The Eastern Cherokee, Southern Iroquois, and United Tribes of South Carolina

The Eastern Cherokee, Southern Iroquois, and United Tribes of South Carolina, Inc., aka Cherokee Indian Tribe of SC, is a non-profit organization "dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of South Carolina Native American history, culture, folkways, arts and crafts, and heritage." Eastern Cherokee, Southern Iroquois and United Tribes of South Carolina (ECSIUT) serve Native American Indians throughout South Carolina in various statewide projects. ECSIUT is a nonprofit organization that serves federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Natives and “state status” Native American Indian people; it is also a tribally based intertribal consortia. A non-profit, tax exempt 501 (C) (3) charitable organization whose multifaceted programs are designed to inspire South Carolina’s youth and to preserve, document, and present South Carolina’s important Native American history, heritage, culture, and folkways. The goals and objectives of the organization includes maintaining Cherokee documents, preserving and protecting all tribal documents, enrollment records, and Tribal Council administration of the Cherokee Indian Tribe of South Carolina. Presently, there are Cherokee descendants that live in all 46 counties of the state of South Carolina and enrolled members living throughout the US in other states with family ties and documentation to South Carolina Cherokees.

Therefore, Native American Indian people document their Native American Indian progenitors to comply with federal and state requirements for status. It was with this extensive documentation that on February 17, 2005 the *Eastern Cherokee, Southern Iroquois & United Tribes of South Carolina, Inc.* aka Cherokee Indian Tribe were formally and officially recognized and received “status” as a state recognized American Indian Tribal group in South Carolina, in compliance with Chapter 139 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 1-31-40 (A) (7) (10). This official classification helps the folklorist, crafts people and artisans members of this group to satisfy requirements for coverage under the federal “American Indian Arts and Crafts Law” of 1990, (Public Law 101-644) protecting their efforts to make and sell their creations and promote it as “AUTHENTICALLY NATIVE AMERICAN MADE.” Indian artists are also protected by 25 U.S.C.§ 309.22 concerning fine arts or what others may term as non-traditional. ECSIUT is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of local traditions, and its activities include publications, crafts displays, art exhibitions, Native film festivals of contemporary storytellers, radio broadcasts, exhibitions of photographs taken, and developed by its members and dramatizations of folktales.

Ancestors of the Cherokee, an Iroquoian people, settled in the southeastern portion of this country as early as 2000 B.C. From as early as the 1500s the Cherokees occupied the midlands of South Carolina and the extreme northwestern portion of South Carolina, present day Richland, Newberry, Laurens, Oconee, Pickens, Anderson, Spartanburg, and Greenville Counties, once called the “lower villages.” The upcountry of South Carolina was the home of Native American Indian peoples since as early as 300 A.D. In approximately 1100, the Etowah Indians also occupied the region. From 1350 until about 1600 the Muskogeans inhabited a portion of the area (Creeks), with the Cherokees arriving around 1400. From 1600 to the 1800s, the Cherokees occupied the extreme northwest portion of South Carolina and during early colonial times dominated much of the “midlands” and the “upcountry.” The Cherokee Path was the leading path out of Charles Town (today Charleston) going to Columbia. “The Cherokee Path” led to all of the other Cherokee territories. It was on this trade path that the first products of Cherokee culture were traded including animal skins, herbal mixtures, pottery, and other products. The Cherokee Path ran from Charles Town to the colonial settlement of Ninety Six, then to Fort Prince George and the Cherokee village of Keowee. From Keowee, the principle town of the Cherokee Lower settlements, it crossed the mountains into the Middle settlements of North Carolina, and then crossed the Unaka Mountains into the valley of the Little Tennessee River and the Overhill settlements. A branch of the “Cherokee Path” even led to the Valley Towns, located in the area of present-day Georgia.

There were many treaties, wars, and agreements from 1600-1800. These activities are well recorded in the historic documents and chronicles of South Carolina including: *The Journals of the Commissioner of the Indian Trade 1710-1718; Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1750-1754; and Documents Relating to Indian Affairs, 1754-1765.* After the last treaty in South Carolina of 1816 and with the *Trail of Tears,* many Cherokees were to leave South Carolina (some went to North Carolina, others to Georgia, some to Oklahoma), yet some of the Cherokee tribal members and their extended families were also destined to stay in the upcountry of South Carolina. Those that remained would be legally reclassified on many documents as *“free people**of color”* by the United States Census enumerators, and other governmental agencies. Yet, they were never to forget their culture, history, and the Cherokee heritage. In fact, they were destined to continue passing those traditions and stories to the next generations.

During the 1780s small bands of mixed Cherokees and Creeks lived along the Tugaloo River. A Treaty drawn in 1785 was supposed to remove the Cherokee people from South Carolina, yet it was not successful. In 1810 a Cherokee of the Tugaloo. received visions that instructed the Cherokees to return to their traditional ways, The *Cherokee Ghost Dance*. This is just one story that has been told and recounted in family histories and documented accounts. Then again, another attempt to relinquish the “Indian Territory” of the Cherokees was in 1816 when a treaty was drawn between the General Assembly of South Carolina and the Cherokees of South Carolina, prior to the *Trail of Tears*, attempting once again to disassemble the remaining Cherokees and “mix breeds.” This treaty divided up land and granted allotments to a few Cherokee families such as the Adairs, Allens, Nicholsons and Martins, along the Tugaloo, and Chatuga Rivers. Many Indian families were living along the Tugaloo River at that time, including the Allen family who is one of prominent families in the current Cherokee tribal organization. Other tribal names include families such as Adair, Sizemore, Thompson, Butler, Nicholson, Martin, Stare, and Oglesby/Ogilvy. The Butlers are also related to the Bushyhead family among the Cherokee and the Wattses, Vanns, Rosses, Galphins, and McIntoshes. Most of the Cherokee descendants had ancestors who resided in the numerous *Cherokee Lower Villages* in the upcountry of South Carolina, including Brasstown, Crane Creek, Chatuga, Chauga, Cheowee, Coweeshee, Echay, Esseneca (Seneca), Estanaley, Estatoe, Oustestee, Keowee, Noyowee, Oconee, Socony, Qualhatchie, Sugartown, Tomassee, Toxaway, and the Tugaloo Village.