

**University of Texas at El Paso**

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**From the Selected Works of Anne M. Giangiulio**

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2014

## House of Purple Cedar

Anne M Giangiulio, *University of Texas at El Paso*



Available at: [https://works.bepress.com/anne\\_giangiulio/70/](https://works.bepress.com/anne_giangiulio/70/)



Berta Crayton

**TIM TINGLE** is an Oklahoma Choctaw and an award-winning author and storyteller. His great-great grandfather, John Carnes, walked the Trail of Tears in 1835, and his paternal grandmother attended a series of rigorous Indian boarding schools in the early 1900s. Responding to a scarcity of Choctaw lore, Tingle initiated a search for historical and personal narrative accounts in the early 1990s.

In 1992, Tingle began mentoring with Choctaw storyteller Charley Jones. He retraced the Trail of Tears to Choctaw homelands in Mississippi and began recording stories of tribal elders. His family experiences and these interviews with fellow Choctaws in Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, and Oklahoma—over two hundred hours and counting—are the basis of his most important writings.

Tim Tingle is the author of ten books including *Walking the Choctaw Road*, *Crossing Bok Chitto*, *Saltypie*, *How I Became a Ghost* (Roadrunner Press), and *Danny Blackgoat*, *Navajo Prisoner* (7th Generation).

*House of Purple Cedar* was fifteen years in the crafting. Filled with hope in the most tragic of circumstances, *House of Purple Cedar* is Tingle's testament to Choctaw elders who continue to watch over the well-being of the Choctaw Nation and its people.

FICTION / \$21. 95

Tingle's Choctaws maintain mystical connections to the land and its creatures. The tale is ripe with symbolism and peopled by riveting characters. A lyrical, touching tale of love and family, compassion and forgiveness.

—Kirkus Reviews

I love this book. There is nothing else quite like it in its loving, clear-eyed description of a people, a time, and a place that are little-known to most. Humor, honesty, lyrical, poetic prose, it has it all—including the voice of a true storyteller bringing it to vivid life.

I think of it as a potential classic.

—Joseph Bruchac, author of *Our Stories Remember*

Rose, a young Choctaw woman of the late 1800s, looks back on a dark episode from her childhood when the racism and fear that paralyzed a town are faced down by the steadfast confidence her grandfather has in the goodness of people to overcome hate.

Told with superb storytelling and unforgettable characters.

—Debbie Reese, *School Library Journal*

An overarching message of forgiveness and love, underscored by themes of patience and resilience, takes *House of Purple Cedar* from historical to timeless.

To enjoy this world, you need only an open heart and a love of great stories.

—Shelf Awareness



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HOUSE OF PURPLE CEDAR Tim Tingle

# HOUSE OF PURPLE CEDAR



# Tim Tingle

**THE HOUR HAS COME** to speak of troubled times. Though the bodies have long ago returned to dust, too many ghosts still linger in the graveyards. You are old enough. You need to know. It is time we spoke of Skullyville.

Almost everyone from that time is dead now, their faces blurred, their stories scratched like formal words in old, old letters.

But once we were alive, all of us, and when good people, Choctaw and Nahullo both, step over our Skullyville graves, we sing as best we can, we sing those old hymns and songs, for they were everything to us. Our religion, our joys, even our sins, they all made up the music. We Amen! at the top of our lungs beneath the brush arbors, we sweat and toil in our gardens and fields and brood over our livestock and our babies both.

This story must be told. To see not only the unfolding of events but the meaning I ascribe to them, you must know of the vision, for the house of this story is built upon my vision.

HOUSE  
PURPLE  
CEDAR



Tim Tingle

HOUSE OF PURPLE CEDAR - Tim Tingle

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**Tim Tingle**



Cinco Puntos Press  
EL PASO, TEXAS

## SNAKES AND SPIDERS

Row

"Anaso is coming!" Janey bellowed. "He's almost here." Janey dashed in the kitchen to tell Pokoni the news. "I saw him riding Whiteface now, coming over the hill."

"Leave him be," said Pokoni. "He'll be very tired, too tired. You know he don't like to talk much anyway."

"But, Pokoni," Janey said, "it looks like he's been in a fight. His face is wrapped in bandages."

Pokoni dried her hands and walked to the road to meet Anaso. She spoke for a short while and Pokoni touched his face several times, testing the bandages. I could see they both were smiling. Anaso led Whiteface to the barn where Daddy was feeding a load of hay to the milk cows.

"Go on inside," he said to Anaso, raking Whiteface by the nose. "I'll see she's full and watered."

At the supper table, Janey grabbed the chair next to Anaso. He rubbed and wiggled against Anaso all supper long, causing long-eyed to hiss till Daddy picked his plate up and said, "I can't get to get upstairs. Leave Anaso alone, son."

"He will talk when he is ready," Pokoni whispered, and Anaso pretended not to hear. He did not say a single word at the table. He just cleared his plate and moved to the living room. I knew if I helped Pokoni and my mother clean the kitchen, then sat quietly on the floor by the fireplace, Momma would let us stay up and hear what Anaso had to say.

Once everyone was settled around the fireplace, Anaso appeared to fall asleep. His head dropped to his chest and I saw his shirt move up and down in his snoring way. Then I must have fallen asleep, for the next thing I knew my Anaso was standing over me with a cup of hot cocoa.

"I hope you like it a little burnt," he said. "It's the only way I know how to make it." I nodded and took the hot cup from his hands.

"That's what you claim, anyway, honey man," Pokoni said.

Looking around the room, I saw that my mother and father had already gone to bed. Pokoni smiled at me through the rising steam of her cocoa.

"You are learning to sleep anywhere," she said to me, "just like old people." We slipped our hot cocoa, blowing cooling whispers in the dark till the macking silver of half moon shone through the window.

"I made two friends today," said Anaso, and he told us about meeting John Burleson and Maggie Johnston.

Row

Anaso arose the next morning in the same bushed hour before dawn, somewhat relieved that his night of fitful sleep was over, a night of rolling on his tender cheek and lying awake in dull and throbbing waves of pain. Following a breakfast of bread, coffee, and eggs with runny yolk, he climbed aboard Whiteface and pointed her nose in