Before the arrival of Europeans in America, Cherokee women held equal status with men. To the Europeans, this gender equality was a sign that the Cherokees were "uncivilized." In an attempt to acculturate, Cherokee women were stripped of rights they'd previously enjoyed. They lost all overt political power and ultimately were robbed of the homes they owned and the land they'd cultivated.

In *Voices of Cherokee Women*, Carolyn Ross Johnston, professor of history and American studies at Eckerd College, uses first-person narratives to tell the stories of Cherokee women in their own words. She divides the book into seven sections: stories of the Cherokees, encounters with Europeans, experiences of Cherokee women with the United States government's civilization program, the Trail of Tears, the Civil War, allotment and assimilation, and Cherokee women leaders. Each section contains a brief introduction, followed by excerpts from primary source materials, including oral histories, journals, letters, and published books.

The stories are at times uplifting, and often heartbreaking. For example, excerpts from the diary of Catharine Brown, who was celebrated in her time as a triumph of the civilization program, show a woman struggling to maintain her adopted Christian lifestyle. The journal of Daniel Sabin Butrick, a minister who traveled the Trail of Tears, describes the suffering of the Cherokees, with an emphasis on women and children. In his words, "It would seem that the power, the wisdom and the funds of the whole union have been employed for the temporal and eternal ruin of this little handful of Indians."

Despite the suffering expressed throughout the book, *Voices of Cherokee Women* ends on a positive note, expressing hope for the future of Cherokee women. The final selection is an essay entitled "Womanhood" by Wilma Mankiller, who was principal chief of the Cherokee from 1987 to 1995, and was the first woman to hold that position. Mankiller initially struggled to be accepted. "It seemed the strong role of women in Cherokee life had been forgotten by some of our own people." Ultimately, she overcame the gender barrier. As she puts it, "In a way, my elections were a step forward for women and a step into the Cherokee tradition of balance between men and women."

*Voices of Cherokee Women* is Carolyn Ross Johnston's fifth book. Her prior publications include *Cherokee Women in Crisis: Trail of Tears, Civil War, and Allotment, 1838-1907* and *Sexual Power: Feminism and Family in America*. *Voices of Cherokee Women* is appropriate for a wide range of audiences. It takes a broad view of Cherokee history, and would serve as a good introduction. At the same time, the focus on women and the emphasis on primary source material will appeal to readers with greater familiarity with the topic. This book is appropriate for both academic and public libraries.

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