

Jefferson Berryhill,  
Interviewer,  
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"Creek Indian Legends"

Why the Creek Indians believe in ghosts should be the title to this story, or legend. The Creek Indians have this legend from way back, and it was handed down to them, as it was told by all the older Creeks. The last ten years it has been forgotten because of the vanishing of the full bloods. The younger generation has become modern.

Once upon a time there in the vast wild woods lived an Indian brave with his wife and four children. The Indian and his family lived happily, with plenty of food as the white man had not come to the red man's country then. For many moons the Indian brave killed the game for his food and clothing without going very far, as game was plentiful. As the winter came and the grass became scarce, the deer and buffaloes began to go further west, hunting for more feeding pastures. When the brave became short of food and found out the game had gone away, he followed them a long distance to kill what he wanted. Again, he went after the game,

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this time he had to go twice as far, until finally he realized to his disappointment that the game was moving westward. After killing some of the deer and buffaloes, he came home to his family. He told his family that he must go west in search of the game, and that he would probably be gone all through the winter. He stayed home many days pondering over the matter of leaving his family as it was very much against his will. Finally he decided to go, as they had to have food. After preparing his weapons and other needs, he bade his wife and children goodbye. In leaving his family, he left wondering what would become of them, or if he would ever see them alive again. So all that winter he had a hard time in finding any game. He had traveled many miles and a long distance from his home. Toward spring he came upon a herd of deer feeding and of these he killed many.

As he started to go home, he came upon a herd of buffalo. Of these, he killed enough to last his family many moons. Packing a very heavy load of food, it took him many moons to get home, and once again summer had arrived. He traveled with his heavy loads and the twelve hounds besides the little white dog, which had been his

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companion. When he and his dogs arrived home, he was very happy as he was going to see his wife and children. When he came up to the house, he saw the fire in the fireplace and his wife sitting by the fireplace. He knocked on the door but no one answered. He became afraid that something had happened as he didn't see his children. Taking courage, he entered the house. He spoke to his wife. He could not see her face as it was in the night and the room was rather dark, lighted only by the flickering fire in the fireplace. When he asked his wife where the children had gone she did not answer him. He told her of the game that he had brought back, but he became afraid as she didn't say a word. The little dog that walked in with him, being able to see in the darkness saw the woman's face. All of a sudden, the dog began to talk and it told him that his wife had become a ghost. Then the woman spoke to her husband and said that she had become hungry and had eaten the four children and had become a human being no more. She said that she had waited for him to come back so she could eat him as she ate the four children. Saying this, she screamed and came after him. The brave

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was paralyzed with fear but the little dog pushed him outside. Together they tied up the door so she couldn't get out. As they were escaping from the house, the woman tore the door down and started after them, calling his name and saying for him to stop so she could eat him. The Indian ran faster, with all his dogs close behind him to protect him if she caught up with him, as she was gaining on him. He asked his little dog if they should wait for her and kill her when she came closer. The little dog said they could not kill her as she was not a human any more. The dog said for him to leave one of the hounds behind to fight her, so they could escape while the ghost and the dog were fighting. He told one of his hounds to stay behind to fight her. The dog obeyed as he was trying to save his master's life. The dog fought desperately but being no match, it was soon devoured. Again, she was on the trail of the man. In looking back, the brave saw her face and it was a terrible sight to behold. Taking advice from the little dog, he left another hound behind to fight. They heard the dog's agony as it was being eaten. This went on, leaving a dog behind every time the ghost came closer, till at last all the dozen dogs had

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been eaten. Only he and his dog were left. They were being pursued swiftly now, as he did not have any more dogs left to fight for him. She was very close to them when they came upon a river. They swiftly crossed the river by swimming, but she could not swim, so she found a dry log to cross the river on. By this time, the man and his dog had gained quite a distance but she gained on them again until they could see her face, she was so close behind. Just as she was about to catch up with them the little dog saw an old hollow log lying ahead. After telling his master of the log, they crawled inside of the old half-rotten log. She came up to the log and having long fingernails, she stuck them through the log trying to pierce the man's body. She would miss, although she came very close. All through the night they moved around to keep her from sticking them with her long fingernails. Finally, the man thought of the buckskin string he had in his pocket. He took the string, made a loop in it and held it up until the long fingernail came through the log. Then when the fingernail went through the loop, they tied the nail by pulling on it. Man and dog held the string tightly by sitting opposite each other. They sat there

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until almost morning. The ghost woman was caught, but when morning was coming, she looked around and found an old eagle feather. When they were not expecting it, she pulled her finger out silently and put the feather in, instead. Then morning came, the man and dog came out and they saw the feather. That is why an Indian believes in ghosts.

BERRYHILL, JEFFERSON

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