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What race is cherokee indian

Are triathlons the new marathons? The three-legged ultimate test of fitness has reached new levels of popularity in the U.S., according to recent data from USA Triathlon and the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA). Roughly 2 million people completed at least one triathlon in 2011—a 58 percent increase from 2008, the SFIA finds. Even more: The number of USA Triathlon events—races, camps, and clinics—nearly tripled between 2004 and 2012. Why the uptick? About 25 or 30 years ago, triathlons began with just the Ironman (a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride, and a full marathon to cap it off). But now, tris come in all shapes and sizes, including the sprint for the weekend warrior (a half-mile swim, 12-mile ride, and 3.1-mile run). And that's opened the door to a wider variety of current and former athletes looking to attain a higher fitness level, says Chuck Menke, the marketing and communications director of USA Triathlon. Want to break out of a rut by crossing that finish line? The Men's Health Triathlon Training Guide has you covered from start to finish. If you're a newbie, start with the Weekend Warrior 8-Week Program, which requires an average of 2.5 hours a week but never more than 1 hour and 15 minutes a day. If you liked this story, you'll love these: Are You Faster Than These Celebs? First Person: Chris Cuomo's Triathlon Adventure The Most Inspiring Triathlon Story This content is created and maintained by a third party, and imported onto this page to help users provide their email addresses. You may be able to find more information about this and similar content at piano.io NPR's sites use cookies, similar tracking and storage technologies, and information about the device you use to access our sites (together, "cookies") to enhance your viewing, listening and user experience, personalize content, personalize messages from NPR's sponsors, provide social media features, and analyze NPR's traffic. This information is shared with social media, sponsorship, analytics, and other vendors or service providers. See details. You may click on "Your Choices" below to learn about and use cookie management tools to limit use of cookies when you visit NPR's sites. This page will also tell you how you can reject cookies and still obtain access to NPR's sites, and you can adjust your cookie choices in those tools at any time. If you click "Agree and Continue" below, you acknowledge that your cookie choices in those tools will be respected and that you otherwise agree to the use of cookies on NPR's sites. YOUR CHOICES Elizabeth Warren claims she's part Cherokee — and she's not alone. (Edward Kimmel)here's a running joke in Indian country," said a spokesperson for the Cherokee Nation in 2012. "If you meet somebody who you wouldn't necessarily think they're Native, but they say they're Native, chances are they'll tell you they're Cherokee."But "Cherokees are among the best documented people in the world," says David Cornsilk, a researcher of Cherokee genealogy. "We probably come in third after royalty and Mormons." Between U.S. government records and the multiple existing sets of very thorough tribal kinship records, if you have Cherokee ancestry, there's bound to be documentation somewhere.Elizabeth Warren can't provide that documentation. In defending her claim, she says only, "This is what my brothers and I were told by my mom and my dad, my mammaw and my pappaw." Many people's grandparents have told them the same thing. There is a distinction, of course, between actual, provable citizenship of the Cherokee Nation, and purported heritage. But the interesting thing is not why Warren's clung to her family lore for so long, it's why so many white people in America claim Cherokee heritage to begin with. The answer is paradoxical: it's a way of communicating authentic white Southern identity."My grandmother was one-quarter Cherokee." — Bill Clinton to Sherman Alexie, 1998.First, let's look at who claims to be Cherokee: Elizabeth Warren, Johnny Cash, Johnny Depp, Miley Cyrus, and Bill Clinton for starters. Their families are from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee/Kentucky, and Arkansas again, respectively. White people claiming Cherokee heritage are especially common in the Southeast United States, where the Cherokee lived between 1000 A.D. and the 1838-9 forced relocation known as the Trail of Tears. That makes these claims somewhat plausible, because early on Cherokee people did intermarry with white settlers at an uncommonly high rate compared to other Native American tribes. Still, the number of people claiming Cherokee heritage far outstrips the number of possible descendants from these intermarriages.Miley Cyrus shows off her dreamcatcher tattoo'I've begged my dad for the Mercedes G-Wagen, but he was like, 'Miley, isn't there enough pollution in the air?' We're Cherokee, that's our background. And he's like, 'As a Cherokee, I really don't think you want to do this.' And I'm like, 'Dad, I'm not that Cherokee.'" — Miley Cyrus, 2008.Second, let's look at when white people started to claim Native American heritage in the Southeast. It was in the 1840s or 50s, as the federal challenge to Southern slavery was growing stronger and Civil War loomed on the horizon, that Southerners first started to claim "Cherokee blood." In the decades prior to the Trail of Tears, Cherokee intermarriage with white settlers had dropped off, as white Southern public opinion had turned against Cherokees. For white people to claim distant Cherokee heritage in 1855 or so had the interesting effect of "legitimating the antiquity of their native-born status as sons or daughters of the South," as Gregory Smithers writes in Slate. In a crucial moment of swelling Southern pride, pointing out that your family had been here long enough to intermarry with Cherokees was a method of staking a claim to Southern identity. Southern white identity.Their descendants believed them, and then they had children of their own who also believed these stories, and so on. Johnny Cash probably wasn't faking it on purpose — he just believed his grandparents.Johnny Cash dressed up for a photo shoot promoting his album 'Bitter Tears. Ballads of the American Indian"("As an American who is almost a half-breed Cherokee-Mohawk (and who knows what else?) — I had to fight back when I realized that so many stations are afraid of 'Ira Hayes'." — Johnny Cash, defending his single about a "whiskey drinkin' Indian," 1964.Cherokee heritage claims became somewhat of a norm in the white American south — to the extent that a son of two Sicilian immigrants, born in 1920 in Louisiana, was himself compelled to claim Cherokee heritage. His name was Espera Oscar de Corti, aka Iron Eyes Cody, and in 1971 he starred in the famous "Crying Indian" PSA as the crying Indian.Fake Cherokee Iron Eyes Cody in the iconic "Crying Indian" PSAFive years later, The Education of Little Tree was published, and went on to become a smash hit. The book depicts a young part-Cherokee boy who's sent to live with his Cherokee grandparents, who nurture his moral compass and his love for the earth. In a jarring plot twist, it turned out that The Education of Little Tree was actually written under a pseudonym by Asa Earl Carter, a staunch racist from Alabama who was a Klansman and wrote speeches for George Wallace (including the famous line, "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever!"). Carter believed he was part Cherokee, a fact that didn't stand in the way of his white supremacist values.Asa Earl Carter, author of "The Education of Little Tree." (The Reconstruction of Asa Carter)Which brings us to the other reason white Southerners liked to claim Cherokee heritage, and continued to do so throughout the hyper-racist Jim Crow-era, when having a drop of non-white blood was otherwise a genuine liability: in the decades after the Civil War, the Cherokee story had become a metaphor for the Confederacy.A century and a half after they were driven from their homeland, white Southerners (many of whom, remember, already thought they had Cherokee ancestry) had reimagined the Cherokee as brave anti-federal fighters who courageously resisted government tyranny. The Cherokee had been defeated, but retained their pride and dreamed of a return to former glory — a Lost Cause.Not to mention that the Cherokee had literally fought for the Confederacy. To people like Asa Carter, their descendants were blood brothers. In the mid-20th century, there was a surge of interest among white Southerners about the Cherokee Confederate battalions. In a 1959 biography of Cherokee Confederate General Stand Watie, Frank Cunningham wrote in florid tones: "His dream had been a bold dream — a dream that shimmered with courage and valor. So bold the dream — so brave the dreamer!"But Watie lost his final battle of the Civil War, and "Gone was the dream... the Confederate flag that rippled in the wind over the virescent summer lands assumed a spectral-like quality there under the heavy June sun." This adulation was typical of mid-20th century Southern rhetoric, which increasingly conflated the Cherokee struggle with the struggle of the South, especially as the Civil Rights movement threatened to finally loosen Southern whites' firm grip on the region.Flag flown by Cherokee Confederates during the Civil War. It is patterned after the first flag of the Confederate States. (Civil War Virtual Museum)The deep Southeast is the Cherokee heritage claim's point of origin, but not its exclusive province. Such claims are common, too, on the outskirts of the region — like Oklahoma, to which the Cherokee were relocated, and the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee, to which many of those who escaped the Trail of Tears fled. So, the lineage claims in Elizabeth Warren's family are not surprising."My family comes from Kentucky. They've been there for, you know, many, many generations. And my grandma, my great-grandmother had a lot of Cherokee blood." — Johnny Depp, Inside the Actors' Studio, 2002.In the lead-up to the Trail of Tears, the documentation of Cherokees was extensive and exhaustive. Censuses were conducted, heads were recorded, birth and marriage and death were noted — bureaucracy was part of the Indian management and removal process. And meanwhile the Cherokee, who had their own alphabet, were keeping their own records. "There are 30 rolls made of Cherokees between 1817 and 1914," says David Cornsilk. "There are thousands of linear feet of records created by colonials, missionaries, U.S. officials, schools, travelers and newspapers that trace our ancestries to the mid-1700s. Much of this paper trail was created by the tribe itself. If your ancestor's name can't be located in those documents, the chance that you're actually Cherokee is slim to none. Think of it this way, says Cornsilk, "If there were enough Cherokees to produce all the wannabes now claiming to be us, we would have never lost the war!" And he doesn't mean the Civil War."This article was updated to reflect the distinction between Cherokee citizenship and Cherokee heritage.Connect with us on — Facebook • Twitter • Medium

