



Fall 12-4-2014

## Retired Education Professor Authors Book About Cherokee Myths and Legends

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### Recommended Citation

Winthrop University, "Retired Education Professor Authors Book About Cherokee Myths and Legends" (2014). *Winthrop News 2014*. 236.

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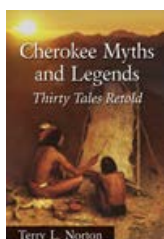
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# Retired Education Professor Authors Book About Cherokee Myths and Legends

## Quick Facts

- Written by Terry L. Norton '81 and recently released by McFarland Publishers, the 232-page book contains some of the essential folklore of the Eastern Cherokees of western North Carolina.
- From 1981-2008, Norton worked as a professor of literacy education in Winthrop University's Richard W. Riley College of Education. During his tenure at Winthrop, he taught courses for teachers and librarians in literacy acquisition and children's and young adult literature.



ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA - Dragon-like serpents, enormous hawks and insects, loathsome cannibals, mighty thunder spirits, powerful conjurers, animal and supernatural helpers, fearless male and female warriors, and more fill the pages of Cherokee Myths and Legends: Thirty Tales Retold."

Written by **Terry L. Norton '81** and recently released by **McFarland Publishers**, the 232-page book contains some of the essential folklore of the **Eastern Cherokees** of western North Carolina.

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Unlike many renditions of **Native American folklore**, the aim of the book is to present Cherokee myths and legends in a culturally authentic and historically accurate context. In this way, today's readers can more fully comprehend the stories by having the kind of background knowledge that original listeners would likely have had.

To accomplish this purpose, Norton spent three years researching the work of contemporary anthropologists and historians of Indians of what is now the southeastern United States. He also consulted the writings of Europeans of the colonial era who traveled among or lived with Native American groups, such as the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, Catawbias and Cherokees.

Such **18th century writers** like Colonel George Chicken of South Carolina, Lieutenant Henry Timberlake of Virginia and naturalist William Bartram of Pennsylvania provided some of the earliest observations on indigenous tribes of the Southeast. Indian trader James Adair lived for 33 years among them and published in 1775 one of the most complete early accounts of southeastern tribes. His "History of the American Indians" records many details about their everyday activities and frontier life in the southern colonies.

To make the retellings more understandable to audiences today, Norton embedded the work of modern researchers and colonial writers into the stories whenever they contained any reference to geographic locales, cultural aspects of Cherokee life, or historical events likely beyond the knowledge of contemporary readers.

For instance, one story, "**The Mohawk Warriors**," tells of two Mohawks who had raided the Lower Cherokee settlements in upper South Carolina. Over the course of a spring and summer, these warriors ambushed and killed some 20 Cherokees from the town of Keowee which is now submerged

beneath Lake Hartwell near Clemson University. The original legend mentions how the Cherokees burned these warriors alive after they were captured.

Using an eyewitness account from Adair's 1775 history, Norton elaborates this episode in his adaptation of the story to detail exactly what would have occurred during such slow and gruesome torture as part of a victory celebration over captured enemies. Needless to say, such tales are not for the very young or the squeamish.

In addition to stories of the many wars between the Cherokees and other Native American tribes, several legends concern conflicts between the Cherokees and European colonists of the 18th century. A story from upstate South Carolina is about the **Choctaw female Catechee** or **Issaqueena** taken captive by the Cherokees during one of their many raids. (Issaqueena Falls on Stumphouse Mountain is named for her today.)

According to the tale, **Catechee** famously warned the small garrison of the trading post and fort at Ninety Six of an impending Cherokee attack in 1760. Most of the original upcountry legend is full of fanciful inaccuracies. Although Norton's adaptation may disappoint some aficionados of the story, he has retold it so that it bears a greater resemblance to the actual events of history and its participants.

**"Cherokee Myths and Legends"** comes with extensive notes detailing sources. The introduction also examines issues and controversies in retelling Native American traditional literature. The book is also available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

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