

pint of oil would make it unfit for any application for which it was intended.

#### Catch Figures

In 1975, Dr. John G. Mead, of the Smithsonian, writing for the "Journal of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada," included some typical catch totals for the Hatteras fishery. For brevity's sake, only the season's totals are noted. He quotes Dr. Frederick True (writing in 1891), who reported 1268 porpoise caught during the winter of 1884-85. David Stick (1952) found the total for the 1885-86 season to be 1295. The average porpoise caught in the winter months yielded 6 to 8 gallons of oil, but this average dropped to 3 or 4 gallons by spring.

Interesting capture reports, entirely non-technical in content, are found in a hand-written diary kept by John W. Rolinson, who lived in Hatteras Village. It is referred to as "Rolinson's Journal," and is the most comprehensive accounting of area events available for the period from 1845 until 1905. A few of his entries, concerning porpoise fishing, are:

"Hatteras, Nov. 16, 1885" "I commence porpoise Fishing on the Sea beach at Hatteras for Col. Wainwright as Boss" (In November of that year, he reported 4 porpoise caught on the 21st — and 167 landed during the month of December).

Other catches were noted as:

"Jan. 1886 — 165 caught

Feb. — 210 caught

Mar. — 205 caught (125 caught at one set)

Apr. — 282 caught

May — 262 caught

"Whole number caught — 1295 caught (See reference to Stick above)

Also: "Tom Fulcher caught for Wainwright at Trent the same year 754."

The names of men down through years mark some who carried out the porpoise venture in the past. The periods when they were part of it are almost impossible to pin down. Some — who brought the profitable activity to the Island — were from northern states. Others, notably those who did the really hard work, were local men whose names are still familiar today, for their descendants live in the Hatteras Village area.

The following incomplete list refers to a few of those in charge of the operations at various times:

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# Myth Keeper Of The Cherokees

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**Had it not been for the efforts of Swimmer, much Indian heritage would have been lost.**

**By A. BRUCE HARTUNG**

*"I know not how the truth may be,  
I tell the tale as 'twas told to me."*

James Mooney of the U.S. Bureau of American Ethnology first visited the Qualla reservation of the Cherokees in 1877. Mooney's time was chiefly spent in gathering plants which the Cherokees used for food and medicinal purposes and learning not only their Indian names but their uses and modes of preparation as well. Mooney soon became aware that the actual medicine and its application was secondary to the rituals and "words" used therewith. Thus it became evident to him that a shamanistic culture still existed which affected the history, religion, and every-day lives of these people.

The forced deportation of the Cherokees to Oklahoma changed tribal traditions with those people far more than years of slow development would have. However, a goodly number of Cherokees remained and in the secluded forests of Nantahala and Oconaluftee the ancient ways persisted. Cherokees tend to be forward-looking, but as Mountain folk they also guard well the past. By the time Mooney got to Qualla in 1877, the missionaries had influenced the Cherokees and most of them had embraced Christianity, but the Cherokee priest still repeated the mystic rituals of his ancestors. The outward appearance of the Cherokee had changed, yet the heart of the Indian was still his own — and in many ways is still today.

In attempting to research the sacred myths and formulas of the Cherokees, Mooney formed an acquaintance with a shaman named A 'yũn' iní or "Swimmer." This true aboriginal antiquarian ultimately contributed three-fourths of the material which Mooney collected. Had it not been for Swimmer's efforts, a substantial part of the heritage of these people would have faded into oblivion.

Swimmer was born about 1835 and

at the time of the deportation was only a small child. His family stayed behind, hiding in the hills, where he grew up under the instruction of the old Cherokee masters. His tribal education prepared him to be jointly a doctor, priest, and keeper of traditions to the extent that he was recognized by both the Cherokees and Whites alike. No tribal function was complete without his presence. Although he spoke no English, he read and wrote fluently in the syllabary of the Cherokees developed by Sequoya. During the Civil



A'yũn' iní (Swimmer) was probably the foremost of the Cherokee myth keepers. Born about 1835, he grew up under the instruction of the old Cherokee masters studying to be a doctor, priest, and myth or tradition keeper. He spoke no English and always wore the turban and carried a gourd rattle as a symbol of his position.

War, he served as second sergeant of the Cherokee Company A, Sixth-ninth North Carolina Confederate Infantry, Thomas Legion. As the leading shaman of his people, he always dressed the part. He wore moccasins and a turban and carried a rattle as a symbol of his position or authority.

#### The Swimmer Manuscript

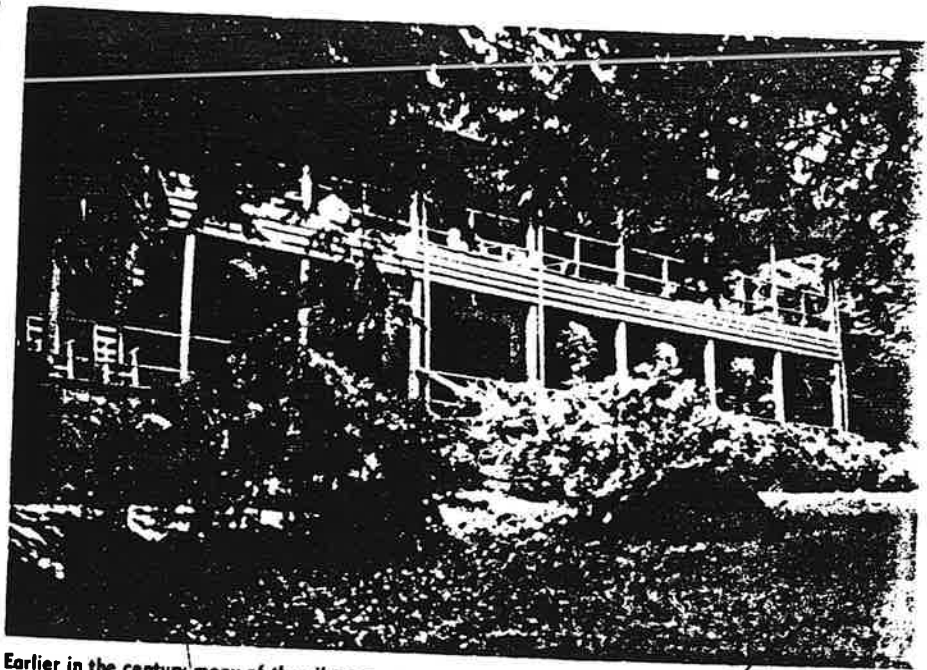
Mooney spent several days with Swimmer and gained from him much information regarding myths and customs. From him we have the myth "Origin of the Bears," and the Bear Songs which are sung in early morning to insure good hunting. Swimmer was hesitant to tell much, but Mooney's approach was that information should be preserved so that when the old men were gone the world would still be aware of the knowledge of the Cherokees. Despite pressure from other shamans, Swimmer cooperated and at length produced a book and announced, "Look at that and now see if I don't know something."

#### The Swimmer Manuscript

The book proved to be an Indian pharmacopoeia of about 240 pages. Here were all those prayers, songs, and prescriptions which had been so closely guarded. Prescriptions given were for the cure of all sorts of diseases — chills, rheumatism, frostbite, wounds and witchery. Love charms to fix the affections of a woman were given as well as those charms used to insure good hunting, fishing, or success in the ball play. Prayers were to make corn grow and insure long life. Prayers were specifically directed to the Long Man, the Yellow Rattlesnake, the Ancient White, and the various other gods of the Cherokees.

Swimmer admitted that other shamans had similar books and agreed to make for Mooney a copy of his book for posterity. This book was deposited with the Bureau of Ethnology where it still reposes and is known as the Swimmer Manuscript.

Although Swimmer passed-on in 1899, his legacy lives today. At the Museum of the Cherokee Indian in the town of Cherokee, one may listen on the "hear phones" to the legends of the myth keepers. "This is what the old men told me when I was a boy," begin such legends as the "Origin of Fire," "The Milky Way," and the "Origin of Strawberries." His earthly remains lie buried in the Cherokee way on the slope of a forest-clad mountain; yet the spirit of A 'yūñ' ini endures as long as the Cherokee myths are retold.



Earlier in the century many of the silent movie stars enjoyed mountain breezes on the spacious veranda, hidden from their public at The Esmeralda Inn.

## Renewal At The Esmeralda

By PATSY TUCKER

The fascination for the glorious North Carolina mountains is as old as the ranges themselves. Upon every visit new discoveries can be made about the ancient rocks and towering mounds. New discoveries can be found in the quiet when you stop and listen to the rippling mountain brooks and streams. New bird sounds come through the thickets of trees, rhododendron and laurel; and the wind whistles at the tops of the high peaks and makes one realize these mountains are among nature's most undisturbed places. What disturbing has been done, in most places, complements the natural surroundings.

Our recent discovery is a renewed one. It is the Esmeralda Inn on the edge of the town of Chimney Rock.

Some of the Inns in the mountains are just eating establishments, but the Esmeralda offers food and limited lodging for a weary traveler anxious to get back to the simpler life.

The Esmeralda has a particularly interesting historical background. It was first built in 1891 and then rebuilt on the original foundation in the early 1900's.

It is located on the old Pony Express and Stagecoach Route over the mountains from the Piedmont in what then was Esmeralda, N.C. During the first quarter of this century, the Inn became to the silent movie stars what the Algonquin in New York was to artists and writers.

Silent movies were made here and notables such as Clark Gable, Douglas Fairbanks, William S. Hart, Mary Pickford and others used the Esmeralda as a hideout. Lew Wallace finished the screen play for "Ben Hur" in room nine.

It changed hands several times and had its ups and downs, but in 1975