

INE: Welcome all. Today I'm happy to interview Brad Wagon, Cherokee author, storyteller and historian. Brad is also a volunteer firefighter and proud husband and uncle.

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INE: Hi Brad. Thank you for agreeing to this interview. Tell us a little more about yourself.

BW: I was born and raised in Gideon, a community near Tahlequah, OK, capital of the Cherokee Nation. I still live very close to my mother in that community. I've been married to Tanya, my wife, for close to 8 ½ years and have one son, Rocky.

I'm very close to my family. My mom lives next door in the house where I grew up and I have a twin brother, Brian who lives close by with his wife, Ashley and my two nephews, Isaac and Levi and my niece, Anna.

I'm a lieutenant on the Gideon Fire Department and I work for the Cherokee Nation, my Nation. I work in the Community and Cultural Outreach Department.

My main job is to assist Cherokee Community Organizations by helping them get their non-profit status, training their boards and managing grants that we give to organizations.

INE: Do you have any published books?

BW: I have two. "How the World was Made: A Cherokee Story" and "The Land of the Great Turtles". Both are based on Cherokee oral tradition.

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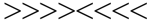
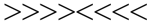


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INE: What inspired you to write your books?

BW: Well my wife has always said I should write a book so the idea has been in my head for a while. Back in 2015 my friend and partner, Alex Stephenson, approached me and asked if I'd be interested in doing some books with him based on Cherokee stories.

Alex has written and illustrated several children’s books and is a very talented artist so I jumped at the chance. Our inspiration and mission are to get these stories out to as many children as possible. We believe the lessons that the stories teach are very important, especially in today’s society.



INE: Do you typically plan your writing around a themed idea, or do you just write whatever and wherever your heart takes you?

BW: So far, it's been a theme of Cherokee stories. I've thought about branching out but have not yet. We will see.

INE: You published your own book. Tell us a little about that process.

BW: With our first book, "How the World was Made," we went the self-publishing route. Honestly, Alex did a lot of the work as far as uploading the book and he had used this particular site, CreateSpace, before for his other children's books.

It worked out well but we wanted to reach a wider audience so we looked for a publisher for the second book, "The Land of the Great Turtles." We were fortunate that the first place we sent it, Rowe Publishing, wanted to publish it. It's been different working through a publisher and I'm not sure what we will do for the next book.

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INE: Do you have any advice for authors on how to prepare before they self-publish?

BW: I really don't. Like I said Alex knew the ins and outs of it so it was fairly simple for us. Just be ready if your book takes off to fill large orders. It's either that or bookstores have to order through someone like Amazon and they don't like that. They want to be able to sell the books at close to the same price.

So, if you buy the books wholesale and sell them to the bookstores you may have to wait a while to get paid. That was the main reason we went with a publisher the second time around. They handle the wholesale orders and then give us our share. No money out of pocket for us.

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INE: What are you currently working on?

BW: We are currently working on our third children's book based on a Cherokee story. This one is going to be about the First Fire. Alex and I are working on the wording, and he is working on the illustrations. He sends me pages when he gets them completed. We very much want the books to be fun and readable but also historically accurate concerning Cherokee dress and culture.

INE: What is your favorite quote?

BW: Ha-ha...I'm a history fan so here's a few of my favorites. I'm especially fond of the abolitionists.

“Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation,
are men who want crops without plowing up the ground.”
~Frederick Douglass

“I have a need to be all on fire, for I have mountains of ice about me to melt.”
~William Lloyd Garrison

And a literary one for you,

“Even the smallest person can change the course of the future.”
~JRR Tolkien

INE: Who is your favorite author?

BW: I love historical fiction so Bernard Cornwell, Conn Iggulden, S.J.A. Turney, and Simon Scarrow to name a few. I also love George RR Martin and not just the Fire and Ice but a lot of his science fiction and short stories.

INE: How can readers discover more about you?

BW: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/landofthegreatturtles/>

Instagram: @bradwagnonauthor

Twitter: @brad_wagnon

LinkedIn: Brad Wagnon

Amazon Author Page: <http://www.amazon.com/author/bradwagnon>

Email: bradwagnoncco@gmail.com

INE: Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to take part in this interview. Best of luck and much success for the future.

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INE Note: answers are provided by the interviewee and are not altered by INE unless the response is deemed inappropriate for a general audience or minor edits are required.