

Vernacular & Oracular

Neil Kandalgaonkar

Vancouver Type Brigade #20

June 24, 2014

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
G/K	D _a	R _e	T _i	Ø _o	Ø _u	í _v
	S _{ga} Ø _{ka}	F _{ge}	Y _{gi}	A _{go}	J _{gu}	E _{gv}
	H _{ha}	P _{he}	Ø _{hi}	F _{ho}	Γ _{hu}	Ø _{hv}
	W _{la}	Ø _{le}	P _{li}	G _{lo}	M _{lu}	Á _{lv}
	Ø _{ma}	Ø _{me}	H _{mi}	Ø _{mo}	Y _{mu}	
	Θ _{na} t _{rhna} G _{nah}	Λ _{ne}	H _{ni}	Z _{no}	Á _{nu}	Ø _{nv}
	T _{qua}	Ø _{que}	Ø _{qui}	Ø _{quo}	Ø _{quu}	Ø _{quv}
	U _{sa} Ø _s	Ø _{se}	B _{si}	Ø _{so}	Ø _{su}	R _{sv}
	L _{da} W _{ta}	S _{de} T _{te}	J _{di} J _{ti}	V _{do}	S _{du}	Ø _{dv}
	Ø _{dla} L _{tla}	L _{tle}	C _{tli}	Ø _{tlo}	Ø _{tlu}	P _{tlv}
TS/J	G _{tsa}	T _{tse}	H _{tsi}	K _{tso}	J _{tsu}	C _{tsv}
	G _{wa}	Ø _{we}	Ø _{wi}	Ø _{wo}	Ø _{wu}	Ø _{wv}
	Ø _{ya}	Ø _{ye}	Ø _{yi}	Ø _{yo}	G _{yu}	B _{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

ଫ	"	ଦ	ତ	ଶ	ତ୍ତ	'	()
ଓ	ୟ	,	ତ୍ତ	.	ହ	ଙ	ୱୟ	ଶ୍ବର
ଗ୍ର	ଵ	କ	ଙ୍ଗ	ଏ	ର୍ତ୍ତ	ର	ତ୍ତ	ର୍ତ୍ତ
ପ	ଗ୍ର	ମ୍ବ	ତ୍ତ୍ବ	ଯ	ର୍ଥ	ର୍ଥ	ଚ	ଫ୍ର
ଏ	ର୍ବ	ହ	ଙ୍ଗ୍ରେ	ଙ୍ଗ୍ରେ	ଜ	ଥ୍ରେ	ର୍ପ	ମ୍ରେ
ହ	ବ୍ର	ଙ୍ଗ୍ରେ	ତ୍ତ୍ବେ	ବ୍ରେ	ଫ୍ରେ	ଫ୍ରେ	ଫ୍ରେ	ଲ୍ରେ
ତ୍ର	ଯ୍ବ	ମ୍ବେ	ତ୍ତ୍ବେ	ଶ୍ବେ	ଗ୍ରେ	ଗ୍ରେ	ଲ୍ରେ	ର୍ତ୍ତେ
ଗ	ଦ୍ବ	ମ୍ବେ	ତ୍ତ୍ବେ	ଶ୍ବେ	ର୍ତ୍ତେ	ୟ	ନ୍ତ୍ରେ	ମ୍ବେ
ତ	ସ୍ବ	ବ୍ରେ	ତ୍ତ୍ବେ	ଶ୍ବେ	ର୍ତ୍ତେ	ଶ୍ବେ	ଲ୍ରେ	ଏୟେ
ର୍ମ	ବ୍ୟ	ମ୍ବେ	ତ୍ତ୍ବେ	ଶ୍ବେ	ର୍ତ୍ତେ	ବ୍ୟ	ଯ୍ବେ	ଏୟେ
ଫ୍ର	ୟ	ବ୍ରେ	ତ୍ତ୍ବେ	ଶ୍ବେ	ର୍ତ୍ତେ	:	;	-

2002



Sean M. Burke
Programmer / Linguist

Sean's project

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

The “traditional” Cherokee font

Т҃јFжTоу, l.h
qVKgEТRжC^P
G^gTвHBCжC^T
IжJжJжPМHж
жTж4LжLж9ж
ZжGжGж

Legible font for Cherokee?

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

Uneven color

U P ő O ę E

i can back this, no problem

Variety of forms

00-¾ Gels

there's definitely definitely definitely no logic

Distinguished by terminals

ЛЛ

өө

you have got to be kidding me

Nearly identical glyphs

WW

RR

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

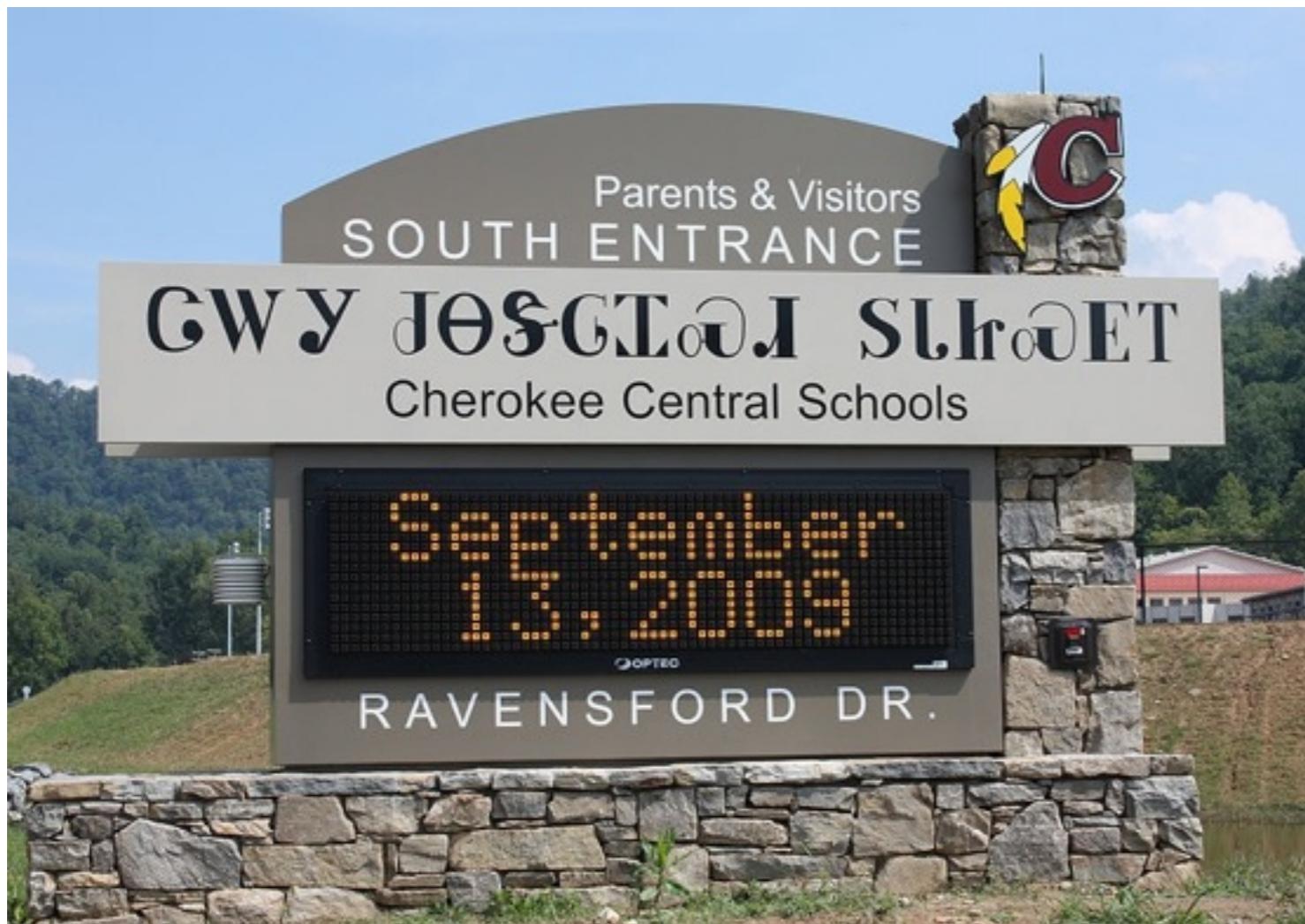
9 ԻՆԵՍԻ ՏԵՍՎՔՆԱՆԵ ԱՇ
ՎՈՅՉՈՎ; ՓԱՎԻ ՏՎԱՎԱ ՔՅ, ՏՎ-
ԱՎԱՐԱ ԻՎԱՆԱ ՏԵՎԻՏ.

10 GEORGIA FOR SOCIETY. D
RGA 0H5F016 0700700ET, 0-
0Y0 54W.L 0H5F01604.

11. ІЧУВІЧКІ КІСІЛІВЛІ ОУІВ А.А. Т.С.

12 Академічні союзи, є- сюз інженерів КІСУ.

13 Dr. L. A. OTAFELA KRT
OJEDYKALOJEWOWY, OJEGELOJEW-
OJEWOWYH OG KRT. GYPSZ
GEOGWA KRT, Dr GJHYLA
KRT, Dr RGQWALG KRT HAA-
KT. ROJ. O.



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

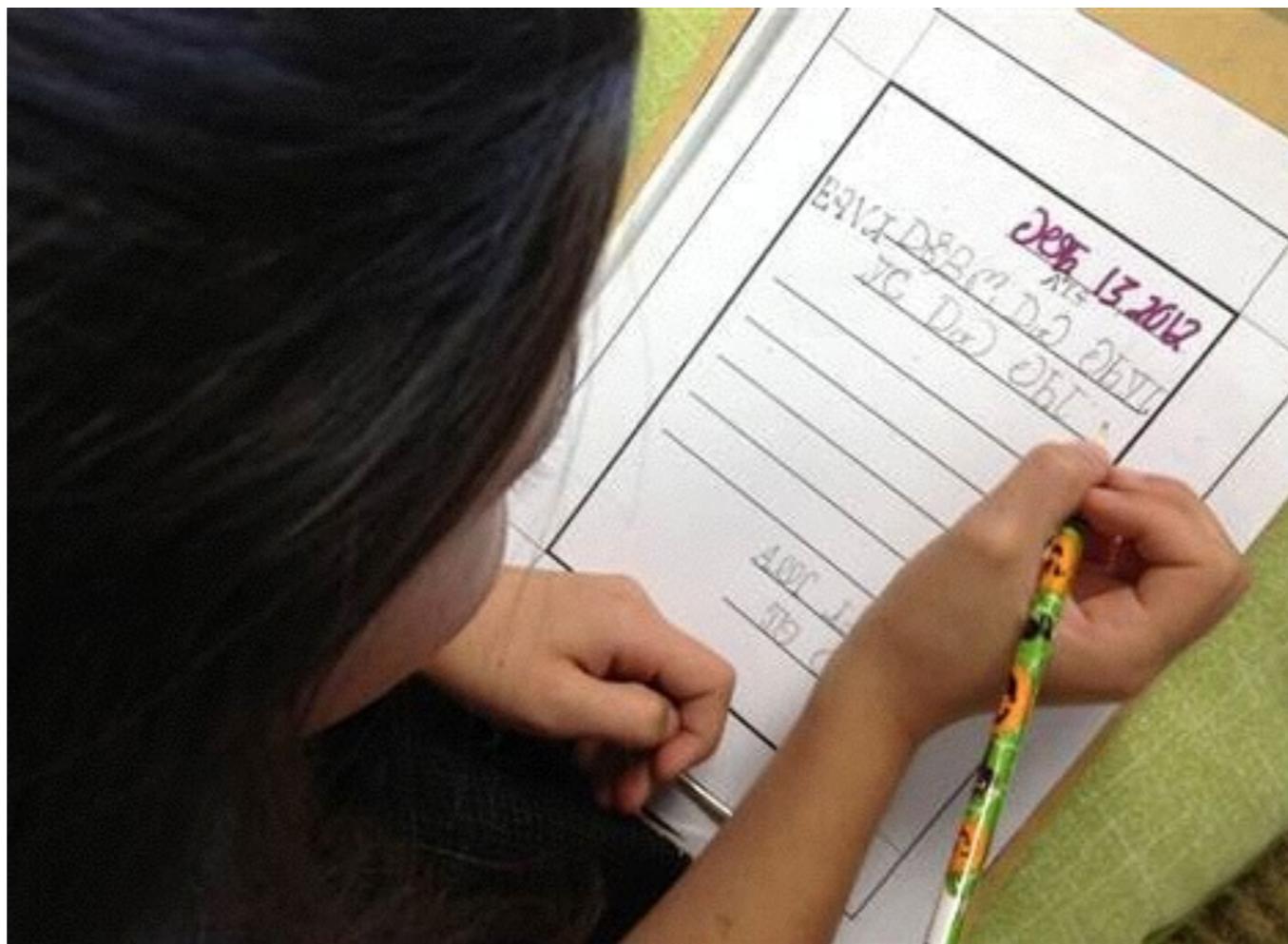
- Monoline, based on Microsoft's Verdana
- With slab serifs if absolutely required
- Subtle differences avoided; exaggerate!

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	"	Д	Ф	Ђ	Ѡ	'	()
Ѡ	у	,	ლ	.	һ	ჰ	გვу	ბეჭ
ცვ	Վ	Կ	ბ	Է	ТЬ	Ր	Վ	Շ
Պ	Գ	Ծ	Վ	Ծ	Ւ	Յ	Ը	Ւ
Գ	Թ	Խ	Ը	Ը	յ	օ	Ր	Մ
Հ	Ը	Ը	Լ	Ե	Գ	լ	Վ	Լ
Օ	Զ	Բ	Զ	Տ	Ը	Ը	Ը	Ը
Ը	Ը	Բ	Ը	Ը	Ը	Ը	Ը	Ը
Տ	Տ	Ա	Բ	Օ	Ը	Ը	Ը	Ը
Ր	Ը	Վ	Օ	Ի	Վ	Վ	Ը	Ե
Ը	Ը	Վ	Վ	Ը	Վ	Վ	Ը	Ե

ଫ	"	ଦ	ତ	ଶ	ତ୍ତ	'	()
ଓ	ୟ	,	ତ୍ତ	.	ହ	ଙ	ୱ୍ୟ	ଶ୍ବର
ଗ୍ର	ଵ	କ	ଙ୍ଗ	ଏ	ର୍ତ୍ତ	ର	ତ୍ତ	ର୍ତ୍ତ
ପ	ଗ୍ର	ମ୍ବ	ତ୍ତ୍ବ	ଯ	ର୍ବ	ବ୍ର	ଚ	ଫ୍ର
ଏ	ର୍ବ	ହ	ଙ୍ଗ୍ରେ	ଙ୍ଗ୍ରେ	ଜ	ଦ୍ର	ପ୍ର	ମ୍ର
ହ	ବ୍ର	ଙ୍ଗ୍ରେ	ତ୍ତ୍ବେ	ବ୍ରେ	ଫ୍ରେ	ଫ୍ରେ	ଫ୍ରେ	ଲ୍ର
ତ୍ତ	ଯ୍ବ	ମ୍ବେ	ଶ୍ବେ	ଶ୍ବେ	ଗ୍ରେ	ଗ୍ରେ	ଲ୍ରେ	ର୍ତ୍ତେ
ଗ	ଦ୍ର	ବ୍ରେ	ଶ୍ବେ	ର୍ବେ	ର୍ବେ	ୟ	ନ୍ତ୍ରେ	ମ୍ରେ
ତ	ସ	ବ୍ରେ	ଶ୍ବେ	ର୍ବେ	ର୍ବେ	ଗ୍ରେ	ଲ୍ରେ	ଏୟେ
ର୍ବେ	ବ୍ରେ	ଶ୍ବେ	ର୍ବେ	ର୍ବେ	ର୍ବେ	ବ୍ରେ	ଶ୍ବେ	ଏୟେ
ଫ୍ରେ	ଫ୍ରେ	ଫ୍ରେ	ଫ୍ରେ	ଫ୍ରେ	ଫ୍ରେ	:	;	-

Even color

UPதୋଏ

UPତୋଏ

More unity of form

00-9Gw9S

00-9Gw9S

Distinguished by
~~terminals~~ shape

ЛЛ ё ѕ

ʌʌ ə ʊ

Easier to distinguish glyphs

W W R R

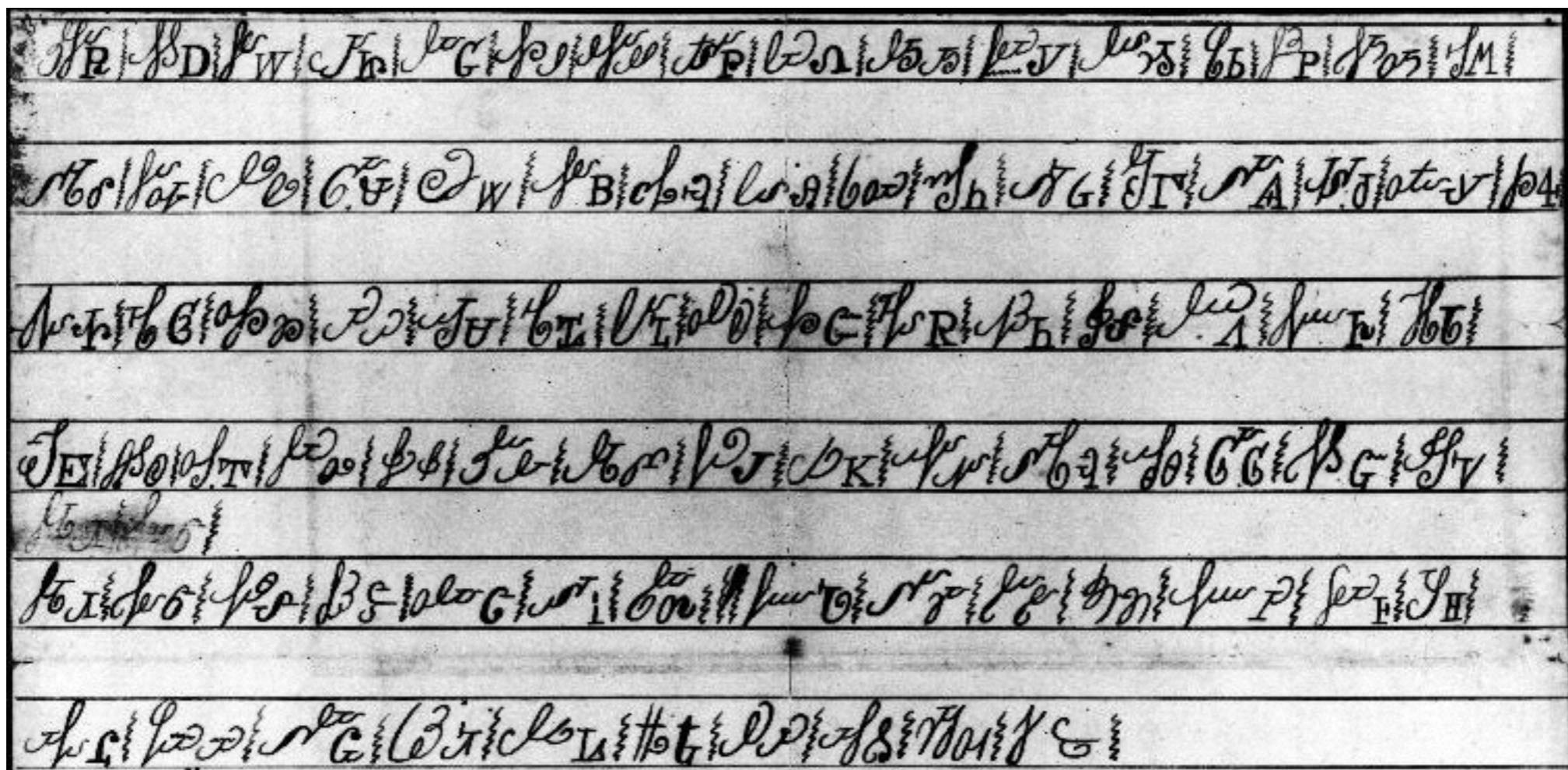
W W R R

Success

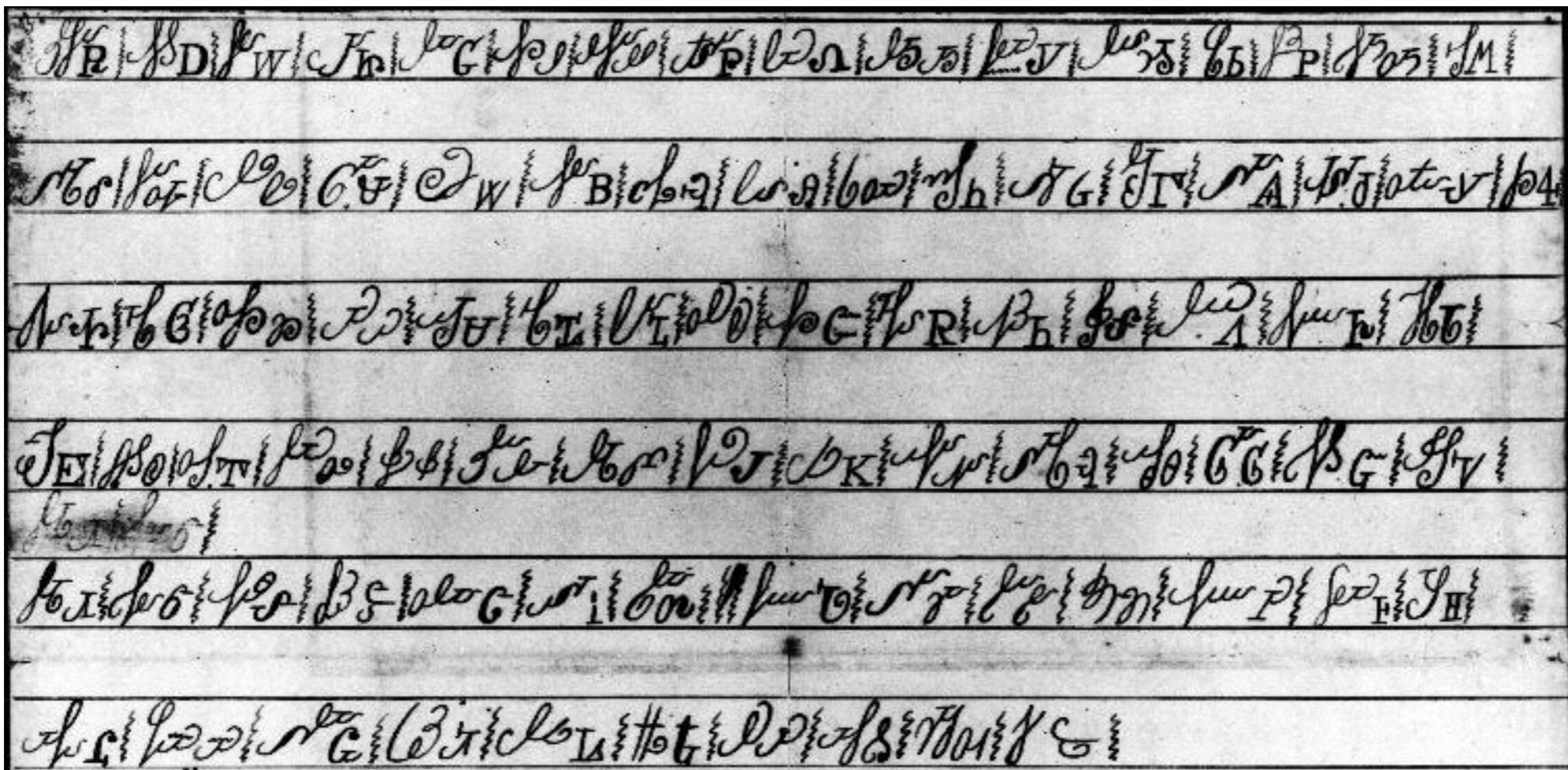
“The typeface chosen for the syllabary is an easy-to-read sans serif font, much more inviting than the commonly used intricate characters...”

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

Spooky postscript



Sequoyah's *original* designs



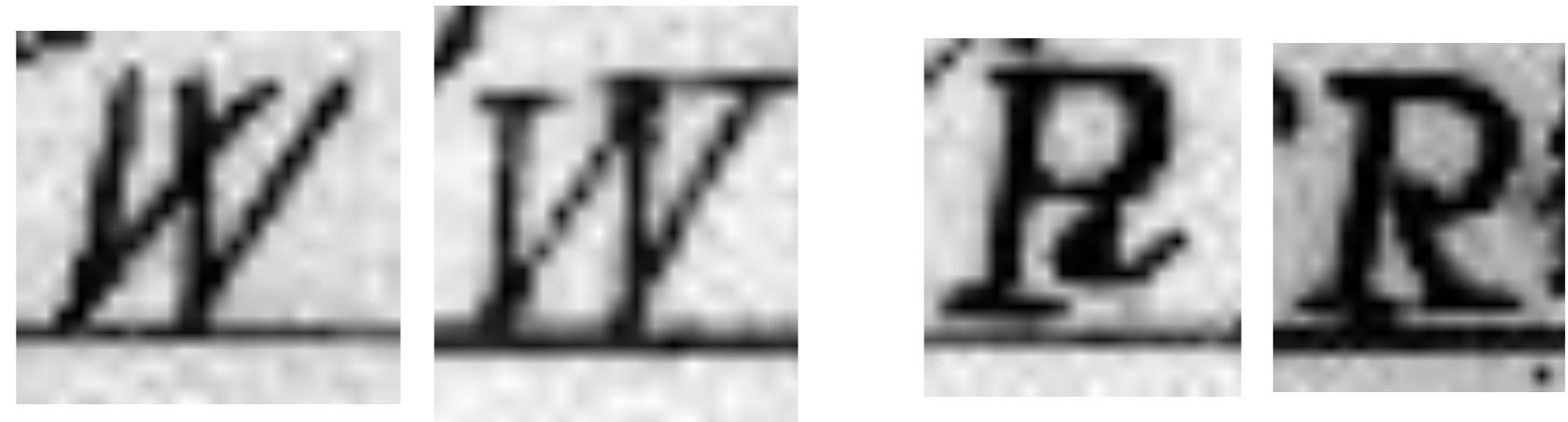
look familiar?

From 1810 to 2002

¶ Ø Ø Ø

Back to the future?

Sequoyah
handwritten
1809?



digital tracing
of 1810
typesetting

WW RR

nkCherokee
2002

WW RR

Reproducing, too soon?

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



oluntatem eius quinque misericordias
est uolumen uolumen eius quinque
ne patris ut omnis quod dedit
per omnia dico sed resuscitatum
in unissimo die. **H**oc est enim
s pater nostra qui misericordia ut omnis
dicit plenus excedit mentem ha-
bitum alterum. **R**esuscitatio
in unissimo die. **R**esuscitatio
mirabantur ergo iudei dabo
in aduersitate. **E**go sum pax quoniam
exaudi. **E**dictebant homines hie
Iesus Christus cuius uos nominatis

deuuius. **I**uzech te moki.
Damirasse napomoki
biti. **K**ibogu moih gre-
chou. **D**abim cisto iz
pouued ztuoril. **I**od
puistic otboga prie-
bogu uhe mogokem-
iz pouuede uhe moie
greche. **I**se marie.
Izech ne praud nih del.
in cpraud nega pomislera
E se iehem uiuede ztuo

**Alt pnoia un-
iānis t sup oē
pōderēt: q̄draq
a serēt q̄niqu
us uida p genē
ulias ac domo
i suar p nomū
nōcēmo āno e**

Prettier fonts, but it took a while

DRTðOiSðøYAJEøÞðHð
&WðPGMðþðOHðyøtGðh
ZðOðIððøððð4ðFðRð
WðSðLðVðSððLðCððPCðVð
KðCðGðøðøðøðGB
(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?