

Cherokee Society

Cherokee society was organized into seven clans. Villages had two governmental units, one handling peacetime affairs and one for times of war. A medicine chief would resolve disputes should these two disagree. The Cherokee had a matrilineal society, which meant that descent was traced strictly through the mother's side of the family. One of the reasons women were the head of the clan was that they were the givers of life. The most important male in a Cherokee child's life was their mother's brother. He was the disciplinarian and instructed children in warfare and hunting. Because members of the same clan were considered brothers and sisters, clan members were not allowed to marry. Women were free to choose the men they wished to marry, as long as they were from different clans. When a woman wished to divorce her husband, she would pack his things and put them outside the door.

NATURE

Indians believed they were to live in harmony with nature—they couldn't understand how the white culture wanted to own the land, control it, change it, use it, and be masters of it.

Indians believed that the air, water and land could not be bought, sold or traded. They were to live with these things and not control or change them. Nature was the source of knowledge and the natural order of things.

Indians believed that when you live with nature, all other things will fall into place. Harmony with nature and spirituality is necessary for good health. Modern medicine is just beginning to recognize this. Some hospitals are hiring medicine men to teach the traditional Indian methods of treating the sick, although many of these medicines cannot be developed through science.

RESPECT THESE FOUR THINGS

These same four things that you depend on to live—

FIRE WIND EARTH WATER

can also take your life in an instant.

Each one of these four things can take the breath of life away from you at anytime.

Treat each one with respect.

