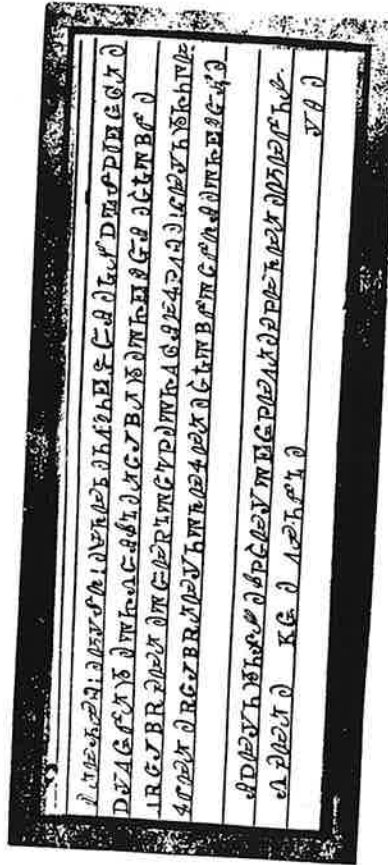


CHEROKEE ALPHABET

D a	g a	o ka	R e	T i	o	u	v
g ha	g e	h ka	g e	g i	g o	g u	g v
w la	h e	l ka	h e	h i	h o	h u	h v
m a	l e	m ka	l e	l i	l o	l u	l v
n a	o me	n ka	o me	h mi	h mo	h mu	
g wa	h ne	h na	h ne	h ni	z no	z nu	o nv
g sa	g wa	s	g wa	g wi	g wo	g wu	g gwv
g da	g se	w ta	g se	h si	g so	g su	R sv
g dla	s da	t hna	s da	h di	v do	h du	g dv
g dsa	L dle	l ka	L dle	c dli	g do	g dlu	P dlv
c wa	7 dso	w ta	7 dso	h dsi	k dso	g dsu	g dsv
g ya	g we	g wa	g we	g wi	g wo	g wu	g wv
	g ye	g ya	g ye	g yi	g yo	g yu	B yv

Writing said to have been done by Sequoyah



SEQUOYAH



Sequoyah's Log Cabin Built About 1829
(Before Restoration)

Property of Oklahoma Historical Society

OK
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#250

SEQUOYAH

Where and when Sequoyah was born has never been exactly determined. It is known, however, that his birthplace was in that area of the Appalachian Mountains where Tennessee, Georgia, and North Carolina join. He was born sometime between 1760 and 1770.

His mother was a Cherokee Indian and his father, a white man by the name of Guist. It is thought that the father deserted his Cherokee family while Sequoyah was quite young. At any rate, little is known of him.

Young Sequoyah grew to manhood amongst his kinsmen, the Cherokees, and never learned to speak any language other than Cherokee. As a youth, through either accident or disease, he was permanently lamed.

After reaching adulthood, Sequoyah engaged in trading and operated a trading post. He had been preceded in this business by his mother. For a time he was addicted to drinking and drunkenness. In order to overcome this weakness, he set about keeping busy by doing handicraft work, with the result that he became a skilled blacksmith, — and a total abstainer.

While still living in the Appalachian region, having married and the father of two or three children, Sequoyah became interested and intrigued with the fact that white men could convey messages by writing to each other. In 1809, he began to toy with the idea of producing a written alphabet for the Cherokees. His neighbors and friends ridiculed him.

At first he tried to use a different character for every Cherokee word, but this proved to be impractical because it would require too many characters, or letters. After experimenting with his alphabet ideas for ten or twelve years, Sequoyah came to the realization that the Cherokee language was composed of a number of recurring sounds. Inventing some characters, and using some English letters, although he did not know the sound or meaning of the latter,

Sequoyah eventually developed his famous alphabet or syllabary. With it he could write any word in the Cherokee language. There were eighty-four characters or letters in this alphabet.

The first person taught to use the alphabet was his daughter, Ah-yo-ka. Fellow Cherokees thought he was possessed of an evil spirit, but when they found he and his daughter Ah-yo-ka could communicate with each other through writing, it was decided he had really developed something worthwhile. The amazing thing concerning Sequoyah's alphabet was that within a week or so, any Cherokee could be taught to write and use it extensively. In time it became a widely used method of communication among Cherokees, including those who were well schooled in the English language.

In 1829, Sequoyah joined those Cherokees who were moving to their new home in what is now northeastern Oklahoma. He here erected a one-room log cabin which is still standing and is now owned by the Oklahoma Historical Society.

So enthusiastic was Sequoyah about what was to become eastern Oklahoma, that he went with an expedition to Texas and Mexico for the purpose of urging Cherokees, who had migrated to those regions, to return to the new Cherokee Nation. While on this trip he died in either July or August of 1843. His burial place is unknown.

Sequoyah's fame became world wide as the inventor of a nation's alphabet. His statue is in the National Capitol as one of Oklahoma's two greatest men. The giant trees of California have also been named after him. In 1905, when the Five Civilized Tribes called a convention in Muskogee for the purpose of securing statehood for their area, they wrote a tentative constitution for the territory and proposed the name of Sequoyah for the intended state. In 1907 this area became the eastern part of the State of Oklahoma.