

CHEROKEE CEREMONIAL GROUND (2014)

By Walt Wright

This is a small painting (8X10) yet it is not lacking in detail nor color values. As in most of my paintings the sense of distance is prevalent. The vast array of color and contrast create a stunning image of an ancient Indian celebration. The large shadow on the cliff gets the viewer's attention and provides a haunting sense of mysticism. Although the painting is small it attracts from quite a distance and compels the viewer to move in for a closer look.

The Cherokee Indian Nation is comprised of seven primary clans. They are Wolf, Deer, Paint, Long Hair, Potato, Bird, and Blue Face. The Bear clan ceremonial mask is also represented in this painting. They are a minor clan under the Blue Face in the Cherokee clan structure. The Bear clan was once the largest of all the clans and occupied the Northwest section of North Carolina and up through the Southwest Virginia region. When an Indian brave marries they must marry outside their own clan and they must leave and become a part of the bride's clan. After many generations of having more braves than squalls the Bear clan became smaller in number, but not in status. The Cherokee were the first Native American tribe to have a written language and they lived in huts made of hardened clay, not teepees. If their casino is all you know of the Cherokee, you have so much to learn.

The shadow on the stone cliff is a depiction of the well known Eagle dance performed by the Cherokee Indian Nation. It is reenacted during their outdoor drama located in Cherokee, NC. The fascinating story told during the drama is like a dream catcher within itself. Their lives were once simple and happy but when the Union army marched half their people across the country it became a tragedy known as the trail of tears. The drama is called "Unto These Hills" and by the end of the performance you'll wish you were also a proud Cherokee, able to rise and soar above the hardships of life.

