

## *How Fire Came to the Alabamas and Coushattas*

There was a time, far back, when bears owned Fire. These animals guarded Fire very closely and even carried it about with them. They allowed no creature except a member of the bear clan to use Fire or even to approach it.

One day the bears put Fire on the ground and went away to eat acorns. Now, Fire needed much attention. Since the bears did not come back that day, Fire grew weaker and weaker, and finally began calling for help. But the bears had travelled so far into the woods that they couldn't hear Fire's cries.

Some Alabamas and Coushattas heard him, though, and hurried to his aid. They got a stick from the north and laid it on Fire. In the west they found another stick and fed it to Fire. The people found the third stick in the south. Then they went to the east for another stick. When the people put down all of the sticks, Fire blazed up.

After the bears finished their meal of acorns, they returned to claim Fire. However, Fire said, "I don't know the bears any longer."

This is how Fire left the bears and went to live with the Alabamas and Coushattas.