

## Warriors of AniKituhwa

The Warriors of AniKituhwa, a Cherokee dance group that is re-creating Cherokee dances as described almost 250 years ago, will present two performances at this year's Mountain Heritage Day. The group will perform at 11:15 a.m. on the Traditional Music Stage, and again at 1:30 p.m. on the Norton Music Stage.

The Warriors of AniKituhwa was created in 2003 when Marie Junaluska, a member of the Tribal Council of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, wanted to establish a Cherokee dance that would welcome visitors and other tribes to Cherokee. Junaluska and two other tribal members, Carmaleta Monteith and Chrissy Arch, sought to find a dance that was distinctly Cherokee, rather than the intertribal dances performed at powwows.

Their research led them to an account of Cherokee dances described by Lt. Henry Timberlake, a Colonial journalist and cartographer, in 1762. Timberlake witnessed the "Warrior Dance" and the "Eagle Tail Dance" in the Cherokee capital of Chota, and he described the dances in his memoirs, published in 1765.

That research was further enhanced when Barbara R. Duncan, education director at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, and James "Bo" Taylor, museum archivist, helped find wax cylinder recordings and other archival recordings of a song that accompanied one dance, as well as written descriptions of the dance as it was still performed in Cherokee in the 1920s.

Taylor worked with Cherokee elder Walker Calhoun and other dancers chosen by Junaluska to re-create the dances as they now perform them.

The original members of the Warriors of AniKituhwa were designated Cultural Ambassadors by the Cherokee Tribal Council in February 2005. The group's official sponsor is the Museum of the Cherokee Indian.

The Warriors have danced at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., and have performed internationally in Canada and Germany. They also have been featured at many festivals throughout the Southeast and have appeared on television and film. Their unique, historically accurate appearance recently has been the focus of an advertising campaign for Cherokee.

The Warriors' performances have led to increasing interest in traditional dances and 18<sup>th</sup>-century clothing among Cherokee people of all ages, both in North Carolina and within the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Cherokee have offered workshops to teach and preserve the "War Dance," "Ant Dance," "Buffalo Dance" and others.

The Museum of the Cherokee Indian has created an exhibit based on Timberlake's memoirs, "Emissaries of Peace: The 1762 Cherokee and British Delegations." The Warriors danced at the opening of that exhibit in Cherokee and at its opening at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C.

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