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## My Mother's History

One day many a year ago  
My mother spoke to me  
About her family's tangled history,

She spoke to me  
Of lies, half-truths, and myths  
Some of which may have been true  
And throughout the evening  
Her history came alive.

She was born in the hills  
of North Little Rock  
The 10<sup>th</sup> of 11 children  
Of an ancient dying race.

The Cherokees  
who had run away  
Refusniks  
Refugees who fled in the hills.

Part of the lost tribe of the Cherokee nation  
Part Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole  
and African Americans  
Who fled to the mountains  
To avoid the trail of tears.

Rather than join the rest  
In the promised land  
Of Oklahoma.

They did not exist  
I did not exist.

The BIA told us  
No Indian scholarship  
For you

## My Mother's History for Six Fold

Since you can't prove  
You are in fact  
Of Native American ancestry,

I asked my mother  
What does this mean?  
She said

No BIA money for you,  
My non-Indian son.

Her family and Bill Clinton family  
Were related  
Bill Clinton and I are distant cousins

When I met him  
I related my family history  
He concluded that we were indeed cousins  
Said I could call him Cousin Bill  
And he would call me Cousin Jake

And he too was part Cherokee  
Irish, Scotch, French  
And African American  
Part of the lost tribe  
Of the Cherokee nation

I told my mom  
This story  
She said  
It was true

She was a distant cousin  
Of Bill Clinton  
Still did not like  
The lying SOB

Her people disappeared  
From history's eyes

## My Mother's History for Six Fold

And DNA data banks

My history was over  
As was hers

And so,  
I learned at last  
The painful truth

That due to the genocidal crimes  
of politicians so long ago  
My mother's people

Lost their land, their culture,  
and their hope  
And became  
downtrodden forgotten people

Hillbillies they were called  
Living in the hills and mountain dales  
Clinging to the dim fading memories  
Of their once glorious past  
As proud Cherokees

Now no one knew their name  
The old ways were forgotten  
And the new world never forgave them

And they never forgave the new world  
As they lived on  
In the margins of society  
Forgotten people

And I vowed that as long as I lived  
Their history would not die  
As I knew the truth

And I would become a proud

## My Mother's History for Six Fold

Cherokee  
And make my mother proud of me  
And my accomplishments

When I am down and out  
I recall her stories and her warnings  
And realize it is up to me

To live my life  
To let the Cherokee in me  
Live his life

And in so doing  
My mother's history does not die

It lives on in me  
Until the day I die

Long live the Cherokee nation  
Long live my mother

**DNA Tests Do Not Lie or Do They?**

I sent way  
For one of those DNA tests  
That promises to reveal  
Your ethnic heritage

The only problem is that claim  
Is not yet true  
The results were surprising  
To say the least

Family lore would have it  
That I have 18 nationalities  
In my tangled family history  
Mostly Northern European

Part German, Norwegian, Swedish, Finish, Danish, Dutch, Laplander, Russian,  
Scottish, Basque, Mongolian, Jewish, Spanish, and French from my father  
Part Cherokee, Dutch, Irish, Scottish, English, Italian, Nigerian, and French from  
my mother  
100 percent born and raised in Berkeley

The DNA results showed  
that I am 68% northern European  
with trace elements of Jewish, Basque, Italian  
Mongolian and Nigerian stock,

No native American at all  
And my Germanic last name  
For some reason  
Did not register at all

Go figure I said  
And I read the fine print  
The state of the art is such  
That claims that they can tell

Your ethnic background

## My Mother's History for Six Fold

Are exaggerated  
The fine print read  
Explaining why it is often inaccurate

The Cherokee background  
Disappeared  
Because my branch of the Cherokees  
Disappeared into the mist of time

Part of the lost tribe of the Cherokee nation  
Part Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole  
and African Americans  
Who fled to the mountains  
To avoid the trail of trees

The German background  
Got swept up into the northern European thing  
And at the end of the day  
I remained as much a mongrel  
breed as anything else

Typical American  
I suppose

**Family History Revealed**

The DNA results  
Revealed some aspects  
Of whom I am  
Where I am from

But not everything  
Was revealed  
And much of my history  
Remains hidden

My father was from Yakima  
Ran away to the Bay Area  
Where he became a college professor  
Taught the dismal science economics

Along the way  
He met my mother  
And after a whirlwind romance  
had four children

My older brother,  
Me  
Younger brother  
And sister

She was a refugee  
From the dust bowl  
Fled Arkansas  
In the late '30s

Never looked back  
Settled down  
In the Bay Area  
Yet the south lingered on

She trained herself



## My Mother's History for Six Fold

To speak without an accent  
The only time the southern came out  
Was when she was talking to her sisters

She was the 10<sup>th</sup> of 11<sup>th</sup> children  
Father was a moonshiner  
A Cherokee medicine man to boot  
Lived life in the Ozark mountains

She had two sons  
From a prior relationship  
That went south  
We never really knew them

My father was an atheist  
And a morning person  
And a man with a plan  
For everything

My mother  
More make it up  
As she went along  
And a night owl

How and why  
They met and stayed together  
Is beyond me  
They had a stormy relationship

My mother always said  
Germans and Irish  
Don't mix  
And never should marry

She also said  
The world is divided into morning people  
And night owls  
And they are doomed to marry each other

## My Mother's History for Six Fold

Yet I suppose  
There was real love  
Beneath all the drama  
And bluster

All in all  
A fascinating experiment

**Thoughts on Visiting the Holocaust Memorial Museum in DC**

Sam Adams  
Had never been  
To the Holocaust Museum,

Despite the fact  
He had lived  
And worked in DC for decades

One day after he retired  
He said to himself  
It was long past time  
To finally see the holocaust museum

He went the week  
After Charleston,  
When the mob had chanted,  
Jews will not replace us.

The museum affected him deeply  
He had just confirmed  
Through DNA

That he had at least 10 percent  
Jewish ancestry  
Among the 18 other nationalities  
Swirling among these bloodlines

Sam Adams was concerned  
Those elements of antisemitism  
We're emerging among  
The MAGA crowd.

But he dismissed  
The fears that Trump  
Was another Hitler  
As liberal hyperbole

## My Mother's History for Six Fold

It could not happen here  
A new holocaust  
Would never happen  
But now he was not so sure

**Mother's Secret Cherokee History**

My Mother  
Grew Up Poor  
In Arkansas  
Part Cherokee

Part Of the Lost Tribe  
Of The Cherokee Nation  
Ran Away  
From The Trail of Tears