

THE CHEMAWA AMERICAN

H. E. WADSWORTH, Superintendent

VOLUME 15

JANUARY, 1913

NUMBER 4

TRIBAL CONSTITUTION

DOCUMENT SHOWED ADVANCED LEGAL IDEAS



LAWS there are, in volume inexhaustible, and laws there always have been from time immemorial—about, of, concerning, guiding, governing and explaining every act or deed of man or beast. Some are readable, some laughable and some are useful though there are some who may say nay.

In the year 1838, twenty-four more years than a half century ago, a band of Indians met at a point in the hills of the Indian territory where many springs of pure, clear, sparkling water poured their thirst quenching fluid from the mountain side in sufficient quantity to start a small rivulet coursing its way through the valley, and the outstretched limbs of the mammoth oaks furnished refreshing shade, and there held a pipe smoking peace meeting from which was evolved "The Constitution of the Cherokee Nation."

Up to this time there had been two nations of the Cherokee—the eastern and the western Cherokees but having been brought together in this beautiful land by the government of these United States they found that it behooved them to live as one and for that purpose the great men of the tribes came to this meeting—but maybe the preamble of that document will better explain matters:

The eastern and western Cherokees having again reunited, and become one body politic, under the style and title of the Cherokee nation: Therefore, we the people of the Cherokee nation, in national convention assembled, in order to establish justice, insure tranquility, promote the common welfare, and to secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of freedom—acknowledging with humility and gratitude, the goodness of the sovereign ruler of the universe, in permitting us so to do, and imploring his aide and guidance in its accomplishment—do ordain and establish this constitution for the government of the Cherokee nation.

Being just as conclusive and enlightened as ever preamble was, since