

STATE LOCAL

Cherokee Nation Reinstates Freedmen after Considering Expulsion

Julia Dent, Staff Writer

The Cherokee tribe recently expelled the 2,800 African American descendants of the 300,000 member tribe that took away their citizenship, medical care, food stipends, and homeowners' assistance.

Although not widely known, there have been several relationships throughout history between Cherokees and African Americans since the time Europeans first brought over African slaves. Most relations between the Cherokees and Africans were because the Cherokees owned several Africans as slaves. It was not largely practiced in tribes, but many individuals owned these slaves. Some prominent people with Cherokee and black ancestry are Crispus Atticus (the first man killed during the Boston Massacre in 1770), Bill Pickett, and Langston Hughes (whose grandparents were of Cherokee descent).

After fighting for the Confederacy in the Civil War, a treaty was formed in 1866 between the Chero-

kee tribe and the federal government. The slaves of the Cherokees were freed, and they and their descendants were granted the same rights and privileges as full-blooded and mixed Cherokees in the treaty.

But, in 2007, there was a special vote in the Cherokee Nation Supreme Court to amend their constitution and expel the slave descendants that had no Cherokee blood, people known as "freedmen." In early September of this year, 76% of Cherokee voters approved this amendment. With this change, the freedmen were not going to be allowed to vote in the September 24th election for the new principal chief.

"On a personal note, both my paternal and maternal great-great-grandmothers were Cherokees," said Dr. Alisa Johnson. "I'm as confused as anybody about the reasons for the expulsions, especially now."

Former Principal Chief Chad Smith said that the amendment

change "was about the fundamental right of every government to determine its citizens, not about racial exclusion," even though many black descendants view their intent differently.

"Personally, I do not agree that this move is a good practice of Cherokee values or a good move to sustain the nation," says Dr. Jessi Bardill, a professor of Native American studies, "but I support their right to make it and believe that the tribal courts and other processes will determine its legality. Community members (and on-lookers) should be questioning not the move itself but the narratives, implicit, and explicit outcomes and causes, of such a change."

Thankfully for the freedman descendants, they were reinstated into the tribe four days before the election, after a preliminary hearing in federal court in Washington D.C. They were able to vote with the election extending until Octo-

ber 8th to ensure that all freedmen take their opportunity.

The freedman group filed a lawsuit against the Cherokee tribe and the federal government to guarantee their tribal rights. They won the case because the U.S. government said that the 1866 treaty still stands today for all Cherokees, Cherokee mixes, and slave descendants.

"We've agreed upon an order between the Cherokee Freedmen, Cherokee Nation, the federal government to essentially reinstate the citizens into the Cherokee Nation, so that they may vote equally with fellow Cherokee citizens," stated freedmen attorney Johnathan Velie. The freedmen now have all of their tribal rights given back to them, but this is not the first time their rights have been threatened.

"I think it is highly likely to be revisited in the future," said Dr. Bardill, though the freedmen hope otherwise.

Cantina South: A Review

Sarah Potratz, Staff Writer

When one door closes another one opens but, in the case of the closing of Bogart's American Grille, a window (of opportunity) opened instead for Kevin Summers and Bill Holt, co-founders of Cantina South's Modern Mexican Kitchen. Summers realized that "what Glenwood South was missing was a modern Mexican restaurant with a late night perspective." Located in the heart

of Raleigh's Glenwood South district, Cantina South serves a savory selection of brunch, lunch, and dinner dishes for a fair price.

To get a taste of the dinner menu, which uses only the freshest, locally grown ingredients, I sampled the cheese quesadilla, known as the Quesadilla de Cuitlacoche at Cantina South. This grilled flour tortilla adds a twist to the

traditional cheese quesadilla as it is loaded with cuitlacoche, poblano chiles, corn, Chihuahua cheese, and goat cheese. I added chicken to the quesadilla for about one dollar more, and it was well worth the extra cost. This entrée is served with crema and salsa verde cruda with a touch of fresh guacamole. Although I was a little wary about trying a dish with so many unfamiliar ingredients, the Quesadilla de Cuitlacoche was surprisingly delicious and so were the side items – yellow rice and refried beans.

Cantina South has recently started serving brunch from 11am to 2pm every Sunday. The brunch menu looked incredible; it includes a vast selection of breakfast and lunch items. There is a self-serve buffet of breakfast and lunch items, including Hash Brown Mexicana, Pork Tenderloin Pibil, and Tabalones, which our server, Dennis C., says are "absolutely wonderful." Along with the buffet, there are build your own huevos rancheros and build your own taco stations. Six different types of tacos are available – including one stuffed with lobster. At the head of the buffet line, two chefs fix made-to-order omelets and pancakes.

To begin brunch, my friend and I started with some fresh fruit that included pineapple, strawberries, watermelon, melon, and more. I headed to

the omelet and pancake station where I ordered a simple bacon and cheese omelet and a mixed berry pancake, made with fresh blackberries, raspberries, and blueberries and topped with fresh strawberry syrup. The syrup is more like a light glaze, and it was the perfect accent to the pancake. I also tried the key lime cheesecake tart, which had a hint of cinnamon. My friend sampled the chocolate cake squares with chocolate mousse and went back for more than one. Unfortunately, by the time we finished our breakfast items, we were far too stuffed to try any of the lunch items.

Cantina South's Quesadilla de Cuitlacoche certainly stands out; in comparison to other quesadillas I've tried in the past, it has a distinct taste because it is made with ingredients that are not used by most Mexican restaurants. It might be a bit too flavorful for those who enjoy a simple chicken and cheese quesadilla, but I definitely recommend it to those searching for a quesadilla with a kick. And Cantina South's brunch puts the competition to shame. The brunch features both traditional American and Mexican breakfast and lunch items. While I was waiting for my pancake, I spoke with the sous chef, Antonio, who boasted, "I'd like to think this is the best brunch in town." After sampling the menu, I would have to agree.

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