

Vernacular & Oracular

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Vancouver Type Brigade #20

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About me

- Not a typographer

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg

Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn

Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss

Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

@ # \$ % & , - ()

About me

- Not a typographer
- Not a designer

Google



WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

flickr

About me

- Not a typographer
- Not a designer
- Not Native American nor an expert in their writing systems

		A	E	I	O	U	V
QU/KW	G/K	D _a	R _e	T _i	Ꭰ _o	Ꭱ _u	i _v
		Ꭰ _{ga} Ꭱ _{ka}	Ꭲ _{ge}	Ꭳ _{gi}	Ꭴ _{go}	Ꭵ _{gu}	Ꭶ _{gv}
	H	Ꭷ _{ha}	Ꭸ _{he}	Ꭹ _{hi}	Ꭺ _{ho}	Ꭻ _{hu}	Ꭼ _{hv}
	L	Ꭽ _{la}	Ꭾ _{le}	Ꭿ _{li}	Ꮀ _{lo}	Ꮁ _{lu}	Ꮂ _{lv}
	M	Ꮃ _{ma}	Ꮄ _{me}	Ꮅ _{mi}	Ꮆ _{mo}	Ꮇ _{mu}	
	N	Ꮉ _{na} Ꮊ _{hna} Ꮋ _{nah}	Ꮌ _{ne}	Ꮍ _{ni}	Ꮎ _{no}	Ꮏ _{nu}	Ꮐ _{nv}
		Ꮑ _{qua}	Ꮒ _{que}	Ꮓ _{qui}	Ꮔ _{quo}	Ꮕ _{quu}	Ꮖ _{quv}
	S	Ꮗ _{sa} Ꮘ _s	Ꮙ _{se}	Ꮚ _{si}	Ꮛ _{so}	Ꮜ _{su}	Ꮝ _{sv}
	D/T	Ꮟ _{da} Ꮠ _{ta}	Ꮣ _{de} Ꮤ _{te}	Ꮥ _{di} Ꮦ _{ti}	Ꮧ _{do}	Ꮩ _{du}	Ꮫ _{dv}
	DL/TL	Ꮭ _{dla} Ꮮ _{tla}	Ꮯ _{tle}	Ꮯ _{tli}	Ꮰ _{tlo}	Ꮱ _{tlu}	Ꮲ _{tlv}
	TS/J	Ꮳ _{tsa}	Ꮴ _{tse}	Ꮵ _{tsi}	Ꮶ _{tso}	Ꮷ _{tsu}	Ꮸ _{tsv}
	W	Ꮹ _{wa}	Ꮺ _{we}	Ꮻ _{wi}	Ꮼ _{wo}	Ꮽ _{wu}	Ꮾ _{wv}
	Y	Ꮿ _{ya}	Ᏸ _{ye}	Ᏹ _{yi}	Ᏺ _{yo}	Ᏻ _{yu}	Ᏼ _{yv}

About me

- Not a typographer
- Not a designer
- Not Native American nor an expert in their writing systems
- What I have is a story

Г	"	Ј	Е	Ѓ	Љ	'	()
О	у	,	Љ	.	н	Ѓ	GWY	ѿБf
ѿV	V	K	ѿ	ε	Љ	R	Ѓ	C
P	G	ѿ	ѿ	ω	U	β	C	†
G	Љ	н	Љ	Љ	J	ѿ	ѿ	M
H	ѿ	ѿ	T	Љ	4	Ѓ	ѿ	L
ѿ	ѿ	н	Z	Ѓ	Ѓ	Ѓ	Ѓ	Ѓ
ѿ	D	н	Љ	Ѓ	R	у	Ѓ	ѿ
T	S	Ѓ	н	ѿ	ѿ	ѿ	Ѓ	A
ѿ	ѿ	W	ѿ	i	W	B	ѿ	E
ѿ	6	V	ѿ					

Glyp
U+F

Г	"	d	†	Ѡ	Ѳ	'	()
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GV	V	K	⌘	ε	ℒ	R	Ƨ	Ɔ
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Ɔ	⌘	ℓ	⌘	ᄁ	J	ᄁ	ᄁ	M
H	ᄁ	ᄁ	I	b	4	λ	4	L
Θ	ᄁ	ᄅ	Z	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	ᄁ
G	D	ℓ	ℓ	λ	R	Y	Ɔ	ᄁ
T	S	q	ρ	ᄁ	Θ	ᄁ	ℓ	A
ᄁ	ᄁ	W	ᄁ	i	W	B	ᄁ	E
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2002



Sean M. Burke
Programmer / Linguist

Sean's project

- *A Handbook of the Cherokee Verb*
- Complained his eyes were bleeding

The “traditional” Cherokee font

Γ J F Ɔ Ɔ O I Y , L . h
 4 V K 8 ε T R 4 C P
 G 8 V ω H β C 4 G 8
 H Q 5 J 0 P M H 0
 0 T B 4 T 4 L 0 9 6
 Z S C C C 5

Legible font for Cherokee?

- How hard could that be?
- *(audience?)*

Uneven color

H P 0 0 0

i can hack this, no problem

Variety of forms

0 Q 1 G^w 2 5

there's definitely definitely definitely no logic

Distinguished by terminals

JJ

oO

you have got to be kidding me

Nearly identical glyphs

W W

R R

this is impossible... ?

Legible font for Cherokee?

- How hard could that be?
- *(audience?)*
- In 2002... no references, nothing on the web, few books available

How did this even happen?

1810



Sequoyah (~1770-1843)
Inventor of Cherokee Syllabary

Unparalleled genius



Samuel Worcester (1798-1859)
Missionary to Cherokee, arranged for typesetting

Random guy
with access to
Western technology
and resources

GWY

CHEROKEE



JdAUO~A.

PHOENIX.

NEW ECHOTA, THURSDAY MARCH 13, 1828.

LAS BOUNDNOTT.
WEEKLY IN

HARRIS,
CHEROKEE NATION.

is a house, 42 in six
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ADVERTISE.
OF THE CHEROKEE

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THE CHEROKEE

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THE CHEROKEE

THE CHEROKEE

It is known, That this day, the va-
rious class or tribes which compose
the Cherokee Nation, have unanimously
passed an act of oblivion for all lives
for which they may have been indebted,
one to the other, and have mutually
agreed that after this evening the
afore-said act shall become binding upon
every clan, or tribe; and the afore-
said class or tribes have also agreed
that if in future, any life should be
lost without malice intended, the
innocent aggressor shall not be account-
ed guilty.

It is known also, That should it so
happen that a brother, forgetting his
natural affection, should raise his hand
in anger and kill his brother, he shall
be accounted guilty of murder and suf-
fer accordingly. And if a man has a
brother stolen, and overtakes the thief,
and should his anger be so great as to
cause him to kill him, let his blood re-
main on his own conscience, but no
satisfaction shall be demanded for his
life from his relatives or the clan he
may belong to.

By order of the seven class.

TURTLE AT HOME,
Speaker of Council.

Approved,
BLACK FOX, Principal Chief,
PATH KILLER, Sec'y.

TOOCHALIE.

CHARLES HICKS, Sec'y to the Council.

Ontonellah, April 10, 1818.

Whereas, fifty-five towns and villa-

ges having convened in order to de-

liberate and consider on the situa-

tion of our nation, in the disposition

of our common property of lands

without the unanimous consent of

JOSAPAL GUY, GUY GUY.

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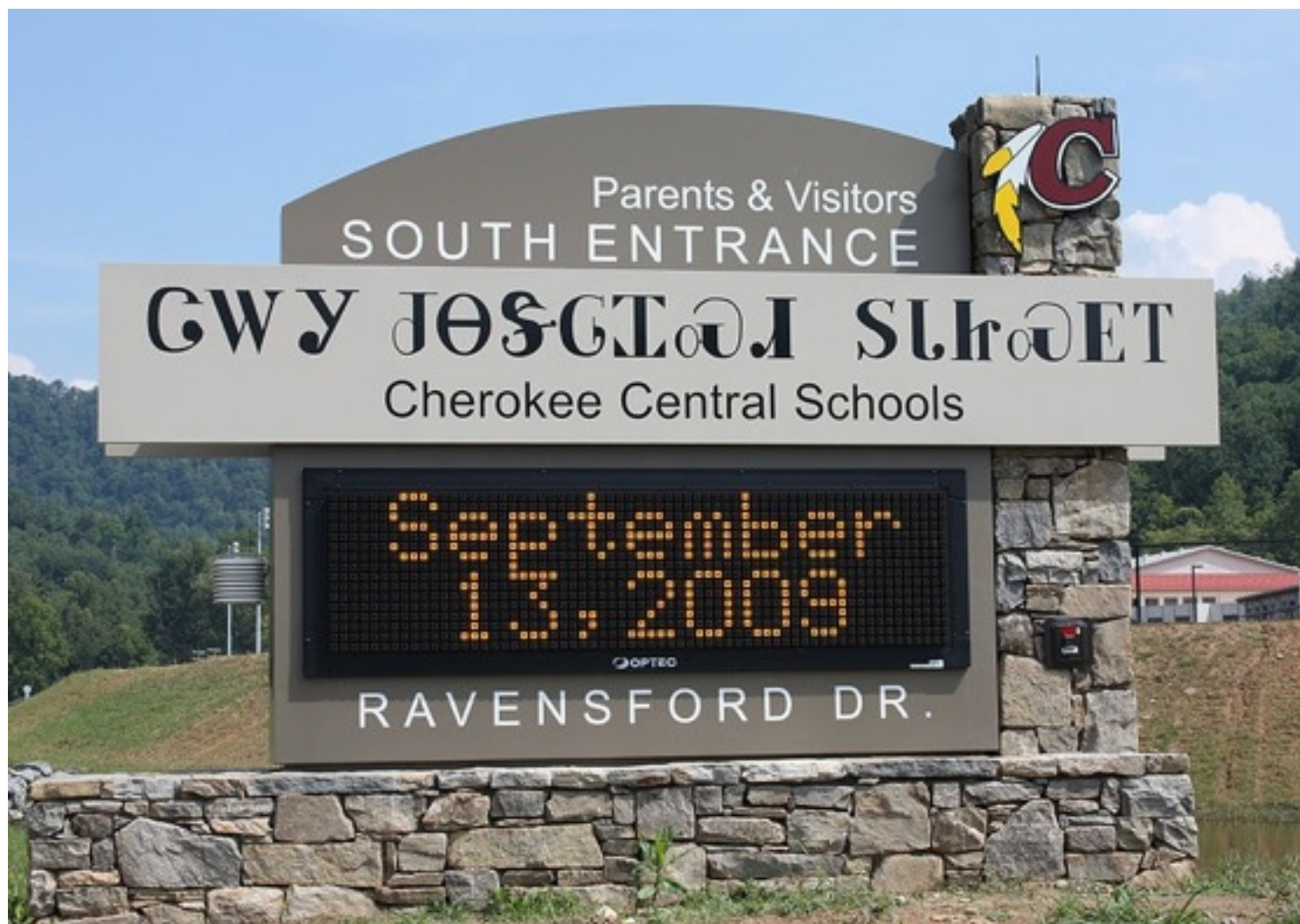
9 HAYH TGVFADAE AD
qadad; dyvE sawA pA, sa-
yagE fada sGvIT.

10 GEAGA FR OSAAT. DH
RGA OHFADAE oboadET, o-
yad sawA hsfadA.

11 HUVFR OSAADAE yuB
AA TS.

12 AYyBz saySET, o-
yad hshhA KhsY.

13 Df LAA OADFAA FR
OAYADAWOY, yGboadA-
yayH OA FRT. GFsZ
GEAGA FRT, Df GHYA
FRT, Df RGAyagE FR hAA-
AT. Ro.



Not treated as a writing system

- A little more like hieroglyphics
- Ceremonial, associated with tradition
- Difficulties perceived as features
- Can we help make it more usable?

Time out

Who has the right to do that?

Rules for nkCherokee

Glyphs could not be distinguished by:

- variations in weight
- presence or absence of stroke terminal
- type of terminal (ball versus serif)
- anything too subtle to see in a font at reduced size

Rules for nkCherokee

Style

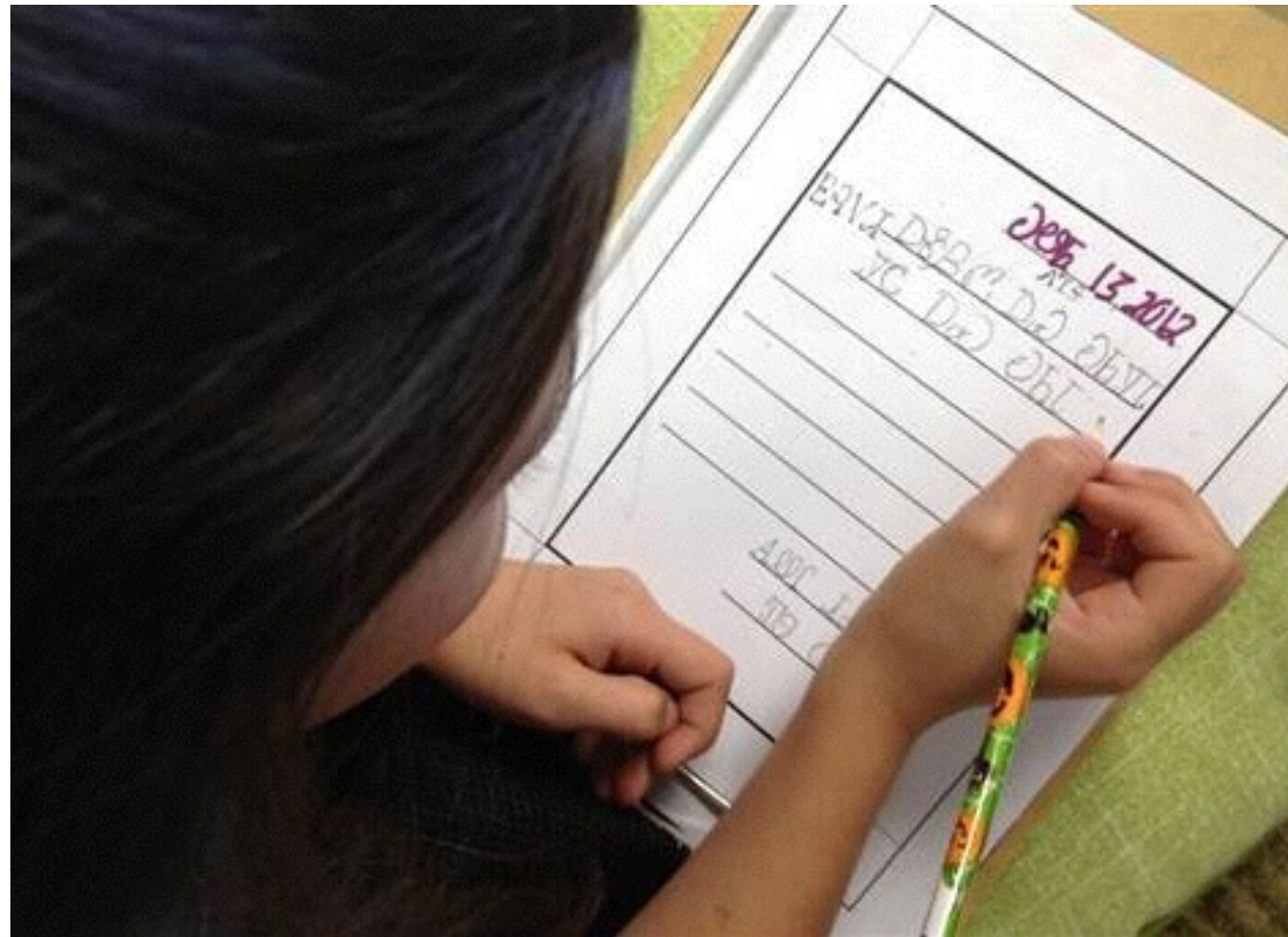
- Monoline, based on Microsoft's Verdana
- With slab serifs if absolutely required
- Subtle differences avoided; exaggerate!

Rules for nkCherokee

Recognizability

- Any glyph should be immediately recognizable to a literate Cherokee person

Method: Handwritten texts



- Use them to understand the “essence” of the letter as they are used

Г	"	Ј	Е	Ѓ	Ђ	'	()
О	у	,	Љ	.	Н	Ѕ	GWY	Ѧ
Ѣ	У	К	Ѧ	Э	Љ	Н	Ѕ	Г
Р	Г	Р	Ѣ	Ѧ	Н	Б	С	Ѣ
С	Ђ	Н	Ѕ	Љ	Ј	Ѧ	Ѕ	М
Н	Ѣ	Ѣ	Т	Б	Ѣ	Ј	Ѣ	Л
Ѣ	Ј	Н	З	С	С	С	С	Ѕ
Ѣ	Д	Н	Љ	Ј	Н	у	С	Ѕ
Т	С	Ѕ	Р	Ѣ	Ѣ	Ѣ	Л	А
Ѣ	Ѣ	W	Ѣ	i	W	В	Ѣ	Е
Ѣ	6	У	Ѣ					

Glyp
U+F

Г	"	d	†	Ѡ	Ѳ	'	()
Θ	Ƴ	,	Ƨ	.	h	q	CWY	ᄁᄃᄅ
GV	V	K	⌘	ε	ℓ	R	‡	Ɔ
P	G̃	♂	✓	ω	⊞	β	C	‡
Ɔ	⌘	ℓ	⌘	ᄁ	J	ᄁ	ᄃ	M
H	ᄁ	ᄃ	I	b	4	λ	‡	L
Θ	ᄃ	ᄅ	Z	Ɔ	Ɔ	Ɔ	ℓ	ᄃ
G	D	†	ℓ	λ	R	Y	Ɔ	ᄃ
T	S	q	ρ	ᄃ	Θ	ᄁ	ℓ	A
ᄃ	ᄃ	W	ᄃ	i	W	B	ᄃ	E
ᄃ	6	V	ᄃ	!	!	:	;	-

Even color

U P ၀ ၀ ၀

U P ၀ ၀ ၀

More unity of form

00 1 G^w 05

00 1 G^w 05

Distinguished by
~~terminals~~ shape

II II O O

II II O O

Easier to distinguish glyphs

W W R R

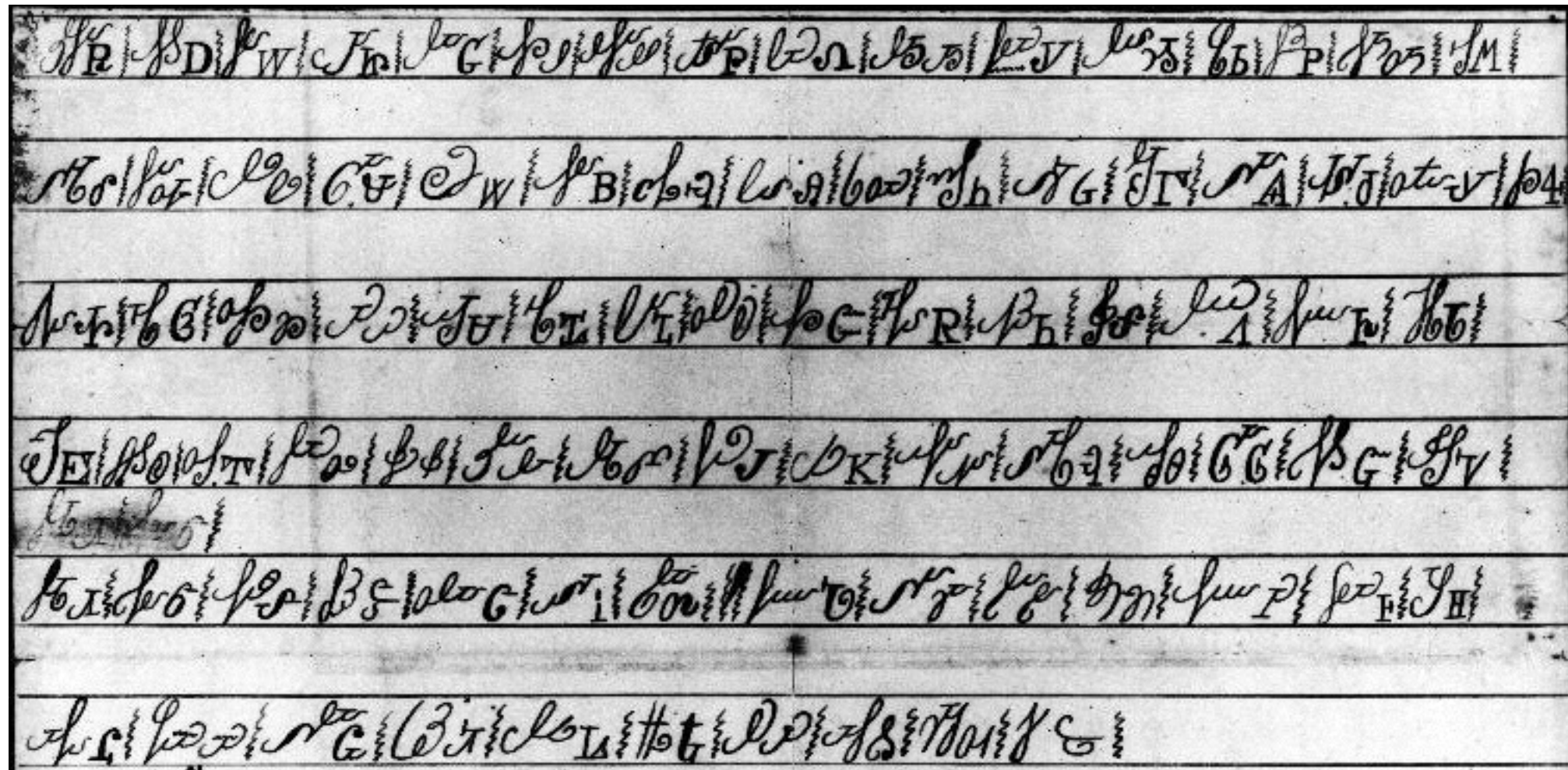
W W R R

Success

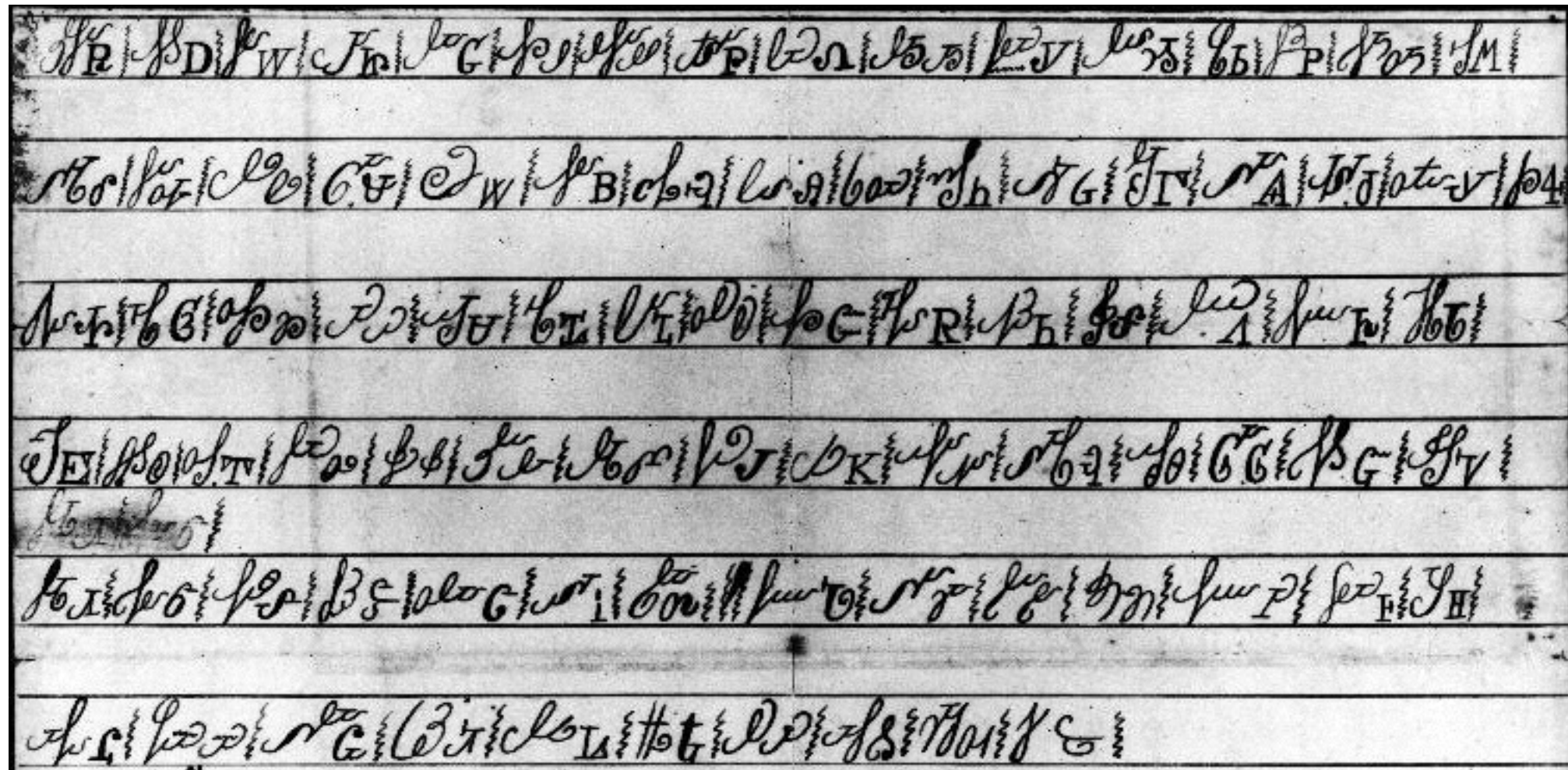
“The typeface chosen for the syllabary is an easy-to-read sans serif font, much more inviting than the commonly used intricate characters...”

International Journal of American Linguistics - Volume 72, Issue 2, April 2006, pp. 285-287; A Handbook of the Cherokee Verb: A Preliminary Study (Feeling, Kopriv, Lachler, and van Tuyl).

Spooky postscript



Sequoyah's *original* designs



look familiar?

From 1810 to 2002



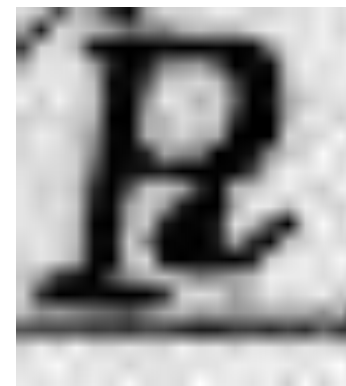
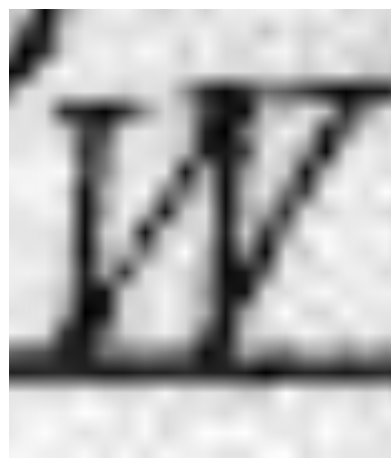
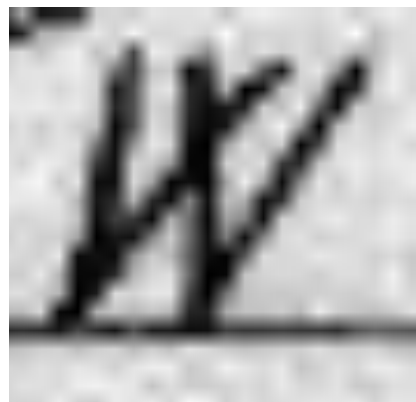
A

A

A

Back to the future?

Sequoyah
handwritten
1809?



digital tracing
of 1810
typesetting



nkCherokee
2002



Reproducing, too soon?

- Sequoyah lived in a time soon after mechanical reproduction
- All mistakes preserved forever
- No evolution



oluntatem eius quine oniste
est uicem uoluntas eius quim
nepateris uicomue quodoech
perdam exco sedresuscitatu
iouisimo die. **H**occe est enim
s patris mei quimissione ucom
die plium excedit meum ha
un uicem uicomue exresuscitabo
ouisimo die. **¶**
rimurabunt ergo iudaei de illo
uicem uicomue. **¶** Exsumptis uide
atendi **E**dicebant uicomue me
ius ioseph cuius uos nominis

deuuih. luZeh b moki.
Da mirasite napomoki
biti. Kibogu moih gre
chou. Dabim cisto iz
pouued Ztuoril. lod
puztic otboga priel.
Bogu uhe mogokemu.
iz pouuede uhe more
greche. Isce marie.
yZeh nepraudnih del.

in epraudnega pomis leza.
Isce iehem uuede Ztuo

et p noia lui
i anis et sup oes
poderet: qdraq
a seran quinqu
us uida p genea
uhas ac domo
i suax p nomu
nosumo ano e

Prettier fonts,
but it took a while

DRTðOıSĐŁYAJEŁPŁŁŁŁ
&WŃPŁMŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁ
ZŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁ
WŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁ
KŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁŁ
(123456789) {};!&? AaBbCc

Digoweli (Chris Harvey, languagegeek.com)

Two paradigms for design?

- **Oracular:** forms from trained designer
 - Integrity of form
 - Prescriptive
 - Created at a point in time

Two paradigms for design?

- **Vernacular:** derived from use
 - Bricolage
 - Descriptive
 - Evolves over time

- Have we lost something in shifting from vernacular to oracular design?
- Is there any way to recapture the vernacular in our processes today?