

## **Nancy Ward**

*Nancy Ward (ca. 1738-1822/1824) was born in the Cherokee town of Chota. A member of the Wolf Clan, her given name was Nanyehi, which means "one who goes about." Her mother, whose actual name is not known, was a sister of Attakullakulla.*

*Her first husband was Kingfisher. They had two children, Catherine and Five Killer. Nanyehi and Kingfisher fought side by side at the Battle of Taliwa against the Creeks in 1755. When Kingfisher was killed in the battle, she took up his rifle and led the Cherokee to victory. This was the action which, at the age of 18, gave her the title of Ghigau, or Beloved Woman. This was a very powerful legal and diplomatic distinction which meant she had the power to sit in councils, and, along with other Beloved Women, to issue pardons.*

*In 1781, when the Cherokee met with an American delegation led by John Sevier to discuss American settlements along the Little Pigeon River, Nanyehi expressed surprise that there were no women negotiators among the Americans. Sevier was equally appalled that such important work should be given to a woman. Nanyehi told him, "You know that women are always looked upon as nothing; but we are your mothers; you are our sons. Our cry is all for peace; let it continue. This peace must last forever. Let your women's sons be ours; our sons be yours. Let your women hear our words." An American observer said that her speech was very moving.*

*Nanyehi objected to the sale of Cherokee lands to whites, but her objections were largely ignored. In 1808 and again in 1817, the Women's Council came out in opposition to the sale of more and more native land.*

*Nanyehi married a second time to Bryant Ward, a South Carolina colonist and Indian trader. Their child was Elizabeth Ward, the Cherokee wife of General Joseph Martin. Nanyehi became known as Nancy Ward and continues to be identified by that name today.*

*At some point Nancy Ward moved to Womankiller Ford on the Ocoee River. She opened an inn on the Federal Road that passed through. One of Ward's great-grandchildren, Jack Hildebrand, was four when he attended his grandmother's funeral. He told of being in the room when she died. He wrote that "a light rose like a bird, left through an open door, and disappeared toward Chota."*

*Nancy Ward's grave sits on a hill beside Hwy 411 south of Benton, TN overlooking the Ocoee River. Her son, Five Killer, and her brother, Longfellow, are buried there also.*