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# Book Review of Up from These Hills: Memories Anderson of a Cherokee Boyhood, by Leonard Carson Lambert, Jr., as told to Michael Lamber

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# Book Review of *Up from These Hills: Memories Anderson of a Cherokee Boyhood*, by Leonard Carson Lambert, Jr., as told to Michael Lamber

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Kathy Campbell, Book Reviews Editor

**Lambert, L. C., Jr. & Lambert, M.** (2011). *Up from These Hills: Memories of a Cherokee Boyhood*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 197 pages. ISBN 978-0-8032-3536-6.

Every primary school child learns about Andrew Jackson's Indian removal policy and the forced removal of the Cherokee Nation to Oklahoma known as The Trail of Tears. Yet we typically do not learn of the few Cherokees who remained behind. *Up from These Hills: Memories of a Cherokee Boyhood* paints a lively picture of what happened to those who stayed behind and settled on the Eastern Band reservation in Western North Carolina. This book is a collection of stories as told by the editor's father, Leonard Carson Lambert Jr., who lived most his childhood in or around the reservation during the 1930's and 40's.

The book opens with a "Forethought" written by Michael Lambert explaining why he published his father's memoirs and addressing the history and background of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians today (I use the term Indian instead of Native America or American Indian because it is the term used by the author). Originally written for his family, Michael felt the stories would be attractive to a larger audience. *Up from These Hills* is a very candid representation of Leonard Lambert's life and the lives of those around him. Michael explains that his father "has no interest in preserving anyone's reputation – neither his own nor anyone else's." Consequently, Leonard describes exactly what his experience was growing up extremely poor and speaks candidly about members of his family and others from his early years. Although some of Leonard's descriptions seem a bit harsh, they are entertaining. Readers will learn fascinating details about what it is like to be an Eastern Indian today. For example, the authors describes how, in order to make money, the "chief" of the reservation started to wear the dress of the Western Sioux Indians, which included large headdresses, since white tourists were more interested in seeing Hollywood movie Indians rather than Eastern Indians in their traditional dress.

The remainder of the book consists of six chapters representing different junctures in Leonard's life. The stories begin before his birth and continue until after his graduation from North Carolina State University with a degree in Engineering. Leonard describes surviving the Great Depression; working with his family as sharecroppers in Tennessee and for his father's trinket shop on the reservation; and describes how he was able to get a college degree despite growing up poor, starting school late, surviving the less equipped reservation schools, and catching up when attending white schools. As a conclusion to his memoirs, Leonard brings the reader up-to-date on a few of the characters from his childhood. His memories are enjoyable to read, but readers might have some trouble remembering how everyone is linked.

Leonard Lambert worked throughout the world as an engineer for Alcoa. His son, Michael Lambert, is currently an associate professor of anthropology and African studies at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Anyone interested in general American Indian, Cherokee, and southern culture and history should be encouraged to read *Up from These Hills*, which would be a good addition to any public or academic library east of the Mississippi River.

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