

Summary: The Cherokee

Living in Tennessee

The Cherokee became one of the largest American Indian groups in the South. The Cherokee lived in East Tennessee. Cherokee towns had a plaza and 30–60 homes inside a tall, wooden fence. Each town had a council and a council house. The Cherokee had meetings and religious ceremonies in the council house.

The Cherokee used the land to get what they needed to live. They grew corn, beans, squash, melons, and pumpkins. The Cherokee picked nuts, roots, and fruit. They hunted deer, bear, and turkey, and they fished.

Cherokee Culture

Farming was important to the Cherokee religion. They had six ceremonies each year that were based on growing crops. The most important ceremony was the Green Corn Ceremony. At the Green Corn Ceremony, the Cherokee gave thanks for being able to grow lots of good crops.

Cherokee towns had two leaders. One leader served during war times and one leader served during peaceful times. Beloved women helped to govern the town. Today, the Cherokee have their own governments that take care of taxes, health care, and schools. The Cherokee are the largest American Indian group in the United States.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

plaza *noun*, an open area near the center of a settlement

council *noun*, a group of people who make laws



After You Read

REVIEW What crops did the Cherokee grow?

Highlight the sentence that tells about the foods they grew.

REVIEW What was the Green Corn Ceremony?

At what event did the Cherokee give thanks for the plants they grew?

Draw a box around the sentence that tells about this special happening.