

**LITERATURE OF THE
CHEROKEES: ALSO,
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND THE
STORY OF THEIR GENESIS**

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Literature of the Cherokees: Also, Bibliography and the Story of Their Genesis by George E. Foster

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GEORGE E. FOSTER

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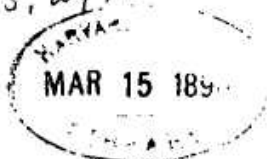
BY GEORGE E. FOSTER,
AUTHOR OF "SEQUOYAH, THE AMERICAN CADMUS".

ITHACA, N. Y.

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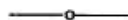
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Henry C. ...

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LITERATURE
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Brinton, in his book entitled "Aboriginal Authors," remarks:—

"When even a quite intelligent person hears about 'Aboriginal American Literature,' he is very excusable for asking: What is meant by the term? Where is the literature? In fine is there any such thing?"

The announcement that a Bibliography of the Cherokees would be published by the writer caused expressions of astonishment that such a work could be compiled at all. "A Bibliography," says Brande, is a knowledge of books in regard to their authors, subjects, editions, and history." On this ground it is safe

to ascribe to the Cherokees a greater bibliography than to any other Aborigines tribe.

§ 1. FOLK LORE.

Brinton finds a strong literary faculty in the Native mind, indicated by a vivid imagination, a love of narration, and an ample, appropriate and logically developed vocabulary.

All the above applies to the Cherokees, but the folk lore of their tribe, has not been preserved; only now and then do we find a recorded tradition. They have but few "tales of talking animals, mythical giants, dwarfs, subtle women, potent magicians." That they had such lore is proved by the "Buttrick Collections." That the traditions were lost was owing to the early doing away of the custom of collecting on feast day around the "old man," who recited the traditions of the past. Neither was this race so fortunate, like the Chippewas, as to have a man of Schoolcraft's genius

intermarry with and thus preserve the legends and traditions of their people. But they were doubly fortunate; there was raised up for them a man, who became the "Father of Learning," to his people. This was SE-QUO-YAH, who himself unlearned gave them an alphabet. Before this they had the unwritten literature; they had a historic literature as is seen in the "Buttrick Collections;" these may be styled also religious; they had an unwritten code of Laws for years fully understood, for it was carefully handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, and was first written out in Roman character in 1820 to be printed soon after in letters of their own invention. They had also a dramatic literature. Brinton cites under the head of "Dramatic Literature," an instance. "A pantomime where the actors appeared in costume was seen by Lieutenant Timberlake among the Cherokees in the middle of the last century, which he spoke of as 'very diverting,' where some of the