

Nimrod Jarrett Smith

Nimrod Jarrett Smith (1837–1893), or **Tsaladihi**, was the fourth Principal Chief of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. His father was the Valley River landowner Henry Smith, one of the wealthiest men in the Eastern Cherokee Band. Chief Smith was also the great-grandson of David Watie and therefore great-grand-nephew of Major Ridge, first cousin twice-removed of John Ridge, and grand-nephew of Stand Watie and Elias Boudinot through his paternal grandmother, Sarah Susan Watie. He is also known by his Cherokee name, Tsaladihi ("Charlie-killer", or possibly "Lichen-killer"), which was an attempt to render in Cherokee his middle name, Jarrett, by which he was most often addressed. During the American Civil War, he served the Confederacy in the Cherokee Battalion of Thomas' Legion of Cherokee Indians and Highlanders under the command of then Principal Chief William Holland Thomas during the American Civil War.

A well-educated and well-spoken man, he was fluent in both Cherokee and English, although he had learned Cherokee as a second language. He was elected Principal Chief in 1880 upon the death of his immediate predecessor, Lloyd Welch. He exercised unprecedented power over and influence among the Eastern Cherokee. He worked actively for official U.S. government recognition for the band as a tribe under federal law and was successful.^[1]

In 1887 he was host to ethnologist James Mooney during Mooney's first visit to the Eastern Band in western North Carolina. In that year Mooney observed a Green Corn Dance that became the last such ritual enacted by the tribe for over a century.^[1]

Jarrett Smith was a radical anti-assimilationist, fighting against acculturation into the white American society. He was also chiefly responsible for the incorporation of the Eastern Band as a legal entity by the North Carolina legislature.

References

- [1] George Ellison, Mooney's efforts recorded Cherokee traditions (http://www.smokymountainnews.com/issues/11_01/11_07_01/back_then.shtml), *The Smoky Mountain News*, 11/7/01

External links

- Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (official site) (<http://www.cherokee-nc.com/>)
- George Ellison, (http://www.smokymountainnews.com/Templates/issues/12_00/12_20_00/mtn_voices_ellison.shtml), *The Smoky Mountain News*, December 20, 2000



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