it is distressingly painful. I wish you to get up and look at me, but I hope you will not be afraid of me, for no matter what my form proves to be, I shall never forget our friendship or harm you.

Upon this the friend got up and, lifting the covering from his unfortunate friend, found that he was gradually being metamorphosed into a snake, a large portion being already coiled up in the bed. He replaced the covering

- 40 and bore his grief in silence. When morning came and it was light Kowe had turned into a fully developed snake of hideous appearance. He was, however, able to converse with his friend in human language and he solicited him to follow him back to a lake or pond of water which they had

passed the day before. On their way thither the snake requested his friend to return home and inform his wife and all his relations of the occurrence, and to tell them that he desired they should all come out to the pond to see him for the last time. He further directed that he

- 50 should bring back a *saogo* or rattle to rattle on the bank so that he would know that his wife and relatives had come to see him, whereupon he would appear to them.

Having given these directions to his friend, he disappeared in the depths of the lake which they had now reached. The friend immediately returned home and reported what had happened to him, delivering also his messages to his wife and relatives.

As soon as possible the relatives and many others went to the pond to view the strange sight, the news of which was

- 60 uppermost in everyone's mind. On reaching the pond the friend began to shake his rattle and sing, calling "Kowe! Kowe!" as he had been instructed to do. Thereupon the waters of the pond began to roll and bubble and show considerable commotion, and presently an enormous snake appeared. Coming up to the shore where stood a great crowd of spectators, it laid its head on the lap of the woman who had been its wife during the days of its humanity. Its head was now surmounted by a pair of horns. It happened that the woman was provided with a
- 70 sharp instrument and with it she cut the horns off as mementos of him who could no more be her companion.

These horns were found to have value to anyone who had a portion of one, giving him luck and success in the hunt. It is said that a song or chant something like the following must be sung before going out with the horn to hunt:

He coiled himself up  
 He loosed himself out of his coil  
 He straightened himself out

- 80      He went in a zigzag way  
          He glittered toward the sun  
          He disappeared in the water  
          The water bubbled

On account of the virtues attributed to it, this snake's horn at once became a charm greatly desired by every hunter, and in course of time it was broken up into very minute pieces in order that its virtues might reach and benefit as many men as possible. I (i.e., the recorder of the story) have been informed by a friend who has a

- 90      minute fragment of this so-called horn that it is a little red particle which will float when in placed in water.

### Muskogee: Legend of the Tie Snakes (MT3)

Methvin 1927:392-96

A Major Cramer, an old ex-federal army officer, related the following legend to Methvin.

- 1      It was many years ago, about 1812, when the encroachments of the whites had grown more and more oppressive to the Indians, and revenge rankled in their hearts, and they determined to get rid of the hateful "pale face." At this time the Creeks lived in Georgia. Tecumseh, who was a Shawnee Chief, a half-breed Creek, his mother being a Creek, undertook to organize all the Indians from the Gulf to the Great Lakes into one united effort to exterminate the ever increasing and oppressive whites.
- 10     He came to the Creeks and found all willing and ready to enter such an alliance except one band, the Tuc-ca-baces. This was his mother's band of Creeks and he came to them very confident that he would find them ready to join the alliance, and when they persistently refused he was greatly angered. He threatened them with dire punishment if they persisted in their refusal. He told them that when he got back home he would stamp his foot upon the



ground and it would be heard from one end of the line to the other, for it would jar the whole earth and by this

- 20 they would know that his anger was great against them, and if they did not at once arm themselves and join the alliance they would suffer great punishment.

The Indians counted the days it would take Tecumseh to reach his home back in Ohio on Mad River, and by a strange coincidence, when the time predicted for arrival came, the houses were shaken by a great earthquake. Trees fell, houses were shaken down, the waters boiled and seethed, and New Madrid was completely swallowed up. The Indians who had hesitated became alarmed and

- 30 convinced of Tecumseh's mission, rushed to arms. But the Tuc-ca-ba-ces still refused. It was then that an effort was made to coerce them, but the Tuc-ca-ba-ces, declaring that they would not enter the war, gathered in their square grounds, a kind of fort, and prepared to defend themselves. Here for days they were besieged.

Thousands of missiles sent by their foes fell in their midst, but no one was hurt, and the Tuc-ca-ba-ces felt assured that the Great Spirit was befriending them. The arrows of the besiegers were silver tipped and lay three

- 40 inches deep, but still no one was hurt. On the morning of the third day, the chief of the Tuc-ca-ba-ces called his only son and heir, a lad of fourteen, and gave him a message to the chief who lived some distance up the river, stating his situation and asking his aid.

As a token of friendship, the chief sent one of the tribal vessels, a small round pot.

The boy called two other boys of his own age and together they started off up the river. After seven or eight

- 50 miles they grew tired and forgetting the urgency of their mission and the need of haste, they stopped to look

around and just as boys often do, began some sport. They began to ricochet stones upon the water in the river, when finally the chief's son concluded to try the skipping properties of the sacred vessel. A rash act apparently, but the Tuc-ca-ba-ces ever contended that it was the Great Spirit that caused the boy to do it. The boy threw the vessel and it skipped along till it reached the center of the river when it suddenly sank out of

60 sight. The boy was dismayed, for he knew it would be useless to go without the vessel and to return to his father he dared not. There was but one way open. The vessel he must have at any cost. So stationing the other boys to guide him to the spot where the vessel sank, he swam after it. When just over the vessel he saw it lying on the bottom of the river. He dived for it, hoping to reach it and bring it up again. But on reaching the bottom, he was seized and securely bound, hands and feet, by the snakes that had gathered around the pot. They

70 carried him along on the bottom of the river till they came to a sandbar and lifting him safely over that they went on till they finally came to an island composed entirely of snakes, though the boy did not notice this at the time.

He was taken to the center of the island where he was released and placed upright before a throne upon which sat the king of the "Tie-Snakes." The king invited him to a seat upon the throne beside him but as he attempted to reach the seat the throne raised up. This was

80 repeated three times before he was able to step upon the platform of the throne. As soon as he had stepped in front of the king he was directed to a tomahawk sticking in a column at one side of the throne. This he was told to take, as it was his. But three times the column receded before he was able to secure the weapon. In another column was a large eagle feather which the king told him to take also, but the column receded before he was able to gain the prize. On still another was a

wampum belt which he must obtain also by the threefold

90 effort.

After all this the king said to the boy, "I am aware of your father's trouble and know of the hostile bands that are trying to drive him into war. Your father is my friend and is acting in the right and I, the king of the Tie-Snakes, will help him. Go back to your father and tell him that when he can hold out no longer against his foes to come to the river where the tribal vessel sank and just at sunrise, facing the east, prostrate himself three times to the earth, and when he has done so and he

100 stands erect again his eyes will behold standing before him the king of Tie-Snakes, who will be there to deliver him and his people. The king finished speaking and as the boy was dismissed, the snakes, that had brought him there, approached and again tied themselves about his body and bore him away. As this was taking place, he discovered for the first time that the platform, throne, columns, pillars, and islands were all composed of Tie-Snakes. He was taken up and carried back out of the lagoon over the sandbar to the very spot in the river

110 where the sacred vessel had sunk. Here he was released, the snakes unwinding themselves from his body. He was given back the tribal vessel, and rising to the surface, he swam to the landing.

In the meantime the two boys on the river bank, convinced that the chief's son was drowned, in great trepidation, returned to tell him of the sad tragedy.

This startling news broke the old chief's heart for all his hopes were centered in this son and he would not be comforted. But just at sunrise on the third morning the

120 lad suddenly returned. Consternation for a while seized upon the camp, for they thought it was the boy's spirit in tangible form come back from the dead. But their fears were turned into rejoicing when he related all that

had happened to him and the message that the Tie-Snake king had sent to his father. The foe had failed to make any successful attack upon the Tuc-ca-ba-ces until the night before his return when renewed assaults fierce and strong were made, and so urgent was the conflict that it seemed that the foe would certainly overcome them.

- 130 This was renewed with greater force for three successive nights, but still the Tuc-ca-ba-ces kept back their foes. It seemed that they could hold out but a little longer, for the hostile Indians were receiving reinforcements each day, until great multitudes surrounded the camp. On the third morning after their return of the boy, the chief of the Tuc-ca-ba-ces went as was directed to the appointed place on the river to meet the king of the Tie-Snakes. As the message directed, facing the east just at sunrise, he prostrated himself three times to the earth.
- 140 As he rose the third time and stood erect, the Tie-Snake King arose from the water and stood before him. He told the chief to go back to his camp, continue his vigilance, but rest assured that deliverance would come that night.

Every Tuc-ca-ba-ce was in dire dread and expectancy for the approaching night, for they anticipated a still fiercer attack from their relentless foes. But to their surprise and wonder no attack was made and the hours of the night passed away in silence. In the early morning the whole camp was thrilled by the news brought in by

- 150 scouts that all warriors in the besieging army were lying dead out there on the field. But when the chief, with a band of warriors, ventured out he found that instead of being dead, they were all securely bound hands and feet by the Tie-Snakes.

## Muskogee: The King of the Tie Snakes (MT4)

Tuggle 1973:175–76

This legend cannot be directly associated with the Tuckabatchee. It is placed here because of its similarity to the preceding legend.

1 A chief sent his son on a message to another chief, and delivered to him a vessel as the emblem of his authority. The son stopped to play with some boys, who were throwing flat stones on the surface of the water. The chief's son threw his vessel on the water, and it sank. He was frightened. He was afraid to go to the neighboring chief without the vessel, & he did not like to return home and tell his father of his loss. He jumped into the stream, & reaching the spot where the vessel sank, he dived into

10 the water. His playmates waited a long time for him, but he did not appear. They returned & reported his death.

When he was beneath the surface of the stream, the tie-snakes seized him & bore him away to a cave & said to him: "Ascend yonder platform." He looked and saw seated on a platform the King of the tie-snakes. The platform was a mass of living tie-snakes. He approach[ed] the platform and lifted his foot to [as]cend, but the platform ascended as he l[ifted] his foot. Again, he tried, with the [same] result. The third time he tried

20 in vain. The tie-snakes said, "Ascend." He lifted his foot the fourth time & succeeded in ascending the platform & the king invited him to sit by his side. The king said to him: "See yonder feather. It is yours," pointing to a plume in the corner of the cave.

He approached the plume & extended his hand to seize it, but it eluded his grasp. Three times he made the attempt & three times it escaped. On the fourth attempt, he obtained it.

"Yonder tomahawk is yours" said the tie-snake's King.

30 He went to the place where the tomahawk was sticking & reached out his hand to take it, but in vain. It lifted itself every time he raised his hand. He tried four times & on the fourth trial, it remained still and he succe[eded] in taking it.

The king said: “You [ca]n retu[rn] to your father after three days. When [he] asks where you have been reply, ‘I know what I know,’ but in no event tell him what you know. When he needs my aid let him walk towards the east, & bow three times to the rising sun and I will be

40 there to help him.”

After three days the tie snake[s] carried him to the same spot where he dived into the stream & lifted him to the surface of the water & placed his lost vessel in his hand.

He swam to the bank & returned to his father who was mourning over his death. He father rejoiced over his son’s wonderful restoration.

He informed his father of the tie-snake King & his message of proffered aid. Not long afterwards his father

50 was attacked by his enemies. He said to his son: “You understand [what the King of the Tie-snakes] said. Go and seek [his aid.]”

The son put [the feather on his] head, took the tomahawk, [walked towards] the [ea]st and bowed three [times t]o th[e] rising sun.

The King of the tie-snakes stood before him: “What do you wish?”

“My father needs your aid.”

“Go. Tell him not to fear. They will attack him, but

60 they shall not harm him nor his people. In the morning all will be well.”

The son returned to his father and delivered the message of the King of the tie-snakes.

The enemy came & attacked his town, but no one was harmed. Night came. In the morning they beheld their enemies, each held fast in the folds of a tie-snake & so all were captured & the chief made peace with all his foes.

## Man-Eating Birds

Several legends exist among the Creeks that describe man-eating birds or mythological birds of gigantic proportions that carry people away to their nests. Similar legends found among other southeastern peoples are included in this work because of the importance attributed to birds in Creek cosmology.

### Hitchiti: The Man-Eating Bird (H4)

Swanton 1929:89–90

- 1 Several persons went out to hunt and traveled about for some time. One night some unknown person carried off one of them, and they started on without him. They traveled along and camped again and that night another person disappeared, only one being left. There was a puppy with them and in the morning the man and the puppy started on together. After they had traveled for some time night came, and the puppy said, "Creep into that hollow log and I will sit at the opening and watch." When he spoke thus
- 10 that man went inside of the hollow log, and while he was sitting there he heard something coming making a noise. The puppy sitting at the opening barked. Then the thing reached them and began scratching on the hollow log. While he was doing so the puppy said to the man, "If he scratches a hole through the hollow log you must tie his claw," so the man prepared something with which to tie it, and after he had waited for some time the creature finally made a hole and he tied its claw. But when day



came the claw of the thing that had been carrying people  
 20 away came off and he disappeared.

Then the man and dog started along. They traveled about, and presently found some big eggs. They both sat down in that nest, and when night came some strange thing like a big bird came along in the sky and sat down upon the eggs. It covered the man completely. While it was and the man was sitting under it, the man-eater came making a noise. When it got there, he heard it attack the big bird sitting on the eggs. The man sat there for a while, and then the man-eater disappeared and did not come back.

30 It was gone for good and when day came the thing sitting on the eggs flew toward the sky. After it started off that man left, traveled along and reached home. "Something like that (describing what it resembled) devoured them," he said.

### Hitchiti: The Visit to the Nest of the Monster Bird (H5)

Swanton 1929:90

1 A man out hunting saw a Big-crow coming, against which people were very much on their guard because it caught human beings. The man ran away. He got inside a hollow log, but it took him up, hollow log and all. The Big-crow flew with it toward the sky. "He went long," said the man, "and left me at a rocky place where two baby Big-crows sat. There I remained." While the baby Big-crows were growing up that man played with them. After he had made them very tame that man sat on a Big-crow,  
 10 and it flew out and back with him. Then he considered the matter and thought to himself, "I might do this way and so get down to the ground."

Then he made a drumstick, mounted one of the birds, and flew off on it. After he had gone a little way he struck

it on the back of its head with the drumstick and made it fall so that it went lower down. When it tried to go up he struck it on the back of its head with his drumstick and it again went down. When he could see the trees he kept on until he struck them and then do got clear down

- 20 on the ground and dismounted. He struck the baby Big-crow to drive it away. Then the man started on, reached his people, and told them about his adventures. This is the way they tell it.

### **Hitchiti: A Strange Turkey Catches People and Carries Them Up to the Sky (H6)**

Swanton 1929:90–91

- 1 A Turkey used to catch men and carry them up to the sky. When they discovered this, many people gathered at the buskground to find someone who could kill the Turkey when it came. Black Snake was present, and they said to him, “You might do it.” “All right,” he answered. Then they deliberated to find another whom they might ask. A Puppy was there, and they said, “You might try this.” He, too, said, “All right.” So these two were chosen to kill the Turkey.
- 10 Then the people waited and presently they heard the Turkey coming. It came from the sky while they were waiting for it. As soon as it lighted on the ground Black Snake ran at it and tried to whip it but missed. When it dropped from above the Puppy also ran up and struck the Turkey from behind. It fell down and all the men ran upon it, beat it, and killed it. Then the disappearance of the men into the sky stopped.

Before that time the people did not eat these birds, but they have done so ever since. When the Turkey came the

- 20 Puppy killed it, and so nowadays when turkeys see a puppy

they are afraid of it. All fly up into the trees.  
 Therefore, puppies are taken hunting and when, after  
 hunting about, they discover turkeys the turkeys all fly  
 up into trees. Then it is easy to kill them.  
 This is how they tell it.

### Alabama: The Eagle's Nest (A19)

Swanton 1929:154

- 1 A man traveling about became frightened at a big eagle which he saw moving along and got into a hollow tree. Then the eagle took him, tree and all, carried him to his little eaglets, and laid him down there. The eaglets sat on the top of a high hill. When day came the mother bird went away and in the evening came back.

Then the man watched the eaglets. When they grew bigger and could fly some, and just after their mother had started away, the man came out of his log, mounted upon

- 10 the back of one of them, and came down. He tried to come toward the ground, and if the bird flew up a little, he struck it on the head and it came on down again. If it turned round and flew up again, he again, hit it and it descended farther. It came on, and, when it had almost reached the ground, he heard its mother screaming behind. But the eaglet came on down and when it reached the earth he got off and ran away.

### Alabama: The Man and the Eagle (A20)

Swanton 1929:193

- 1 Some Indians went hunting and camped in a certain place. While they were there one Indian was attracted by a certain high mountain. So he went to it and spent some time walking around its sides. After he had looked as

much as he wished he started back to camp, but before he had gotten there something like a cloud pursued him, seized him, and flew with him to the top of the rocky mountain. Arrived there, it threw him down to be food for an eaglet, which was on the top, but he whipped it

10 and made it run away. He himself hid in a rocky cave.

After he had stayed in this place for a while he got hungry, and laid down slices of venison from deer he had killed upon a hot rock where they became dried in the sun. He lived upon them and also gave some venison to the eaglet, which was very small. Then the big eagle killed and brought home a bison he ate that in the same manner. He also fed it to the eaglet. Another time it killed a bear and he fed the eaglet with it. He did so because he wanted to ride upon its back. He was watching

20 for a chance to do this. The old eagle went off early in the morning and came back late in the evening. So the Indian thought, "That is how I will escape." He kept trying to ride upon the little eagle. By and by he cut a stick to take along, and after the old eagle had started off, he carried the eaglet to the edge of the rock, mounted upon it and made it start downward by striking it on the head. If it inclined upward he hit it on the head and made it turn down. He struck it on the head and made it come down four times. When it dropped

30 upon the ground he got off and ran away. As he went he saw the thing like a black cloud following him and he ran fast. When he got to some woods the eagle approached them, wheeled about and went back.

### Alabama: The Story of the Life Eater (A21)

Swanton 1929:196-97

1 Once, when Life-eater was traveling about, he met a man out hunting. The man was very much frightened. Life-

eater pursued him, and though the man strove to run away from him he could not do so. As he was going along he seized a little rabbit and put it into his hunting bag. Life-eater is very much afraid of a dog and when evening came the man, being afraid of him, acted like a dog. He growled and barked. Life-eater stopped and said, "Listen!" By and by the hunter barked a little. The

- 10 other stood still. Then the hunter took out the little rabbit and showed it to Life-eater and he disappeared on the run. The man got back to his camp and, when night came, sat down upon the ground.

During the night something bad (or something supernatural) came to him. It seized a stout stick to hit him but when the Indian lay down he had gotten under a forked stick, and when the bad thing wanted to give him a sweeping blow it hit the forked stick. Then the man got up quickly, ran away and jumped into a big pond near

- 20 by and crossed it. Looking back, he saw his pursuer standing on the other side. Then the Indian returned home without killing anything.

### Muskogee: The Story of the Turkey (M16)

Swanton 1929:36

- 1 The Seminoles have a story about the Turkey, who was once the king of the birds and flew high in the air like the eagle. He would swoop down on the council ground and bear away a man. Then people devised a plan to catch him. Four men were to roll four big balls along the ball ground, so as to attract his attention as he circled in the air about them, and four swift warriors were to watch the Turkey as he came down and seize him. The Turkey was seen flying in the clouds over the council ground and at
- 10 last down he swooped, having the scalp of his last victim hanging at his breast. All of the warriors were afraid

to touch him, but an old dog seized him by the leg and they killed him.

Ever since then the turkeys have been afraid of man, but more alarmed at dogs. The turkey gobbler still wears the scalp lock at his breast as a trophy of his former valor.

### Muskogee: Turkey, Turtle, and Rattlesnake (M17)

Swanton 1929:57–58

- 1 Once upon a time the beasts, birds, and reptiles held a council to devise means of destroying their enemy, Man. It was decided that he must die. The Rattlesnake, being the most poisonous, was chosen to kill him; the Turtle was selected to bite off his scalp lock; while the Turkey was to run away with it. In accordance with this arrangement the three repaired to the cabin of Man during the night and while he was asleep. The Rattlesnake coiled himself up near the door, so that he could strike
- 10 Man as he came out, the Turtle took a position round the corner of the house, and the Turkey stationed himself behind it.

When morning came Man awoke and stepped out. The Rattlesnake heard him coming and when he was sufficiently near struck his fangs deep into his leg. Man fell down and died. Then the Turtle crawled up to his head and after much labor bit off the scalplock, and the Turkey seized it and ran off with it. In his race he accidentally swallowed the scalplock, and ever since a

- 20 scalplock has grown from the breast of the Turkey in honor of that event.

## Tobacco and Corn

### Sacred Plants to the Creeks

Among the array of plants that are sacred to the Creeks, many are mentioned in other myths or legends. The importance of tobacco and corn to the Creeks, however, is underscored by the fact that their origins are recounted by myths and legends particular to these plants.

#### Yuchi: Tobacco Originates from Semen (U16)

Speck 1909:146–47

- 1 A man and a woman went into the woods. The man had intercourse with the woman and the semen fell upon the ground. From that time they separated, each going his own way. But after a while the woman passed near the place again, and thinking to revisit the spot, went there and beheld some strange weeds growing upon it. She watched them a long while. Soon she met the man who had been with her, and said to him, "Let us go to the place and I will show you something beautiful." They went
- 10 there and saw it. She asked him what name to call the weeds, and he asked her what she would give them. But neither of them would give a name. Now the woman had a fatherless boy, and she went and told the boy that she had something beautiful. She said, "Let us go and see it."

When they arrived at the place she said to him, "This is the thing that I was telling you about." And the boy at

once began to examine it. After a little while he said, "I'm going to name this." Then he named it, "I,"

- 20 "tobacco." He pulled up some of the weeds and carried them home carefully and planted them in a select place. He nursed the plants and they grew and became ripe. Now they had a good odor and the boy began to chew the leaves. He found them very good, and in order to preserve the plants he saved the seeds when they were ripe. He showed the rest of the people how to use the tobacco, and from the seeds which he preserved, all got plants and raised tobacco for themselves.

### Hitchiti: The Origin of Tobacco (H7)

Swanton 1929:87-88

- 1 A man had lost his horses and was looking for them. A woman was also hunting for horses. They, the man and the woman, met and talked to each other. They sat talking together under a hickory tree which cast a good shade. The woman said, "I am hunting for some horses that have been hidden away." The man said, "I am also hunting about for horses." As they sat talking something occurred to the man and he spoke to his companion as follows, "I am hunting about for horses; you too are
- 10 hunting about for horses. Let us be friends, and lie here together, after which we will start on." The woman considered that matter and said, "All right." Both lay down, and when they got up the man went on his way and the woman went on hers.

Next summer the man was looking for horses again and happened to pass near the place where he and the woman had talked. The man thought, "I will go by that place just to look at it." When he got there he saw that a weed had grown up right where they had lain, but he did



20 not know what it was. He stood looking at it for a while and then started off. He traveled on and told the old men about it. He said, "I saw something like this and this growing," and one answered, "Examine it to see whether it is good. When it is ripe we will find out what it is."

Afterwards the man started off to look at it. He saw that it had grown still bigger. He dug close about it to soften the soil and it grew still better. He took care of it and saw the leaves grow larger. When it blossomed

30 he saw that flowers were pretty, and he saw that they were big. When they ripened the seeds were very small. He took the seeds from the hill, gathered leaves, and took them to the old men. They looked at these but did not know what the plant was. After they had looked at them in vain for some time they gave it up.

Then one of them pulverized the leaves and put them into a cob pipe, lighted it and smoked it. The aroma was grateful. All of the old men said, "The leaves of the thing are good," and they named it. They called it *hitci*

40 (which means both "see" and "tobacco"), they say. Therefore woman and man together created tobacco.

### Alabama (Koasati): A Story of the Origin of Corn and Tobacco (A22)

Swanton 1929:167

1 Six Indian brothers traveled about. The youngest did not have enough to eat, so he left the people and went off by himself. He took nothing with him except an earthen pot which he carried on his back. He went on, camping each night and traveling in the daytime. Going on camping in this way he settled at a certain place near which he saw that two persons had built a fire. But he stayed by his own fire watching it. In the morning the two persons saw

him and called to him to come over. When he got there

- 10 they said, “Cook and eat,” and they gave him food which he cooked and ate. He remained to watch the camp, but when day came those two men started out to hunt. After they were gone that Indian took the little earthen pot, made it grow large by snapping his fingers against it, set it in the fire place filled with water in which he had placed some food, and kept up a fire beneath until it boiled.

The two persons traveled about and came back. When they got there he said, “I am cooking for you.” “Alas!

- 20 (Hiha),” they said, “it is spoiled for us. Now we must leave you.”

“To-morrow I will drive bear,” said one of them.

Together they went on to drive the game toward him. They went on and camped four nights driving bear, and saying to him, “You must drive bear this way.” Then he himself went along the trail. The Indian went. When he got where the men were standing together they said, “We shot in this direction. The ground is bloody.” Following the trail for a while, they saw some red corn dropped on the

- 30 ground. The Indian took it and went on with it. Again they found two ears (or kernels) of corn in the trail. He picked them up and carried them along. Presently it was bright in front of them because there was a big field there. When they reached it, it was something ripe (grain). The men said, “You must stay here,” and they went off. They showed him how to make corncribs before they went. Then they left him alone. But they gave him tobacco seed, saying, “Plant some of this tobacco and smoke it.”

### *Comments*

- 20–21 . . . Now we must leave you . . . According to Swanton, “perhaps he should not have cooked the food for them because they were supernatural beings.”<sup>1</sup>

**Muskogee: The Origin of Tobacco (M18)**

Swanton 1929:19

- 1 There was an old man who went to the square ground of his town to take the black drink every morning and carried something to eat with him. One morning as he was eating this by the creek where he had stopped for the purpose, he felt like defecating, and therefore he went over to a log which lay at some distance. When he got there, however, he saw a pretty little plant growing. A man and a woman had lain at that place, and this plant was the result. The old man brushed the rubbish away from it
- 10 and returned home. Each time he came by after that he went to it, and he took the dry lower leaves and smoked them. The people at the square ground learned of it through him and said, "That is a mighty good thing. We had better take that and smoke it." The first name of the plant was "coeuns" (haisa). After they learned of it and came to value it they made it a warrior (tāsikaya), and gave it the name hitci ("finding") as a war name. I do not know the history of the hitci pākpāgi, which is the greatest medicine there is.

**Muskogee: The Origin of Tobacco (M19)**

Swanton 1929:19

- 1 A young man wanted to marry a certain girl very much. One time when a party to which they belonged was out she was riding a pack horse and was lost along with the man. He told her that he wanted her and would take her to his camp if she would marry him, which she consented to do. Later there was another hunt and the man went to the spot where he had first lain with the woman. He saw a very pretty plant growing there. He went back to his people and told them what he had seen. Then he showed the plant

- 10 to them and told them how it had come about. They said, “We shall call it hitci, and when we smoke we shall call it the same as quum coimus (haisa).” This was the beginning of tobacco.

### Muskogee: The Origin of Tobacco (M20)

Swanton 1929:19–20

- 1 A man was courting a woman and they were seated on the ground at a certain place. Some time afterwards the man came back to the spot and saw a small weed growing up just where the woman had been sitting. He went several times until the weed got to be of some height. Now he began to care for it. When it was about a foot high he took off some leaves and smelt of them and they smelt good to him, and others he would throw into the fire, finding the odor they gave forth in burning very agreeable. He cultivated this plant until it gave forth seed. Tobacco was gotten in this manner, and since this man and woman were very happy when they were there and were very peacefully inclined toward each other tobacco has ever since been used in concluding peace and friendship among the Indian tribes. (Told by Jackson Lewis)
- 10

### Alabama (Koasati): Corn Woman (A23)

Swanton 1929:168

- 1 An old woman was traveling about. She was covered with sores and was very dirty, so that wherever she went people did not want to see her. Finally she came to where some orphan children were living and remained there to take care of them. They said, “Stay with us.” Then the old woman said, “Set out the things you use when you

cook,” and they set them before her. She was Corn. She rubbed herself as one rubs roasting ears and made bread of what came off, which they continued to eat.

- 10 By and by she said, “The corn is now getting hard.” An old corncrib stood near, and she said, “Sweep this out, shut it up, and go to sleep. I am your mother. You can eat bread made out of white corn.” When the night came they lay down, and they heard a rapping noise in the corncrib, which presently ceased. Next day they went to it and opened the door and it was full of corn.

### Muskogee: The Origin of Corn (M21)

Swanton 1929:9–10

- 1 It is said that corn was obtained by one of the women of the Tāmālgi clan. She had a number of neighbors and friends, and when they came to her house she would dish some sofki (a native dish made from corn) into an earthen bowl and they would drink it. They found it delicious, but did not know where she got the stuff of which to make it. Finally they noticed that she washed her feet in water and rubbed them, whereupon what came from her feet was corn. She said to them, “You may not like to eat
- 10 from me in this way, so build a corncrib, put me inside and fasten the door. Don’t disturb me, but keep me there for four days, and at the end of the fourth day you can let me out.” They did so, and while she was there they
- heard a great rumbling like distant thunder, but they did not know what it meant. On the fourth day they opened the door as directed and she came out. Then they found that the crib was stocked with corn. There was corn for making bread, hard flint corn for making sofki, and other kinds. She instructed them how to plant grains of corn

20 from what she had produced. They did so, the corn grew and reproduced and they have had corn ever since. (Told by Jackson Lewis)

### Muskogee: The Orphan and the Origin of Corn (M22)

Swanton 1929:10–13

1 An old woman was living at a certain place. One time, when it was raining, she found a little blood in the water, laid it aside carefully and covered it up. Some time afterwards she removed the cover and found a male baby under it. She started to raise him, and when he was old enough to talk he called her his grandmother.

When the child was 6 or 7 years old his “grandmother” made a bow and arrows for him and he began going out hunting. The first time he came back from the hunt he

10 said to her, “What is the thing which jumps on the ground and goes flopping along?” “It is a grasshopper,” she said. “Go and kill it and bring it to me,” and he did so.

The next time he came in from hunting he said, “What was the thing I saw flying from tree to tree?” “It is a bird. Go and kill it and bring it to me to eat.”

Next time he returned from hunting he said, “What is the shiny thing with long legs and slender body which I saw run away?” “That is a turkey,” she said. “Go and kill it

20 and bring it to me. It is good to eat.”

Next time he said, “What is the thing with a woolly tail which I saw climb a tree?” “It is a squirrel. It is good to eat,” she said, so he killed it and brought it in.

The next time he said, “What is the thing with long legs, short body and tail, a blackish nose and long ears?” “It

is a deer. Go and kill it and bring it in. It is good to eat.” This is how he found out the names of all these creatures.

The next time he returned from hunting he said, “I saw  
30 something with big feet, a big body sloping forward, and big round ears but looking as if it had no tail. What is it?” “It is a bear,” she replied. “Go out and kill it and bring it in, for it is good to eat.” And so he did.

The next time he said, “I saw a big thing which has long hair halfway down the shoulders but nowhere else except at the end of the tail. It had its head close to the ground and when it raised it I saw that it had short horns and big eyes. What is it?” “That must be a bison,” she  
40 eat.” So he killed it and brought it in.

After that he stopped questioning his grandmother regarding the animals because he had learned about all of them, and he could now hunt by himself and so make a living. He went out hunting all of the time.

The old woman warned him, however, not to go to a big mountain which they could see in the distance. The old woman provided corn and beans for them but did not tell him where she got them and after a while he became curious. One time when she was out of corn and

50 beans and he was about to go hunting she told him that she would cook sofki and blue dumplings against his return. He started off but instead of going hunting slipped back to the house and peeked through a crack. Then he saw his grandmother place a riddle on the floor, stand with one foot on each side of it and scratch the front of one of her thighs, whereupon corn poured down into the riddle. When she scratched the other thigh beans poured into the riddle. In that way the orphan learned how she obtained the corn and beans.

60 Afterwards the orphan went off hunting, but when he came back he would not touch the food. His grandmother asked him if he was in pain or if anything else was the matter with him, urging him to eat. When she could not persuade him, she said, “You must have been spying upon me and have learned how I get corn and beans. If you do not want to eat the food I prepare, you must go away beyond the mountain which I forbade you to pass.” Then she told him to bring her live jays with which she made a kind of headdress, and she also made a flute for him.

70 As he walked along wearing the headdress and blowing upon the flute the birds would sing and the snakes shake their rattles.

Then his grandmother said to him,  
“Now, all is ready for you.  
Start along on this trail, but before you leave  
lock me up in this log cabin and set it on fire. After  
you have been gone for some time come back to look at  
this place, for here you were raised.” She had provided  
in advance that he was to marry the first girl whom he

80 encountered.

The orphan did as his grandmother had directed, and when he reached the other side of the mountain he came upon numbers of people playing ball. When they saw him all were pleased with his headdress of jays and rattlesnakes and stopped to look at him.

Rabbit was among these people, and when he saw how all were attracted by the orphan he wanted to be like him, so he persuaded the orphan to let him travel along in company. Before they had gone far they came to a sheet

90 of water, and Rabbit said, “When I shout ‘all ready’ we will dive in.” But, at the appointed word, instead of diving into the water, Rabbit went to where his companion’s headdress and flute were lying and prepared to run off with them. Before he could get away, however,



the youth came out and called, "Why are you doing that?" "It is so pretty that I was just looking at it. When I say 'Ready' let us dive again." The youth did as had been agreed, but Rabbit jumped out of the water, seized the headdress and flute and ran off with them.

- 100 The youth collected many turtles and started on carrying them. Presently he came to a lot of people who liked him as well as those he had met before he lost his headdress and flute and they treated him well. After he had spent some time among them he traveled on until he came to a house. He found a young woman living there whom he married. Then he said to his mother-in-law, "There are some turtles outside in a hole in the ground. Bring them and cook them for us." So she went to the cavity and found it full of turtles which she brought back with her.
- 110 After they had finished eating, someone came to them and said that Rabbit had been arrested for stealing the youth's property. The youth went to the place and as soon as he came up the jays and the rattlesnakes, who had been absolutely silent while they were in Rabbit's possession, began to make noise, the jays to sing and the snakes to rattle. He put on his headdress once more, took his flute, and started home, the birds and snakes singing and rattling for joy at being restored to him. The people who held Rabbit threw him down among a lot of
- 120 dogs but the dogs were asleep and he ran off. The dogs awoke at once and began smelling around but they could not catch him.

After the youth had gotten home he said to his wife, "Let us go down to the creek. I want to swim. By crossing four times I can poison all the fish there." His wife told him to do so and, as he was able to accomplish everything which he undertook, he performed this feat also. He killed all of the fish in that stream. Then he told his wife to call all of the townspeople, and they

130 came down in a crowd and had a great meal off of fish.

After the youth and his wife had gotten home the former said that since he was feeling happy she must wash her head and comb her hair and part it in the middle. When she had done so, he told her to go into the house and stand perfectly still in a window looking out. Thereupon he seized an ax and struck her in the parting, splitting her into two women who looked just alike.

When Rabbit heard what the other man had done, he wanted to imitate him, and said to his wife, "Let us go down to

140 the creek. I want to swim and when I cross four times the fish will come to the surface." "Well, go and do so," she said. So Rabbit swam across four times. When he dived he struck a minnow and stunned it, so that when he came out he found it mulling about as if it had been poisoned. He told his wife to call all of her people down to get fish. She did so, but, finding only one minnow lying at the edge of the water, they became angry with Rabbit and went home.

As soon as Rabbit and his wife returned from the creek,

150 Rabbit said, "Wash your head, part your hair and stand in the window." She did this; he struck her on the parting with an ax and killed her.

Some time later the youth said to his wife, "Let us go over to the place where I grew up, for I want to see it." They went there, and when they had arrived found that all sorts of Indian corn and beans had grown up in it. That was where the corn came from. So the corn was a person, that old woman, and if it is not treated well it will become angry. If one does not "lay it by," i.e., heap up

160 the soil about it in cultivation, it calls for its underskirt. The laying by of the corn is the underskirt of old lady corn.

## Muskogee: The Orphan and the Origin of Corn (M23)

Swanton 1929:13–15

- 1 In early days the Indians lived in camps, and when they got tired of one place they moved off to another. The men would go out hunting and the women would go to dig mud potatoes. One time, while they were living this way, each clan encamped by itself, an old woman came to one of the camps and said, “I would like to warm myself on the other side of the fire.” They said they had no place for her and added, “Maybe they will give you a place at the next camp.” But the people at the next camp said the
- 10 same thing, and so it was with all of them until she came to the last, which was the Alligator camp. They said to her “Why, there is plenty of room here. You can stay here.” Next morning the men started out hunting and the women went for potatoes, leaving the children at home. Now this woman was Corn itself and, while they were away, she made hominy out of herself and fed the children with it. When the grown people came home the children said “Why, this woman had plenty of food. She fed us all while you were gone.” Then the leading man said “Tell
- 20 her to have plenty of food and I will eat when I come back.” So the children told her, and she made blue dumplings and all kinds of foods made from corn. The children said “Why, she shelled it off from those sores,” but he answered, “All right, I will be hungry and eat it.” When he returned he feasted with the old woman and thought the new food good. Then she told him to build two cribs with an entry between them, and she said “At night, just at dark, put me at the door of one and push me in, and come right away.” He did so and could hear a
- 30 roaring that night. Next morning, when he went to the cribs, they were both filled with corn. It was in this way that flour corn and flint corn originated. The same

old woman also told the man not to drop the corn around or waste it.

One time some people were living in a certain place, and they noticed that the dripping from the eaves of the house (I do not know whether this was during a rainstorm or not) were red. So they picked up some old pieces of pottery which had been dripped upon (called *paskī'*) and

40 put them under the bed. During that night they heard something under the bed crying like a child, so they drew out what they had placed there and found it was a baby. The old woman who found him took care of him and nursed him until he grew up. When he got to be about four feet tall, she made a bow and arrows for him, and he wandered about shooting. A long way off from where they lived was some rising ground, and the boy was told never to go to that and look beyond it. When the boy went out hunting for the first time he came in and said to the old woman,

50 “Some things with blue heads came running.” “Those were turkeys,” she said; “We can eat them. Kill them. They are game.” The next time he came in he said, “I saw some things with white tails.” “We eat those. They are good,” said the old woman. When he got back with these various things he would find the old woman with white dumplings and other corn foods, and he wondered how she got them. One time he came back and, instead of entering the house, peeked through a crack. Then he saw the old woman shake her body, and when she shook it the grain

60 poured out of her.

By and by the young man went over to the rising ground which he had been warned not to cross and looked over. On the other side he saw people playing ball. When he came back the old woman offered him some food but he would not eat and she said, “You scorn me, then.” He had seen men and women on the other side of the hill, and he did not care for her any more. Then the old woman told him to find a rattlesnake and a blue jay. Out of these

she made him a fife (flute).

- 70 That was to be an ornament for the top of his head. Then she told him to kill the trees all about to make a field. “When you get through,” she said, “take me and drag me all around over that place and burn me up, and after three months come over and look at me.”

The boy did as the old woman had told him, and afterwards he put on the headdress she had made for him and crossed the rising ground again. There he met a Rabbit who made friends with him. They went on together and presently they came to a pond where there were turtles, and Rabbit

- 80 said, “Let us go in and get some turtles.” So they got ready, and when Rabbit said, “Dive” they dived together under water. Rabbit, however, instead of remaining down there getting turtles, came out right away, seized the youth’s headdress and ran away with it. Meanwhile the youth collected a number of turtles which he tied to a cord and brought ashore. He found that Rabbit had disappeared with his headdress, but he took the turtles he had caught and went along until he came to a house. Putting his turtles into a hole which had been dug near

- 90 by he went to the door and said to the old woman who lived there, “You had better make a fire and cook those turtles, and send round to invite all of your neighbors.” She did so and had a feast. After the feast all met at the square ground. When Rabbit came there wearing a red coat (?) and headdress, the rattlesnake and jay called out, “The rumor is that Pasakola has stolen that man’s cap.” He struck them with his flute to make them stop, but they kept on calling just the same and trying to get to their true master, so the people took them away and  
100 gave them to him.

After that the youth took the old woman’s daughter as his wife. One day he went down to the river with her and washed his head in the stream, and all of the fish

floated up intoxicated. Then he said to his wife, “You had better tell your mother to come down and cook this fish.” So the old woman went down to the creek and found lots of big fish there, and she told the young men to go all around the edge of the town and notify everybody to come to the feast. All did so. By and by the youth told

- 110 his wife to comb her hair in the center, and when she had done it he seated her on the doorstep, took an ax and with one blow cut her in two so cleverly that he made two women out of her.

After that Rabbit thought that he could do the same things. So he went down to the creek and washed his head and told his wife (who was sister to the wife of the other man) to tell her mother to go down and get the big fish there. She went down, but there was nothing there. Then Rabbit had his wife comb and part her hair, seated

- 120 her on the doorstep and struck her on the head, killing her instantly.

By and by the youth recalled what the first old woman had told him about going back to see where he had dragged her about, and he did so. He found the whole place covered with red silk corn (probably yellow corn). Wormseed and cornfield beans were also growing in this field. So he used the wormseed as a “cold bath” (medicine) before he ate the corn and the beans, and that is why they now take it before eating corn in busking time. (Told by Big Jack

- 130 of Hilibi)

### Muskogee: The Orphan and the Origin of Corn (M24)

Swanton 1929:15–17 (Tuggle Collection)

- 1 An old woman lived alone. She walked along a certain path until it became hard and smooth. At one place a log lay across the trail. One day as she stepped over this log she saw a drop of blood in her track. Stooping down,

she carefully scraped up the dirt around the blood and carried it home. She put the blood and dirt in a jar. She looked in the jar occasionally and discovered that the blood clot was growing. After several months she saw that it was beginning to look like a human being. In 10

10 months it was developed into a boy. She took him out of the jar and dressed him.

The boy grew. She made him a bow and arrows and told him to go and kill birds. He went and killed birds.

When he grew older she said, "Go and kill squirrels." He went and killed squirrels. Again, she said, "Go and kill deer." He went and killed deer.

One day on his return from hunting she gave him new food to eat. The boy wondered where she had obtained this delightful food. He asked her, but she refused to tell

20 him.

One day she warned him not to go beyond the mountain which could be seen from their house.

He thought there must be something strange beyond the mountain. He went there. He beheld a lovely sight in the valley beyond the mountain.

When he returned home he stayed by himself and looked lonesome.

The old woman said: "You have been beyond the mountain. I will make you a garment and let you go. Go to the

30 woods and bring me a singing bird."

He brought the singing bird. She made him a flute and taught him how to play on it. She made him a headdress and put it on his head. He played on the flute and the singing bird flew on the headdress singing to the music of the flute.

She said: “When you go beyond the mountain you will come to a stream, and the first house beyond the stream is the home of three women. The woman who cooks something for you will become your wife. Marry her, and when you come

40 back to see me all will be changed. You will not see me; you will see something growing where my house stood. When you come again it will be ripe. Build a rock house and gather it. Come when you need something to eat and take your food out of the rock house.”

He went across the mountain. He crossed the stream, stopped at the first house and saw three women. One of them offered him food which she had cooked. She became his wife. He lived with her people. He saw that the people were suffering for food. He said: “Follow me to

50 the stream.” They followed him. He took some pieces of an old log and threw them into the stream. He played on his flute and the bird sang.

Soon the fish came to the surface of the water and the people shot them with arrows and had a great feast.

Chufee (Rabbit) saw the young man lay aside his flute and headdress and stole them and ran away.

The people pursued him and found him trying to play on the flute, but he made no music. Because it refused to sing he struck at the singing bird and injured its

60 feathers.

Chufee thought he could win a wife if he could only make music. He failed. The people took from him the headdress, with the singing bird, and gave it back to the young man.

One day the youth and his wife went to his old home. Behold, all was changed. The house was gone. Where it had stood were some tall green stalks. The old woman was not there.



Again he and his wife returned. The stalks were dry and  
70 the grain was hard. He built a rock house and gathered  
the grain and put it into the house.

Again he returned and found all the birds gathered around  
the house. They were trying to tear the house down.

The Owl said: "Let me knock it over." He flew at the  
house and struck it with his head. He made himself  
humpshouldered by the blow. He could not knock it down.

The Eagle said: "Let me knock it over." He sailed at the  
house, but flew over it.

The Hawk said: "I can knock it down." He flew at the  
80 house. He knocked it down. The blow drove his neck in  
and ever since he has had a short neck.

The birds all came and ate up the grain. The man saw  
some crows flying and fighting in the air. They let some  
grains fall. He took them and carried them to his new  
home. He planted the grains and from there sprang corn.

## Contemporary Creek Myths and Legends

What follows are a number of myths and legends that have been communicated to the author by contemporary Creeks. These myths and legends have either never been published or have enjoyed only limited distribution in publication. Many closely parallel myths and legends have already been discussed.

### Hitchiti: Apalachicola Origin (CCI)

Pine Arbor Creeks (Daniels):26

Told by Emma Burney, a Black Creek of Jacksonville, Florida, to J. Ray and Barbara Daniels.

- 1 In early times there was no land anywhere. All things were struggling to stay alive, because everything was all water-covered. No one had given water its "First Instructions," so it didn't know where to go or how to behave. Water was very rude. When the animals found a shallow place, they would all stand around and be happy till water came and covered them all over. Turtle and her friends had no problems; they had First Teaching and knew their ways. They were the ways of water. Turtle's
- 10 friends paid no mind to the struggle of other creatures, but Turtle was made first and felt herself to be the older sister of things. She decided to help them. First, she stood up out of the water and called all to come and hear her. She showed them her legs and how she moved them. Soon she taught most creatures to swim.

When they got tired she let them stand on her back for rest.

While all the others were swimming, Turtle dived beneath the waters and found land. She scooped it up and brought

20 it to the surface. Soon every creature living had a little bit of land. Everyone began to pile their land up together. Winds helped drive the water back to the edge. Creator, *One Above*, smiled at things working together—that smile was the Sun. All things still lived together in the early days; everything spoke the same sound and understood each other. Together they decided to hold a dance to honor Turtle.

It was the very first dance.

Humans still make that the first dance nowadays, too.

30 After the time of the great fog, everything had its own direction from the Creator and knew what to do. Everything except humans knew what to do. Humans had become so bad and selfish and thought themselves so important that they foolishly forgot their First Instruction. To humble humans and teach them humility, the *One Above* left truth hidden with all the animals and plant creatures. Because humans had to seek the help of smaller things, they decided to teach them a lesson. For their help, aid, wisdom, truth, and gifts, all required

40 humans to remember them, thank them, and honor them always. If humans fail to do these things humans will lose all the things the plants and animals have given them to know.

Turtle is always remembered first; humans owe Turtle a great debt. This is why when one is traveling along and sees a turtle crossing the road, you stop and help her. Humans are the older siblings now. Our younger siblings, the plants and animals, still teach humans about patience and not to make hurry-waste. Being first-made, Turtle is

50 special to the *One Above*; when humans help Turtle and

care for her, the Creator smiles and hears the humans. And so humans dance and shout “Locv! Locv!” Humans feel good when they do this; it is for Turtle, humans’ friend.

### Hitchiti:Apalachicola Origin (CC2)

#### Pine Arbor Creeks (Daniels):18–23

- 1 In the first time, Hvtecesk-of, that is, at the beginning, the Earth, Ekvny, and all that there is, “was.” Creator, The Source, thought it so, that is, caused it to be so. This the elders were taught. Aela! All that was, had no place. All that had come into “Beingness,” all the newly-created things—birds, reptiles, animals, insects, trees, rocks, and everything else—were in *no-where*. It isn’t very pleasant to be nowhere. It’s like being lost, only worse.
  
- 10 And, not only were all things nowhere—these birds, reptiles, animals, insects, trees, rocks, and all other things—not only were they nowhere, they were also in confusion. They hadn’t been given their Original Teachings, their First Instructions. And this too, the Elders knew.  
  
Though each was perfect, just as the Creator made it—  
Though each thing was perfect, just as *One Above* thought it—nothing had yet learned its duties and responsibilities.
  
- 20 So! being nowhere, knowing nothing they were in great confusion amongst themselves. None knew what to do. They weren’t very good being still. There wasn’t any kind of order. It isn’t very Muskogee to be without order! This lesson from the start, the Elders try to impart. Aelah! There wasn’t even a Square Ground or Paskofv, so that the proper place of each thing and its relationship to others could be seen, known and understood.

You must understand that this was *One Above's* first time at creating, and there was no experience in these matters.

- 30 *One Above*, the Creator, was amused at first by all this confusion—that is, until *Locv*, the Turtle, cried out in desperation.

Some say that the Turtle, *Locv*, was the first Being to be formed. Poor *Locv*! She was alone (some say) in a nothingness, a void. She cried out and was heard by Creator, the *One Above*. Suddenly, Water, *Owv*, was everywhere. Be careful of what you ask or you may complicate the task.

There are some who say Water came first and then Turtle.

- 40 Be that as it may, Water was now everywhere; Water made a place for things to be. It was good that all now had a place to be . . . ah, but it was bad for that place to be Water, because almost everything was drowning. It certainly takes a heap of experience to be a good Creator. One thing was for sure, *One Above*, was getting experience.

“Help us!” some things in the Water cried out. “Help us!” Turtle heard the others. She taught some to swim immediately. Now, the story doesn’t say how Turtle knew

- 50 how to swim, so we just assume it came naturally. Some couldn’t swim—she rested these on her back and on the backs of the new swimmers.

“Ah, all is well,” they thought. But not so. They had not yet experienced tiredness, because they were still so new. Tiredness came quickly. There was much anguish, and then, fear came to be. Fear was the first feeling to be fully known. It became the most important feeling—we all know that fear is one feeling that helps Beings keep alive and safe. Every lesson is a teacher for life even if its

60 learned in strife.

Turtle, though, did not fear Water too much, sensing that it was her home and domain. However, the cries of others brought a new feeling to her; thus, compassion was born. Compassion, like many things, cannot dwell alone or in nothingness.

*(All things made by Creator can think or reason, each in its own way and according to its own ability. But, notice that by the Creek perception, not everything has the same kind of reason or the same kind of thoughts.*

70 *Each reasons according to its own.)*

Turtle, now remembering her own cries and hearing the cries of others, knew something had to be done, and quickly! She looked about with compassion and dove beneath the Waters. She swam about and found some mud. Turtle piled up this mud, and dove again and again. Soon there was much land, Ekvnv, being formed about. A mountain of good deeds in repetition succeeds.

Of all the creatures, Fuswv, the Birds, were the closest to the new land. They clambered up onto it. Soaked to

80 the bone, they stretched their wings out to dry. They did not yet know they were Sky-dwellers and could fly. As they flapped their wings, shaking off water, they rose upwards and came to know flight. Fuco, the Duck, did not rise too high (of course, she was kind of fat anyway). She seemed to like Water and returned to float freely upon it. She felt at home as her big feet pushed her about. Fuco did not sink, nor did she look beyond that place at that moment. Fuco understood Water and understood her place. Fuco, the Duck, now had no fear of

90 Water, and happiness was born. Help without scorn and joy is born.

Happiness, which comes from understanding, is always born a twin and cannot live alone. Happiness is not lonely by

nature; it is active and needs its twin, sharing. So Fuco, being happy, went to help Turtle, and sharing came to be known. With her big feet, the Duck, Fuco, pushed the mud together and packed it down. She smoothed the edges where it met Water. Now, all other creatures climbed ashore with ease.

- 100 Fuswv, the Birds, happy at finding themselves airborne, also desired to help. With their wings, they dried the land. They beat their wings very hard; some rose to great heights and saw the *One Above*. The Creator, was pleased with their actions and gave them songs, calls and wild cries so that all the others would also know of Creator's pleasure. Rewards that are small are often pleasures for all.

This is why we say a quiet prayer or "thank You" when we hear a Bird burst into morning's first song. To say "A

- 110 Bird is Singing" is an act of praise and recognition of *One Above*. The Creator breathed on the breast feathers of some Birds, those who flew highest, and those feathers at once became soft and delicate. These gentle feathers are called "prayer feathers" or "little prayers." Birds felt at peace and at one with the *One Above*; they came to know sisterhood and were thankful.

Prayer was born of thankfulness. Eagles and Hawks flew closest to Creator. They carried prayers of thankfulness from the other creatures who had not yet all learned to

- 120 speak for themselves. Even today, feathers, Tafv, are companions to prayer and peace. While birds were in the sky, they circled, soared, and rested on air. They looked calm and quiet; they flowed with all things. Others learned peacefulness from their example. Haven't you heard? Actions are louder than words.

Water Turkey worked hardest at drying the land with her great wings. So hard did she work, and so tired did she become, that *One Above* preserved the ripples of the first

Waters on her tail feathers. Those ripples are there

- 130 today with their rainbow colors quietly reflecting the sunlight. They remind us of Water Turkey's part in the first times. Today, some believe the shapes that represent "thunderbirds" come from Water Turkeys to commemorate their powerful part in Creation.

We learned unselfish service from Water Turkey's example. Old ones say the rippled feathers help Water Turkey fly upward with ease. *Creator rewards in quiet but lasting ways.* Water Turkeys still dry their wings after diving, to be ready to work again if the need ever arise or *One*

- 140 *Above* should ever call upon them. Water Turkey is called the Vigilant Bird and symbolizes *watchfulness*.

Today, Water Turkey's feathers, Tafv, carry Cedar, Vcenv, and Tobacco, Hece, incense upwards in prayers; her feathers are very sacred and must not be used without devotion and the permission of the Vculvkvke, your traditional Elders or ceremonial leaders.

Where land was piled high there were mountains; where it was spread out there were plains, forest, and gentle hills. Valleys occurred where the great creatures and

- 150 the giants of old walked about. Turtle, Locv, and Fuco, the Duck, worked hard. Water Turkey and all the Birds did their part to secure the meaning of sharing. Fuco symbolized security. Sharing is a grace that provided every creature a proper place.

As all those magnificent winged creatures dried the land, rivers, ponds, lakes, and streams flowed from the Waters that dropped from their wings. Everything that could, came ashore. With life, they filled the whole land, the good land we call Vnewetv on the "Back of the Turtle."

- 160 Water creatures knew their place and abilities. Sky-dwellers discovered theirs, too! It was the in-between



creatures, the land-dwellers, who had not yet found their own ways; they caused a great commotion. There was much moving about, each one trying to be where the others were or to do what the others did. Uncertainty came from lack of instruction. Things were a mess and getting worse. There was much to learn about creation! If at first you don't succeed, try again to better the deed.

*(It is still said today on Ceremonial Grounds, Pvnkofv,*

- 170 *where dances are held, that confusion occurs when too many things try to occupy the same place at the same time—even if those things are only your own thoughts. In councils since, each is allowed to have a full say without interruption for speaking all at once makes confusion. For this reason, no one is to go onto a Ceremonial Ground, without knowing clearly the purpose for being there.)* Without purpose may come disaster—just find Turtle and ask her.

Through this time of confused commotion, a great Tree,

- 180 Eto, sought only to stand in one place to enjoy itself, as it reflected on all that had just come into “Beingness.” The Tree, Eto, was truly happy within; Eto understood itself and its differences from the ways of the others. The roots of Trees grew from Peace.

The Tree had learned joy comes from within and not from without. Just standing there, watching Birds in flight and feeling peacefulness and contentment, it appeared calm and happy. All the others didn't know their own

- proper places. That Tree felt helplessness and great  
190 pain. Aela!—sadness was discovered.

Nothing was still, nothing cooperated with anything, all these things and creatures went about making an extraordinary confusion. Greed, the child of not knowing oneself, came to be. The Winds, Hotvle, gathered up in one place, and their noisy pranks and quarrels made

everything in their reach miserable. The Sun, Hvse, couldn't decide what to do. So, it just stopped still, confused and fearful, pondering its grievances, while all living things near it shriveled in the searing heat.

200 Where the Sun was not, there was too much darkness and cold. The Clouds, Aholoce, all crowded up into that place, and the fog, Hopere, tried to move in also. Creatures stumbled about; some got hurt. Not only the Birds, but by now all other creatures of speaking, singing, or crying out, had found their voices and they were using them, too!

Noise! Shouting everywhere! Quietness was only a thought of the past, a dim memory, not even clear enough to be a dream. Dreams are the stepping stones to reality but

210 nightmares are a malady.

Ohfvnkv, The *One Above*, saw all this confusion and was no longer amused by it. Creator was puzzled. "Did I not make all things?" said *One Above*. "From Me, don't they have reason?" Mystery came to be from not seeing and acting together in the whole, but separately. The *One Above* could see and know all things, but the new Beings could not. The part is not the whole and rumors do not make truth when told.

Turtle spoke: "Master of ALL Being, we cannot hope to see

220 and know as You. You are the whole, but we are only parts. We are of You, but each of us is only one small part. We know enough to be troubled from ignorance, but not enough to find peace from knowledge."

"You have spoken well, Turtle," said *One Above*. Some of Creator's wisdom had come to rest in Turtle, she who had been the first created. "In you," Ohfvnkv said, "there shall be thoughtful wisdom, slow and full of sureness;

other kinds of wisdom shall be put into other creatures according to their kind.” And, this was done as promised.

- 230 Example from everything is learned—even the smallest shouldn’t be spurned.

“Turtle, you were first among all things. All know you. Call all the Nations together for Me.”

Turtle called the Sky Nations, the Birds. She called the Animal Nations and the Water Nations, too. She summoned the Star Nations, the Forest Nations, the Grass Nations, and everything that had *form, substance, thought or action*. She called all Beings together.

The Creator had told her how to call the many Nations

- 240 together and where to put them. She set the Sun, Hvse, on one side of Creator and the Moon, Nere-hvse, on the other.

*One Above* said, “Let the Winds, Hotvle, rise at My shoulders and the Water Nation gather at My feet. Put the Birds at My hand and the Star Nations above. Let all other Nations sit with the Grasses all around Me, in front of Me, behind Me, and at My sides.” Everything now had an appointed place.

It was done as spoken. In this way, all things came to

- 250 know where the true center was. *One Above*, Ohfvnk, is really without form or shape, but each had seen the Creator in a way that each could understand. Each saw the Creator as one of its own!

The Creator spoke with the voices of the Winds; light shone from the Creator’s Eyes; happiness and joy sprang from the Heart of the One-Above; and every part of One Above, the Creator, gave forth example for all to see and know.

To each was given First Instructions, Original Teachings.

260 Clouds were taught to move about. Cato, the Rocks, learned to take full pleasure in solitude and stillness. Mountains were shown where to stand; Plains and Valleys were instructed on where to spread out. Trees were gathered together in fellowship and Winds were urged to dance about and touch all things. *One Above* forgot to remove anger from the Winds, but they were given gentleness for their major portion. Ah, there was much to be remembered during these proceedings.

The Sun, Hvse, was set on its path, with true light for

270 companionship. The Moon was given its trail. The Star Nations were sent to be its brothers and sisters. They became the Camp Fires of the Departed one day. The White Road was placed across the night sky-vault, too.

To each were given private things to know as well. Into each Rock and Leaf, Breath or Being a lesson was formed. Within every Voice and Sound a meaning was secured. With every creature in its appointed place around Creator, a great Ceremonial Square Ground was formed. Each creature saw its own proper place and relationship, to one

280 another; each understood order.

To all, a desire for harmony and balance was imparted. Of course, some lessons have been lost or not yet discovered in full, a few were even ignored! Ekvny, The Earth, was to be Mother to all, giving equally to each and withholding from none. With First Instructions came contentment, because each now understood its own way, its own proper place.

Creator spoke on: “You will have language and talk among yourselves only as long as you remember your duties and

290 your voices don’t become sister to trouble, mother to anger, or companion to unhappiness. You will each be a teacher of your own secrets and wisdom, but you must each

be a student of the other and seek patiently to learn and understand each other's ways, also.

“Guard your private lessons and wisdom well; do not toss them about carelessly or give them away foolishly for in so doing you may lose them. If the Gift is not valued, it is no Gift.” Healing plants learned to sing of their particular qualities but very few people have ever

300 learned to hear their beautiful songs.

“You are the first Beings and the last. In your own ways a part of you will return to yourselves: (*One Above* further explained this puzzlement.) Offspring will come to you; teach them their proper ways. In this manner you will come to fully understand yourself and your wisdom. Your Young will learn their places from you and you will learn your responsibilities from them. This will be the way of all living things.

“There shall be Seasons to shelter these ways, the

310 fourfold path of Infancy, Youth, Maturity and Old Age marked by time, change, growth and learning. The Seasons shall be grandparents to all things created so that all will know they are related.” All things of Mother Earth heard *One Above* and knew this to be the Father Spirit, Master of Breath, Creator and Source. Order came to be as understanding became clear.

Father Spirit said: “Sister Tree that suffered pain will forever remain green, Lane-munkv. But, as the Sun makes its journey through the Sky-kingdom and the Seasons, all

320 other growing things will become as that first Tree, Eto, was when she was beaten down. During this time, as you remember the confusion and pain that sprang from greed and disorder, the Tree, ever green, will stand near you and its greenness will remind and teach you of life.” Today, Life-givers, Hoktvke, Women, carry green boughs of prayer in their hands in the Ribbon Dance. Arbors are

greened with Willow at the ceremonies, too.

“For a Season, Cold and Frost will be with you as a bitter memory and lesson, but Berry and Blossom will come

330 forth to remind you of what we are doing as you sit assembled together now in balance and harmony. At the time of the Mulberry Blossom, all shall come together again and seek to renew these teachings for a season.” Parents of the Year, Summer and Winter, and their Children, Fall and Spring, were named. “The Sun will be ever-watchful for it shelters My Heart, My hands, and My Eyes. Its grandchildren, the Serpents, who walk breast on breast with Mother Earth shall be as my Ears. Sound will be your voice, but Silence Mine.” Without Silence

340 nothing sacred is ever received—too much noise and you may be deceived.

At this time, All came to know that Father Spirit is Life, the Whole, and dwells within in part and without in the complete. Onward Ohfvnkv spoke: “My Breath and light will dwell in your midst.” So saying, the Creator placed *four limbs* from the Tree Nations in the midst of all Beings that had come together on that great Square. While the Words were spoken, the logs began to burn with Fire. The Sun began to burn evenly; all knew that the

350 Father was there too. And then suddenly, each felt warmth in its own bosom and knew that a part of Father Spirit was truly come within according to the understandings of their own thoughts and the size of their own hearts. None could any longer see the Father Spirit in its own form, but only the Fire which burned in their midst and continued to speak. In the giving of the Sacred Fire and other things, numbers and two natures of all things came to be known. Right and responsibilities were also set forth. From these we often stray when we forget

360 Creator’s Way.

“Nokuse, the Bears, will live in the forest and have

charge of feeding the Fire; others will help too. Birds will fan Me with their wings, and Wind will sing around Me. The Sun will shine above Me with all the Sky-dwellers—the Moon, the Stars, and all of the Air.” Of course, not everything continued as it had been ordained, as you must surely know from experience.

“One day a new Nation will come out from among you to dwell. When they are raised up, you must each seek to

370 teach them all that you know. You will guard them and help them; you will set them on the good road and be friendly to them.” Thus, Father Spirit foretold and gave news of the coming of First Woman and her Children, the Nation of Humankind. Many of those First Mothers neglected to teach their sons to listen and hear the Silence. Thus, many lessons were learned late and after much difficulty!

Many things *One Above* spoke about at that time, teaching each creature its own lessons; no creature had yet gone

380 out to learn the teachings of the others. During First Instructions, Original Teaching, most all listened intently and learned their public and private ways. *Some didn't!*

Not that old Turtle, though, did not learn her First Instructions or her own ways too well. She was too busy to listen. While *Master of Breath*, now also called *Father Spirit*, was speaking, Locv was talking to herself about her own great deeds, about how much help she had been to Father Spirit and how everyone owed her a debt of

390 gratitude. Turtle had discovered arrogance and conceit, but she hid them under her *smooth shell* so that no one would know. But that is another story for another time.

For these were the “*Smooth Shell Days*” when all things were new and Turtle’s back hadn’t yet been broken. These were days when all creatures spoke, held dances and kept the ceremonials given down from *One Above*; this was the

time when Night and Day were divided on Wotko's tail, the Raccoon. But that's another story for another time. Mehenwv, truly, these were the "*Smooth Shell Days*" when

400 Vnewetv was whole.

This is how all things came to be! At least, this is how the Old Ones, the elders, have told it to us tvktempe, around the Fire.

### Muskogee: Creation of the Earth and Creek Origin (CC3)

Maxey 1950s/1996

The following myth is related by Rosemary Maxey. It was told to her by her grandmother in the 1950s.

- 1 From Grandmother Ellen McIntosh McCombs Smith: (Words in parentheses were her special sidebars.) Told in the 1950s.

In the beginning, there was nothing. On the inside were all created beings, waiting to be born. One day, Hesaketamese (The One Above is the one who holds life's breath.) told them they could go on out. Maybe because they were impatient to be born the Creator just told them to go on. ("I don't know. I wasn't there.")

- 10 A few of the created things went out, but they soon complained and cried because the ground was wet, and with nothing not even a rock to stand on. ("This seems to be the birth of complaining.")

The created ones held a council to decide what to do. They talked it over for a long time.

Different eager ones jumped in front of others to try to fix dry land, but each failed. The crawfish, ("the least likely, backward looking one"), was the only one that could go deep and find the earth. Other crustaceans



- 20 (“other unlikelies.”) followed his lead and they piled up mud. But, it was still too damp for the created ones to stand on.

The created ones held another council on how to dry out the land and harden it. It was Eagle who seemed to have the best solution, that of flapping his mighty wings to dry the land. “Go ahead,” created ones cried. So, he formed a pattern of flap and soar. Finally, the other birds caught on to his idea and followed until the land was dried enough for other created ones to come out to

- 30 the land. The formation of the land was a backbone, that is mountains and hills and valleys.

The created ones were of one accord, they would come out and take their places along the backbone of Mother Earth. Cedar, sage and sweetgrass and other medicines came and held the land together. Animals and birds made their homes. Everyone was busy.

Finally, the people emerged in what people now call Alabama, Georgia, and Northern Florida. (It’s at the end of the Appalachian Mountain Range, the backbone of

- 40 the Mother.) People were the last ones, and the most dependent on creation. They got lost, divided into clan groups, suffered from arrogance and greed, and forgot to sing the Creator’s praises. (Each of these experiences are stories in themselves.)

**Hitchiti: Migration from the West, the Great Bird, and the Red Rat (CC4)**

Pine Arbor Creeks (Daniels, pers. comm.):

- 1 At one time, when the people were coming from the west to the east on their long journey, they were at one particular spot and where they were camped a very, very large bird would come, daily, and with its bow and arrow

would kill one of the people and take it off. Now this went on for a long time and it caused much consternation among them. What are we going to do? How are we going to protect ourselves from this great being? And, almost every day this great bird would come and kill someone and

- 10 take them away, they supposed for food for its young but we do not know.

So finally, they made a large form in the shape of a woman out of reed and vine and cattail and they put fiddle on it as soft hair and made it into a very beautiful structure and they set it up by a post where the bird came regularly and so after a while the bird came and seeing this form took it away and was gone for quite some time. Then the bird returned and left the form back by the post. Out of it climbed a small red rat.

- 20 Now the people looked and discussed among themselves, “what is this, we have never seen a small rat of this type and color.” So they took council with the rat supposing the bird to be its father and “yes the bird was my father” said the rat and they carefully explained their predicament, their plight. And the rat not being welcome in the house of its father said “well I will help you and you will help me.” So together they decided a manner in which they could kill this bird.

When next the bird came and landed on the post, quietly,

- 30 quickly the little red rat scurried to the top of the post and swiftly gnawed the bow string from the bow of the bird and now the bird could not fire its bow and kill anyone nor defend itself. The people swiftly killed the large bird and when they did they burned the bird and noticed that the bones were red on one side and blue on another.

They took note of these things and where they had thrown rocks and their spears to kill the bird, they decided to commemorate that always but they did not want to hurt

- 40 each other so an old man made two very small leather rocks and to them he attached a long, little string and said this is the tail of the rat that scurried to the top of the post to help kill the great bird that was killing our people. We shall remember the bird and how he was killed and so this is the origin of the single pole ball game and which the people learned during their migration. This is the game that resulted from them defending themselves from the great bird. This is why you see a fish atop some of the posts because the birds would often
- 50 come to land on the fish. Oh did I fail to mention that the people had put a large fish atop the post for the bird to come and see the woman made out of wicker and take her away? This is the origin of the balls and this is why we have a little string on the balls. That is the rat's tail to remind us always of the rat's help at a time of need when the people were moving from the west to the east. So this is how some of the old ones have told it.

### Hitchiti: The Brother Who Became a Snake (CC5)

Pine Arbor Creeks (Daniels, pers. comm.):

- 1 A long time ago two bothers decided to go on a very long walk. The purpose of this walk, so we were told, was to go and find two sisters that they had learned about that lived far, far away across a great river. They were thinking to themselves, "It would be nice to have these two sister to be our wives. As we are brother and they are sisters we would all be friends together and our children would grow up together and there would be great comfort in this." So they went about their journey and
- 10 they traveled and they traveled and they traveled and after several days and several nights they came to the great river but the sun was going down and it was said that the Water Master lived in that particular river and

that Water Master often travels at night and it was not safe to cross the river except in the light of day. One brother thought, “Well, that is very wise. Let us make our beds here on the bank with a small fire and sleep comfortably and in the morning we shall cross the river.” But the other brother thinking to himself that he must

20 have been a child of old who became a woodpecker and he was very, very selfish. He had heard that one of the sisters was far more beautiful than the other and it was his desire to find the sisters first and take the first sister to be his particular wife so he said to his brother, “you stay here and sleep and I will go ahead and find the sisters and bring them to the river and we will cross over in the morning.” So in the dark he started to cross the river. All the being had told the brothers that when they come to the river they must never cross in

30 the dark but the one brother would not listen so he got into the river and at first he began to walk and walk. It is a very wide river and the water was somewhat shallow and came up only to his hips and he continued to walk but soon the water rose up to his mid-section and in these days people did not swim very well and so he soon supposed that he was going to be in great trouble. Just then a peculiar log floated by. A log like he had never seen before and so he reached out and put his arm around the log and the log raise his head and turned around and

40 said, “Do not disturb me. I am resting” for the log was really halbuta, the alligator whom the man could not see clearly in the dark so the man reluctantly let go for the alligator, the log was much bigger and much more powerful. Soon a thinner limb, he thought, a stalk came floating by and so he reached out to grab it with both hands and the water snake turned its head and opened its white mouth and hissed, “Do not disturb me for I am resting. Can not you see the sun has gone its journey.” Reluctantly, the man let go. Soon the water was to his

50 shoulders and he was indeed in trouble. And one by one

the creatures of water all came by and one by one he reached out and grabbed them and one by one they rebuked him and told him to unhand them as they were resting because it was the proper season to do so as he should be but no he was wandering around in the middle of the night when he ought not to have been. Finally though, after much, much effort a voice said to him, "I will help you cross." Now he could not see the voice clearly but it was large and it was long and it too looked like it might

- 60 be a log or a large branch or a piece of wood or a large snake but the voice said, "Come, I will help you. Reach hold of me and I will take you across the river." And so now that the water was up to his neck and was running very fast he could not turn and go back for he was almost across the river and he had said that he would go and find the sisters and return in the morning and so he reached a hold of this not knowing that it was the Water Master but the Water Master never tells the truth. The Water Master only tells half the truth and if the Water
- 70 Master tells you the whole truth there is always a catch. The Water Master helped him across to the shallow shore on the other side and said go here on the bank and lay and rest for a few moment and then continue your journey. And so it was that he rested for a few moments and thought I best go swiftly and find the two sisters before the light of day for I want the first for my own. I want the most beautiful. And as he continued on his way in the darkness he noticed the trees were much taller he could only see the bottoms of the trunks and the flowers
- 80 seemed to be much taller on this side of the river. Everything seemed to be much taller and the grass seemed to be much closer and the sand seemed to be much tighter on his feet and as he went his way he did not notice that he was moving in a peculiar fashion. Well, soon the light of day awakened and spread across the horizon and he saw the camp of the two girls and from a distance he saw, "Oh yes, they are as wonderful as we have been told. So very fair and the smell of their cooking they are indeed

talented women. We must have them for our wives and I

- 90 must have the first one, the oldest one for she seems to have the most grace.” And so he came into the camp and startled the sisters and said, “I have come to take you for a wife of myself and my brother.” Now one of the sisters in the early light of morning was preparing meal with her mortar and pestle and she took the pestle, the kejabu and quickly pounded on the poor man. “Ouch,” he said “Ouch. You struck me twice. Why?” And she said, “The serpent is not to live in the camp of the humans and the humans are not to live in the burrows of the
- 100 serpents.” “I am not a serpent, I am a man.” “Not so” said the woman. And the man turned to look at his body and it was long and thin and scaly and it had cross marks across it where he had crawled through the underbrush and the twigs and it was brown where he had crawled through the ruffage, the halungwa of other animals. And his head had two bumps where the woman had hit him with her corn grinding pestle. And they chased him from the camp and said, “the serpent can not marry two women of the human race. Go about your business and go back to where you
- 110 came from for you are not one of us.” And the man turned and flew swiftly back to the river where he called across the river to his brother but his brother could not hear him for he had no voice left. The brother made himself a small craft where he safely crossed the river and he saw nothing there but scuffle marks on the shore and then he saw this most peculiar snake and he said, “have you seen my brother?” And the serpent said quietly, “I am your brother.” But the man could not understand him for the serpent had lost his voice in all
- 120 the shouting but the man noted, “I have never seen a serpent with such peculiarities and such marking and two bumps on his head” so the brother went his way and came to the village of the two sisters and soon learned the story of the serpent speaking that had come to the camp at the break of day and the sisters had run him off.

Together the two sisters and the elder brother went to the shore where they found the sad and mournful serpent lying in the sun and feeling very sorry for himself and the man examined him and asked question and the serpent

130 merely raised his head and raised back and gave a very sad look and the man knew that the story was true because the brother had done those things that he ought not to have done the brother became a serpent. A peculiar kind of rattlesnake with two bumps on his head and the brown color and the little cross marks are there today where this serpent crawled through the brush in the middle of night and now to this day the serpents only go about in the light, they never go about in the dark for they have learned their lesson but far too late.

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## Appendix of Sources

In this appendix I briefly describe the sources of the stories presented here. I present as much information as possible about the collectors of the stories, the times and places the stories were collected, the context in which the stories were collected, and the principal informants from whom the stories were collected.

### John R. Swanton

Swanton was certainly the most prolific of the early Creek ethnographers, and many of the stories contained in this work were collected by him. Swanton was born in 1873 and died in 1958. He earned a bachelor of arts (1896), a master of arts (1897), and a doctorate (1900) from Harvard University.<sup>1</sup> Upon completion of his doctorate, Swanton joined the Smithsonian's Bureau of American Ethnography.

After initial ethnographic work with the Haida and Tlingit of the Northwest Coast, Swanton turned his attention to the displaced Muskogean people then living in Oklahoma, already a generation or two from removal from their former southeastern homes.<sup>2</sup> With the exceptions of Alabama stories collected in Texas and Koasati stories collected in Texas and Louisiana, Swanton's stories were collected in Oklahoma.

### *Swanton's Informants*

Principal among Swanton's informants was George Washington Grayson, a Coweta who lived among the Eufala.<sup>3</sup> Grayson was born on or about May 12, 1843, in Oklahoma. At about the age of thirteen, in 1856, he began his formal education at the Asbury Manual Labor School in Oklahoma.<sup>4</sup> In 1859, at the age of sixteen, he attended Arkansas College.<sup>5</sup> In his adult life, Grayson held many offices in Creek government including treasurer and representative in the House of Warriors,<sup>6</sup> and in 1917 he was appointed by President Woodrow Wilson as Chief of the Creek Indians, a post he held for over two years. Grayson died on December 2, 1920.<sup>7</sup>

Pleasant Porter, Chief of the Creek Nation from 1899 until his death in 1907, was also an important source of Swanton's stories.<sup>8</sup> Porter was the son of a white man and a woman named Phoebe, the daughter of Tah-lo-pee Tust-a-nuk-kee, a Creek Indian town chief. Porter was born September 26, 1840, in present-day Wagoner County, Oklahoma, and in early life was given the name Talof Harjo (Crazy Bear). Educated at the Presbyterian Mission School, Porter served the Creek Nation as an educator, a military leader, a member of the House of Warriors, and a delegate to Washington, D.C.<sup>9</sup>

Legus Perryman, born to the prominent Perryman family of the Creek Nation, codified the laws of the Creek Nation in 1880, was a member of the House of Warriors, and was elected Chief of the Creek Nation in 1891.<sup>10</sup>

Ispahihtca, also spelled Isparhecher and Is-pa-heh-tsa, was a full blood born in 1829. He was associated with the Lower Creek towns and the McIntosh faction in Oklahoma. He was Principal Chief of the Creek nation from 1895 to 1899.<sup>11</sup>

Jackson Lewis was born in Alabama in the early nineteenth century. He was a full-blood Creek with Hitchiti ancestry.<sup>12</sup> At the age of six, he migrated west of the Mississippi with his family during the Creek Indian removal from Alabama and Georgia. He settled with his family near present-day Eufaula, Oklahoma. Lewis was schooled in the traditional arts of medicine and was well known and respected as a doctor throughout the area by both whites and Indians. During his life he also served as a member of the Creek National Council and was a member of the House of Warriors. He died on December 21, 1910.<sup>13</sup>

Judge Nokosi, whom Swanton describes only as Creek,<sup>14</sup> lived about 100 yards from George Washington Grayson on the south side of the Canadian River in Oklahoma.<sup>15</sup>

Swanton also mentions as informants Alindja, a Tuckabatchee; Zachariah Cook, Fulotkee, a Lower Creek; James R. Gregory, Kasihta Yahola, a Łaplâko (a branch of Łiwahali); Caley Proctor, whom Swanton describes as "one of the leading reactionaries among the Creek"; and Woksi Miko, an old man of Hilibi).<sup>16</sup>

## Günter Wagner

Wagner collected his stories among the Yuchi of central Oklahoma during the summer of 1928 and the winter of 1929. His stories are published in the original Yuchi with a literal translation and a free translation. His trips

to Oklahoma were financed by the Council of Learned Societies at the recommendation of Franz Boas.<sup>17</sup>

### *Wagner's Informants*

One of his principal informants was Maxey Simms of Sapulpa, Oklahoma. Born around 1876, possibly in the town of Tuskegee, Simms described his mother as Creek and his father as mixed Yuchi and white. Wagner credits Simms, along with Ella Townsend, with much of the work of translating his Yuchi stories into English. Wagner identifies as additional informants George and Sally Clinton and their daughter Ida Clinton of Bristow, Oklahoma, and Andy Johnson of Sapulpa, Oklahoma.<sup>18</sup>

### Frank G. Speck

Like Swanton, Speck was an ethnographer for the Smithsonian's Bureau of American Ethnography. Working for the Smithsonian, Speck collected many of his Yuchi and Tuskegee stories in Oklahoma during 1904 and 1905. In 1908 he returned to Oklahoma, supported by a Harrison Fellowship from the University of Pennsylvania, to continue his work.<sup>19</sup>

### *Speck's Informants*

Speck lists his Yuchi informants as GAmbeš'ne (Jim Brown), Ekīlané (Louis Long), Ka'Ká (John Wolf), George Clinton, John Big Pond, Gonlānlciné (Jim Tiger), Henry Long, and Fago<sup>2</sup>o<sup>n</sup>wī'. Speck reports all of these men as holding civil or religious offices in their tribe at the time.<sup>20</sup> Speck fails to identify his Tuskegee informants.

### Albert S. Gatschet

Gatschet, like Swanton and Speck, was a professional ethnographer. Unfortunately, he reveals little of himself or his background in his own work *A Migration Legend of the Creeks*. A native of Switzerland, Gatschet was educated in that country and in Germany, earning his Ph.D. in 1862. Interested in etymology, Gatschet came to the United States in 1869 and worked for the U.S. Geological Survey west of the 100th meridian. He next worked as an ethnologist for the U.S. Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountains region. In 1879, Gatschet joined the staff of the Bureau of American Ethnology, where he remained until he retired in 1905.

### *Gatschet's Informants*

Gatschet attributes much credit for his work to Judge George W. Stidham of Eufaula, Indian Territory.<sup>21</sup> Stidham was born in 1817 in Alabama of Scotch-Irish and Creek parents. His family settled at Choska, south of Coweta in Oklahoma, following removal from Alabama.<sup>22</sup> Stidham was a successful cotton and wheat farmer and operated a store at the Creek Agency until 1861. He served the Creek Nation as chief judge on the Creek Supreme Court, helped to draft the Okmulgee constitution for the Creek Nation, and in the 1870s served on at least fifteen tribal delegations to Washington, D.C. He was also the father-in-law of George Washington Grayson. Stidham died in 1891.<sup>23</sup>

Chief Samuel Checote was born in 1819 in the Chattahooche Valley, Alabama, and removed with his family to Indian Territory in 1829.<sup>24</sup> He was a full blood associated with the Lower Creek towns. Chicote attended the Asbury Manual Labor School in Alabama and after removal attended Harrell's Academy at Muskogee (Oklahoma). Chicote was a convert to Methodism early in life and served the Creek Nation as its chief from 1867 to 1875 and from 1879 to 1883. He died in 1884.<sup>25</sup>

Samuel Benton Callahan was the son of a white man, James Oliver Callahan, and Amanda Doyle Callahan, who was of Creek descent.<sup>26</sup> Born in Mobile, Alabama, in 1833, he became a member of the tribe in 1858. He served the Creek Nation as their representative in the Confederate States Congress, clerk in the House of Kings, clerk of the Supreme Court of the Creek Nation, justice of the Creek Supreme Court, and member of many delegations to Washington, D.C. Callaghan died in Muskogee, Oklahoma, on February 17, 1911.<sup>27</sup>

David M. Hodge was born at Choska in 1841. He was educated at Presbyterian mission schools. Hodge coauthored a Creek dictionary and grammar and helped to write the Creek constitution of 1867. He frequently served as a member of delegations to Washington, D.C.<sup>28</sup>

Ward Coachman (Co-cha-my) was born at Wetumka, Alabama, in 1823. Coachman was the son of Polly Durant and Muslushobie. After their death when Coachman was a child, he was reared in Macon County, Alabama, by his uncle Lacklan Durant, with whom he lived until 1845 when he moved to the Indian Territory.<sup>29</sup> Coachman served as a court clerk and as a member and speaker of the House of Warriors. He was chosen second chief in 1875 and became Principal Chief of the Creek Nation in 1876 with the impeachment of Chief Locher Harjo. Coachman died March 13, 1900.<sup>30</sup>

Noah Gregory was the son of Joseph Gregory, a white man, and Lucinda Simms, who was half Yuchi. He served as a representative of his Yuchi town in the Creek Nation, Indian Territory, and was a member of the House of Kings and the House of Warriors.<sup>31</sup>

Ispahidshi (Isparhecher) and George Washington Grayson are discussed in the section on Swanton's informants.<sup>32</sup>

## W. O. Tuggle

Two of the stories that appear in this work were collected by W. O. Tuggle and published in 1973 in *Shem, Ham, & Japheth. The Papers of W. O. Tuggle Comprising His Indian Diary Sketches & Observations, Myths & Washington Journal in the Territory & at the Capital, 1879–1882*.

Tuggle, who had been an attorney in La Grange, Georgia, took the position of attorney for the Creek Nation and spent 1881 and at least part of 1882 in the Indian Territory (Oklahoma), where many of his stories were collected. Unfortunately, Tuggle became too ill to continue his work and turned the publication of his stories over to J. W. Powell, the first director of the Bureau of Ethnography of the Smithsonian Institution, in 1883.<sup>33</sup> Powell returned the manuscript to Tuggle for more editing, but unfortunately Tuggle died at the age of forty-four before his work was published.

After his death, Tuggle's wife again submitted his manuscript to the Smithsonian for publication, but Powell suggested the work was too fragmentary for publication as it then existed. Mrs. Tuggle requested the immediate return of her husband's manuscript, but apparently at least portions of the work were copied at the Smithsonian before the work was returned.<sup>34</sup>

Both J. R. Mooney and Swanton published some of these stories after consulting at the Smithsonian what they thought was Tuggle's original work.<sup>35</sup> Both apparently consulted only copies of the original.<sup>36</sup>

The location of Tuggle's original manuscripts remained unknown until they were discovered in the possession of some of Tuggle's descendants. In 1973 the work was published in the form consulted here.

## *Tuggle's Informants*

Although Tuggle identifies the sources of many of his stories, little is known about the informants who supplied him with the stories reproduced here.

## Benjamin Hawkins

Hawkins was the U.S. Agent for Indian Affairs South of the Ohio River from 1801 to 1816. Prior to his appointment as an agent of the federal government, he was a U.S. senator representing North Carolina. From letters written by Hawkins, it appears as though he was still living in Creek territory as late as 1825, where it is presumed that he spent the remainder of his years.<sup>37</sup>

### *Hawkins's Informant*

Hawkins attributes his version of the Creek migration story to Tus-se-kiah Mic-co.<sup>38</sup>

## Le Clerc Milfort

Milfort was an educated, middle-class French adventurer. He arrived at the Creek town of Coweta in May 1776, where he became closely associated with Alexander McGillivray. Marrying McGillivray's sister, Milfort championed the Creek resistance to white encroachment and remained among the Creeks until after McGillivray's death, when he returned to France in January 1795.<sup>39</sup>

### *Milfort's Informants*

Milfort does not attribute his version of the Creek migration story to any particular informant, but Swanton suggests that it probably was the version current at Otciapafa, McGillivray's hometown, at the time it was recorded.<sup>40</sup>

## Miscellaneous Contributors and Their Informants

Other stories reported here are taken from occasional reports. Bludworth attributes his story of how the Alabama migrated southward to Colberta, a Cherokee.<sup>41</sup> Frances Densmore identifies her informant as Charlie Martin Thompson (Son' ke mǐ' kko [Sun-Kee]).<sup>42</sup> Hewitt's Horned Serpent story is probably attributable to Jeremiah Curtin, a linguist and philologist who spent some time among the Yuchi in 1883 and 1884.<sup>43</sup> Rosemary Maxey, an Oklahoma Creek, related to the author her grandmother's story of creation. Methvin attributes his story to Major Cramer, an ex-federal army officer.<sup>44</sup> Schoolcraft identifies Eakin's informant as Se-ko-pe-chi (Perseverance), one of the oldest Creeks living west of the Mississippi (about 1847).<sup>45</sup> Nelson's Tie Snake story was originally recorded by

Blanche C. Fleetwood of the Federal Writer's Project; however, Fleetwood's informant is unknown.<sup>46</sup>

Stories from the Pine Arbor Creek community were collected from a number of members of that community and related to the author by C. Randall Daniels (Sakim) and Mary Frances Johns. C. Randall Daniels (Sakim), curator of "The Museum," is of Apalachicola-Creek descent, born and raised in northern Florida of Creek and Scottish parentage. A hereditary tribal town king and carrier of tradition, he was recognized by Creek Nation, Oklahoma, as the only fully trained Creek maker of medicine east of the Mississippi River. He served many years as "Maker of Medicine" for Pine Arbor Tribal Town near Tallahassee, Florida. As a recognized conveyor of history, story, and ceremony concerning ancient Muskogee lifeways, he is a sought-after public speaker, performer of Native American flute music, and cultural resources advisor. Among his writings are books on Creeks and Seminoles of Florida, Southeastern Indians, vocabulary and grammar books on Muskogee languages, and many others. He and Mary Frances Johns (Miccosukee-Seminole) have spent twenty years collecting, archiving, and translating traditional native stories from Muskogee, Creek, and Mikasuki speakers. In addition, Daniels (Sakim) is a well-versed folk musician, performer, instrument builder, herbalist, proficient collector of ancient and forgotten lore, and able oral historian with several part-time movie and television credits. With degrees from Florida State University, he has served as chairperson for Native American Studies at California State University (Hayward) and taught Native American Art and Architecture, Native American Philosophy and Religion, and Native American Music at Western Maryland College and other institutions. Sakim has been a Florida Humanities Scholar for two years and is a current Georgia Humanities scholar.

Raised in traditional Indian culture, Mary Frances Johns, of Muskogee Hitchiti descent, is a member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. She speaks Mikasuki, Seminole Creek, and English fluently. Mary learned arts, crafts, and Indian history from early childhood from her grandmothers, aunts, mother, and mother-in-law, all of whom shared their vast cultural knowledge, folktales, and traditional stories as part of Mary's girlhood instruction. Now a grandmother herself, Mary Johns is a marvelous storyteller able to relate complicated concepts cross-culturally with relevant moral analogies appropriate to her audiences. Since 1980, she and C. Randall Daniels (Sakim) have jointly gathered, recorded, and translated numerous stories and folktales from elderly monolingual Creek and Hitchiti speakers as part of their coauthored series *Muskogee Words and Ways, a South-*

*eastern Reader*. She lives on the Brighton Reservation, near the northwestern shore of Lake Okeechobee. She has demonstrated basketry, patchwork, bead working, doll making, herbal medicine, and Native American cuisine throughout the United States, and has been featured in numerous documentaries. She is also a regular participant in several archeological and anthropological symposia as a cultural resource informant.



## Phonetic Guides

### Swanton's Phonetic Guide

(Reproduced from Swanton 1928a: 33)

The following peculiar phonetic signs are used: ɭ, unvoiced l; â, obscure a; tc, English ch; c, English sh; <sup>n</sup>, nasalization of the preceding vowel; x and ɣ (in Natchez), palatal and velar spirants; vowels generally have continental values.

### Wagner's Phonetic Guide

(Reproduced from Wagner 1931: viii-ix)

i, as in "meat"

ɪ, as in "pin"

e, like the German or French closed e, e.g.: "sehr," "été"

ɛ, as in "get"

ə, as in the second obscured e in German "gehen," "nehmen"

ä, between a and ɛ, e.g. in German, "Ära"

a, as in "father"

ɑ, as in "bump"

o, like the German or French closed o, e.g.: "Boot," "haut"

ɔ, open o, like German "offen"

u, as in "room"

ʊ, as in "cook"

All the open vowels occur often nasalized as ɪ̃, ɛ̃, ɑ̃, ɔ̃, ɔ̃. Quantity seems to be of significance in a very few cases only, where vowels are lengthened to denote comparison; in these cases the length is indicated by a dot following the letter, e.g.: ạ. There are two semivowels w and y which are both sounded like the corresponding English letters.

As regards consonant sounds I have distinguished between sonant, halfsonant, and surd stops. This distinction is clearly recognized, although

it is subject to individual differences, which are considerable enough to cause uncertainties in my perception of differences between the sonant and the halfsonant, respectively the halfsonant and the surd stops. Since these uncertainties also occur with a single individual it is impossible to be consistent in the distinction of all three grades. Nevertheless this distinction seems to be an outstanding feature of Yuchi phonetics. Thus we have:

Sonant	Halfsonant	Surd
b	P	p
d	T	t
g	K	k, ƙ (velar).

Of the continued sounds we recognize the fricatives dento-labial surd *f*, dento-labial surd *s*, alveolar surd *c*, palatal *x* as in German “ich,” and backpalatal or velar as in German “ach,” and the nasals *n* and *m*. Furthermore occur the laterals *l*, sonant, and *ɭ*, surd, and the spirans *h*.

The vowels as well as the consonants, with the exception of the nasals, the fricatives *x* and *ɣ*, and the sonant *l* occur aspirated and glottalized which is indicated by <sup>ʰ</sup> for aspiration and <sup>ʔ</sup> for glottalization. A pause between two sounds which is not caused by a glottal stop is denoted by a dot on the line, e.g.: *hit.he*. Stress is indicated by a <sup>ˈ</sup> for the main accent and <sup>ˋ</sup> for the secondary accent. This distinction is only kept up for a part of the texts and does not claim to be always correct, although in most cases two accents can be distinguished with certainty.

### Speck's Phonetic Guide for Yuchi

(Reproduced from Speck 1909: 16–17)

In the stops we have the glottal catch represented by <sup>ʔ</sup>. The palatal surd and sonant *g* are both similar to the English sounds. The alveolar dentals *t* and *d* and the labials *p* and *b* are found, both pairs being rather difficult to determine as to their surd and sonant quality. In the Spirants we have the palatal *c* like English *sh*, and the surd *dj*. The alveolars are *s*, *ts*, and *dz*, similar to the English sounds. The labial dental surd *f* occurs, but there is no corresponding sonant. All of the surds given so far occur also followed by a catch and are represented in such cases as follows, *t<sup>ʔ</sup>*, *p<sup>ʔ</sup>*, *tc<sup>ʔ</sup>*, *s<sup>ʔ</sup>*, *f<sup>ʔ</sup>*, etc. The nasal *n* occurs, but independent *m* is wanting. The lateral spirant surd sound made by pressing the tip of the tongue against the upper alveolar ridge and forcing the breath out over both sides of the tongue, is repre-

sented by *l*. A common *l* like that in English is also found. The semivowels are *h*, *y*, *w*; and the bilabial aspirate of the last *hw*, also occurs.

The vowels are *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, with their continental values. They are short when not marked; long with the mark over them as *ā*, *ē*, *ī*, *ō*, *ū*. Other long vowels are *â* like *a* in English fall, and *ä* like *a* in English fan. Besides these there is an obscure vowel represented here by *A* which is similar to *u* in English but. Nasalized vowels, which are very frequent, are written *a<sup>n</sup>*, *ä<sup>n</sup>*, *â<sup>n</sup>*, etc. Breathed vowels are *a<sub>~</sub>*, *A<sub>~</sub>*, etc. The diphthong *ai* occurs rarely. Stress and prolongation are indicated by *!*. Accent is marked by *'*.

### Speck's Phonetic Guide for Tuskegee

(Reproduced from Speck 1907: 106fn)

Surd *tc* and sonant *dj*, lingual alveolars, *dj* represents a sound about midway in position between *dz* and *dj*; *b* is indeterminate between surd *p* and sonant *b*; *d* is also of the same indefinite nature and produced as an alveolar dental; *t* is a soft palatalized spirant surd; *g*, a palatal sonant; *q* a velar surd; *g* the sonant of the same series; *f* a normal labial dental surd; *c* like English "sh"; *l*, *m*, *n*, *s*, *k*, are like the English. Semivowels are *h*, *w*, *y*. Prolonged consonants are written doubled: *kk*, *tt*. Vowels *ā*, *ē*, *ī*, *ō*, *ū* are long; *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u* short; *ɑ* open and obscure like "u" in English "but"; *â* like "a" in English "all"; *ä* long and open like English "fare" without the "r" tinge; *<sup>n</sup>* nasalized; *ai* diphthong. Accent is denoted by *`* and *'*; *˘* indicates aspiration; *ˆ* a glottal catch.

### Gatschet's Phonetic Guide

(Reproduced from Gatschet 1884: 6–7)

The sounds *b*, *d*, *h*, *k*, *l*, *m*, *n*, *p*, *t* are pronounced in the same manner as in European languages. *N* superior marks nasalizing of the vowel preceding: *a<sup>n</sup>*, *o<sup>n</sup>* as in French *écran*, *bon*. The macron marks the longer sound of vowels, as *ā* in *father*, *ē* in *shade*, *ī* in *reef*, *ō* in *note*, *ū* in *fool*. Long sounds are often the result of accentuation. The crescent marks the shortest sounds of vowels: Cr. *hāsi*, *sun*; *nō'ta*, *day*. A distinct sound is given to *ē*. The diphthongs being adulterine, they can be generally separated into two vowels, and then become hyphenized:

*i-u*, *o-i*, *á-i*, *a-ú*.

*a* as in *alarm*, *wash*.

*â* as in *fall*, *law*, *taught*; same sound as *ô*.

ä as in *dash, rat, slab*.

e as in *bell, met*.

ē as in last syllable of *maker, settler*.

g as in *gamble, garfish, gum*; never as in *apogee, geology*.

dsh as heard in *judge, dudgeon*; alternates with *tch, ts, ds*.

h as in *hard, hook*; when medial and final, it was written 'h to prevent its being pronounced as a silent letter.

i as in *marine, French ici*.

î the *i* pronounced deep or hollow, as in *brim, filth, still*.

y as in *yell, yoke*; never used as a vowel.

Ł the aspirate guttural—in German, *lachen, sachte*, as pronounced in Southern Germany; in Spanish *mujer, dejar*; in Scotch, *loch*. It alternates in Maskoki with the alveolar *g* and *k*, and has nothing in common with the English *x*.

ʹ*l* and the *l* palatalized, as in ʹ*láko, great*; ʹ*láʹlo, fish*. *L* is pronounced while the tip of the tongue is held against the fore-palate. Transcribed in the Creek missionary alphabet by *r*, in that of the Cha'hta by *hl*. This singular sound occurs in all Maskoki dialects, in Yuchi, Naktche and Cheroki (here it alternates with *tl*), in Caddo and many tongues of the Pacific coast; but not in Tonica, Shetimasha, Timmucua, and Katába.

o as in *most, lost*.

s as in *sour, smart*; alternates with *sh*.

sh as in *shift, mash*.

tch as in *catch, church*; alternates with *ts, dsh, ds*.

u as in *truth, soothe*.

û the *u* pronounced deep or hollow, as in *gull, sullen*.

w the *û* before vowels, as in *water, wolf*.

For permutations of sounds among each other, observe that *d* alternates with *t*, *b* with *p*, *g* with *k*, *X*; *o* with *u*, *s* with *sh*, *tch* with *ts*, *dsh*, *ds*. Remember this well when using the glossaries.

The English *x* is rendered by *gs* or *ks*, the German *z* by *ds* or *ts*, all being compound articulations. The two points on *a* (*ä*) mark a softened vowel, and are *not* a sign of diæresis.

## Glossary of Creek Words

The following glossary of Native words found in the myths and legends provides the Native word as it originally appears in the text and the definition of its use as encountered. Where the interpretation of the word is questionable, the definition is followed by “(?)”

*f<sup>s</sup>âde'*—U5c, Yuchi for Button Snake Root.

A'tcik há'ta—H1, reported as true name of Hitchiti.

Aba Mikko—A14, interpreted by Martin as “Great Chief” of the strange land beyond the sky.

Abâ'ski djo'kole—A11, interpreted by Swanton as “God”.

Abba Mingo—A9, interpreted by Bludworth as “Chief of the Sky.”

Aela—CC2, exclamation.

Afo'slipa'kfa—M2, Slippery Elm or Slimywood.

Afo'slipakfa—M2, Slimy Switch (Slippery Elm).

Ah-yok—U1, hawk, the primeval Hawk.

Aholoce—CC2, clouds, the primeval Clouds.

Ahopáya—Cho3, Gatschet reports this to mean prophet in Creek.

Åsi—M2, Black Drink.

Ata'k la-lasti—M2, Black Weed. M4n, Swanton describes this plant as having yellow flowers and appearing at the time of the fall hunt.

Atâsâ—M7, war club.

Au-che-nau—M6, Cedar.

Au-lic-chul-gee—M6, great physic makers.

Au-tus-sau—M6, war club.

Awit—M2, afterwards.

Awita—M2, from Awit, source of name of Coweta.

Bâksa—A11, A13, Bark cord.

Cato—CC2, rocks, the primeval Rocks.

Cha-chu-see—M6, younger brother.

- Chat-la-hau—M6, oldest brother.
- Chufee—M24, Rabbit.
- Coeuns—M18, original name of tobacco.
- Cos-is-tuggees—MC2, people of Cosa town.
- Cos-ulgee—MC2, see Cos-is-tuggees.
- E-cau halpe—M6, scalps.
- E-mau-li-ge-tuh—M6, tribe.
- E-ne-hau-thluc-ul-gee—M6, people second in command.
- E-sau-ge-tuh E-mis see—M6, Master of Breath.
- E-yas-ke—MC2, the humble, lowly, weak, unpretending.
- Ekvnv—CC2, earth, the primeval Earth.
- Eschalapootchke—M1, little tobacco. M1n, according to Swanton: hitci laputcki.
- Eto—CC2, tree, a great tree, the primeval tree.
- Fohah hupis hno yah—Cho4, “Rest all of us here.”
- Fuco—CC2, duck, the primeval Duck.
- Fuswv—CC2, birds, the primeval birds.
- Gohäntoné—U8, diety, creator.
- Hâ'mpi isya'fkita—M2, day of the all day eating.
- Hâ'tki ipu'tcasi—M2, the owners of the white.
- Haisa—M18, M19, tobacco.
- Hece—CC2, tobacco.
- Hesaketamese—CC3, the One Above who hold life's breath.
- Hi'ki—U11, unknown mysterious being of the ancestors of the Yuchi.
- Hiki—U11, see Hi'ki.
- Hisa'kita immi'si—M2, Breath-Holder.
- Hitchiti—H1, to see, a Muskogee word.
- Hitci pâkpâgi—M18, greatest of all medicines.
- Hitci—H7, to see, tobacco. M18, finding.
- Hitcika hasâ—M5, “See the sun!” Interpreted as the possible origin of the name Chickasaw.
- Hi-you-yul-gee—M6, four beings who came from the four corners of the earth to teach the Muskogee of fire and medicine.
- Hobuna—Cho3, sacred bag containing medicines of the Choctaw.
- Hoktvke—CC2, life givers, women.
- Hopáya—Cho3, interpreted by Gatschet (1884:219n) as Creek for prophet.
- Hopáyi—Cho3, interpreted by Gatschet (1884:219n) as Choctaw for prophet.

- Hopere—CC2, fog, the primeval fog.  
 Hotvle—CC2, winds, the primeval winds.  
 Hu'ktagi i'ntcuka—M2, house of the women.  
 Hvse—CC2, sun, the primeval Sun.  
 Hvtecesk-of—CC2, at the beginning.  
 I—U16, tobacco.  
 Ikan tâpiksi—M2, level land.  
 Iksas—Cho5, ancestors (?).  
 Il'afoni—M3, the backbone, ancestral home of the Cowetas, identified with the Rocky Mountains.  
 Inhul'upuna'ya—M2, war talkers.  
 Itlo châte—M6, Red Wood.  
 Its obānga—M2, the Shooting Dance (a women's dance).  
 Ka'la hi'ki—U11, see Hi'ki.  
 Kapapaska—MT2, Spicewood, medicine of the Cowetas.  
 Ko-aoita—M5, those that are following us, interpreted as the possible origin of the name of the Cowetas.  
 Kohasita—M5, Where Is the Sun? interpreted as the possible origin of the name of the Kasihta.  
 Koos—MC1, name applied to large crane at Coosa and interpreted as the possible origin of the name of the village of Coosa.  
 Koskoza—MC4, small bird that could fly across the flooded village of Coosa. Reported to have had a yellow breast and interpreted as the possible origin for the name of the village.  
 Lane-munkv—CC2, green.  
 Lovc—CC1, CC2, turtle, the primeval Turtle.  
 Mehenwv—CC2, truly (?).  
 Mi'kâłgi i'ntchuka—M2, house of the Mikos.  
 Mic-co-ho yon ejau—M6, one of four scared herbs shown to the Muskogees by th Hi-you-yul-gee. See also Micoweanochaw and Miko hoyanidja.  
 Mic-cos—M6, chiefs, leaders. See also Mic-ul-gee.  
 Mic-ul-gee—M6.  
 Miccos—M6, see Mic-cos.  
 Micoweanochaw—M1, Red root. See also Mic-co-ho yon ejau and Miko hoyanidja.  
 Miko hoyanidja—MT1, MT2, M9, Red Root. See also Mic-co-ho yon ejau and Micoweanochaw.

- Misha Sipokni—Cho4, beyond age, whose source and terminus are unknown.
- Nere-hvse—CC2, moon, the primeval Moon.
- Nokuse—CC2, bears, the primeval Bear.
- Obã'nga tcã'pko—M2, the Long Dance.
- Obãnga atculi—M2, the old dance done with women wearing turtle shell rattles.
- Oĩ-kātca—MC5, water panther.
- Ohfvnkṽ—CC2, the One Above
- Oke-choy-atte—A4, life, name applied to Muskogees (?).
- Owv—CC2, water, the primeval Water.
- Pas-sau—M2, one of four sacred herbs shown the Muskogees by the Hi-you-yul-gee. See also Pasa and Pasaw.
- Pasa—MT1, one of two principle Busk medicines belonging to the Tuckabatchee when they were sent down from the world above. See also Pas-sau and Pasaw.
- Pasakola—M23, name of Rabbit who stole a headdress and flute from a young man.
- Pasaw—M1, one of four sacred herbs discovered by the Muskogees on their migration eastward. See also Pas-sau and Pasa.
- Paskofv—CC2, square ground.
- Paskĩ'—M23, old pieces of pottery that had been dripped upon.
- Poskita—M2, Busk.
- Puk' i'tcita—M2, Shooting the ball, stick ball.
- Pvnkofv—CC2, ceremonial grounds.
- Quum coimus—M19, a name for tobacco.
- Sákdju—T1, crawfish, the primeval Crawfish who brought land up from beneath the water.
- Saogo—M15, rattle.
- Sawatcka—M9, combination of Pasa (button snakeroot) of the Cowetas and Miko hoyanĩdja of the Tuckabatchee. Swanton reports that by some it is named as a third medicine.
- Shar-pah—U1, moon, the primeval Moon.
- Sock-chew—U1, crawfish, the primeval Crawfish who brought land up from beneath the water.
- Sofki—M21, M22, a dish made from corn.
- Sowatchko—M1, one of four sacred herbs discovered by the Muskogees on their migration eastward, described as growing like wild fennel.
- T-chō—U1, sun, the primeval Sun.



- Tådjo—M2, round ridge of earth around the ball post of the Busk Grounds.
- Tafv—CC2, feathers.
- Tan—U1, Cedar, primary medicine of the Yuchi.
- Taputcka obånga—M2, the gun dance.
- Tåsikaya—M6, M18, warrior.
- Tåstånågåłgi i'ntcuka—M2, the house of the warriors.
- Tastanégy—M4, the grand war chief.
- Tcika ha'så—M5, See the sun! Interpreted as the possible origin of the name Chickasaw.
- Tcokofa—MC4, unidentified building.
- Tcon<sup>s</sup>—U14, turtles, the primeval Turtles.
- Tcook-u'-thlocco—MC2, big house, the square grounds.
- Tcuko—M2, houses associated with the square ground.
- Tcuko låko—M12, square ground.
- Te-po-lux-o—M6, shields.
- Thlot-lo-ul-gee—M6, the fish tribe.
- TiT ógo'—U6, a division of the Yuchi.
- To tcālá—U5c, Red Root.
- Too-loh—M6, Sweet Bay.
- Tote-kit-cau—M6, fire.
- Towaka—M9, logs.
- Tsoya'ha—U6, son of the Sun, the original Yuchi, a division of the Yuchi.  
See also Tsøyahá
- Tsøyahá—U5d, Sun people, offspring of the sun, the original Yuchi. See also Tsoya'ha.
- Tus-e-ki-yås—MC2, citizens or warriors (?).
- Tvktempe—CC2, around the fire (?).
- Ul is ke ta—MC2, shame, disgrace.
- Ulse—MC2, to be ashamed, bashful, interpreted as possible origin of the name Tulsa.
- Um-mau-mau-yuh—M6, elders or people ahead of them. The name the Abecuh applied to the Chickasaw.
- Útski—H2, reed thicket.
- Vcenv—CC2, Cedar.
- Vculvkvłke—CC2, traditional Elders or ceremonial leaders.
- Vnewetv—CC2, earth, all creation.
- Wahalle—M1, the south. See also Wali.
- Wahketa—MC2, lamentation for the dead.

Wali—M1, the south. See also Wahalle.

WētânA'—U5c, God.

Wi katca—MC4, water tiger.

Wotko—CC2, raccoon, the primeval Raccoon.

Yah-tee—U1, buzzard, the primeval Buzzard.

Yana's' atch'li—M2, the old Buffalo Dance.

Yōh-ah—U1, star, the primeval Star.

## Glossary of Geographical Locations

Aphoosa pheeskaw—M1, M1n, Swanton offers the following translation: afuswa—thread, fesketâ—to sprinkle, scatter out. After leaving Coosa, the Muskogees lived near Nowphawpe, now called Callasi-hutche (river). Leaving this place they came to a creek called Wattoolahawka-hutche, Whooping Creek. After crossing this they came to a river with a waterfall named Owatuaka River. After one more day of travel they came to Aphoosa pheeskaw.

Appalachian Mountain Range—CC3, “the backbone of the mother,” the place where people emerged.

Atauga—A5, Alabama town.

Atlantic Ocean—H1, the Hitchiti arrive in ancient times at the Atlantic Ocean after migration from the west.

Augusta—M4, the Muskogee establish themselves near the location of modern-day Augusta; M5, some Chickasaws settle near the location of modern-day Augusta.

Belle-Rivière—M4, while migrating from the west, the Muskogee arrive at Belle-Rivière (the Ohio River) in pursuit of the “Alibamons.”

Big River—M2, the name of one of two rivers near where the Coweta and Kasihta emerged from the earth: Big River (Hâtcî Lâko) and Confluent River (Hâtc Afa’ski).

Big Water—MC1, the Coosa traveled eastward to a big water too wide to cross and lived near there for a long time before eventually crossing. M6, the Coweta migrating eastward arrive at Big Water (the ocean) and live near there.

Cahawba—A4, river near which the Alabama sprang from the ground.

Callasi-hutche—M1, M1n, see Aphoosa Pheeskaw.

Chat-to-hoche—M6, upon crossing the Chat-to-hoche (River) the Kasihta, Chickasaw, and Coweta found a race of people with flat heads.

Chattahooche—M4, the Muskogee establish themselves on the Coosa, Tallapoosa, Chattahooche, Flint, Ocmulgee, Oconee, and Ogeeche Rivers.

- Chattahoochee—M4, upon joining the Creeks, Yuchi assigned land along the Chattahoochee.
- Chic-ke-tal-lo-fau-hat-che—M6 (Savannah), after defeating the “flats” at the Chattahoochee, the Muskogeese spread eastward and settle along the O-cheese-hat-che (Ocmulgee), Ocone, O-ge-chee (How-ge-chuh), and Chic-ke-tal-lo-fau-hat-che (Sau-va-no-gee/Savannah) Rivers.
- Choctaw Bluff—A5 (Holsifa), place near where the Alabama emerged from the ground; near the Alabama River a little upstream from its junction with the Tombigbee.
- Coloouse-creek—M1 (Coloouse-hutche), the last creek crossed by the Muskogeese before arriving at the village of Coosa.
- Coloouse-hutche—M1, see Coloouse-creek.
- Confluent River—M2, see Big River.
- Coosa—A4, after migrating from the Cahaba and Alabama Rivers, the Alabama settle at the junction of the Tuscaloosa and Coosa Rivers. A5, Hatcafa’ski (River Point), an Alabama town located at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa. MC1, the Coosa or Tulsa (people) migrate eastward. MC1, MC4, town on the Coosa River. MC4, MC5, Water Cougar destroys the town of Coosa and many of its inhabitants. MC2, “Cosa” original name of the Muskogee; “Cosa” destroyed by Snake Man, accounts for origin of Coosa River. MC3, Coosa original name of the Muskogee; Snake Man destroys Coosa, accounts for origin of the Coosa River. M4, the Muskogee establish themselves along the Coosa River; the Tuskegee, joining the Creeks, are given land at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers.
- Coosau River—M6, the Kasihta, Chickasaw, and Coweta, migrating eastward, meet the “Au-be-cuh” at the Coosau River.
- Coosaw—M1, the Kasihta, migrating eastward, meet a people called Coosaws and live with them for four years.
- Cosa Town—MC2, those people surviving the destruction of Coosa formed Cosa Town.
- Coussa—M4, the Alabama advance as far as the banks of the Coussa River.
- Cumberland—M4, the Muskogee cross the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers in pursuit of the Alabama.
- Cussetuh fields—M6, after crossing the falls of the “Tal-la-poo-sau,” the Muskogee visit the “Chat-to-hoche” and find a race of people with flat heads in possession of the mounds in the Cussetuh fields.
- Falls of Tallapoosa—M6, falls located on the Tallapoosa River near “Tool-cau-bat-che.”

- Florida—H1, the Muskogee and Hitchiti become allied in Florida. CC3, people emerge at the end of the Appalachian Mountain Range and inhabit Alabama, Georgia, and northern Florida.
- Fort Jackson—A4, the Alabama settle near Fort Jackson.
- Fus-hatchee—MC5, associated with the destruction of the town of Coosa.
- Great Lakes—MT3, Tecumseh undertakes to organize all Indians from the Gulf to the Great Lakes.
- Gulf—See Great Lakes.
- Hâtc Afa'ski—M2 (Confluent River), the Kasihta migrating eastward conquer a town on this river and establish a town for themselves where they are joined by the Coweta near Hâtci Lâko (Big River).
- Hatcafa'ski—A5 (River Point), an Alabama town located at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers.
- Hâtci Lâko—M2 (Big River), river near a Kasihta/Coweta town (see Hâtc Afa'ski).
- Holsifa—A5 (Choctaw Bluff), located near where the Alabama emerged from the ground on the Alabama River a little upstream from its junction with the Tombigbee.
- How-ge-chuh—M6 (O-ge-chie), the Muskogee settle along this river.
- Huntsville—Chi1, the Chickasaw, migrating eastward, arrive near Huntsville.
- Istalsosi—MC4 (Tulsa).
- Kosa—MC4 (Coosa), town located on the Coosa River, destroyed by a Water Cougar (see Coosa).
- Kosa-talâksûmgi—MC5, Sunk Coosa.
- Koza—MC4 (Coosa), see Kosa.
- Mad River—MT3, river in Ohio near the home of Tecumseh.
- Mexico—M4, identified as origin of the Muskogee.
- Missouri—M4, the Alabama, pursued by the Muskogee, flee along the Missouri River.
- Mobile—M4, the Alabama, fleeing the Muskogee, settle near Mobile.
- Moterell—M1, mountain encountered by the Muskogee during their eastward migration. Described as making a noise like a beating drum.
- Nanne Wayah—Cho1, stooping or sloping hill created by a superior being. Described as place where red people emerged from the earth.
- Nánni Wáya—Cho3, described as place where Choctaw settled after migrating from the west.
- Navel of the Earth—H1, according to Hitchiti myth, place where the Muskogee claim to have emerged from the earth near the Rocky Mountains.

New Madrid—MT3, swallowed up by an earthquake caused by Tecumseh.  
 New Orleans—A4, the Alabama claimed the country from Fort Jackson to Mobile as their hunting ground.

Nowphawpe—M1, Nowphawpe River, now called “Callasi-hutche.”

Nunih Waiya—Cho2, hill or mountain created by the Great Spirit, place where red man first emerged from earth.

O-cheese-hat-che—M6 (Ocmulgee), the Muskogee settle along the O-cheese-hat-che (River).

O-ge-chee—M6 (How-ge-chuh), the Muskogee settle along the O-ge-chee (River).

Ocmulgee—M4, M6 (O-chees-hat-che), the Muskogee settle along the Ocmulgee (River).

Oconee—H1, one of several Hitchiti towns. M4, M6, the Muskogee settle along the Oconee (River).

Ogechee—M4, the Muskogee settle along the Ogechee (River).

Ohio—M4, the Muskogee pursue the Alabama to the Ohio River.

Okmulgee—H1, one of several Hitchiti towns.

Oktcaiutci—A5, one of several Alabama towns.

Otciafafa—M4, identified as the home town of Alexander McGillivray.

Owatuaka River—M1, after leaving the town of Coosa, the Muskogee come to Nowphawpe (Callasi-hutche); next they come to Wattoo-lahawka-hutche (Whooping Creek); next to Owatuaka (River) where there was a waterfall.

Owatunka—see Owatuaka River.

Pawokti—A5, one of several Alabama towns.

Prairies—M4, the Muskogee migrate through an area of immense prairies. M5, after crossing a great river, the Chickasaw, migrating eastward with the Kasihta and Coweta, settle in an area of small prairies.

Red River—M4, after leaving Mexico, the Muskogee travel fifteen days northward as far as the source of the Red River. M6, (We-chā-te-hat-che Au-fus-kee), place west of the Mississippi River at which Kasihta, Coweta, and Chickasaw found themselves. Two mounds were located there.

Rocky Mountains—H1, according to Hitchiti myth, the Muskogee claim to have emerged from the Navel of the Earth near the Rocky Mountains. M3, place from which the Coweta started their eastward migration.

Saskatchewan—A9, place where the Alabama were thought to have once lived before migrating to Alabama.

Savannah—M1, place at which “Tchikilli” delivered the Creek origin

story to Governor Oglethorpe in 1735. M4, the Chickasaw settle among the Creek as far north as the mountains of the Cherokee near the source of the Savannah River. M6, Muskogees settle along the Savannah River.

Sea Coast—H2, the Hitchiti first appear in their country by coming out of a canebrake near the seacoast. M6, the Muskogee meet the white people near the seacoast.

Shoveling Place—M2, near a large river where the Muskogee settled, two people were killed by the Muskogee while throwing up earth to make a mound; the place became known as the shoveling place.

Springs—M1, the Kasihta settle near a red, bloody river for two years but there were low springs there.

Tal-la-poo-sau—M6, the Kasihta, Chickasaw, and Coweta settle along the Coosau and Tal-la-poo-sau.

Tallapoosa—A5, Hatcafa'ski, an Alabama town, was located at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa. M4, the Muskogee settle along the Tallapoosa. M4, the Tuskegee settle at the junction of the Coosa and Tallapoosa. M6, crossing the falls of the Tallapoosa near Tool-cau-bat-che, the Muskogee visited the Chattahooche and found a race of people with flat heads living there.

Tawasa—A5, one of several Alabama towns.

Tennessee River—Chi1, the Chickasaw Old Field was located on the eastern bank of the Tennessee River at the islands (Lat.34°35' and Long. 86°31').

Tool-cau-bat-che—M6, the Muskogee crossed the falls of the Tallapoosa near Tool-cau-bat-che.

Tougoulou—M4, located near the sources of the Tennessee and Savannah Rivers.

Tukabahchee Town—MT1, the Tuckabatchee migrate to Tukabahchee Town.

Tulsa—see Coosa.

Tuscaloosa—A4, A4n, the Alabama migrate from the Cahaba and Alabama Rivers to the junction of the Tuscaloosa and Coosa Rivers.

Two Floridas—M4, place where the Alabama lived that the Muskogee sought to conquer and settle. The Alabama country is described as “between the two Floridas.”

Wabash—M4, the Muskogee pursue the Alabama to the Ohio River near the Wabash River.

Wattoolahawka-hutche—M1 (Whooping Creek), creek crossed by the Muskogee after leaving Coosa.

We-chā-te-hat-che Au-fus-kee—M6 (Red River), the Kasihta, Chickasaw and Coweta found themselves here at two mounds.

We-o-coof-ke—M6 (Muddy Water), identified as the Mississippi River.

Wetumka—A5, one of several Alabama towns.

White Foot-Path—M1, the Kasihta cross a white footpath traveling toward the sunrise just before arriving at Coosa.

White Road—CC2 (Milky Way), placed across the night sky vault by creator.

Whooping Creek—see Wattoolahawka-hutche.



## Notes

### Chapter I. The Role of Mythology

1. Wagner, *Yuchi Tales*, 183–84.
2. Pals, *Seven Theories*, 23–25.
3. Hultkrantz, *Belief and Worship*, 8.
4. *Ibid.*, 11–12.
5. Brinton, *American Hero-Myths*; Kunike, “Zur Astralmythologie.”
6. Boas, *Tsimshian Mythology*; Reichard, *Coeur d’Alene Myths*; Thompson, *European Tales*; Thompson, “Star Husband Tale”; Thompson, *Folk Tales*.
7. See, for example, Swanton, *Myths and Tales*.
8. See, for example, Róheim, “Culture Hero”; Radin, *Trickster*; and LaBarre, *Ghost Dance*.
9. Pals, *Seven Theories*, 60.
10. Hultkrantz, *Belief and Worship*, 6.
11. *Ibid.*
12. For example, Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*.
13. *Ibid.*, 202–28.
14. Hultkrantz, *Belief and Worship*, 7.
15. Eliade, *Sacred & Profane*, 68.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. Wallace, *Religion*, 57–58.
19. Eliade, *Sacred & Profane*, 97–98.
20. *Ibid.*, 99.
21. *Ibid.*, 80.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, 73.
24. *Ibid.*, 20.
25. *Ibid.*, 22.
26. *Ibid.*, 37.
27. *Ibid.*
28. It is the intent to provide here only a brief overview of Creek history. Extensive histories of the Creeks can be found in Swanton, *Early History* and *Indians of*

*the Southeastern United States*; Debo, *Road*; Stiggins, *Creek Indian History*; and Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, to name only a few.

29. Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles*, 2.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., 2–3.
32. Ibid., 7.
33. Ibid., 8–9.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 12.
36. Ibid., 10.
37. Ibid.
38. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 112.
39. See, for example, Lankford, *Legends*.
40. Swanton, *Early History*, 11.

## Chapter 2. Cosmogony

1. Leeming and Leeming, *Dictionary*, vii–viii.
2. Hawkins, *Sketch*, 39.
3. Gatschet, *Migration Legend*, I:146.
4. Mooney, cited in Speck, *Taskigi Town*, 105–6.
5. For a more in-depth discussion of possible Tuskegee origins, see Swanton, *Early History*, 207–11.
6. Swanton, *Myths and Tales*, 269.
7. Charles Daniels, personal communication.
8. Eakins, in Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, I:271.
9. Hultkrantz, *Native Religions*, 18.
10. Howard, *Shawnee*, 35–37.
11. Gatschet, cited in Swanton, *Early History*, 279, without source.
12. Swanton, *Early History*, 277.
13. Witthoft and Hunter, “Origins of the Shawnee,” 52.
14. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 143.
15. Ibid., 107–8.
16. Ibid.
17. Eakins, in Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, I:272.
18. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, I:310.
19. Ibid.
20. Adair, *History*, 38.
21. See, for example, Wagner, *Yuchi Tales*, 170; Swanton, *Early History*, 77–78; and Swanton, *Myths and Tales*, 40, 121.
22. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 76.
23. Tuggle, cited in Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 487.

### Chapter 3. Creek Cosmology

1. Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 25.
2. Ibid.
3. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 477–78.
4. Eakins, in Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, I:269.
5. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 477–78.
6. Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 27.
7. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 481.
8. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 102.
9. Ibid., 105.
10. Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminole*, 424.
11. Bossu, *Travels*, 145; Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 481.
12. Pope, *Tour*, 54.
13. Ibid.
14. Swan, in Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, V:269–70.
15. Ibid.
16. Pope, *Tour*, 54.
17. The Florida Mikasuki also recognize *solō:plā:pīlī* (soul or ghost with horns) as a being who lives somewhere in the air and has small horns. This being, translated in modern times as the devil, is of obvious Christian origins. Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminole*, 424.
18. Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 25.
19. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 494.
20. Ibid., 492.
21. Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 90.
22. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 494.
23. Hudson, *Southeastern Indians*, 131–32.
24. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 502.
25. Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 91.
26. Ibid., 92.
27. Hawkins, *Sketch*, 79–80.
28. Ibid.
29. Hudson, *Southeastern Indians*, 145.
30. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 69.
31. Ibid. 70.
32. Gatschet, “Water Monsters,” 255–60; Lankford, *Legends*, 102–5; Howard, *Southeastern Ceremonial Complex*, 54.
33. Conzemius, in Rands, “Horned Serpent Stories,” 79–81.
34. Rands, “Horned Serpent Stories,” 80–81.
35. Conzemius, in Rands, “Horned Serpent Stories,” 79.
36. Lankford, *Legends*, 100.
37. Ibid.

38. Ibid. 100–101.
39. Howard, *Southeastern Ceremonial Complex*, 53; Lankford, *Legends*, 96; Phillips and Brown, *Shell Engravings*, 140–43, 200.
40. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 525.
41. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 111.
42. Ibid.; Speck, *Taskigi Town*, 201–2.
43. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 485.
44. Ibid., 544.
45. Ibid., 428.
46. Ibid., 484.
47. Bartram, *William Bartram*, 396n.
48. Adair, *History*, 80.
49. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 47.
50. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 110.
51. Eakins, in Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, I:271.
52. Swan, in Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, V:254n.
53. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 495.
54. Howard, *Southeastern Ceremonial Complex*, 42.
55. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 513.
56. Ibid., 495; Howard, *Southeastern Ceremonial Complex*, 45.
57. Howard, *Southeastern Ceremonial Complex*, 48–49.
58. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 497.
59. Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*.
60. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 496.
61. Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 97–98.
62. Hitchcock, *A Traveler*, 139–40; Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 97; Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 26.
63. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 494–95; Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 424–25.
64. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 480.
65. Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 424–25.
66. Ibid.
67. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 493.
68. Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 210–11.
69. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 496; Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 426.
70. Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 426.
71. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 497.
72. Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 211–12.
73. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 498.
74. Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 428.
75. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 497.
76. Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 212–13.
77. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 497.

78. Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 214.
79. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 497.
80. Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 214–15.
81. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 497.
82. Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 215.
83. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 498.
84. Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 216.
85. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 495.

## Chapter 4. Souls

1. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 97.
2. *Ibid.*, 93–94.
3. Capron, *Medicine Bundles*, 174–75.
4. Hewitt, *Notes*, 157; Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 111.
5. Hewitt, *Notes*, 157.
6. Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 111.
7. From conversations with Charles Daniels and Dan Penton of Pine Arbor, Mary Johns of Brighton Reservation, and Rosemary Maxey of Oklahoma.
8. Capron, *Medicine Bundles*, 175.
9. Hewitt, *Notes*, 157, and Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 111, respectively.
10. From conversations with Charles Daniels and Dan Penton of Pine Arbor, Mary Johns of Brighton Reservation, and Rosemary Maxey of Oklahoma.
11. Capron, *Medicine Bundles*, 174–75.
12. Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 112.
13. Greenlee, “Medicine and Curing,” 317–28.
14. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 512–13; Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 356.
15. Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 356.
16. *Ibid.*, 357.
17. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 513.
18. Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 357.
19. Hawkins, *Sketch*, 80.
20. Adair, *History*, 36.
21. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 511.
22. Bossu, *Travels*, 145.
23. Bartram, *William Bartram*, 540.
24. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 514.
25. Bartram, *William Bartram*, 540–41.
26. Adair, *History*, 36.
27. Bossu, *Travels*, 145.
28. Greenlee, “Medicine and Curing,” 174.
29. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 511.
30. Adair, *History*, 39.

31. Pope, *Tour*, 63–64.
32. Ibid.
33. Bartram, *William Bartram*, 540–41.
34. Dan Penton, personal communication.

## Chapter 5. Spiritual Specialists

1. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 615.
2. Ibid., 616.
3. Ibid., 617.
4. Ibid., 618.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 619.
7. Hawkins, *Sketch*, 78–79.
8. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 618.
9. Ibid., 620.
10. Adair, *History*, 89–94.
11. Hitchcock, *A Traveler*, 140.
12. Adair, *History*, 91–93.
13. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 630.
14. Ibid., 631.
15. Ibid.
16. Stiggins, *Creek Indian History*, 88.
17. Hitchcock, *A Traveler*, 139–40.
18. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 632.
19. Ibid., 635.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 635–36.

## Chapter 6. Miscellaneous Beliefs

1. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 517.
2. Adair, *History*, 139.
3. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 499.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 500–501.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 502.
9. Ibid., 500–501.
10. Adair, *History*, 168–70.
11. Capron, *Medicine Bundles*, 163.

12. Ibid.
13. Hawkins, *Sketch*, 79.
14. Hitchcock, *A Traveler*, 123–24.
15. Stiggins, *Creek Indian History*, 44–45.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, III:88–89.
19. Pickett, “History of Alabama,” 82.
20. Adair, *History*, 187–88.
21. Pickett, “History of Alabama,” 83.
22. Ibid.
23. Stiggins, *Creek Indian History*, 36.
24. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 510.
25. Adair, *History*, 137–43.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Bartram, *William Bartram*, 541.
29. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 516.
30. Adair, *History*, 121.

## Chapter 7. Sacred Plants or Medicines

1. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 65n.
2. Hawkins, *Sketch*, 77.
3. Gatschet, *Migration Legend*, II:47.
4. Ibid., I:179.
5. Hu, “Botany of Yaupon,” 22.
6. Merrill, “Beloved Tree,” 41.
7. Adair, *History*, 177.
8. Merrill, “Beloved Tree,” 41.
9. Swan, *Indian Tribes*, 5:266.
10. Ibid.
11. Merrill, “Beloved Tree,” 72–73.
12. Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 33.
13. Merrill, “Beloved Tree,” 73.
14. Stiggins, *Creek Indian History*, 54.
15. Bartram, *Travels*, 358–59.
16. Men of peace and religion, not Europeans.
17. Adair, *History*, 49–50, 114, 177; Bossu, *Travels*, 141–42.
18. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 543–44.
19. Ibid., 485.
20. Adair, *History*, 106.
21. Ibid., 176.

22. Bartram, *Travels*, 359.
23. Merrill, “Beloved Tree,” 58–59.
24. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 99.

## Chapter 8. Sacred Time and Space

1. Adair, *History*, 80.
2. Swan, *Indian Tribes*, 5:276.
3. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 400–401.
4. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 551.
5. *Ibid.*, 551–54.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 67.
8. Swan, *Indian Tribes*, 5:276–77; Swanton, *Social Organization*, 401.
9. Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 22.
10. *Ibid.*, 18–20.
11. Eliade, *Sacred & Profane*, 37.
12. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 76.
13. Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 31.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Bartram, *William Bartram*, 365–66.
16. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 57.

## Chapter 9. Ceremony and Ritual

1. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 521, and Bartram, *Travels*, 396; see also Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 62, for a description of Yuchi flutes and their use.
2. Bartram, *Travels*, 396.
3. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 521–52; Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 62.
4. Bartram in Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 635.
5. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 550.
6. Stiggins, *Creek Indian History*, 60–61.
7. Bartram, *William Bartram*, 404.
8. Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 121–22.
9. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 546.
10. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 106–7.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, 116–31.
13. Speck, *Taskigi Town*, 134.
14. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 585n.
15. *Ibid.*, 546.
16. Hitchcock, *A Traveler*, 132–36.
17. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 112.



18. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 547.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Gatschet, *Migration Legend*, I:177–83, offers a review and discussion of Hawkins’s and Swan’s accounts; Hewitt, *Notes*, 149–54, and Stiggins, *Creek Indian History*, 60–64, give very general accounts of the busk. See Sturtevant, *Mikasuki Seminoles*, 407–11, for a description of a Florida Mikasuki busk (1950s) and Howard and Lena, *Oklahoma Seminoles*, 123–56, for a description of an Oklahoma Seminole Busk.

22. Hawkins, *Sketch*, 75–78.

23. See discussion of sacred plants.

24. Swan, *Indian Tribes*, 5:267–68.

25. Bartram, *Travels*, 399.

26. Adair, *History*, 105–17.

27. Pope, *Tour*, 55–56.

28. Hawkins, *Sketch*, 75–78.

29. Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 38.

30. Swan, *Indian Tribes*, 5:267–68.

31. Adair, *History*, 105–17.

32. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 43.

33. Ibid., 114.

34. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 484.

35. Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 36.

36. Ibid., 37.

37. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 484–85.

38. Martin, *Sacred Revolt*, 37.

39. Swanton, *Religious Beliefs*, 548.

## Chapter 10. Conclusions

1. Hultkrantz, *Native Religions*, 18.

2. Merrill, “Beloved Tree,” 58–59

## Chapter 11. Earth Diver Myths

1. Charles Daniels, personal communication, 1997.

## Chapter 12. Emergence Myths

1. Leeming and Leeming, *Dictionary*, 58.

2. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, I:265–66.

3. Swanton, *Early History*, 191n.

4. Ibid., 192.

5. See Brinton, *National Legend*, 5; Gatschet, *Migration Legend*, I:235, II:4[36]–5[37].
6. Brinton, *National Legend*, 5–6.
7. Gatschet, *Migration Legend*, I:236.
8. Brinton, *National Legend*, 7–9.
9. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 34–38.
10. Gatschet, *Migration Legend*, II.
11. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 33n.
12. *Ibid.*, 34n.
13. *Ibid.*, 34.
14. *Ibid.*; Swanton, *Early History*, 245.
15. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 37n.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, 38n. See also Swanton, *Early History*, 108–9, and Jones, *Sketch of Tomo-Chi-Chi*.
20. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 56n.
21. *Ibid.*, 57n.
22. *Ibid.*, 346–54.
23. *Ibid.*, 59n.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, 60n.
27. *Ibid.*, 61n.
28. *Ibid.*

### Chapter 13. Migration Legends

1. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 40; Gatschet, *Migration Legend*, I:233.
2. Gatschet, *Migration Legend*, I:233.
3. *Ibid.*, 233–34.
4. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 44n.
5. *Ibid.*, 45n.
6. Swanton, *Early History*, 215.
7. See Swanton, *Social Organization*, 331.
8. Gatschet, *Migration Legend*, I:220–21.
9. *Ibid.*, 220n.
10. *Ibid.*, 222.
11. *Missionary Herald*, 1828, Vol. 24.
12. Gatschet, *Migration Legend*, I:219n.
13. Lewis, “Nunih Waiya,” 216.
14. *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, VIII:532.

## Chapter 14. Relationships Between the Tribes

1. Wagner, *Yuchi Tales*, 167n.
2. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 65n.

## Chapter 15. Journeys into the Sky World

1. Greenlee, “Folktales.”
2. Wagner, *Yuchi Tales*, 85n.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 87n.
5. Martin, “Folktales of the Alabama-Coushatta Indians,” 67–70.
6. Heard, “Two Tales,” 294–96.

## Chapter 16. Visitors from the Sky World

1. Gatschet, “Mythic Stories,” 281.

## Chapter 17. Snake Man Legends

1. Wagner, *Yuchi Tales*, 69n.
2. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 72n.
3. Ibid., 70n.
4. Swanton, in Hewitt, *Notes*, 157–58.

## Chapter 19. Tobacco and Corn: Sacred Plants to the Creeks

1. Swanton, *Myths and Tales*, 167n.

## Appendix of Sources

1. Lankford, in Swanton, *Myths and Tales*, xi–xii.
2. Ibid.
3. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 67, 71.
4. The Asbury Manual Labor School was first established in 1822 near Fort Mitchell, Alabama. Closing in 1829, it was reopened in 1850 in present-day Oklahoma (Baird, *Creek Warrior*, 41n).
5. Ibid., 49.
6. In 1867 the Creek Nation adopted a constitutional form of government that created a National Council composed of a House of Warriors (similar to the U.S. House of Representatives) and a House of Kings (similar to the U.S. Senate) (see Debo, *Road*, 180–82).
7. Baird, *Creek Warrior*, 9.

8. Meserve, “Pleasant Porter,” 318.
9. *Ibid.*, 323–25.
10. Debo, *Road*, 313, 325.
11. Baird, *Creek Warrior*, 156n.
12. King, “Jackson Lewis,” 66.
13. *Ibid.*, 68–69.
14. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 65.
15. Baird, *Creek Warrior*, 126.
16. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 53, 67–71.
17. Wagner, *Yuchi Tales*, x.
18. *Ibid.*, x–xi.
19. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi*, 5.
20. *Ibid.*, 5–6.
21. Gatschet, *Migration Legend*, I:v–vi.
22. Baird, *Creek Warrior*, 39n.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Meserve, “Samuel Checote,” 401–3.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Wright, “Appendix,” 314.
27. *Ibid.*, 315.
28. Baird, *Creek Warrior*, 159n; Foreman, “The Yuchi,” 496.
29. Meserve, “Samuel Checote,” 406.
30. *Ibid.*, 407.
31. Foreman, “The Yuchi,” 490n.
32. Swanton, *Early History*, 192; Gatschet, “Mythic Stories,” 279.
33. Tuggle, *Shem*, 273.
34. *Ibid.*, 275.
35. Mooney, *Cherokee*; Swanton, *Myths and Tales*.
36. Tuggle, *Shem*, 274–75.
37. Hawkins, *Sketch*, 5–6.
38. *Ibid.*, 81.
39. McCary, *Memoirs*, 7–11.
40. Swanton, *Social Organization*, 40.
41. Blutworth, “How the Alabamas Came Southward,” 298.
42. Densmore, “Alabama Indians,” 276.
43. Hewitt, *Notes*, 157; Foreman, “Jeremiah Curtin,” 345–56, and “The Yuchi,” 488.
44. Methvin, “Legend,” 392.
45. Eakins, in Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes*, I:265.
46. Nelson, “Folk Etymology,” 201.

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- Alabama Origin-Migration (A4)
- Chickasaw Migration (Chi1)

## **Speck**

- Origin of the Earth (U5a)
- Origin of Light, Sun, Moon, and Stars (U5b)
- Origin of the Yuchi and the Ceremonies (U5c)
- Origin of the Yuchi (U5d)
- Origin of the Other Tribes, and a Chief's Visit to Receive the Creator's Prophecy (U8)
- Four Men Visit the Spirit Land to Recover Their Wives (and Death Originates) (U10)
- Wind Seeks His Lost Sons and Kills the Iron Monster (U13)
- Tobacco Originates from Semen (U16)
- Taskigi Origin (T1)

## **Swanton**

- Hitchiti Origin (H1)
- The Man Who Became a Snake (H3)
- The Man-Eating Bird (H4)
- The Visit to the Nest of the Monster Bird (H5)

A Strange Turkey Catches People and Carries Them Up to the Sky  
(H6)

The Origin of Tobacco (H7)

Origin of the Indians (A3)

Alabama Origin (A5) (Gatschet)

Alabama-Koasati Origin (A6)

The Celestial Skiff (A16)

The Men Who Went to the Sky (A10)

The Men Who Went to the Sky (A11)

The Men Who Went to the Sky (A13)

Two Brothers Who Tried to Restore Their Sister to Life (A12)

A Story of the Origin of Corn and Tobacco (A22)

The Woman Who Turned into a Snake (A18)

The Eagle's Nest (A19)

The Man and the Eagle (A20)

The Story of the Life Eater (A21)

Corn Woman (A23)

Coosa Origin (MC1)

Coosa Flood (Water Cougar) (MC4)

The Water Panther (Leopard) (MC5)

Coosa Flood (Snake-Man) (MC2)

Kasihta Migration (M4) (Milfort)

Kasihta-Chickasaw-Coweta Origin-Migration (M2)

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Coweta Origin-Migration (M3)

Coweta-Tuckabatchee Alliance (M7)

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The Man Who Became a Snake (M10)

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The Man Who Became a Snake (M14)

The Story of the Turkey (M16)

Turkey, Turtle, and Rattlesnake (M17)

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The Origin of Corn (M21)

The Orphan and the Origin of Corn (M22)

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The Orphan and the Origin of Corn (Tuggle Collection) (M24)  
Tuckabatchee Origin-Migration (MT1)  
Tukabatchee-Coweta Alliance (MT2)

### **Tuggle**

Yuchi Origin (U1)  
The King of the Tie Snakes (MT4)

### **Wagner**

The Creation of the World (U4)  
The Origin of the Yuchi (U6)  
Dispute among the Yuchi, Chickasaw, and Shawnee (as to Their  
Priority on Earth) (U7)  
Four Men Go to the Land of Spirits (to Recover Their Wives) (U9)  
A Hunter Who Captured a Woman from the Sky (U12)  
Wind Seeks His Lost Sons and Kills the Iron Monster (U14)  
A Man Becomes a Snake (U15)

## List of Stories by Cultural Group

### **Yuchi**

- Yuchi Origin (U1)
- The Origin of Dry Land (U2)
- How the Land Was First Made (U3)
- The Creation of the World (U4)
- Origin of the Earth (U5a)
- Origin of Light, Sun, Moon, and Stars (U5b)
- Origin of the Yuchi and the Ceremonies (U5c)
- Origin of the Yuchi (U5d)
- The Origin of the Yuchi (U6)
- Dispute among the Yuchi, Chickasaw, and Shawnee (As to Their Priority on Earth) (U7)
- Origin of the Other Tribes, and a Chief's Visit to Receive the Creator's Prophecy (U8)
- Four Men Go to the Land of Spirits (to Recover Their Wives) (U9)
- Four Men Visit the Spirit Land to Recover Their Wives (and Death Originates) (U10)
- Why the Cedar Tree Is Red-Grained (U11)
- A Hunter Who Captured a Woman from the Sky (U12)
- Wind Seeks His Lost Sons and Kills the Iron Monster (U13)
- Wind Seeks His Lost Sons and Kills the Iron Monster (U14)
- A Man Becomes a Snake (U15)
- Tobacco Originates from Semen (U16)

### **Hitchiti**

- Hitchiti Origin (H1)
- Hitchiti Migration (H2)
- The Man Who Became a Snake (H3)
- The Man-Eating Bird (H4)
- The Visit to the Nest of the Monster Bird (H5)

- A Strange Turkey Catches People and Carries Them Up to the Sky (H6)
- The Origin of Tobacco (H7)

## Alabama

- The Creation of the Earth (A1)
- The Creation of the Earth (A2)
- Origin of the Indians (A3)
- Alabama Origin-Migration (A4)
- Alabama Origin (A5)
- Alabama-Koasati Origin (A6)
- Origin of the Alabama and Coushatta Tribes (A7)
- The Origin of the Alabama-Coushatta Indians (A8)
- How the Alabamas Came Southward (A9)
- The Men Who Went to the Sky (A10)
- The Men Who Went to the Sky (A11)
- Two Brothers Who Tried to Restore Their Sister to Life (A12)
- The Men Who Went to the Sky (A13)
- A Journey to the Sky (A14)
- The Visit to the Sky (A15)
- The Celestial Skiff (A16)
- The Man Who Became a Snake (A17)
- The Woman Who Turned into a Snake (A18)
- The Eagle's Nest (A19)
- The Man and the Eagle (A20)
- The Story of the Life Eater (A21)
- A Story of the Origin of Corn and Tobacco (A22)
- Corn Woman (A23)

## Tuskegee

- Taskigi Origin (T1)

## Tuckabatchee

- Tuckabatchee Origin-Migration (MT1)
- Tukabatchee-Coweta Alliance (MT2)
- Legend of the Tie Snakes (MT3)
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## Muskogee

- Kasihta Origin-Migration (M1)
- Kasihta-Chickasaw-Coweta Origin-Migration (M2)
- Coweta Origin-Migration (M3)
- Kasihta Migration (M4)
- Kasihta-Chickasaw-Coweta Migration (M5)
- Kasihta-Chickasaw-Coweta Migration (M6)
- Coweta-Tuckabatchee Alliance (M7)
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- The Man Who Became a Snake (M10)
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- The Origin of Corn (M21)
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## Coosa

- Coosa Origin (MC1)
- Coosa Flood (Snake-Man) (MC2)
- Tie Snake Legend (MC3)
- Coosa Flood (Water Cougar) (MC4)
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## Choctaw

- Choctaw Creation (Cho1)
- Choctaw Creation (Cho2)
- Choctaw Migration (Cho3)
- Choctaw Origins (Cho4)

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Apalachicola Origin (CC1)

Apalachicola Origin (CC2)

Creation of the Earth and Creek Origin (CC3)

Migration from the West, the Great Bird, and the Red Rat (CC4)

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