

NARRATOR NOTES: Sequoyah: PAINTER OF WORDS

The man known as "Sequoyah" was a member of the Cherokee Nation of Indians born to a Cherokee mother and father who was either White or Half-breed, thus giving him the Anglicized name "George Guess" variously known also as "George Gist". By occupation he was a Silversmith while by avocation he was creator of a written language for the Cherokees. By virtue of the latter he earned the honor of being one of the only human beings to have created Language. This became known as "Sequoya's Syllabary".

The true, enduring legacy of this accomplishment was its utilization in uniting the displaced Cherokee Nation with publication of a Newspaper called the CHEROKEE PHOENIX. Mythologically speaking, the Phoenix-bird represents "rebirth" or "resurrection". By virtue of being forced to relocate to what is now known as the State of Oklahoma via what has come to be remembered as "The Trail of Tears" which stands as an example of Ethnic-cleansing in U.S. History, the Cherokee Nation lost its identity until somewhat restored through the system of communication made possible by Sequoyah's invention.

Scene 1:

SEQUOYAH was born at the Cherokee village of Tuskegee located on the banks of the Tennessee River not far from a place called "Echota" considered by his people as their capital or sacred town. His youth and adolescence were spent in this community removed from contact with Whitemen. Accordingly he developed little knowledge of Languages other than his native tongue though he had been given an English name - "George Guess or Gist" - by virtue of having been fathered by a man with Caucasian heritage known as Nathaniel Gist. Records indicate that this progenitor was employed by George Washington as a Scout.