

Focus on Books by **Benjamin E. Frey**, (EBCI), Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Cherokee Language and Culture, University of North Carolina-Asheville.

People of Kituwah: The Old Ways of the Eastern Cherokees

by John D. Loftin and Benjamin E. Frey [synopsis from University of California Press]

According to Cherokee tradition, the place of creation is Kituwah, located at the center of the world and home to the most sacred and oldest of all beloved, or mother, towns. Just by entering Kituwah, or indeed any village site, Cherokees re-experience the creation of the world, when the water beetle first surfaced with a piece of mud that later became the island on which they lived. *People of Kituwah* is a comprehensive account of the spiritual worldview and lifeways of the Eastern Cherokee people, from the creation of the world to today. Building on vast primary and secondary materials, native and non-native, this book provides a window into not only what the Cherokees perceive and understand—their notions of space and time, marriage and love, death and the afterlife, healing and traditional medicine, and rites and ceremonies—but also how their religious life evolved both before and after the calamitous coming of colonialism. Through the collaborative efforts of John D. Loftin and Benjamin E. Frey, this book offers an in-depth understanding of Cherokee culture and society.

People of Kituwah is available in hardcover, paperback, or e-book from the University of California Press.

<https://www.ucpress.edu/books/people-of-kituwah/paper>

Rising Above: Language Revitalization in the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

By Benjamin E. Frey [synopsis from the Museum Of The Cherokee People]

Today there are fewer than two hundred first-language Cherokee speakers among the seventeen thousand citizens of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in North Carolina. In 2019, the United Keetoowah Band, the Cherokee Nation, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians declared a state of emergency for the Cherokee language.

In *Rising Above*, Eastern Band Cherokee citizen Benjamin E. Frey chronicles his odyssey of being introduced to the Cherokee language with

trepidation as a young adult and his eventual work revitalizing the Cherokee language in a Cherokee way. In the first book to examine the process of language shift and revitalization among this band, Frey explores the institutional, economic, and social factors that drove the language shift from Cherokee to English, interpreted through the lens of a member of the Eastern Band Cherokee community in conversation with other community members. *Rising Above* navigates Frey's upbringing, the intricacies of language and relationships, the impact of trauma, and the quest for joy and healing within the community.

In addition to language documentation and preservation, *Rising Above* explores how to breathe new life into the language and community, using storytelling to discuss the Cherokee language, its grammatical components, and its embedded cultural ideologies alongside its interactions with broader American society.

Rising Above is available in hardcover or as an e-book from the University of Nebraska Press.

<https://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/nebraska/9781496235701/rising-above/>