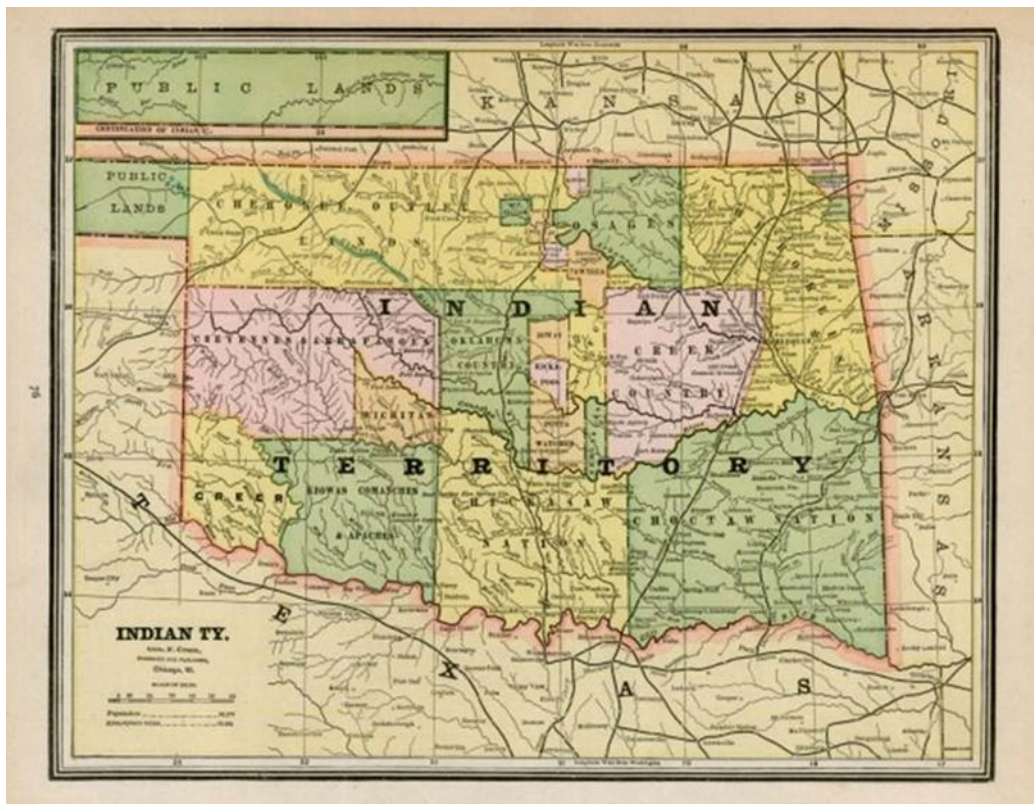


American Indians in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA HISTORY CENTER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Nawa! That means hello in the Pawnee language. In Oklahoma, thirty-eight federally recognized **tribes** represent about 8 percent of the population. Most of these tribes came from places around the country but were removed from their homelands to Oklahoma in the nineteenth century. Their diverse **cultures** and rich **heritage** make Oklahoma (which combines the Choctaw words “*okla*” and “*huma*,” or “territory of the red people”) a special state. American Indians have impacted Oklahoma’s growth from territory to statehood and have made it into the great state it is today.

This site allows you to learn more about American Indian tribes in Oklahoma. First, read the background pages for more information, then go through the biographies of influential American Indians to learn more about him or her. The activities section has coloring sheets, games, and other activities, which can be done as part of a group or on your own.



Map of Indian Territory prior to 1889
(TTMAP.0035, Oklahoma Historical Society Map Collection, OHS).

Before European Contact

The first people living on the prairie were the **ancestors** of various American Indian tribes. Through archaeology, we know that the plains have been inhabited for centuries by groups of people who lived in semi-permanent villages and depended on planting crops and hunting animals. Many of the ideas we associate with American Indians, such as the **travois**, various ceremonies, tipis, earth lodges, and controlled bison hunts, come from these first prairie people. Through archaeology, we know that the ancestors of the Wichita and Caddo tribes have been in present-day Oklahoma for more than two thousand years. Their impact can still be seen today in Oklahoma. For more information on what archaeologists do and how they uncover clues about the past, see the *Archaeology in Oklahoma* e-exhibit.



Lithograph of a sedentary plains tribe (image courtesy Smithsonian Institution National Anthropological Archives).

Life on the Plains

The first known tribe in the plains area was the Pawnee, who lived in **earth lodges** part of the year and in **tipis** during the summer and fall hunts. The earth lodge tribes such as the Arikara, Hidatsa, Mandan, Omaha, Oto, Ponca, Pawnee, Wichita, and Winnebago, among others, planted crops such as corn, squash, and beans and stored their food in underground **storage caches**. Their **semi-subterranean** lodges held from ten to forty people. Several lodges were grouped together to form villages. Smaller groups went out with tipis for the bison hunts, returning to the earth-lodge for winter.

Other tribes associated with the Great Plains were the Lakota-Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, Kiowa, and Crow, among others. They lived mainly in tipis, traveling through the Plains region. These groups were the great hunters of the Plains, following the bison or “buffalo” and **foraging** for berries, roots, and other plants. They lived in extended family relationship groups, traveling to familiar places and encampments. Often, they traded and warred with the earth lodge dwellers.

When the prairie was changed by the coming of Euro-Americans, the culture of the prairie tribes was dramatically affected. The prairie tribes were moved off their traditional homelands onto **reservations** by the United States government to make way for the new settlers. They were forced into a new lifestyle that was very different from their own.



Tipi with Battle Pictures

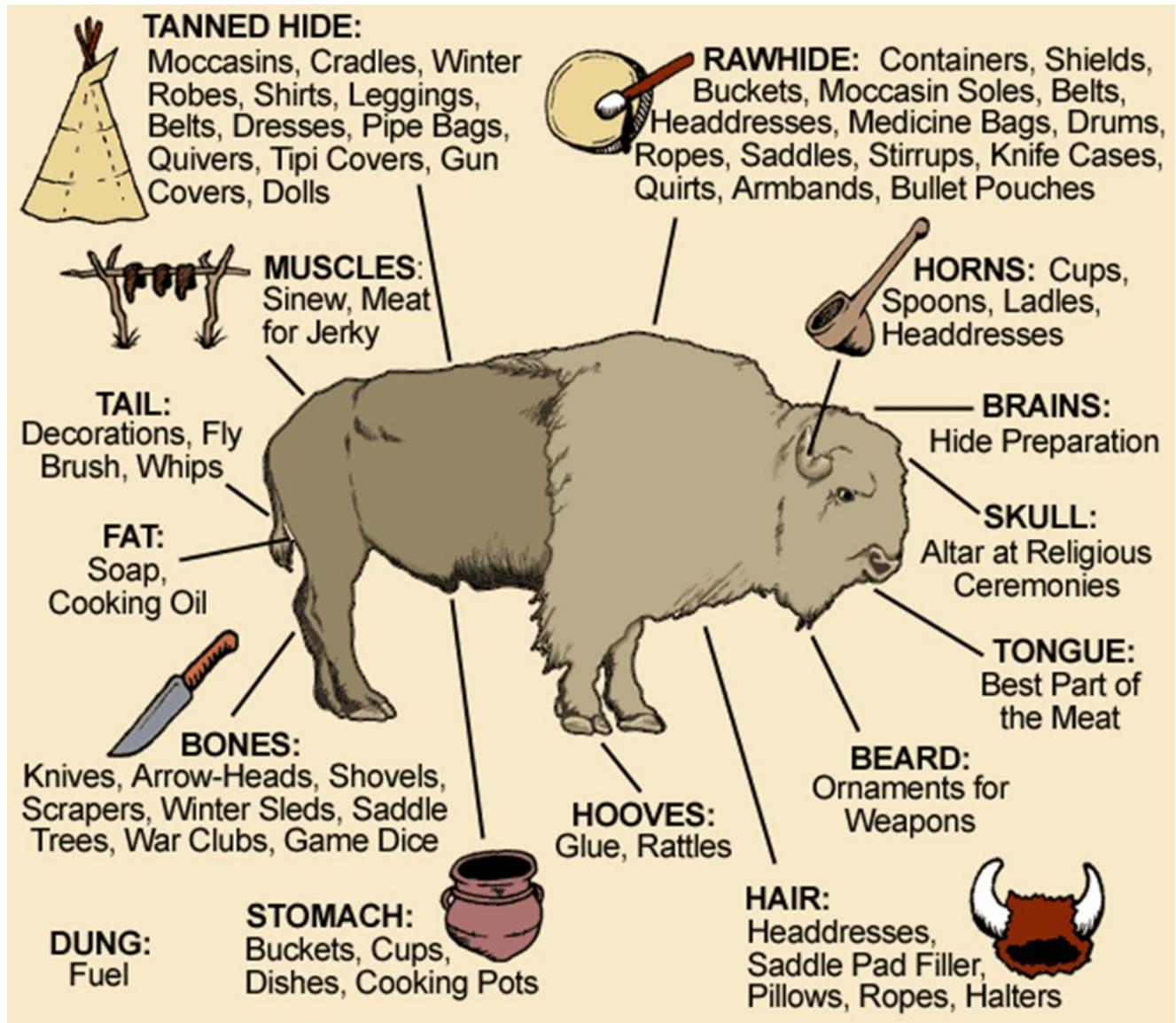
This tipi was traced all the way back to 1833 when Little Bluff became the sole leader of the Kiowa people.

We Are Who We Were

American Indian exhibit at the Oklahoma History Center



Plains Indians who had semi-permanent homes planted gardens and maintained small farms. Here is a picture of maize, or corn, an important crop to tribes (image courtesy of Wikimedia).



Plains Indians honored the buffalo by using every part of the animal and not letting anything go to waste (image courtesy of the South Dakota Historical Society).

Indian Removal and the Trail of Tears

From the 1830s to the 1840s, the Five Tribes were forcibly removed from their homelands and made to travel to Indian Territory. The Five Tribes include the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole. Each one of these tribes had their own “**Trail of Tears**” as they were marched to Indian Territory by the US government. Without enough supplies, many American Indians died on these trips, which were often more than a thousand miles long. Many died from disease and exposure to harsh weather on the trip as well. Once in Indian Territory the US government left them without enough supplies, leading to more deaths. This information is important to know because it changed American Indian culture and their relationship with the United States government forever.



The Trail of Tears by Robert Ottakar Lindneux (image of courtesy Woolaroc Museum & Wildlife Preserve).

Indian Removal Act of 1830

Following the purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France, there was a growing movement to remove American Indians residing in United States territory east of the Mississippi River to lands west of the Mississippi River. Many Americans held the flawed belief that American Indians did not make good use of the land they possessed, and American settlers could better develop it. This belief led to conflict and eventually invasion of Indian lands by white settlers, which was multiplied by the discovery of gold in Indian lands in Georgia.

Many presidents tried to convince American Indian nations to move West in exchange for land or money. President Thomas Jefferson promised to remove all American Indian residents from Georgia in 1802 but was not able to go through with his plan. President James Madison renewed some talks with tribes in Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama following the War of 1812 but did not follow through. In the 1820s, it was President James Monroe who first put forth the idea to exchange land in the East for land west of the Mississippi River, but his negotiations were as equally unsuccessful as his predecessors.

The issue came to a head under the presidency of Andrew Jackson. President Jackson was strongly anti-American Indian rights and refused to recognize the **sovereignty** of Indian nations. He felt that it was wrong to allow American Indians to possess and control lands, which he felt belonged to American citizens. He also did not like the idea of independent nations existing within the borders of the United States. Indian removal as an official policy was first put forth in President Jackson’s second annual address to Congress in 1830. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 was written that same year, passed, and signed by President Jackson in December.

The Trail of Tears

The Indian Removal Act called for the relocation of all American Indian tribes residing east of the Mississippi to lands in the West. The tribes were forced to negotiate and sign relocation **treaties** and could voluntarily move west or be forced to move at gunpoint by the US Army. The Removal Act created conflict among the Five Tribes. Some members felt that they should accept the inevitable move West, while most wanted to fight removal as long as they could.

An example of this is the Cherokee Nation. Major John Ridge, one of the chiefs of the Cherokee Nation, and some others close to him, felt that fighting was pointless. Chief John Ross and many others thought the battle should be taken to the Supreme Court of the United States. The Cherokee Nation won two court cases in the Supreme Court, *Worcester v. Georgia* and *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, where the court upheld the Cherokee Nation's sovereignty. They believed this would help them fight removal.

Major Ridge and his supporters, however, signed the Treaty of New Echota with President Jackson in 1835. They exchanged all Cherokee lands east of the Mississippi for land in Indian Territory, \$5 million and one year's worth of rations and supplies. The president ignored the Supreme Court and upheld the Treaty of New Echota. In 1838, President Martin Van Buren sent troops to forcibly remove the remaining Cherokees. The Cherokee citizens were held in disease-ridden camps and forced to march with little food, water, or good winter clothes. One in four Cherokee died on the march west known today as the Cherokee Trail of Tears.

The stories of the other four tribes are very similar, and by 1838 the United States Army ensured most of the tribes had moved to Indian Territory. One exception was the Seminole Nation. The Seminole armed themselves and fought the Second Seminole War from 1838-1842. Some of the tribe was captured and forced to move to Indian Territory, while others continued to fight until the US Army gave up. Today, the Seminole Tribe of Florida refers to themselves as the "Unconquered People," for this reason.



This map shows the route each of the Five Tribes took from their homelands to Indian Territory. These routes are known as the Trail of Tears because of the high number of deaths on the marches (map courtesy of *National Geographic*).

History of the Five Tribes

As Oklahoma's largest tribe of American Indians, the **Cherokee** Nation, with approximately 240,000 people, was one of the tribes removed to Oklahoma in the 1830s by the United States government. The Cherokee homeland is in the southeastern portion of the country. Before contact with the Europeans, Cherokee people owned little land and were a hunter-gatherer warfare tribe. Their families, unlike Anglo-American families, were **matrilineal**, which means tracing the mother's family rather than the father's family. Once removed to Oklahoma, the Cherokee began to adapt and expand their nation. This includes becoming the first tribe to have a written syllabary for their language. They also created higher education institutions for both men and women. During allotment by the Dawes Commission they lost most of their land and wealth, leading to impoverished tribal members. After World War II many Cherokee returned to their homelands from combat overseas and began to revitalize and rebuild their nation. Today the Cherokee Nation continues to grow and expand their economic and cultural independence led by their headquarters in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.



(Seal courtesy of the Cherokee Nation.)



(Seal courtesy of the Chickasaw Nation.)

The **Chickasaw** people's original homelands are in Kentucky and Tennessee. They were forced to sell their land with the Treaty of Washington in 1834 and moved to present-day Oklahoma. They, unlike the other Five Tribes, oversaw much of their own removal and did not experience the hardships of other tribes. The Chickasaw tried to buy land from the Choctaw but were denied until the United States government forced the Choctaw to sell. In 1837 the Choctaw and the Chickasaw signed the Treaty of Doaksville, allowing the Chickasaw to lease part of the Choctaw Nation for \$530,000 and representation on the Choctaw Council. Once in Oklahoma, the Chickasaw struggled to maintain their cultural heritage and not merge with the Choctaw. During the Civil War the Chickasaw Nation declared its independence and formally joined the Confederate States of America. After the war the Chickasaw Nation began to focus on opening schools and expanding their economic reach. In 1987 Governor Bill Anoatubby was elected and led the Chickasaw Nation in a push for economic and political stability. The Chickasaw Nation's headquarters is located in Ada, Oklahoma.

The **Choctaw** Nation's homelands were in Mississippi before they moved to the southeast part of Oklahoma with the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek 1830. More than 5,000 Choctaw were removed to present-day Oklahoma and began to rebuild their community and government. They began to build schools of higher learning, such as the Wheelock Academy. Later, railroad companies began pushing for the opening of their lands, at least a part of it, so they could build a track through it. During the Civil War, the Choctaw Nation was one of the tribes that allied with the Confederacy and had to sign over parts of their land and government as punishment after the war. Today the Choctaw Nation is headquartered in Durant, Oklahoma, and they continue to revitalize and rebuild their culture and language.



(Seal courtesy of the Choctaw Nation.)



(Seal courtesy of the Muscogee Nation.)

The homelands of the **Muscogee (Creek)** people are located in and around Alabama as evidenced in the mounds built during the influence of the Mississippian culture. With the contact of European explorers, such as Hernando De Soto, disease killed thousands. During the Civil War, the Muscogee (Creek) were an ally of the Confederacy. Currently the capital of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation is located in Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

The **Seminole** people at one time were a part of the Creek Nation in Georgia and Alabama but separated and moved to northern Florida. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, most but not all of the tribe was forcibly removed from their homelands and relocated to present-day Oklahoma. They were placed within the Creek Nation initially, but later signed a treaty establishing themselves as the Seminole Nation. During the Civil War most Seminole sided with the Confederacy. Today the headquarters is in Seminole, Oklahoma, and the tribe continues to revitalize their culture and the Muskogean language.



(Seal courtesy of the Seminole Nation.)

The 38 Tribes of Oklahoma

Absentee Shawnee Tribe



For more information visit
www.astribe.com/astribe.

The original homeland of the Absentee Shawnee was the northeast United States, including the areas of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania. The tribe is known as “Absentee” because they did not join the rest of the Shawnee tribe at the Kansas reservation between 1825 and 1840. The tribe settled in Oklahoma by 1840 in the Shawnee area (central Oklahoma).

The Absentee Shawnee Tribe speaks English, as well as their native Algonquian dialect. The Absentee Shawnee lived in wigwams, which are rounded huts or tents made of hide, bark, or woven mats. The women were typically responsible for tending the farms, as the men hunted and fished.

The seal features a profile of the great Shawnee leader Tecumseh wearing a red headdress against a bright yellow field. Two stylized black-and-white eagle feathers extending beyond the edges of the seal cross behind him diagonally. Circling the center image on the red field are the tribe’s Shawnee and English names in black.

Alabama Quassarte Tribal Town

The original homeland of the Alabama Quassarte Tribal Town is in Alabama. These two tribes, the Alabama and Quassarte, merged and became members of the Creek Confederacy in 1763. The Alabama Quassarte came to Oklahoma during Indian removal in 1835 and settled near Wetumka in the east-central part of the state. The language of the Alabama Quassarte is part of the Muskogean language family.



For more information visit
www.alabama-quassarte.org.

Apache Tribe of Oklahoma



For more information visit www.apachetribe.org.

The Apache Tribe of Oklahoma originated in the Great Plains area of the United States: Arizona, Colorado, Texas, and Mexico. They settled in Oklahoma around Anadarko (the southwest part of the state) in 1800. The Apache Tribe of Oklahoma has its own unique Apache language.

Caddo Nation of Oklahoma



For more information, visit
www.mycaddonation.com.

The Caddo Nation has occupied the areas of present-day Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas, and Oklahoma for thousands of years. The Caddo sold much of their homelands in 1835 and began migrating to the central part of Indian Territory.

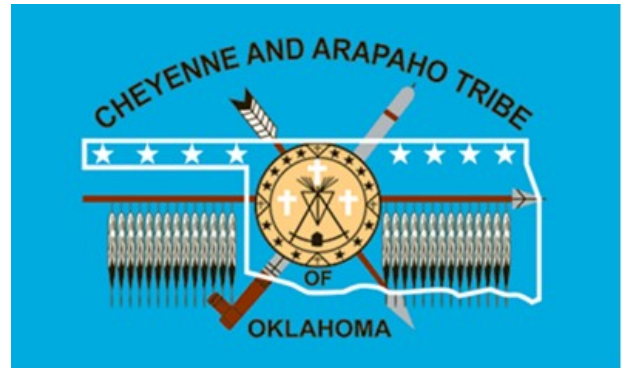
The Caddo language is a dialect of the Southern Caddoan language. Their language is endangered, as only a few elderly speakers remain. The Caddo were known for trading and for their elaborate pottery, and they were the earliest American Indians known as mound builders. They built mounds to bury their dead, celebrate lives, and to honor offerings to spirits.

The Caddo Nation seal depicts a performance of the “Turkey Dance.” The dance is performed by the women and children of the tribe who also sing, while the men sing and drum. The design at the bottom of the seal symbolizes the door to the world beyond, as well as the four stages of life and the four cardinal directions.

Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma

The Cheyenne have origins in the Rocky Mountains and the Great Plains; the Arapaho originated in northern Minnesota. The Cheyenne migrated south to present-day Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado, joining forces with the Arapaho in the early 1800s. The tribes banded together in order to have more lands and a stronger force in the plains area in approximately 1811.

Around 1869, the Cheyenne and Arapaho arrived in Indian Territory near El Reno. The headquarters for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes is in Concho, Oklahoma.



For more information, visit cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov.

Citizen Potawatomi Nation



For more information, visit
www.potawatomi.org.

The original homeland of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation was in present-day Indiana. From there they were forced to Kansas on the Trail of Death. The Citizen Potawatomi moved into the area south of Shawnee, Oklahoma, starting in 1861. The Citizen Potawatomi Nation lived in wigwams, and were known as traders and warriors.

The Potawatomi language is a part of the Algonquian languages, and is in a stage of resurgence. The Citizen Potawatomi Nation has taken many efforts to educate the new generations with their native language.

Comanche Nation



For more information, visit www.comanchenation.com and www.comanchelanguage.org.

The Comanche Nation originated in the Southern Plains, spread out in present-day Colorado, Wyoming, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas. The Comanche have been in various parts of Oklahoma since the late eighteenth century. Their headquarters is in Lawton, Oklahoma.

The flag's color scheme is the blue, red, and gold—the ceremonial colors of men's blankets in Peyote Meetings and the Gourd Dance. The warrior on the horse and the phrase "Lords of the Southern Plains" are included because the Comanche were the protectors of the Southern Plains. A snake is symbolized with the curved line through the middle of the seal.

The Comanche have their own language, which has seen a revival within the tribe since 1994.

Delaware Nation

The Delaware Nation originated in the northeastern United States, in the present-day states of New Jersey, New York, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. The Delaware Nation came to Oklahoma Territory in 1868, and settled in southwest Oklahoma near Anadarko.

The language of the Delaware is Lenape, part of the Eastern Algonquian language. The Delaware symbol is the *Tulamakum* and the *TaaKox*, meaning Grandfathers and Turtle in Lenape. The turtle is the Unami clan's animal symbol; the clan from which this group of Delaware descended. The turtle's colors represent trade blankets that are used in ceremonies.



For more information, visit www.delawarenation.com.

Delaware Tribe of Indians



For more information, visit <http://delawaretribe.org>.

The Delaware Tribe of Indians, or the Eastern Delaware, originated in the northeastern United States. The Delaware were known as grandfathers to other tribes, as they were the origin of other tribes who moved as the tribe grew. They migrated west after they lost their lands to the Walking Treaty in 1737. The Delaware Tribe was forced to settle in Indian Territory in 1867. Their headquarters is in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

There are two bands of Delaware in Oklahoma because they split from each other in the early 1800s.

The seal of the Delaware features Mesingw, the guardian spirit of game animals. The word Lenape is also on the seal, which means "The People."

Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma



For more information, visit www.estoo-nsn.gov.

The original homeland of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma was in the middle of the Ohio Valley, in the areas of present-day Kentucky and West Virginia. The Eastern Shawnee Tribe came to Oklahoma in the early nineteenth century under Indian Removal, settling near present-day Wyandotte.

The Eastern Shawnee Tribe was historically a nomadic tribe, staying in bark-covered longhouses in the summer and in small hunting camps in the fall. The Shawnee have their own native language, Shawnee. The women were the planters and gatherers, and the men were the hunters and warriors. The Eastern Shawnee Tribe was known for their aggressiveness in battle, and the most famous Eastern Shawnee warrior is Tecumseh.

Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma

The members of the Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma are descendants of the Chiricahua Apache tribe. Their original homeland included areas in southwest New Mexico, southeast Arizona, and northern Mexico. They came to Oklahoma in 1894 after being released as US prisoners of war. The Fort Sill Apache stayed in Oklahoma after their release because they anticipated a return to their homeland. The Fort Sill Apache headquarters is in Apache, Oklahoma, in the southwest part of the state.



For more information, visit www.foortsillapache-nsn.gov.

Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma



For more information, visit www.bahkhoje.com.

The Iowa (Ioway) Tribe of Oklahoma originated in the areas of present-day Wisconsin and Iowa. The Iowa call themselves *Bah Kbo-je*, which means “People of the Gray Snow.” They began coming to Oklahoma in 1878, and their headquarters is based in Perkins, Oklahoma.

The central part of the Iowa seal is a circle, which represents the Circle of Life. The focal point of the seal is an Iowa warrior bonnet with eagle feathers. Eagles are sacred to the Iowa; they believe the bird is a connection between God and their tribe. There is also a sacred pipe and a plow in the circle. The pipe represents the pipes each clan used in sacred rituals. The plow is a pivotal part of the Iowa culture, as they were successful farmers until Indian removal. The fringe signifies the buffalo hide, and the eagle feathers at the bottom symbolize the four seasons.

Kaw Nation of Oklahoma



For more information, visit
www.kawnation.com.

The Kaw Nation of Oklahoma originated in present-day Kansas, and came to Kay County, Oklahoma, in 1872. The Kaw lived in bark-covered lodges and spoke Kanza, a Dhegiha language. The Kaw Nation was known for its warriors who tried to protect their original homelands until the Treaty of 1825. Their headquarters is located in Kaw City, Oklahoma.

According to the Kaw Nation website, “The Kaw Nation Seal symbolizes the relationship between the Southwind and the Kaw (Kanza) people. The Kaws lived long with the Southwind and the Southwind with them. The south wind travels far and fast and knows the movements of the buffalo and other foragers. The wind conducts reconnaissance on enemies and carries messages to and from allies. The wind knows where nuts, fruits, and grains grow and the hiding place of squirrel, rabbit, and turkey. The tribe was of the Siouan linguistic stock and Kansa, or Kansas, is a Siouan word which means Wind People or People of the Southwind.”

Kialegee Tribal Town

The Kialegee Tribal Town has its origin with the Creek Confederacy in what is now Alabama and Georgia. The Kialegee Tribal Town settled near Henryetta, Oklahoma, in 1836. They moved close to Wetumka in 1899.

The Kialegee Tribal Town has a matrilineal culture. The native tribal language is Muscogee, and they were known as mound builders.

The blue flag of the Tribal Town is made largely of the Kialegee Tribal Town Seal. The seal includes a set of stickball sticks in the center, an important game in Muscogee (Creek) culture. The cross symbolizes the Christian faith of many modern Muscogee (Creek) people. The eagle is shown as an important symbol of strength for both the Muscogee (Creek) and United States. A mound and ceremonial lodge are at the base of the seal.



For more information, visit
www.kialegeetribal.webstarts.com.

Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma



For more information, visit
www.kickapootribeofoklahoma.com.

The Kickapoo Tribe originated in the Great Lakes region of the United States in present-day Michigan and Ohio. The Kickapoo came into Oklahoma in 1873.

The Kickapoo language is a Central Algonquian language. The Kickapoo lived in villages with bark-covered homes.

The seal of the Kickapoo Tribe has a tribal meeting house on an oval shield with a Kickapoo arrow behind it. From the shield hang three white-and-black eagle feathers symbolizing the three subgroups of the Kickapoo people.

Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma

The native lands of the Kiowa Tribe were in northwest Canada. The Kiowa Tribe settled into the southwest part of Oklahoma in the early nineteenth century.

The seal reminds the tribe of the traditions of six warrior societies. At the center is a warrior riding an Appaloosa of the tribes' northern homelands, surrounded by a wreath of ten white-and-black eagle feathers. The ten feathers recall the "Ten Bravest" warrior society.

The warrior shield shows the sacred Rainy Mountain, where the "Great Tribal Journey" ends. The red Principal Dog sash hangs as a symbol of leadership and protection. A lightning bolt painted on the horse's front leg represents the "voice of thunder in the spring," a symbol of the Oh-ho-ma Society. The blue sky and blood-red hand on the horse's hindquarter are part of the Koitsenko warrior tradition.



For more information, visit
www.kiowatribe.org.

Miami Tribe of Oklahoma



For more information, visit
www.miamination.com.

The Miami (My-am-uh) Tribe of Oklahoma is originally from the Great Lakes region of the United States. In 1846 they were forced to leave their homelands, and were removed to Kansas. The Treaty of 1867 called for their removal to Indian Territory, and they settled in what is now the northeastern part of Oklahoma.

Their headquarters is located in Miami, Oklahoma. The native language of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma is Myaamia, which is an Algonquian language.

Modoc Nation



For more information, visit www.modocnation.com.

The Modoc Nation originated in present-day California and Oregon. They were forcibly removed to the northeastern part of Oklahoma in 1874 as punishment for the Modoc War of 1872–1873. The language of the Modoc Tribe is Klamath-Modoc, and their headquarters is in Miami, Oklahoma.

The seal of the Modoc Tribe is bordered in white. Ten feathers hang from the seal. The central design of the seal is an eagle flying over a dark blue ocean with a coastline appearing at the bottom of the seal. The coastline symbolizes the original homeland of the Modoc people in southern Oregon and northern California.

Osage Nation

The original lands of the Osage Nation were in the areas of Arkansas, Missouri, and Kansas. The Osage Nation settled into the north/northeastern part of Oklahoma in 1865. Dhegiha Siouan is the language of the Osage, as well as the Kaw and Ponca. Their language is similar to the Otoe-Missouria and Iowa tribes.

The meaning of the Osage Nation Seal: The golden circle represents tribal prosperity and the arrowhead symbolizes the hunt. The pipe represents peace and friendship, and the eagle feather represents tribal authority.

One of the many notable Osage, Maria Tallchief, was known for her breakthrough as not just the first prima ballerina of the New York Ballet, but also the first American Indian in ballet.



For more information, visit www.osagenation-nsn.gov.

Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Indians



For more information, visit www.omtribe.org.

The Otoe-Missouria Tribe originated in the Great Lakes area of the United States. They migrated southwest into the present states of Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas. The Otoe-Missouria came to Oklahoma in 1881 and settled what is now known as Red Rock.

The Otoe-Missouria language is of Siouan origin and is the same language spoken by the Iowa Tribe. They were known as hunter-gatherers and hunted buffalo. The Otoe-Missouria was the first tribe to sign a treaty with Lewis and Clark on their expedition for President Jefferson.

The seal of the Otoe-Missouria has the symbols of the seven remaining clans: buffalo, beaver, eagle, bear, pigeon, owl, and elk.

Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma



For more information, visit www.ottawatribe.org.

The Ottawa Tribe originated in the Great Lakes area of North America; Ontario, Canada; and the state of Michigan. The Ottawa Tribe settled in the northeastern area of Indian Territory in 1867. The Ottawa were known as traders, particularly with the French. They wore buckskin clothing and lived in wikis (wigwams). The Ottawa language is from the Anishinaabemowin language family. Their headquarters is located in Miami, Oklahoma.

The tribal seal includes an evergreen tree, which symbolizes the Tree of Life, and grass knoll recalling the tribe's origins in the Northeast Woodlands, while the canoe represents their trading skills. The war club was used by the Ottawa in combat and hunting, and the otter refers to the clan that most Ottawa descended from. The water is a symbol of the source of all life.

One of the most distinguished Ottawa chiefs was Pontiac. He was responsible for rebelling against the British in 1762–1763.

Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma

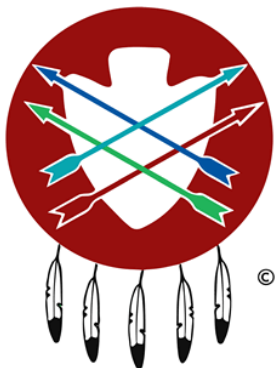
The Pawnee Nation originated along Nebraska's Platte River and in Northern Kansas. They came to north-central Oklahoma in 1875.

The Pawnee Nation flag has a blue background, with red and white accent colors. The small American flag represents the Pawnee Nation's loyalty to America, as the colors of the flag symbolize America. The wolf represents what the Plains Indians called the courageous Pawnee: wolves. Under the wolf are the symbols of war and peace: the peace pipe crossed with a tomahawk. The arrowheads across the bottom of the Pawnee flag symbolize the wars they have fought in while serving the United States military, beginning with the Indian Wars and the service of the Pawnee Battalion in the US Army in 1865.



For more information visit www.pawneenation.org.

Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma



For more information, visit www.peoriatribe.com.

The Peoria Tribe is a confederation of the Kaskaskisa, Piankeshaw, Peoria, and Wea Indians. They banded together to form the Peoria Tribe in 1854. The Peoria originally lived in the Midwestern United States: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Missouri.

The language of the Peoria was the Miami-Illinois, and their headquarters is located in Miami, Oklahoma.

Their tribal emblem includes four arrows, each representing one of the original tribes: turquoise symbolizes the Piankashaw and their native soil; red represents the Peoria and the sun; blue stands for the Wea and the waters; and green represents the Kaskaskia, grass, and trees.

Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma



For more information, visit
www.ponca.com.

The Ponca Tribe was once part of the Omaha Tribe. Their original homeland was in present-day Nebraska and South Dakota. The Ponca were brought to Oklahoma in 1877 to the Kay County area (Ponca City).

Standing Bear was an important leader of the Ponca Tribe. After they had been removed to Indian Territory, Standing Bear's son passed away. Standing Bear returned to Nebraska to bury him and was arrested for leaving the reservation and put on trial. After the trial, it was decided that Standing Bear was being held illegally, and all American Indians were to be treated like any other person under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution.

Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma

The Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma originated in the Arkansas/Mississippi River Valley, near the Mississippi River. The Quapaw settled into the northeastern corner of Oklahoma Territory in 1834. The Quapaw language is Dhegiha Siouan, and is related to the Osage language.

There are many important symbols on the flag of the Quapaw. In the early 1700s, they depended on the buffalo for many things, most notably for food, tanning, and painting buffalo robes to trade. The four eagle feathers represent the cardinal points of the land, and the number four is sacred to the tribe. The Quapaw hold the eagle in high esteem because it flies the highest; therefore they believe it talks with God, and the eagle feather is included in many Quapaw ceremonies. The red and blue background represents the blanket used in meetings of the American Indian church. The blanket was made from an old trade cloth and was used as leggings, breechcloths, and skirts. The word O-GAH-PAH means Quapaw, with the translation being "down stream people."



For more information, visit
www.quapawtribe.com.

Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma



For more information visit
www.sacandfoxnation-nsn.gov.

The Sac (Sauk) and Fox Nation of Oklahoma began in the western Great Lakes area of the United States. They came to central Oklahoma, near Stroud, in the 1870s. The Sac and Fox have their own language, the Sauk language.

The most well-known member of the Sac and Fox Nation of Oklahoma is Jim Thorpe, considered the greatest athlete of the twentieth century. His accomplishments in the Olympics are recognized by the Olympic rings above the black hawk on the Sac and Fox seal. The black hawk with a shield is representative of the Sac and Fox leader Black Sparrow Hawk, who fought for his people.

Seneca-Cayuga Nation



The Seneca-Cayuga Nation of Oklahoma has their roots in the area now known as New York, then moved to Ohio before coming to Indian Territory. They were removed and brought to Delaware County, Oklahoma, in 1831. Their current headquarters is in Miami, Oklahoma. The language of the Seneca-Cayuga Tribe is Cayuga.

For more information visit www.sctribe.com.

Shawnee Tribe

The original lands of the Shawnee were in the Ohio River Valley and the states of Pennsylvania, Virginia, Georgia, and Alabama. The Shawnee were relocated into the northeastern part of Indian Territory in 1869. Their headquarters is in Miami, Oklahoma.

The Shawnee language is an Algonquian dialect. The Shawnee Tribe was known for their silverwork and basket weaving; the weaves were so tight the baskets could hold water.



For more information visit www.shawnee-tribe.org.

Thlopthlocco Tribal Town



The Thlopthlocco Tribal Town originated as part of the Creek Confederacy in the present-day states of Alabama and Georgia. They were removed to Indian Territory on the Trail of Tears and settled along the North Canadian River in the 1830s. The Thlopthlocco Tribal Town's headquarters is in Okemah, Oklahoma.

For more information visit www.tttown.org.

Tonkawa Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma



For more information, visit
www.tonkawatribe.com.

The Tonkawa Tribe originated in the area of south central Texas. The Tonkawa relocated to northern Oklahoma Territory in 1859.

The Tonkawa language is Tonkawan linguistics. The Tonkawas were a nomadic people and lived in tipis or brush shelters. The Tonkawas were well known warriors.

The meaning of the seal:

The red earth and red hill on the horizon represents “La Tortuga” (the turtle), the sacred place of their birth, the genesis of the Tonkawa people. The sacred pipe represents Tonkawa connectedness to the Creator and the deliverance of life from Mother Earth. The sacred water bird image represents the rising up of the spirit and flesh of the Tonkawa to assume its place among God’s creation. The red and blue bi-coloration portrays the counter-forces of a worldly existence. The crimson crescent represents the sacred altar place of their church, the foundation of traditional religion. The rising sun represents the Tonkawa people, a renaissance of their tribe within a contemporary society. The twelve stars represent the original twelve clans of the Tonkawa Tribe. The circular shape represents the sacred and eternal circle of life, at the center of which stands the Almighty God as the beginning and the ending.

United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma

The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma have their origins in Arkansas since the late eighteenth century. They moved into what is now Oklahoma in 1828 along the Arkansas, Canadian, and Grand Rivers. The United Keetoowah Band is headquartered in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

The language of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees is Keetoowah Cherokee.



For more information, visit
www.keetoowahcherokee.org.

Wichita and Affiliated Tribes



For more information, visit
www.wichitatribe.com.

The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes consist of the Wichita, Waco, Keechi, and Tawakoni Tribes. Their original homeland was in the Central and Southern Plains of the United States: Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes have always been in and around Oklahoma; they were forced out by the Confederates in 1863 during the Civil War. Only a few were able to return to Indian Territory in 1867.

The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes have their own language, Wichita, which is a Caddoan language. They originally lived in grass houses in the spring, summer, and fall, going on buffalo hunts and living in tipis during the winter.

Wyandotte Nation

The original homeland of the Wyandotte Nation was in the Great Lakes Region of the United States. They relocated to Indian Territory in 1857 and are currently headquartered in Wyandotte, Oklahoma. The native language of the Wyandotte Nation is Northern Iroquoian.

The symbol of the Wyandotte is the turtle, and the tribe's origin stories teach that the world was created on a turtle. The willow branches above the turtle signify the influence of Christianity, while the war club and peace pipe represent war and peace. In the center of the turtle is the council fire of the Council of Nations. The twelve points of the shield signify the twelve clans of the Wyandotte.



For more information, visit
www.wyandotte-nation.org.

American Indians and the Civil War

Although Oklahoma was not yet a state when the Civil War broke out in 1861, those living in Indian Territory were still greatly affected by it. Despite the fact that both the United States government and the Confederate states did not consider American Indians citizens at the time, tribes were still pressured to choose a side. This put the recently removed tribes in a very difficult situation. Some American Indians, like Cherokee leader Stand Watie, wanted to support the Confederacy and fight against those responsible for his tribe's removal and their mistreatment. Still, some wanted to remain loyal to the United States. If tribes chose to support the Confederacy, the US government would surely cut off their monthly reservation rations, the food and resources many tribes dearly relied on for survival. Because the Confederate Army got to Indian Territory first, most tribes were left without a choice; they must support the Confederacy or face destruction and possibly death.



Map of Civil War battles near Indian Territory (map courtesy of the Sons of Confederate Veterans-Florida Division).

Civil War Consequences in Indian Territory

The Civil War was an extremely difficult time for American Indians in Indian Territory. Many had finally started to settle into life in their new homes and end the conflict between tribal factions, or small organized and likeminded groups, before the war broke out. The pressure of choosing between the Union and Confederacy caused the factions within tribes to reemerge. In the end, a large majority of each of the Five Tribes sided with the South. During the Civil War the Chickasaw Nation declared its independence and formally joined the Confederate States of America. The Creek, Seminole, Choctaw, and the Watie faction of the Cherokee also aligned with the Confederate states. When the Civil War came to an end in 1865, the Five Tribes had to deal with the loss of life, punishment from the US government, and fighting amongst tribe members. For example, it is estimated that by 1863 one-third of Cherokee married women had become widows, and one-fourth of the children were orphans. The Choctaw Nation was punished most severely by the US government, who forced the tribe to sign over parts of their land and sovereignty. The Cherokee Nation suffered the most from internal conflicts as the two factions, the Watie faction and the Ross faction, fought bitterly even after the war's end.

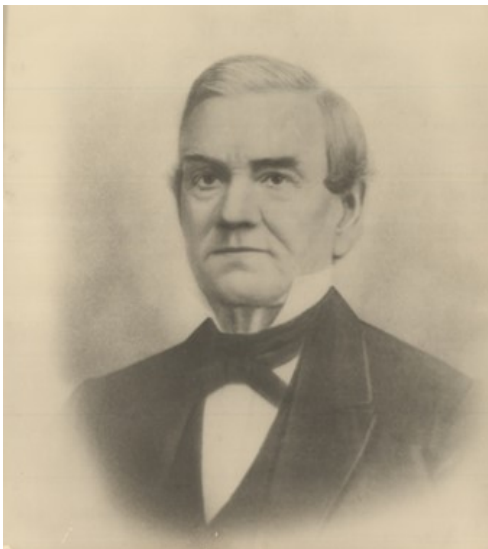
Honey Springs

The Engagement at Honey Springs (called “The Affair at Elk Creek” by the Confederates) was the largest of more than 107 documented hostile encounters in the Indian Territory. The engagement took place on a rainy Friday, July 17, 1863, between the 1st Division, Army of the Frontier, commanded by Maj. Gen. James G. Blunt and the Confederate Indian Brigade led by Brig. Gen. Douglas H. Cooper. Cherokee and Creek regiments fought on both sides. There were approximately 9,000 men involved, including other American Indians, veteran Texas regiments, and the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers (the first African American regiment in the Union army).

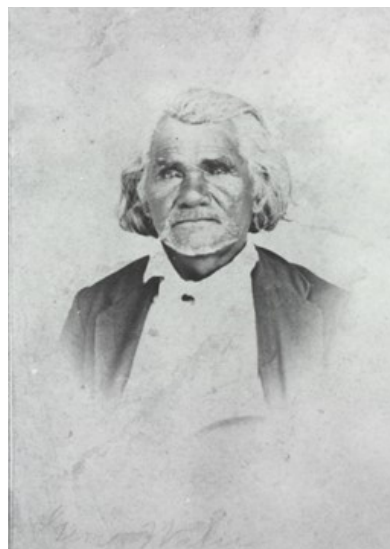
The Cherokee Divide—Stand Watie versus John Ross

Long before the Civil War, Stand Watie, his brother Elias Boudinot, and their uncle Major Ridge, had been at odds with Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation John Ross. Watie and his family lead a faction of the Cherokees and supported removal to Indian Territory early on because they believed it was inevitable. By 1861, the outbreak of war caused these two factions to go against each other once again. John Ross avoided forming a Cherokee-Confederate alliance. However, Stand Watie accepted a commission as a colonel in the Confederate States Army and raised the First Regiment of Cherokee Mounted Volunteers. Fearing a coup, Ross reluctantly agreed to a Cherokee-Confederate alliance. However, when the opportunity arose, Ross fled to Federal-controlled territory. In August 1862, Watie replaced Ross as principal chief.

Stand Watie was a great leader in the Confederacy despite its lack of resources and manpower in Indian Territory. He is credited with the capture of the Union steamboat J. R. Williams and the Confederate victory at the Second Battle of Cabin Creek. In May 1864 Watie was promoted to brigadier general, and in February 1865 he became the commander of the Indian Division. Watie surrendered on June 23, 1865, as the last Confederate general standing.



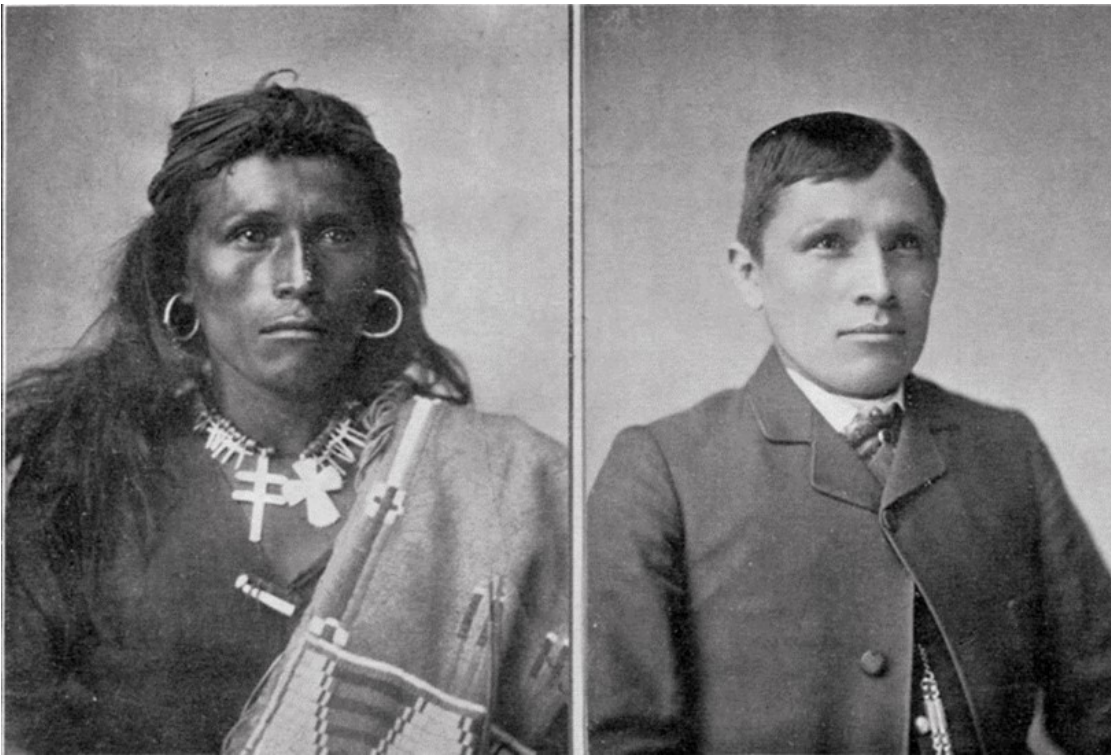
John Ross (7489, Lena Robitaille Collection, OHS).



Stand Watie (7358, Oklahoma Historical Society Photograph Collection, OHS).

Assimilation and Conflict

After the Civil War, the United States government set out to solve what they called the “Indian problem.” The “Indian problem” was the dissatisfaction many white Americans felt with American Indians and their life on reservations. Because many tribes were forced to live on reservations that they could not leave, the US government had promised rations of food and supplies. This way, tribe members did not have a reason to leave the reservation to hunt. After a while, though, whites became impatient and no longer wanted to give American Indians their promised rations. Many had hoped that Indians would become assimilated, which means to take in or absorb someone else’s culture. The US government wanted American Indians to act and dress like whites and to have labor jobs like farming instead of living in tribal communities like they had for generations. The push for whites to assimilate American Indians led to the creation of boarding schools, conflicts and Indian Wars, and, eventually, the dividing of tribal lands into allotments.



Before and after photos of Tom Torlino (Navajo).

The photo on the left was taken in 1882 at his arrival to Carlisle Indian School. The photo on the right is him three years later (image courtesy of the PBS film *Indian Country Diaries*).

Boarding Schools

Indian boarding schools were special schools funded by the government or tribes themselves for American Indian children only. These schools were created to take Indian children away from their parents and tribal communities and to assimilate them into white culture. American Indian children would be forced to cut their hair, wear mainstream or traditional American clothing, learn about Christianity, and speak only English. The children were taught basic reading and writing skills as well as manual and skilled labor trades like sewing and cooking for girls and farming and construction for boys. The most famous Indian boarding school was the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Jim Thorpe, a member of the Sac and Fox tribe who was called the greatest athlete of the twentieth century, attended Carlisle. It was at this school that Thorpe's athletic skills were discovered.

Many tribes in Oklahoma established their own boarding schools to ensure that their children would be educated but also learn about tribal sovereignty. The Cherokee government established a public school system in 1841 and operated eighteen public schools by 1843. In 1844 the Chickasaw tribal government appropriated funds for a tribal academy, which was opened seven years later as the Chickasaw Manual Labor School for Boys. Between 1852 and 1859 the Chickasaw opened four more boarding schools. The Choctaw Nation, whose educational system became the model for schools in the Creek, Chickasaw, and Seminole nations, had twelve tribally funded schools in operation by 1838.



Chilocco Indian Agriculture School during a home economics class
(19051a, Florence Correll Collection, OHS).

Indian Massacres and Military Presence

When it came to treaties with American Indian tribes, the US government broke its promises over and over again. This made many tribes unhappy with their treatment by whites. It also led to many American Indians escaping from their reservations. Many wanted the freedom to travel and hunt as they pleased like they had done in the past and began to escape together from their assigned lands. When Indians would leave their reservations or were suspected of housing warrior bands, often the US Army was sent to find them. This led to many conflicts and battles in Indian Territory.

Washita

On November 27, 1868, peace chief Black Kettle and his Cheyenne and Arapaho followers were attacked in their sleep by Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer and his Seventh Cavalry near the Washita River. The US Army suspected Black Kettle and his people were housing a warrior band that had been raiding white settlers and stealing their goods. The great peace chief Black Kettle was shot and killed while trying to mount his horse. The total number of Cheyenne and Arapaho casualties is unknown. General Custer lost twenty-seven men at the Battle of the Washita. The surviving women and children of the camp were taken hostage while their homes and possessions were burned. The 800 horses found at Black Kettle's camp were shot and killed as well.



Washita monument and view of battle site, 2013
(OHS Collections).

Red River War

By 1874, not much had changed for the American Indian tribes in Oklahoma. Although many had settled onto their reservations, some refused to live on their assigned lands because of the mistreatment by the US government and the lack of supplies and rations. Conditions on Indian Territory reservations during this time were very bad, filled with disease and little food or resources to survive. Some Plains tribes, including the Comanche and Kiowa, had members that raided and hunted for their own resources off the reservations. When white hunters began killing off their much needed buffalo, many American Indians became even more desperate for food. This upset the US Army and eventually led to the Red River War of 1874–75. In the end, the US Army won. By the end of the Red River War, the buffalo was almost completely wiped out on the plains, and more white settlers entered current-day Texas and Oklahoma.

Fort Reno

Fort Reno had its origins as a temporary camp in July 1874 to protect the Cheyenne-Arapaho Agency at Darlington following an Indian outbreak that led to the Red River War of 1874. Located three miles west and two miles north of present El Reno in Canadian County, the original military camp was enlarged and officially created as Fort Reno on July 15, 1875. It took its name from General Jesse L. Reno, who had been killed at South Mountain, Maryland, during the Civil War.

Fort Reno was assigned to exercise military control over the Southern Cheyenne and Southern Arapaho Reservation. It stretched westward between the North Canadian and Washita watersheds to the Texas Panhandle. The post and the Darlington Agency fostered the first trappings of white settlement in what is now central Oklahoma.

Fort Sill

In January 1869 General Philip Sheridan began building a permanent base in Indian Territory, known as Fort Sill. It was named after Brigadier General Joshua Sill, a West Point classmate of Sheridan's who was killed at the battle of Stones River, Tennessee. Fort Sill has long been known as the home of the US Army's Field Artillery. In the nineteenth century, the soldiers of Fort Sill served as peacekeepers, police of the Oklahoma Land Run of 1889, and protection for settlers and American Indians, including Apache chief Geronimo. Today it is home to the US Army Field Artillery Training Center.



A rendition of the October 1867 Medicine Lodge Peace Council between Plains Indians and the US government. A year later in November of 1868, this peace treaty would be broken at the Battle of the Washita (19589.68.45. Alvin Rucker Collection, OHS).

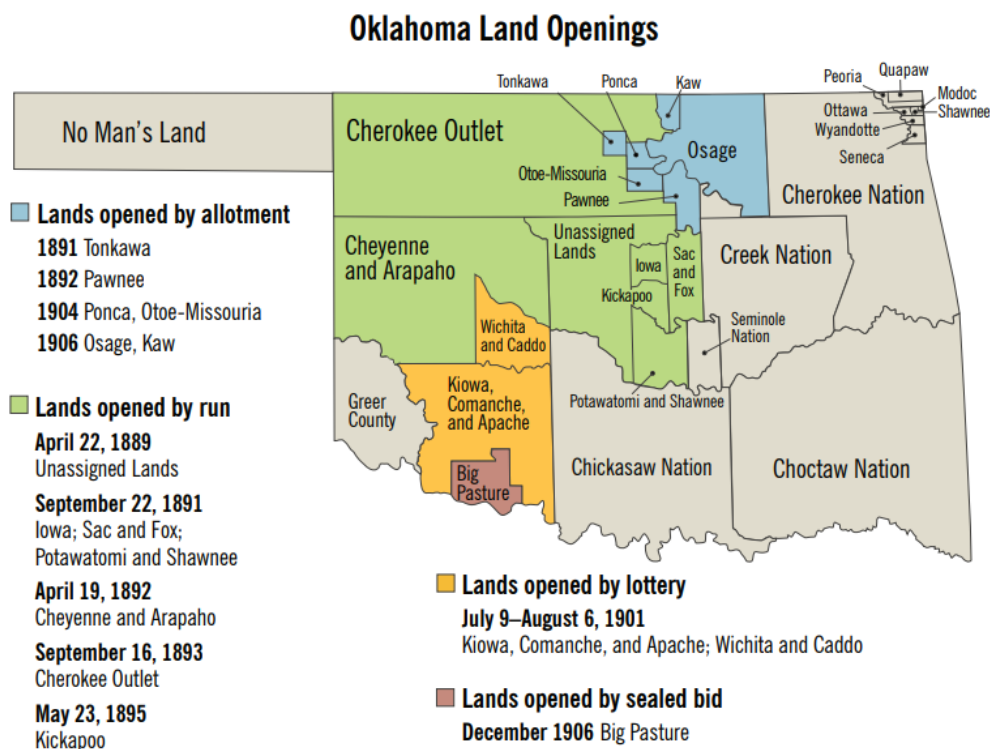
Pile of American bison, or buffalo, skulls in 1870 leading up to the Red River War (photograph courtesy of the Smithsonian).



Dawes Act and Tribal Allotment

When Ponca chief Standing Bear (see the Biography page) was jailed for traveling outside of his reservation in order to bury his son, his story brought national focus to the American Indians in Indian Territory, including the interest of Senator Henry Dawes in Massachusetts. Dawes, wanting to help, created a bill in 1887 to divide allotted lands for individual Indians and sell the rest of the land for a profit. This bill, called the Dawes Act, provided an opportunity for the white settlers to purchase the excess land. American Indians did not feel the same way about the land runs as did the people making the runs. Individuals making the runs were happy and excited at the prospect of new land, but American Indians were afraid they might lose even more land. This is because they had already lost their homelands and some of the land the government had sold to them as well.

[Explore the Dawes Rolls](#)



Map of the opened lands following the Dawes Act and assigned allotments (OHS).

American Indians and the Twentieth Century

American Indians faced much heartache in the twentieth century, including assimilation and racism, but continued to persevere. Despite mistreatment by the US government, American Indians served in both World Wars, built up tribal communities, and reclaimed their sovereignty by joining together across tribal lines.



Comanche Code Talkers Monument at the Comanche Nation Complex (19687.IN.CO.28.13. Chester R. Cowen Collection, OHS).

World War I

Around 10,000 American Indians served their country during World War I. The most decorated of these was Joseph Oklahombi.

Joseph Oklahombi

Joseph Oklahombi was a fifteen-year-old soldier in World War I and a member of the Choctaw Nation. He served in Company D, 141st Regiment, 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 36th Division. He, along with his other tribal members, used their native language to send messages throughout the 71st brigade so that German intelligence could not understand what they were saying. They later were called Code Talkers. Not only was he a Code Talker, he also fought with his fellow soldiers and has been identified by some as “Oklahoma’s Greatest Hero.” He is the recipient of a Silver Star and the French Croix de Guerre. He came back to Oklahoma after the war and was struck by a truck and killed in 1960.



Joseph Oklahombi (2296.1. Czarina Conlan Collection, OHS).



Tobias Frazier, Code Talker (22190, Oklahoma Historical Society Photograph Collection, OHS).

Code Talkers

American Indians served as “Code Talkers” in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The first code talkers were a group of Choctaws in the 141st, 142nd, and 143rd Infantry Regiments of the 36th Infantry Division in World War I. During the Meuse-Argonne campaign of 1918 in France, Germans broke Allied communication codes, monitored radio and telephone lines, and captured one of every four runners between companies. Needing a more secure means of communication, an American army officer overheard some Choctaw soldiers conversing in their native language. The most famous Code Talkers are likely the Navajo Code talkers who served during World War II. The Navajo language is the only military code that has never been cracked by the enemy.

World War II

The attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 encouraged many American Indians to enlist. Oklahoma American Indians, many of whom were already members of National Guard units, filled a noticeable portion of the ranks of the US Army's famed 45th Division. It is estimated that around 44,000 served during the war. Like World War I, many American Indians who served in the Second World War were also honored for their heroism. Ernest Childers, a Muscogee (Creek), and Jack Montgomery, a Cherokee, received Medals of Honor.

Ernest Childers

Ernest Childers was born on February 1, 1918, in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. He attended the Chilocco Indian School before enlisting in the Oklahoma National Guard in 1937. During World War II he was promoted to First Sergeant, Company C, 180th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division. Childers took part in Allied assaults on Sicily and Salerno in 1943 and Anzio in 1944. For his bravery during those battles, he was appointed to 2nd Lieutenant. Childers' awards include the Medal of Honor, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Italian Cross of Valor, Combat Infantryman's Badge, and the first Oklahoma Distinguished Service Medal ever awarded. Lt. Col. Childers was the first American Indian to earn the Congressional Medal of Honor in World War II.



Ernest Childers (photograph courtesy of the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame).

Jack Montgomery

A member of the Cherokee Nation, Jack Montgomery was one of the few American Indians to be awarded the Medal of Honor for his service during World War II in 1945. During the war he attacked German positions, killing eleven enemy soldiers and taking many prisoners in February of 1944. He is from Sallisaw, Oklahoma, and died in June 2002. Montgomery was inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame in 1999.

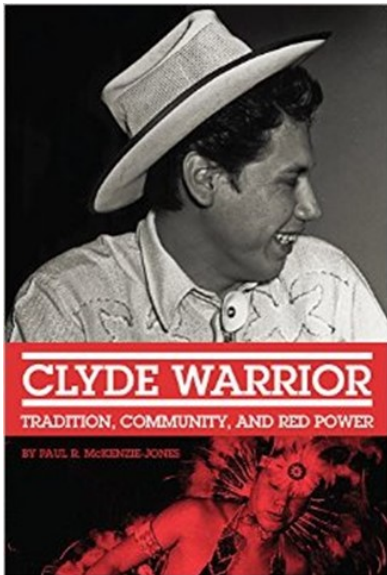
Clarence Tinker

Clarence Tinker was the first American Indian in the history of the United States Army to attain the rank of major general. He was one-eighth Osage and was born in the Osage Nation, Indian Territory, in 1887. He was given command of the Hawaii Department following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and in 1942 was promoted to major general. Clarence Tinker led four bombing attacks on Wake Island on June 5, 1942; upon leaving Midway Island on June 6, his plane crashed at sea, killing all on board. Tinker Air Force Base in Midwest City is named after him.

Red Power and the Rise of a New Age

The opportunities for higher education, jobs, and travel that came with World War II became an important moment for the newest generation of American Indians in the 1960s and 1970s. Many were inspired by the African American civil rights movement and decided to fight for their people's sovereignty and an end to racism. According to Standing Rock Sioux historian and American Indian leader Vine Deloria Jr., Red Power is a uniquely American Indian idea that puts human beings before money and goods. The Red Power movement was also used to contradict the media's portrayals of American Indians as "noble savages," a stereotype that was often used to depict American Indians as less modern or ignorant.

Clyde Warrior



Clyde Warrior was born in Ponca City, Oklahoma, and raised by his traditional Ponca grandparents. While attending Northeastern State University in Tahlequah in 1966, Warrior began organizing the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC). The NIYC was the first student-led Indian activism group and became famous for their 1964 "fish-ins" in Washington State that demanded local tribes be given back their fishing rights. Clyde Warrior was important to the Red Power movement across the nation and has been called the "prophet of Red Power."

Clyde Warrior: Tradition, Community, and Red Power by Paul R. McKenzie Jones (image courtesy of the University of Oklahoma Press).

Wilma Mankiller



Wilma Mankiller, 1987 (image courtesy of the *Tulsa World*).

Wilma Mankiller, born on November 18, 1945, in Tahlequah, was highly inspired by the Red Power movement and the idea of bettering her tribe through unity. Mankiller became the first female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation in 1985. Though up against the male-dominated world of the Cherokee Nation when she became principal chief, she managed to create a sense of community within the nation and assisted in providing the help it needed to become self-sufficient. She is also the author of many books, including *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People*.

American Indians and the Arts

American Indians have a long and rich relationship with the arts. From petroglyphs and paintings, weaving and pottery making, and symbolic clothing and bead work, American Indians have created some of the most beautiful works of art from pre-European contact through the twenty-first century.



Shirt associated with Sinte Gleska (Spotted Tail, Sicangu Lakota, 1823–1881) c. 1845–1855 (image courtesy of the Smithsonian).



Moccasins associated with Peo Peo T'olikt (Bird Alighting, Nimi'ipuu (Nez Perce) b.?-1935) c. 1880. Deer hide, glass beads, cotton thread (image courtesy of the Smithsonian).

George Catlin

Although George Catlin was not of American Indian descent, he was the first artist to paint American Indians and display his work to a widespread audience. Traveling from Fort Gibson to the Wichita Mountains in 1832, Catlin painted many portraits of the Osage, Kiowa, and Comanche people he met. George Catlin traveled around the United States and later parts of Europe with his American Indian art shows. His paintings were the first real glimpse of American Indian life for many Americans at the time. Most of George Catlin's works are housed at the Smithsonian, but the American Museum of Natural History and Oklahoma's own Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa display many of his portraits as well.



Pigeon's Egg Head (The Light) Going to and Returning from Washington, 1837-39
by George Catlin (image courtesy of the Smithsonian).



Né-bee-ó-ee-wóo-tis, Wolf on the Hill, Chief of the Tribe, 1832
Cheyenne/Suhtai by George Catlin
(image courtesy of the Smithsonian).

The Kiowa Six

The Kiowa Six were some of the first professionally trained American Indian artists. Under the direction of Oscar Jacobson at the University of Oklahoma in 1927, the Kiowa Six became internationally known for their talent and portrayals of American Indian traditions. The six members were Lois Bougetah Smoky, James Auchiah, Jack Hokeah, Spencer Asah, Stephen Mopope, and Monroe Tsatoke. Lois Smoky was the only female member of the group and the first American Indian woman in Oklahoma to paint the human figure, as it was against tradition for females to practice this style of art. The most famous works by the Kiowa Six are the murals in the Wiley Post Building, which is now the Oklahoma Judicial Center. The murals were painted by Monroe Tsatoke and Spencer Asah and are thought to be inspired by George Catlin's works. All of the Kiowa Six were born and raised in Oklahoma.



Painting by Stephen Mopope (image courtesy of William and Mary College).

Te Ata

A member of the Chickasaw Nation, Te Ata (or Mary Frances Thompson) was best known for her American Indian storytelling, a career that spanned sixty years. She was born in Emet, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, in 1895 near Tishomingo. Te Ata performed at the first state dinner given by Franklin Roosevelt in 1933 and wrote a children's book, *Baby Rattlesnake*.



Te Ata (20829-18, OHS) (66)

Allan Houser (Haozous)

Allan Houser is one of the most famous American Indian artists. Born in 1914 near Fort Sill to Apache parents, Houser would go on to attend the Painting School at the Santa Fe Indian School. Although a fairly successful painter, Houser quit art professionally for some time in order to make more money for his family. He eventually returned to the art world, but this time as a modernist sculptor and an art professor. His many sculptures of American Indian life are world-renowned. His last monumental bronze sculpture, *Unconquered*, sits in front of the Oklahoma History Center. Houser's work *As Long As the Waters Flow* is on display outside of the Oklahoma State Capitol.



As Long As the Waters Flow by Allan Houser (image courtesy of the Oklahoma Arts Council).



Unconquered by Allan Houser (OHS).

Five Indian Ballerinas

Maria and Marjorie Tallchief, Rosella Hightower, Moscelyne Larkin, and Yvonne Chouteau were the first American Indian professionally trained ballet dancers. They are renowned for combining the artistic skills and traditions of their ancestors with modern dance.



All five were honored with the title prima ballerina and with a mural at the Oklahoma State Capitol titled *Flight of Spirit*. All five were born in Oklahoma (image courtesy of the *Daily Oklahoman*).

Biographies



Elias Boudinot (12376, Oklahoma Historical Society Photograph Collection, OHS).

Elias Boudinot was born under the name Galagina Oowatie in Georgia in 1803. He was educated at missionary schools, and during his education took the English name Elias Boudinot. After he finished his schooling, he became the editor of the *Cherokee Phoenix* newspaper. The newspaper had national circulation and often discussed the Cherokee Nation's efforts to resist removal from their homes in Georgia. Boudinot's uncle was Major Ridge, the leader of the removal party of the Cherokee Nation. The removal party included Cherokee citizens that felt resisting removal was a useless effort, and that the nation should sign a treaty soon to get the best deal they could for their land. Elias, his uncle, his cousin, John Ridge, and Stand Watie signed the Treaty of New Echota in 1835. This was the removal treaty used by Presidents Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren to force the Cherokee to move west, even though most Cherokee citizens opposed the treaty.

Elias Boudinot moved west to Park Hill in present-day eastern Oklahoma and resettled his family. When the rest of the Cherokee Nation arrived in 1839, many blamed the removal party members for the hardships and deaths endured on the journey west. Major Ridge, John Ridge, and Elias Boudinot were assassinated for signing the Treaty of New Echota in 1839.



Ernest Childers (photograph courtesy of the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame).

Ernest Childers was born on February 1, 1918, in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. He attended the Chilocco Indian School before enlisting in the Oklahoma National Guard in 1937. During World War II he was promoted to First Sergeant, Company C, 180th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division. Childers took part in Allied assaults on Sicily and Salerno in 1943 and Anzio in 1944. For his bravery during those battles, he was appointed to 2nd Lieutenant. Childers' awards include the Medal of Honor, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Italian Cross of Valor, Combat Infantryman's Badge, and the first Oklahoma Distinguished Service Medal ever awarded. Lt. Col. Childers was the first American Indian to earn the Congressional Medal of Honor in World War II.



Rosella Hightower (Oklahoma Publishing Company Photography Collection, OHS).



Wilma Mankiller (19687.IN.FC1.I.10,Chester R. Cowen Collection, OHS).



Jack Montgomery (photograph courtesy of the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame).

Rosella Hightower was a member of the first five American Indian prima ballerinas and the Choctaw Nation. She performed all over the world with her fellow American Indian ballerinas: Maria Tallchief, Marjorie Tallchief, Moscelyne Larkin, and Myra Yvonne Chouteau. Their pictures are in the rotunda of the state capitol.

Wilma Mankiller, a former chief of the Cherokee Nation, was a brave leader and the first woman to be named chief. She grew up in a big family who eventually moved to California. She came back to Oklahoma and began to help her people with everyday needs. Her work with the tribe before she served as chief earned her the Medal of Freedom, the highest honor given to a Cherokee citizen. She died in 2010.

A member of the Cherokee Nation, **Jack Montgomery** was one of the few American Indians to be awarded the Medal of Honor for his service during World War II in 1945. During the war he attacked German positions, killing eleven enemy soldiers and taking many prisoners in February of 1944. He is from Sallisaw, Oklahoma, and died in June 2002. Montgomery was inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame in 1999.



Joseph Oklahombi

3813. Czarina Conlan Collection,
Oklahoma Historical Society (75)

Joseph Oklahombi was a fifteen-year-old soldier in World War I and a member of the Choctaw Nation. He served in Company D, 141st Regiment, 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 36th Division. He, along with his other tribal members, used their native language to send messages throughout the 71st brigade so that German intelligence could not understand what they were saying. They later were called code talkers. Not only was he a code talker, he also fought with his fellow soldiers and has been identified by some as “Oklahoma’s Greatest Hero.” He is the recipient of a Silver Star and the French Croix de Guerre. He came back to Oklahoma after the war and was struck by a truck and killed in 1960.



Opothleyahola (704, Redbird Smith,
Mrs. Collection, OHS).

Opothleyahola was a prominent chief of the Creek Nation. Born in Alabama in 1780, Opothleyahola belonged to the Upper Creek faction of the Creek Nation. The Upper Creeks were those members of the Creek Nation that held closest to their traditional way of life, while the Lower Creeks more readily adopted the lifestyles of those non-Indians living near them. The Upper Creeks also strongly opposed removal to west of the Mississippi, while the Lower Creeks felt that removal was inevitable and accepted removal sooner.

Opothleyahola and many Upper Creeks held on to their lands in Alabama as long as they could but eventually signed the Treaty of March 1832. This treaty exchanged the Creek lands in Alabama for lands in Indian Territory where the Upper and Lower Creeks would clash again during the American Civil War.



Major Ridge (20462.1.35, McKenney-
Hall Collection, OHS).

Major Ridge was the leader of the Cherokee mixed-blood treaty party along with his son, John Ridge, and his nephews Elias Boudinot and Stand Watie. Major Ridge earned the title “major” for his participation in the Creek War of 1813 and 1814. He was a prominent Cherokee leader, serving as tribal speaker from 1822 to 1828, as well as an accomplished business man. Major Ridge raised future Principal Chief of the Cherokees John Ross, and they remained close until Major Ridge and his family decided that removal was inevitable. When Major Ridge, John Ridge, Elias Boudinot, and Stand Watie signed the Treaty of New Echota in 1835 ceding the Cherokee Nation’s lands in Georgia, Chief John Ross and his full-blood party were outraged. Major Ridge, John Ridge, and Elias Boudinot were murdered by members of John Ross’s faction on June 2, 1839.



Will Rogers (21412.M62.24, Barney Hillerman Collection, OHS).

Cherokee citizen and comedian, **Will Rogers**, from Claremore, Oklahoma, learned how to be a cowboy on his father's ranch. He would eventually join a Wild West Show, entertaining the crowd by doing rope tricks and riding a horse. Once motion pictures became popular, he moved to Hollywood and began acting in western movies. While acting, he began to write a newspaper column on the current news all the while ensuring he made people laugh.

[Watch a documentary about Oklahoma's Favorite Son!](#)



John Ross (20516.3.23, McKenney-Hall Collection, OHS).

John Ross was the principal chief of the Cherokee Nation for nearly forty years. He was born in 1790 to a Scots-Irish father and Cherokee mother. He was raised speaking both Cherokee and English. During the War of 1812, he served as an adjutant in a unit under General Andrew Jackson's command. Ross rose to prominence as a political leader amongst the Cherokee after the war due to his education and ability to speak both English and Cherokee.

Ross proved himself to be an effective negotiator and diplomat, rebuffing many attempts to force the Cherokee to cede their lands to the United States. This led to his assumption of the role of Principal Chief in 1828, a position he held until his death. The next ten years of his life were spent in conflict with President Jackson over the policy of Indian Removal.

He led the anti-removal, National Party of the Cherokee Nation, and spent a lot of time in Washington, DC arguing for the government to honor their treaties with the Cherokee. Under his leadership, the Cherokee Nation won victories in the Supreme Court cases, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* and *Worcester v. Georgia*. He also gained many allies in Congress to support Cherokee land claims. These allies and victories did not prevent the passage of the Indian Removal Act, however, and were further undercut by the Treaty Party led by Major Ridge and the signing of the Treaty of New Echota in 1835. Even though the treaty was signed by a minority faction of the Cherokee Nation, and not the Principal Chief or the full National Council, President Jackson upheld it as legal and used it to force removal of the Cherokee Nation.

John Ross headed west with his people in 1838. One quarter of those that left in 1838 perished on the Trail of Tears, including Ross's wife. He continued to lead his people through the Civil War, but perished in Washington, DC, in 1866 during negotiations over the Reconstruction Treaties of 1866. He is buried on a family plot in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.



Sequoyah by Charles Banks Wilson, from the Permanent Capitol Art Collection (image courtesy of the Oklahoma Arts Council).

Sequoyah was a Cherokee citizen best known for the creation of the Cherokee Syllabary. He was born sometime in the 1770s in Tennessee. He served with the Cherokee Company, like John Ross, at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. In 1819, he moved to Alabama with his wife and daughter.

Sequoyah had noticed how much of an advantage a written language provided English speakers, so he decided to create something similar for Cherokee. What he created was not an alphabet, like in English, but a syllabary. An alphabet has a few symbols or letters where each symbol can be used to make more than one sound. In a syllabary, each symbol makes exactly one sound, so the Cherokee Syllabary has eighty-five symbols. This also means that the Cherokee written language is 100 percent phonetic, which makes it much easier to learn than English.

To prove the usefulness of the syllabary to the National Council, Sequoyah taught his daughter Ahyokah how to read it. Ahyokah and Sequoyah wrote messages to each other from separate rooms and read them aloud to the Council members. The Council approved the use of the syllabary and by 1826 the Cherokee Nation published the *Cherokee Phoenix*, a bilingual newspaper written in English and Cherokee, for a national audience.

In 1829 Sequoyah moved to Indian Territory near present-day Sallisaw, Oklahoma. Sequoyah died in 1842 while traveling through Mexico. His cabin still stands near Sallisaw, Oklahoma, and is owned by the Cherokee Nation.



Stand Watie (2019, Muriel Wright Collection, OHS).

Stand Watie (also known as De-ga-ta-ga, or "he stands") was the only American Indian to earn the rank brigadier general during the Civil War. As a Cherokee leader of the mixed-blood treaty party along with his brother, Elias Boudinot, and his uncle, Major John Ridge, he signed the Treaty of New Echota in 1835 that led to the removal of the Cherokees from Georgia to Indian Territory. Stand Watie was a successful businessman and plantation owner until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. Despite Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation John Ross's wavering, Stand Watie formed an alliance with the Confederacy and commanded the First Regiment of Cherokee Mounted Volunteers. Stand Watie was a great leader in the Confederacy despite its lack of resources and manpower in Indian Territory. He is credited with the capture of the Union steamboat J. R. Williams and the Confederate victory at the Second Battle of Cabin Creek. In May 1864 Watie was promoted to brigadier general, and in February 1865 he became the commander of the Indian Division. Watie surrendered on June 23, 1865, as the last Confederate general standing.



Standing Bear (20588.12.B.22R,
Thomas Foreman Home Collection,

Born in 1829, **Standing Bear** was a chief in the Ponca Nation. Shortly after the Ponca people were removed to Indian Territory, in 1877, Standing Bear's son died. Standing Bear wished to bury his son in his homeland of Nebraska, so he and a group of other tribal members left the territory and traveled there. They were captured and incarcerated by the US government in Omaha, Nebraska, for leaving Indian Territory. Standing Bear was interviewed by a newspaper, which drew attention to his story and brought volunteer lawyers to his aid. A federal judge determined that the United States government could not confine the Poncas to a reservation. This decision allowed any Indian to come and go from their reservation at will. Standing Bear's story also captured the attention of Henry Dawes, who would write the legislation for the Dawes Act.



Jim Thorpe
(22758.ART.OP.JT.40, Charles
Banks Wilson Collection,
OHS).

Jim Thorpe, of the Sac and Fox tribe, was one of the earliest champions of the Olympics and is recognized as the greatest athlete of the first half of the twentieth century. Born on his mother's allotment in Pottawatomie County in 1887, Thorpe had a troubled childhood after his mother and twin brother passed away. After transferring from an Indian School in Oklahoma to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Thorpe realized he enjoyed football and excelled at track and field. While in high school he broke many athletic records and won a place on the United States Olympic team. Jim Thorpe won two gold medals at the 1912 Olympics which would later be revoked but then reinstated. They were removed by the International Olympic Committee because he was a professional athlete. This rule was unevenly enforced. He would later play professional football and baseball and become the first president of the NFL.

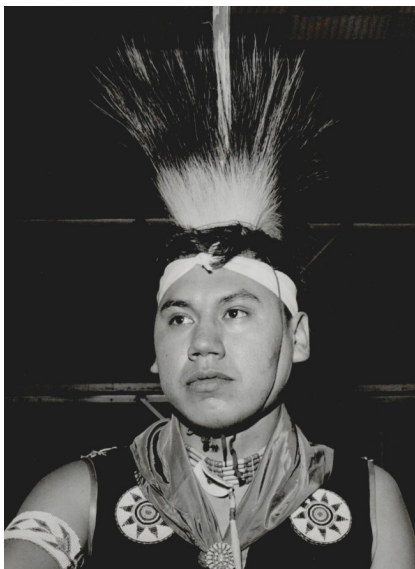
[Visit Jim Thorpe's home](#)

[Visit the Jim Thorpe Museum and Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame](#)



Maj Gen CL Tinker
Clarence Tinker (photograph cour-
tesy of the Oklahoma Military Hall
of Fame).

Clarence Tinker was the first American Indian in the history of the United States Army to attain the rank of major general. He was one-eighth Osage and was born in the Osage Nation in Indian Territory in 1887. He was given command of the Hawaii Department following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and in 1942 was promoted to major general. Clarence Tinker led four bombing attacks on Wake Island on June 5, 1942; upon leaving Midway Island on June 6, his plane crashed at sea, killing all on board. Tinker Air Force Base in Midwest City is named after him.



Clyde Warrior was born in Ponca City, Oklahoma, and raised by his traditional Ponca grandparents. While attending Northeastern State University in Tahlequah in 1966, Warrior began organizing the National Indian Youth Council. The NIYC was the first student-led Indian activism group and became famous for their 1964 “fish-ins” in Washington State that demanded local tribes be given back their fishing rights. Clyde Warrior was important to the Red Power movement across the nation and has been called the “prophet of Red Power.”

Clyde Warrior
(2012.201.B1396.0200,
Oklahoma Publishing Company
Photography Collection, OHS).

Glossary

allotment: A piece of tribal land assigned to a person as a way to break up communal ownership.

ancestors: One's family members from generations back, like a grandparent.

assimilation: To take in or absorb another culture, usually by force.

citizen: A recognized member of a group, city, or nation.

Columbian Exchange: Cultural and biological exchanges between Europeans and American Indians that included plants, animals, and life-threatening diseases.

coup: A quick and often violent takeover of a government or ruler by another faction.

culture: The beliefs, customs, and traditions of a group.

Dawes Act: A bill, proposed by Henry Dawes, that authorized the United States to divide American Indian tribal land into allotments.

earth lodges: A small home or room carved out of a hillside, often used by Plains Indians.

faction: A small but organized group of like-minded people.

foraging: Searching and gathering of food or supplies.

heritage: Customs, beliefs, and ideas shared by a group of people that are passed down to the next generation.

Indian boarding schools: Schools created by the US government to assimilate American Indian children into a "civilized" lifestyle that included speaking English and land ownership.

matrilineal: When families pass down the mother's ancestry rather than the father's.

reservations: A parcel of land, chosen by the government, where a Native nation lives.

semi-subterranean: Partially underground, like earth lodges or storage caches.

stereotype: To believe unfairly that all people who share a characteristic, like race, class, or gender, are the same.

storage caches: Small rooms or storage areas dug out from the earth.

sovereignty: Independence, free from someone else's rule or power.

tipi: A mobile tent made out of animal skins and wooden poles.

Trail of Tears: What American Indians called the march from their native lands to Indian Territory because of its extreme length and danger.

travois: A sled used to move and carry goods.

treaty: An agreement between two groups.

Activities

Make a Tipi Activity

Materials needed:

Copy paper, construction paper, or cardstock

Colored pencils, crayons, or markers

Scissors

Tape or glue

3 sticks or straws

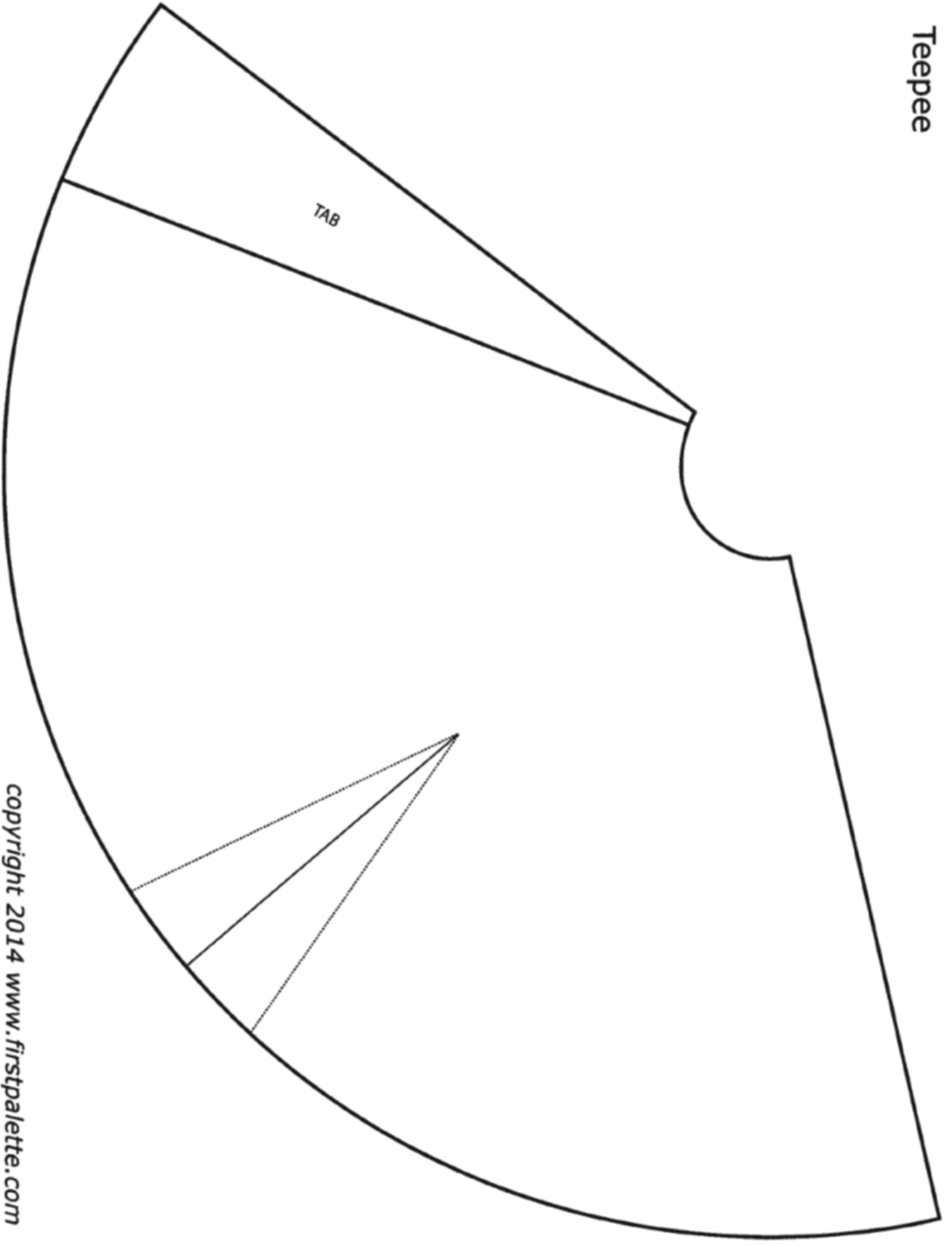
Rubber band

Steps:

1. Print out the template (on the next page).
2. Decorate the tipi using colored pencils, crayons, or markers.
3. Cut the tipi out of the template.
4. Cut a slit in the middle of the door.
5. Fold out the door flaps.
6. Bend the tipi into a cone shape, and tape or glue the edges together.
7. The three sticks or straws need to be about 7 inches in length, and bind them at close to the top with a rubber band.
8. Put the sticks into the tipi, with the ends poking out the top.
9. Tape the bottom of each end of the stick or straw onto the inside of the tipi.

This activity is from www.firstpalette.com

Teepee



copyright 2014 www.firstpalette.com



Wolf
mh' way wah

5
nee-yah-lahn-wce



Corn
ta-mi

20
ne se wi pe ti ke

Absentee Shawnee



Fish
ni-ma-fi

16
may-tah-thwee
ki-te
nay-koh-twah-thwee



Dog
weeh-see

9
jah-kaht-thwee

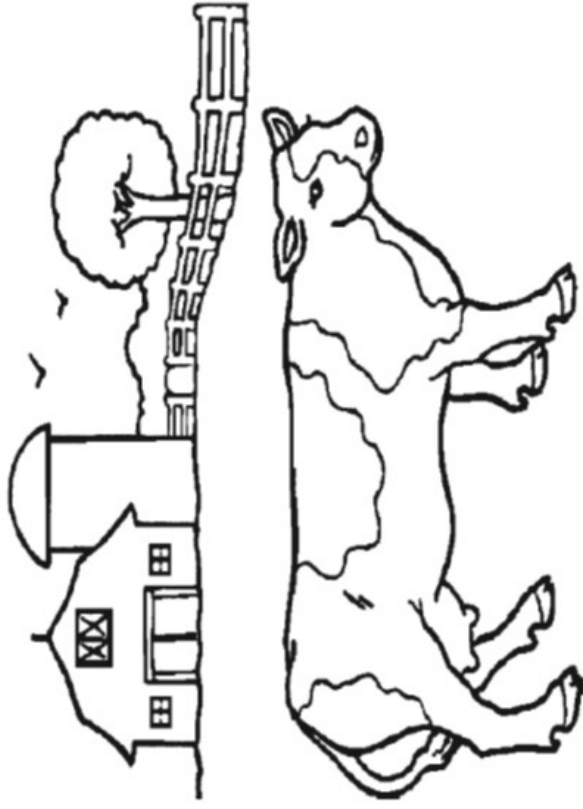
Absentee Shawnee



Turtle

kah-kee-la

14
may-tah-thwee
ki-te
nee-yay-wee



Cow

mee-thoh-thwah

11
may-tah-thwee
ki-te
nick-koh-tee

Absentee Shawnee



Pig
koh-skoh

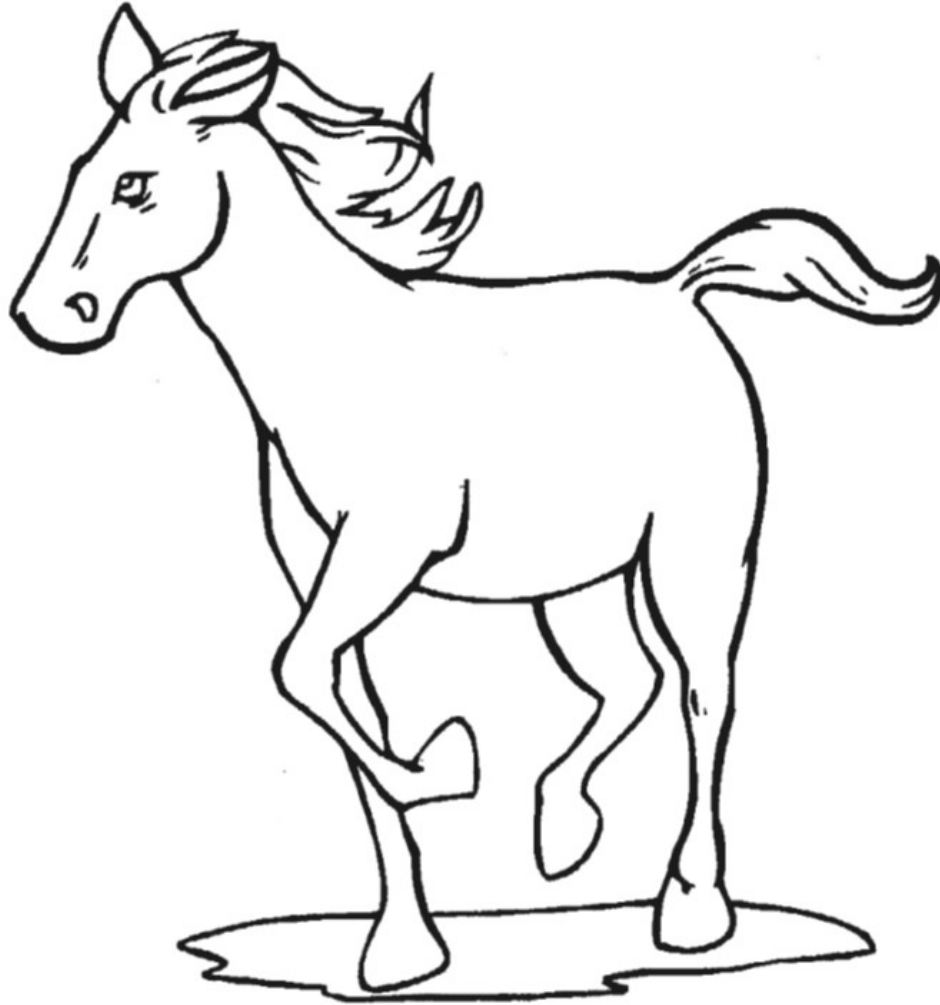
10
may-tah-thwee



Bear
m'kwa

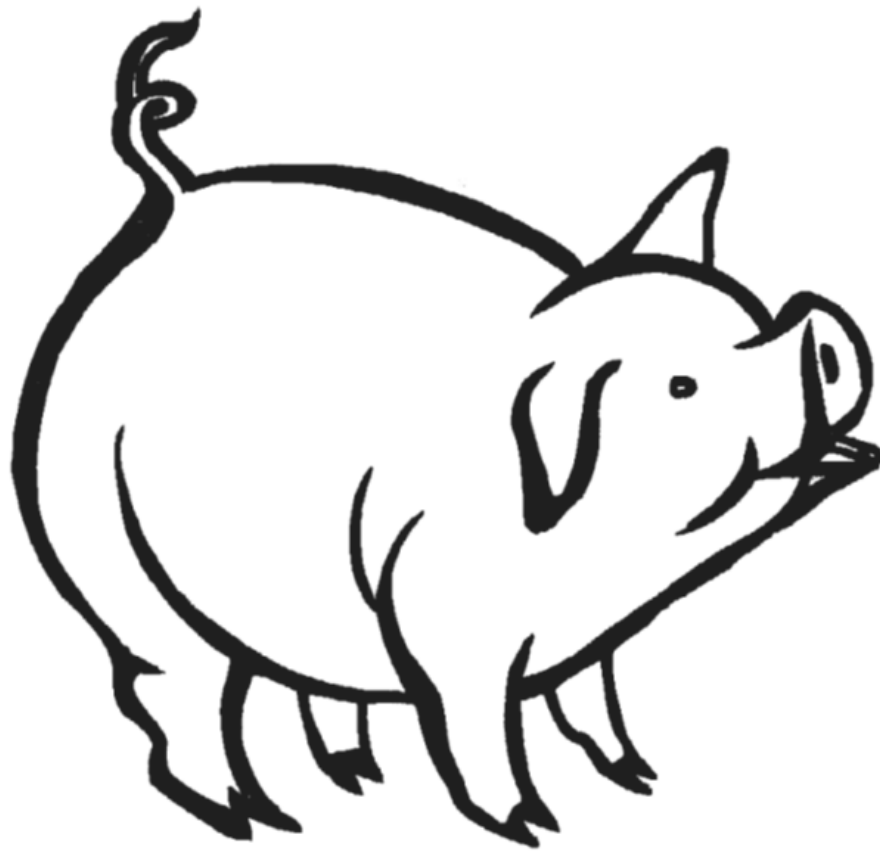
15
may-tah-thwee
ki-te
nee-yah-lahn-wee

Absentee Shawnee



Iluppvt issuba.
This is a horse.

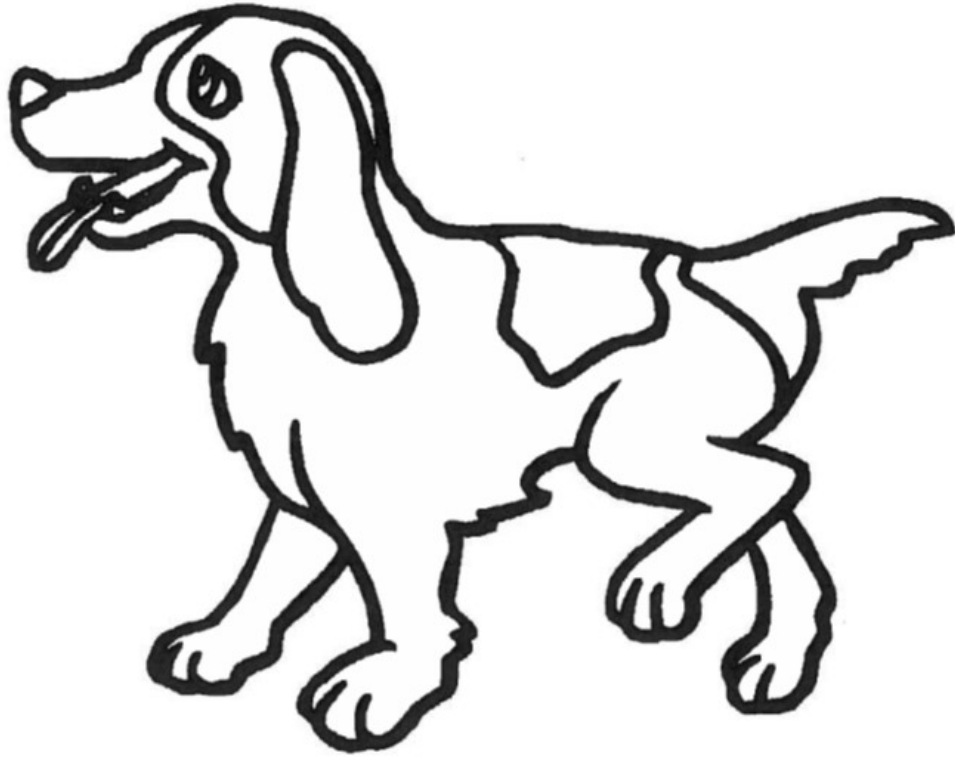
Choctaw



Iluppvt shukha.

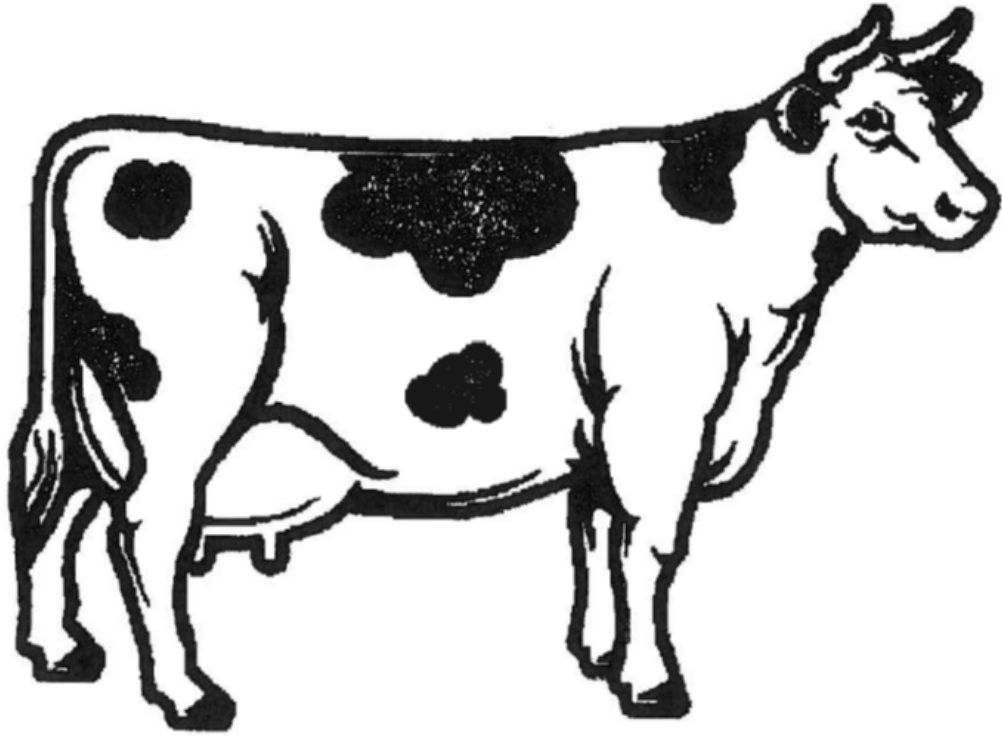
This is a pig.

Choctaw



Iluppvt ofi.
This is a dog.

Choctaw



Ilupput wak.

This is a cow.

Choctaw

What Can You Make from a Buffalo?

How did American Indians on the Plains use every part of the buffalo? Play this interactive game to find out!

Play the game here: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/buffalo/matching.html> (86)



Explore a Buffalo Hide

What stories can we learn from buffalo hides? You get to be the historian in this interactive game! Follow the link below and use the worksheets to interpret this Plains Indian buffalo hide. <http://americanhistory.si.edu/buffalo/hideactivity.html>

NAME: _____



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

You Be the Historian Student Worksheet

Answer these questions as you explore the buffalo hide painting to learn more about the Plains Indians and the buffalo.

MEN ON HORSEBACK

How many men do you see and what are they doing? _____

How many buffalo do you see in this section of the hide painting (look at both sides of the hide)?

The buffalo with a knife next to it represents buffalo that have been killed. How many do you see? _____

What do you think the Indians did with the buffalo they killed? Use the evidence from other sources to answer this question. _____

How are the Indians at the top different from the others? Compare notes with the Smithsonian historian to find out. _____

Where are the buffalo bleeding? Why? Compare notes with the Smithsonian historian to find out. _____

What does this image say about the relationship between the Plains Indians and the buffalo?

BUFFALO SKULL

Look at the photograph clue. What is the man holding and how is he holding it? _____

Where did Indians use parts of the buffalo? _____

How did the Indians of the Plains show respect for the buffalo? Summarize the historian's response: _____

TRACKING THE BUFFALO

Stories from a Buffalo Hide Painting



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

MAN WITH A RIFLE

What are these men doing? _____

How many buffalo do you see in this section of the hide painting? _____

How many men are there and how many buffalo have been killed? _____

Compare this with the number killed by the Indians at the top of the hide; is it higher or lower?

What do you think these people did with the buffalo they killed? Use the pictures at the bottom of the page to help you answer the question. _____

What part of the buffalo is bleeding most? _____ Why? Compare your notes with the Smithsonian historian to find out. _____

How many buffalo could one hunter kill in one day? Compare your notes with the Smithsonian historian to find out. _____

TRAIN

How many people do you see? _____

Who do you think these people are? _____

How did they travel to the northern Plains? What kinds of transportation do you see in this picture? _____

How did they use the land differently from the Indians? Look at the pictures at the bottom of the page to help you answer the question. _____

What animals do you see in this part of the painting? How many are there? _____

How did the arrival of settlers change life on the northern Plains? Compare your notes with the Smithsonian historian to help answer the question. _____

Make Your Own Buffalo Hide Painting

Use the template below to make your own buffalo hide. Draw pictures of things that tell about you and represent important events in your history or your family's history.

http://americanhistory.si.edu/buffalo/files/pdf/buffalo_printOut.pdf (87)



CREATE YOUR OWN BUFFALO HIDE

Directions: Draw pictures of things that tell about you - pictures of important events in your history or your family's history.

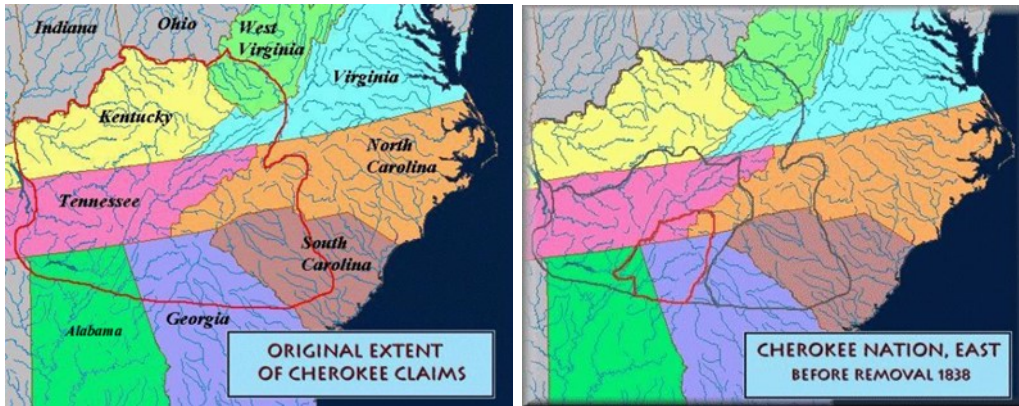
 Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

TRACKING THE BUFFALO
Stories From a Buffalo Hide Painting


Cherokee Lands Map Analysis

Cherokee Land Maps (1791-1838)

Teacher Note: Print this in color so the boundary lines are clear. Red boundary line indicates Cherokee land.



Cherokee Land Maps-Original Claims, 1791, and Before Indian Removal ,1838

Guiding Questions: 1. What is happening to the Cherokee land over time?

2. Based on the boundaries of the Cherokee lands in 1838, why might Georgia be the state most active in pursuing Indian removal?

Create a Story

This is a painting depicting the Trail of Tears, or Indian removal.



The Trail of Tears by Robert Lindneux, 1942

Why do you think the journey American Indians made is called “The Trail of Tears?”

Use the space below to become a character in the painting. Tell their story. Who are they? Where did they come from? Where are they going? How do they feel? What has happened during their journey?

Primary Source Activity: Letter Protesting Indian Removal

Read the following letter from Chief John Ross. When you are done, reflect on what you read and answer the questions below.

Cherokee letter protesting the Treaty of New Echota

Letter from Chief John Ross, "To the Senate and House of Representatives"

[Red Clay Council Ground, Cherokee Nation, September 28, 1836]

It is well known that for a number of years past we have been harassed by a series of vexations, which it is deemed unnecessary to recite in detail, but the evidence of which our delegation will be prepared to furnish. With a view to bringing our troubles to a close, a delegation was appointed on the 23rd of October, 1835, by the General Council of the nation, clothed with full powers to enter into arrangements with the Government of the United States, for the final adjustment of all our existing difficulties. The delegation failing to effect an arrangement with the United States commissioner, then in the nation, proceeded, agreeably to their instructions in that case, to Washington City, for the purpose of negotiating a treaty with the authorities of the United States.

After the departure of the Delegation, a contract was made by the Rev. John F. Schermerhorn, and certain individual Cherokees, purporting to be a "treaty, concluded at New Echota, in the State of Georgia, on the 29th day of December, 1835, by General William Carroll and John F. Schermerhorn, commissioners on the part of the United States, and the chiefs, headmen, and people of the Cherokee tribes of Indians." A spurious Delegation, in violation of a special injunction of the general council of the nation, proceeded to Washington City with this pretended treaty, and by false and fraudulent representations supplanted in the favor of the Government the legal and accredited Delegation of the Cherokee people, and obtained for this instrument, after making important alterations in its provisions, the recognition of the United States Government. And now it is presented to us as a treaty, ratified by the Senate, and approved by the President [Andrew Jackson], and our acquiescence in its requirements demanded, under the sanction of the displeasure of the United States, and the threat of summary compulsion, in case of refusal. It comes to us, not through our legitimate authorities, the known and usual medium of communication between the Government of the United States and our nation, but through the agency of a complication of powers, civil and military.

By the stipulations of this instrument, we are despoiled of our private possessions, the indefeasible property of individuals. We are stripped of every attribute of freedom and eligibility for legal self-defence. Our property may be plundered before our eyes; violence may be committed on our persons; even our lives may be taken away, and there is none to regard our complaints. We are denationalized; we are disfranchised. We are deprived of membership in the human family! We have neither land nor home, nor resting place that can be called our own. And this is effected by the provisions of a compact which assumes the venerated, the sacred appellation of treaty

We are overwhelmed! Our hearts are sickened, our utterance is paralyzed, when we reflect on the condition in which we are placed, by the audacious practices of unprincipled men, who have managed their stratagems with so much dexterity as to impose on the Government of the United States, in the face of our earnest, solemn, and reiterated protestations.

The instrument in question is not the act of our Nation; we are not parties to its covenants; it has not received the sanction of our people. The makers of it sustain no office nor appointment in our Nation, under the designation of Chiefs, Head men, or any other title, by which they hold, or could acquire, authority to assume the reins of Government, and to make bargain and sale of our rights, our possessions, and our common country. And we are constrained solemnly to declare, that we cannot but contemplate the enforcement of the stipulations of this instrument on us, against our consent, as an act of injustice and oppression, which, we are well persuaded, can never knowingly be countenanced by the Government and people of the United States; nor can we believe it to be the design of these honorable and highminded individuals, who stand at the head of the Govt., to bind a whole Nation, by the acts of a few unauthorized individuals. And, therefore, we, the parties to be affected by the result, appeal with confidence to the justice, the magnanimity, the compassion, of your honorable bodies, against the enforcement, on us, of the provisions of a compact, in the formation of which we have had no agency.

The Papers of Chief John Ross, vol. 1, 1807–1839, Norman, OK
Gary E. Moulton, ed.
University of Oklahoma Press, 1985

Based on what you have read, answer the following questions:

1. Do you agree or disagree with John Ross's letter to the House of Representatives? Why or why not?
2. Do you believe laws of the United States of America were applicable to the Cherokee Nations? Why or why not?
3. Can you sympathize with the sorrows of the American Indians? How so?

Create Your Own Mural

After reading through the American Indian biographies, choose an important person from the list and create a mural in their honor. Pretend that you are an artist who gets to paint the next work of art at the Oklahoma State Capitol Rotunda. After choosing a famous American Indian, create their mural. Be sure to draw or paint something that represents or symbolizes their contribution to their tribe and the state. When you finish, present your mural to your class or a partner and see if they can guess who you chose to honor.



Oklahoma State Capitol Rotunda (photograph courtesy of *East World News*).

Will Rogers Quips Activity

Will Rogers was born on a Cherokee Reservation where a former enslaved person taught him how to lasso. Rogers became so proficient with the lasso that he got a job as a trick lassoer in a Wild West Show. While demonstrating his lasso skills, Rogers also began sharing his quips. Eventually he became known more for his sharp wit than his lasso skills. He was a humorist whom many viewed as very wise.

Read through the following quotes of Will Rogers and explore the meaning and humor behind each one. Can you think of any quick quips of your own?

Advertising is the art of convincing people to spend money they don't have for something they don't need.

America is becoming so educated that ignorance will be a novelty. I will belong to the select few.

An ignorant person is one who doesn't know what you have just found out.

An onion can make people cry but there's never been a vegetable that can make people laugh.

Being a hero is about the shortest-lived profession on earth.

Chaotic action is preferable to orderly inaction.

Don't let yesterday use up too much of today.

Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.

Everybody is ignorant, only on different subjects.

Everything is funny, as long as it's happening to somebody else.

If advertisers spent the same amount of money on improving their products as they do on advertising then they wouldn't have to advertise them.

Live in such a way that you would not be ashamed to sell your parrot to the town gossip.

The best way out of a difficulty is through it.

The man with the best job in the country is the vice-president. All he has to do is get up every morning and say, "How is the president?"

The only time people dislike gossip is when you gossip about them.

Why don't they pass a constitutional amendment prohibiting anybody from learning anything? If it works as well as prohibition did, in five years Americans would be the smartest race of people on Earth.

You've got to go out on a limb sometimes because that's where the fruit is.

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<http://americanhistory.si.edu/buffalo/index.html>

The Jacobson House (Kiowa Six Gallery)

<https://www.jacobsonhouse.org/kiowa-five/>

Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame

<http://www.okmhf.org/>