

During my vacation last May, I had a hard time choosing a tour. Flights to Japan, Hong Kong and Australia are just too common. What I wanted was somewhere exciting and exotic, a place where I could be spared from the holiday tour crowds. I was so happy when John called up, suggesting a trip to Cherokee, a county in the state of Oklahoma. I agreed and went off with the preparation immediately.

We took a flight to Cherokee and visited a town called Qualla Boundary surrounded by magnificent mountain scenery, the town painted a paradise before us. With its Oconaluftee Indian Village reproducing tribal crafts and lifestyles of the 18th century and the outdoor historical pageant *Unto These Hills* playing six times weekly in the summer nights, Qualla Boundary tries to present a brief image of the Cherokee past to the tourists.

Despite the language barrier, we managed to find our way to the souvenir shops with the help of the natives. The shops were filled with rubber tomahawks and colorful traditional war bonnets, made of dyed turkey feathers. Tepees, cone-shaped tents made from animal skin, were also pitched near the shops. "Welcome! Want to get anything?" We looked up and saw a middle-aged man smiling at us. We were very surprised by his fluent English. He introduced himself as George and we ended up chatting till lunch time when he invited us for lunch at a nearby coffee shop.

"Sometimes, I've to work from morning to sunset during the tour season. Anyway, this is still better off than being a woodcutter ..." Remembrance weighed heavy on George's mind and he went on to tell us that he used to cut firewood for a living but could hardly make ends meet. We learnt from him that the Cherokees do not depend solely on trade for survival. During the tour off-peak period, the tribe would have to try out other means for income. One of the successful ways is the "Bingo Weekend". On the Friday afternoons of the Bingo weekends, a large bingo hall was opened, attracting huge crowds of people to the various kinds of games like the Super Jackpot and the Warrior Game Special. According to George, these forms of entertainment fetch them great returns.

Our final stop in Qualla Boundary was at the museum where arts, ranging from the simple hand-woven oak baskets to wood and stone carvings of wolves, ravens and other symbols of Cherokee cosmology are displayed.

Back at home, I really missed the place and I would of course look forward to the next trip to another exotic place.

Précis (1st Attempt)

Title:-

Cherokee: its culture & people

Last May, I wanted to ~~go~~^{visit} somewhere very explosive and peaceful during my vacations. I got so happy when my friend John called me and recommended a trip to Cherokee. I agreed straight away and started preparation. We took a flight to Cherokee and visited its town called Qualla Boundary. The town was full of natural beauty and uniqueness of its tribal crafts. They were playing their historical parade named as "Unto these hills" which is played there six times every week in summer nights. This town gives an overall view of Cherokee's history to the tourists. Regardless of language barrier we made it to the testimonial shops by the guidance of the local people. These shops were pervade distinctive and unique items. We got really surprised when an old man there was speaking English very fluently. He was very friendly and hospitable. He took us for lunch at a nearby coffee shop. After having a conversation with him we got to know about the means of living and survival of the people of Cherokee from which the most successful way of earning was "Bingo weekend" held on Friday afternoons in a large bingo hall which appeals the public with various types of games. Lastly, we visited a museum of Qualla Boundary

which was embellished with type of arts, handicrafts and other representations of Cherokee cosmogony. Coming home, I feel really nostalgic for that place and I'm hoping and excited to explore a new place in future.
