



# **A People Divided Against Themselves: Black Indians of the Appalachia Since the**

*Dr. Rufus O. Jimerson*

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This study of Black Indians begins with the Reconstruction Period when reparation treaties with the Five Civilized Nations which sided with the Confederacy were required to sell much of their land to the government and guarantee tribal membership and benefits to their slaves and Indians with African ancestry. This work examines the Jim Crow Era that followed which excluded many of them from membership and benefits guaranteed by the treaties. It also follows the struggle for reinstatement as tribal members persist into this millennium. Insight is provided into why and how tribal counsels and conservative politics maintained exclusion while amassing billions from gaming and other vice. Answers will be sought to find out why social problems and joblessness continue to eclipse among Native Americans and ostracized Afro-Indian relatives. The truth about the contributions and accomplishments of people of bi-racial and multi-racial ancestry in relationship to their ancestral homelands centering on and about the Appalachian Mountains is examined. Insight into how these people became the majority of American is perused. Whether their continuing experiences from the Reconstruction Period into the millennium affected relationship with the ancestral grounds that shape lives, cultures, traditions, and perspectives is determined. The study looks at how Native Americans and African Americans of the Appalachian region shaped the nation's history and collective identity. This study helps us understand how people beleaguered by division, ghettoization in reservations and segregated communities, discrimination, encroachment, and assimilation struggled to restore their freedom, culture, traditions, harmony with nature, and self-determination. In doing so, it provides an important contribution to humanity's self-understanding and how the environment shapes culture, tradition, and relationships with other races and ethnic groups. Therefore, the relevance of this work is found in its contribution to the understanding of humanity itself. This work provides an incisive look at American life in conjunction to the world they live in. It poses a more definitive view of social wealth and power, as well as its cost to humanity as a whole. The truth revealed aims to unmask self-indulgent traditional myths and confront internal contradictions that precede social transformation. The interpretations derived aim to reveal the struggle and record of people of Native American and African ancestry struggled to maintain ancestral ties and tradition. The story derived provides an understanding of the richness and beauty of their diversity and contributions to the overall efforts of humans to transform the world to reflect their humanity. The story of Black Indians contributions to the development of our nation becomes a mirror through which we look to discover and know ourselves and our possibilities. As such, this work contributes to the intellectual and political emancipation of the reader as: (1) a source of self-understanding; (2) as a source for understanding society and the world; (3) as a measure of people's humanity; (4) as a corrective for hegemonic self-indulgent myths; and (5) as models to emulate.

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