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scholars to rethink the "hows" and "whys" of doing biographies of American Indian leaders.

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The Eastern Band of Cherokees, 1819–1900. By John R. Finger. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984. 253 pp. \$24.95 Cloth. \$12.50 Paper.

Like many Native Americans, the Cherokees often are viewed as people of the past, particularly in their ancient homeland. While many people know that a group of Cherokees live in the mountains of western North Carolina, few have made any attempt to link them to the past. In the popular mind the twentieth-century residents of Qualla Boundary have little real connection to Sequoyah, the "American Cadmus" who invented the Cherokee syllabary in the 1820s, or Yonaguska, the Cherokee hero of the Battle of Horseshoe Bend who lies buried nearby. Cherokee history in the Southeast presumably ended with the removal of the vast majority of the Nation west of the Mississippi River. At least that is where Cherokee history ended until John R. Finger wrote *The Eastern Band of Cherokees, 1819–1900*. In doing so he corrects at least one longstanding error, reevaluates the contribution of several prominent individuals and reveals considerable complexity in nineteenth-century Cherokee society.

Finger challenges the common explanation of how the Eastern Band of Cherokees managed to avoid removal. In 1900 in his introduction to "Myths of the Cherokee" (Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology), James Mooney made Tsali, a Cherokee Indian involved in the killing of White soldiers who were rounding up Cherokees for deportation, a heroic figure in the history of the Eastern Band. According to Mooney, Tsali's voluntary surrender prompted the commander of the soldiers to permit Cherokees still hiding in the mountains to remain. Mooney's account subsequently found its way into most works on the Cherokees including Grace Steele Woodward's *The Cherokees* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963) and Dale Van Every's *Disinherited: The Lost Birthright of the American Indian* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1966).

Furthermore, the story of Tsali's sacrifice became the basis for the outdoor drama, "Unto These Hills," which is performed each summer on the eastern Cherokee reservation, and it has been incorporated into the oral history of the Band. Finger's research revealed, however, that Tsali did not surrender but was captured and killed by a group of Cherokees. As a reward for services rendered the commander permitted these Cherokee Indians to remain in the East. They joined another group of Cherokees who had long lived in North Carolina outside the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation. The latter Cherokees had argued persuasively that the removal treaty did not apply to them, and so they too avoided the "trail of tears."

For the period following removal Finger relied on private manuscript collections as well as state and federal records. The public documents often provided little detail and sometimes even presented contradictory evidence. One reason for this was that for many years neither the federal nor state governments had much interest in the eastern Cherokees. These Cherokee Indians lived in a remote mountainous region, they were relatively few in number and they had little of material value. One recurring theme in Finger's work is the uncertainty of jurisdiction over the eastern Cherokees. At times the state maintained that the Cherokees were under North Carolina jurisdiction; at other times the federal government asserted its authority over Cherokee Indian affairs within the state. Neither, however, paid much attention to the Cherokees until the end of the nineteenth century when timber sales promised the tribe some degree of prosperity.

For much of the century eastern Cherokee history was intertwined with the life of William Holland Thomas, a White trader who acted as agent and perhaps, as other historians such as Mattie Russell have suggested, chief of the eastern Cherokees. Thomas operated a mercantile establishment patronized by most North Carolina Cherokees, served as their agent in purchasing land and represented them in Raleigh and Washington. Thomas's motives have always seemed suspect. His financial affairs and those of the Cherokees became so entangled that when Thomas went bankrupt following the Civil War, the Cherokees almost lost much of the land they had purchased through Thomas. The courts finally resolved the case largely in the Cherokees' favor. Despite the appearance of skulduggery, Finger views Thomas as a careless but not necessarily unscrupulous

businessman and as a genuine friend of the Cherokee Indians. Although Finger may be kinder to Thomas than the evidence warrants, he does not make the mistake of exaggerating Thomas's role in the history of the Eastern Band to the point that it obscures the Cherokee Indians themselves.

Finger believes that equally important to the history of the eastern Cherokees in the nineteenth century was Nimrod Jarrett Smith. Smith served as chief in the 1880's when the Cherokees experienced many changes. In 1881 Quakers contracted with the Eastern Band to establish a school system, and the Cherokees began a period of rapid acculturation. Disparate acculturation exacerbated factionalism which developed over political leadership and the sale of tribal timber. The Band also was in danger of losing its land for nonpayment of taxes, and the Cherokee Indians' legal status and political rights were in question. While Smith did not resolve all these difficulties, he did establish the Band as a legal entity by obtaining a corporate charter from the North Carolina legislature in 1889. This charter gave the Eastern Band a firm legal status but further complicated the issue of federal versus state jurisdiction. Finger regards Smith as a culture broker, a well-educated Cherokee who was trying to work out an accommodation between the still very traditional Cherokees and the encroaching White society. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Cherokees faced the challenge of adapting their traditional culture to the demands of the modern world and incorporating elements of that world without destroying their own way of life.

Finger focuses primarily on the political and economic history of the Eastern Band and pays less attention to culture change for which relatively few historical records exist. *The Eastern Band of Cherokees, 1819-1900* is a thoroughly researched, meticulously documented, well-written narrative of a group of Native people whose past previously had been slighted or misrepresented. Those interested in Native American and southern history should welcome Finger's authoritative study of the Eastern Band of Cherokees.

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