

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE:

Culture



& Innovation



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Chickasaw Nation

Choctaw Nation

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Hé, (hello)

I am Kerry Holton, the President of the Delaware Nation in Anadarko, Oklahoma. I am honored to be part of this great opportunity to share exciting things taking place every day in Oklahoma's tribal nations. Being that it's also Native American Heritage month it's a great time to learn about some of the history and heritage of local Native American Indians and their nations.

It is very important that young students everywhere learn the facts about Native American Indians. Native Americans have made major contributions to the building of these United States and can be credited with the most effective democratic forms of government in practice today. They preserved the environment while raising the importance of environmental and wildlife protections, and even made the game of football what it is today thanks to people like Jim Thorpe (Sac & Fox Nation) and the Indian students of Carlisle Indian School. Native American Indians have made and continue to make a difference in the United States every day.

We are thriving, growing and self-sustaining. There are Native American Indians everywhere; some are in your schools, growing into adults that will embark on successful adventures and accomplishments. We are maintaining strong Indian communities while building a bright future, the youth are our future and they are taking hold of their futures, all while obtaining a good education, practicing their traditions and developing leadership skills. Combined with the growing tribal economic developments, tribal nations everywhere are becoming self-reliant and their citizens are more successful.

Oklahoma is a great state for so many reasons. Tribal nations enhance that greatness. Oklahomans should know their all-important tribal history. It's because of this history that we are the great Oklahomans of today. Enjoy learning the things we share and take from it what helps to make you a successful individual.

Welekishku (Have a good day).

President Kerry Holton

Delaware Nation

Tribal Origins and Movement



Chickasaw Nation

The ancient migration story of Chickasaw people is one of survival, perseverance, unity, triumph, adaptability and beauty. Oral tradition tells of two brothers, Chiksa' and Chahta, who led their people from the direction of the setting sun. The brothers brought along an Itti' Fabassa' Holitto'pa' or sacred pole. Each night, they would place the pole in the ground. Upon waking in the morning, Chiksa' and Chahta would look at the pole to determine which way it was leaning, and that would be the direction they traveled. If the pole was not leaning, that was the place they were to settle.

For some time, the tribe journeyed, and yet the pole was found leaning to the east every morning, indicating their journey was not complete. Finally, Chahta



awoke one morning to discover the pole standing straight up and took this to mean they had reached their new homeland. Chiksa' did not agree the pole was standing straight and felt the journey should continue. The brothers eventually came to the conclusion Chahta and his followers would remain in the area, while Chiksa' and his followers would continue the journey. The brothers and their respective followers came to be

known as the Chickasaw (Chiksa') and Choctaw (Chahta) tribes.

Chickasaws found their way to northern Mississippi and portions of Tennessee, Alabama and Kentucky. They settled between the Tombigbee and Tennessee rivers where fresh water and abundant game were located. The rivers provided opportunities for trade and transportation in the region. An ever-enduring feature of the Chickasaw homelands was numerous traces or pathways. They were a bustling expressway across the eastern continent for trade activities, transportation and routes to settle conflict or to afford peace. The most famous remnant of these land trails is the modern 444-mile long Natchez Trace Parkway.

Chickasaw spiritual ancestors arose from mound-builder societies who built great earthen temples, large ceremonial complexes and agricultural fields that fed entire communities.

Chickasaws have always been known as a warrior society. The men commanded strength and endurance unparalleled in the Southeast, but they were not alone. The women participated in battles as well, providing expertise in the fields of strategy and communications.

Chickasaws encountered Europeans in 1540 when Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto and his conquistadors arrived on Chickasaw land. Although the Spanish were eventually defeated and driven from the homelands, the encounter represented the introduction of great change. With the onset of the foreign settlement by the Spanish, British and French, the Chickasaw and other tribes were recognized by the new settlers as strong and worthy of full consideration. Powerful tribes, like the Chickasaw, actually generated a healthy respect from the new nations. This respect came



Chickasaw Migration Legends—The Parting of the Ways, by artist Tom Phillips.



from the knowledge the tribes were strong military forces that could bring to bear a legitimate force on the battlefield.

With the expansion of the United States, European settlers flooded into Indian lands. This led to land cessions reducing Chickasaw land to only the northern part of Mississippi. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. It paved the way for Chickasaws, and other American Indian tribes, to be removed from their homelands.

The Chickasaw people moved to Indian Territory during the “Chickasaw Removal,” on what was called the “Trail of Tears.” Other tribes forced to relocate were the Cherokee, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole, called the “Five Civilized Tribes” because of their highly developed ruling

systems. The Chickasaws were one of the last tribes to move. In 1837, the Treaty of Doaksville called for the resettlement of the Chickasaws among the Choctaw tribe in Indian Territory. In 1856, the Chickasaws separated from the Choctaws and formed their own government.

Tribal leaders established the capital at Tishomingo, adopted a constitution and organized executive, legislative and judicial departments of government, with the offices filled by popular election. Many Chickasaws became successful farmers and ranchers. Chickasaws rebuilt their schools, banks and businesses in Indian Territory.



Delaware Nation

The long history of the Lenni Lenape, or Delaware people as they are now known, reaches far back before the arrival of the Europeans. Since much has been lost over time, it is perhaps best to begin in the forested waterways of the Hudson River Valley. Ranging from

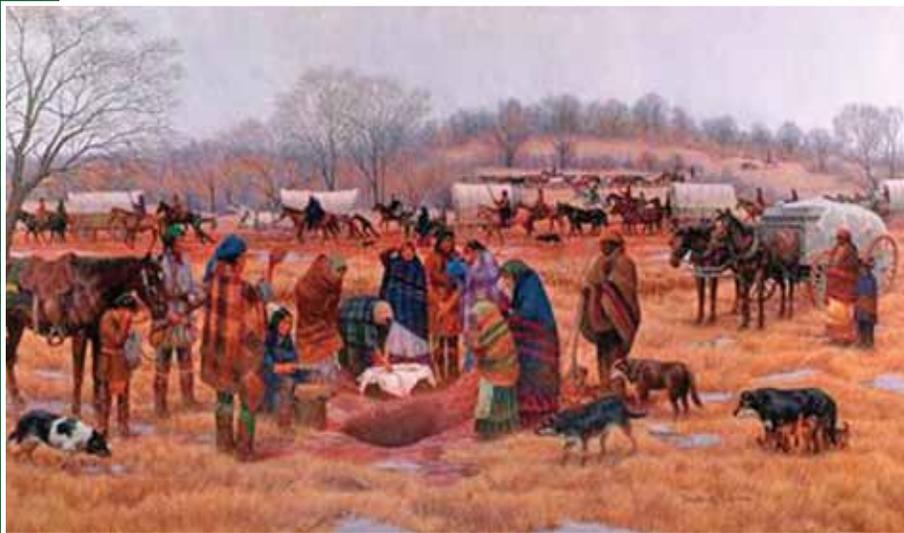
“ . . . the states of New Jersey and Delaware, that part of southeastern Pennsylvania lying between the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers, and the southeastern part of New York state west of the Hudson” (Weslager 1972: 33),

the Delaware people today can be found in small enclaves across the U.S. and Canada. The largest populations reside mainly in Oklahoma, Wisconsin and Ontario, Canada, with families and individual tribal members scattered across North America. Perhaps as frontier artist George Catlin noted in *First Artists of the West*, *George Catlin Paintings and Watercolors* (Troccoli 1993: 52), in describing the Delaware character and reaction to the continuous push into unknown lands; *“No other tribe on the continent has been so much moved and jostled about by civilized invasions; and none have retreated so far, or fought their way so desperately, as they have honorably*

and bravely contended for every foot of the ground they have passed over.”

The Absentee Delaware, “absentee” being a description they were given early on, broke away from the main body of the tribe shortly after the American Revolution. European promises of the inclusion of a 14th state, an Indian state, were made as enticement to sign the first treaty in 1778 between the fledgling United States and the Indians. Of course no Indian state was ever declared and by 1782 continued expansion of the frontier and the violence often erupting from that expansion, compelled the Absentee Delaware to move beyond the borders of the newly formed United States into Spanish territory west of the Mississippi River (Hale 1987: 1).

In 1793 the Delaware were given a land grant from the Baron de Carondelet, Governor General of Louisiana, which they would share with the Shawnees. This tract of land was located northwest of present-day Cape Girardeau, Missouri, along a drainage known as Apple Creek.



*Chickasaw Removal, by artist Tom Phillips.
Courtesy of the Chickasaw Nation.*



*Preparing To Meet The Enemy
by Robert Griffing.*



After 1815 the Cape Girardeau Delaware (Absentee Delaware) continued south and southwest into Arkansas and the Indian Territories while the main body of the tribe continued to reside in Ohio prior to entering into treaties which would bring about their relocation to southwest Missouri along the White River. After the Cape Girardeau group began moving south, they would splinter into three groups; one group residing along the northeast Texas border, others near present day Nacogdoches, Texas, and the third group near present-day Byars, Oklahoma in McCurtain County. These Delaware, along with other bands seeking a place to live, would find themselves removed from Texas three times before eventually settling on Wichita allotments in the Anadarko, Oklahoma area (Hale 1987; 2-5). Known until the late 20th century as the Absentee Delaware, then the Delaware of Western Oklahoma, they are now the federally recognized Delaware Nation.



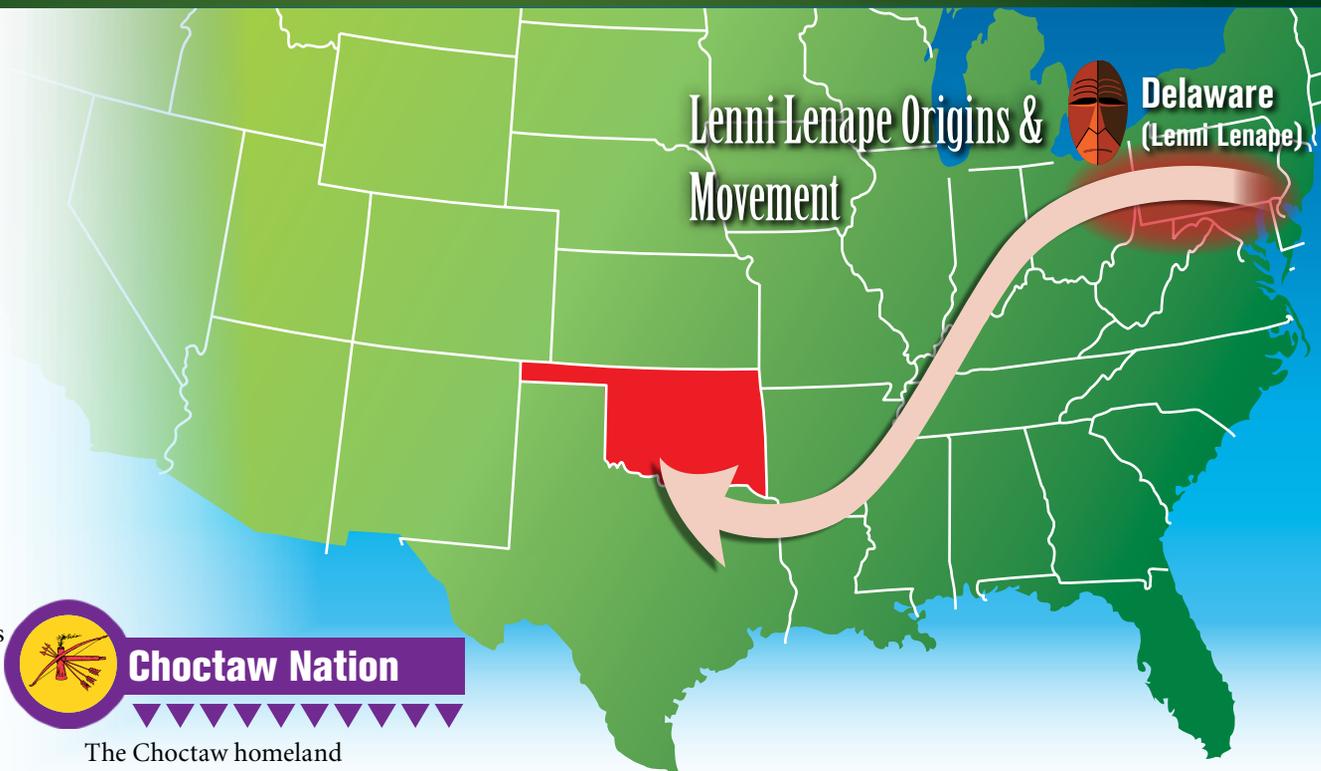
Choctaw Nation

The Choctaw homeland comprises present-day western Alabama, eastern Mississippi, and the Florida panhandle. The Tribe's presence in this area is explained through two ancient stories handed down from generation to generation. The first story tells of Choctaw people being created underground, along with other southeastern tribes including the Chickasaw, Cherokee, and Muscogee "Creek". After the other Tribes emerged onto the surface of the earth through a cave and moved to different regions, the Choctaw people emerged and were told by the creator that they were to stay in that area, which would become the Choctaw homeland. Nearby, the Choctaw built Nvnih Waiya, the first Choctaw village.

Lenni Lenape Origins & Movement

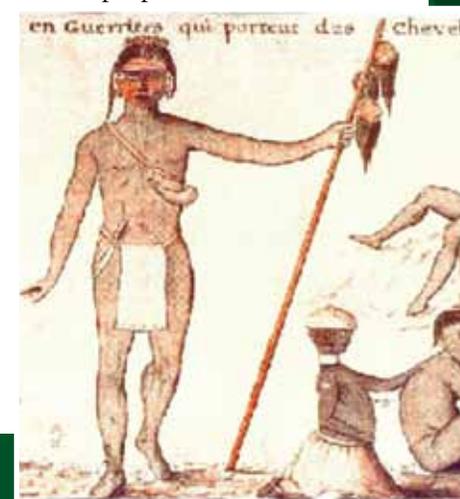


Delaware (Lenni Lenape)



The second origins story tells of the journey of two brothers, Chahta and Chikasha and their people. According to this story, God (Hvshtahli) instructed a holy man to stick a sacred pole upright in the ground, and in the morning, the pole would lean in the direction that God wanted the people to travel to find a new homeland. Every morning for months or according to some versions of the story for many years, the pole leaned towards the southeast and the people daily walked in that direction. Finally, one morning near Nvnih Waiya Creek, the pole appeared to be standing straight and the Choctaw people knew that they had reached their home. Near

the end of their journey, the two brothers argued, and as a result Chikasha and his less numerous supporters separated from the main body of the people. Chahta and his people became known as the Choctaw Tribe while Chikasha and his people became known as



Choctaw Indians by French Artist Alexandre De Batz, 1730's.



the Chickasaw Tribe. To Choctaw people, these two stories, though different, are not contradictory. It may be that they describe once separate groups of people that joined together to make up today's Choctaw people.

Many years later, most Choctaw people were removed from the homeland to what is now southeastern Oklahoma. This came about as a result of the Indian Removal Act, made into law on May 28, 1830. Created by President Andrew Jackson, the Indian

Removal Act called for all Tribes east of the Mississippi River to be removed west of the Mississippi River to Indian Territory. After years of signing treaties that slowly eroded away their land base, in September of 1830, the Choctaw people again assembled with representatives of the United States at Dancing Rabbit Creek in Noxubee County, Mississippi to negotiate a treaty. At the meeting, the U.S. representatives threatened the unprovoked destruction of the Choctaw people, if tribal representatives would not sign a final treaty, ceding the last of Choctaw lands east of the Mississippi River to the United States. The treaty did allow for Choctaws wishing to remain in Mississippi to do so with dual citizenship. After much resistance, the Choctaws signed the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek on September 27, 1830. Removal happened in three waves, 1831-1833, 1845-1854, and 1902-1903. The years of removal are a tragic period



in Choctaw history. Roughly 20,000 Choctaws were forced to leave their homes in Mississippi. Choctaw emigrants in the 1830s, faced some of the worst winters in recorded history. Government provisions, called for by the treaty were often inadequate or simply non-existent. With the lack of shelter and clothing, death became rampant, and the journey was named "The Trail of Tears". It is estimated that more than 2,500 Choctaw men, women, and children, died on their journey to Oklahoma in the 1830s. The descendants of those who survived the trip are today's Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Despite every effort from the United States government, some Choctaws steadfastly remained in the homeland. Although land allotments had been promised to them in the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, most allotments were never provided. Choctaws became sharecroppers in their own land. Descendants of the Choctaw people who stayed in Mississippi make up today's Mississippi Band

of Choctaw Indians. Members of the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians are descended from Choctaw people who remained in Louisiana. After reaching Indian Territory, the Choctaws set about to regain some sense of order out of the chaos they had endured. A new constitution was written, one that mirrored that of the United States, and a national court system was developed. The Choctaw capital was set in Tushkahoma. The Choctaws also established their own form of law enforcement called the Lighthorse. In 1866, Choctaw Chief Allen Wright named the new land "Oklahoma", a term that means "Red People" in the Choctaw language.

The Dawes Act of 1887 once again set out to break up the communally held lands of the Choctaws. Eventually each Choctaw was enrolled on the Dawes Rolls and issued an allotment of land.



Ball Play of the Choctaws – Ball Up by George Catlin, circa 1846-50.

Traditional Housing

Chickasaw Nation

For Chickasaws, the village was the heart of the community, representing their culture and their relationship to the land and to each other.

Traditionally, the ancient Chickasaw homelands were once scattered across forests, mountains and prairies of lands that later became parts of northern Mississippi, southwestern Kentucky, and portions of western Tennessee and northwestern Alabama. Chickasaw towns were typically spread 10-15 miles apart and surrounded by a stockade.

When under attack, the Chickasaws withdrew into a few of the larger towns, making it difficult for their enemies to mount any successful attack. Historians have noted Chickasaws were never defeated in battle, making the small tribe “unconquered and unconquerable.”

A traditional Chickasaw town or village consisted of several compounds or households. Some Chickasaw towns were reported to have numbered more than 200 households. Households could contain a winter house, summer house and corn storage building, or “corn crib.”

The Toompalli’ Chokka’, or summer house, was a lighter structure designed to be used



Summer house

during the warm part of the year by providing shade from the sun and protection from the rain. Located on the edges of the villages, their design allowed for the flow of air, which kept the house cool during hot weather. The average structure was 12 X 22 feet and shaped like a rectangle.

During the cold months, the Chickasaws lived in the Hashtola’ Chokka’, or winter house, which was built for warmth and insulation. The winter house resembled a snail’s shell. Roughly designed in a circle and resembling the number six, the winter house was partially below ground. This layout prevented the heat from escaping the structure by preventing freezing cold wind and rain from blowing into the living area.



Winter house

It is said that the entryway into the home was a narrow corridor about 4 X 6 feet long, only allowing for single-file entry. In addition to preventing heat loss, the winding entrance could be easily defended against enemy intrusion. For warmth and softness, bedding consisted of split-cane mats and the skins of animals, such as buffalo, deer and elk.

The storage house, or corn crib, was a small, enclosed room made of wood, built high above the ground with a small opening for entry. The Chickasaws used the corn crib to shelter goods and store the food supply, such as sunflowers, peas, beans, squash, pumpkins, tobacco, melons and corn, from weather and animals.



Corn crib

The main hub and largest structure of the Chickasaw village is the Aa-anompoli’ Chokka’, or council house. This was also referred to as the mountain house, indicating its larger size and importance. Early each morning, the council of the chiefdom or

village would meet in the council house or the dance ground to discuss important tribal matters, events and diplomacy concerning the Chickasaw people



Council house

A sacred fire was contained in the center of the council house, and a trap door was located in the ceiling to allow smoke from the fire to pass through. Chickasaws believed the smoke carried prayers to *Aba’ Binnil’li’*, the Chickasaw Creator.

A typical Chickasaw traditional village, or *Chikasha Inchocka’*, has been recreated and has been enjoyed by more than 400,000 visitors at the Chickasaw Cultural Center, located in Sulphur, Oklahoma.

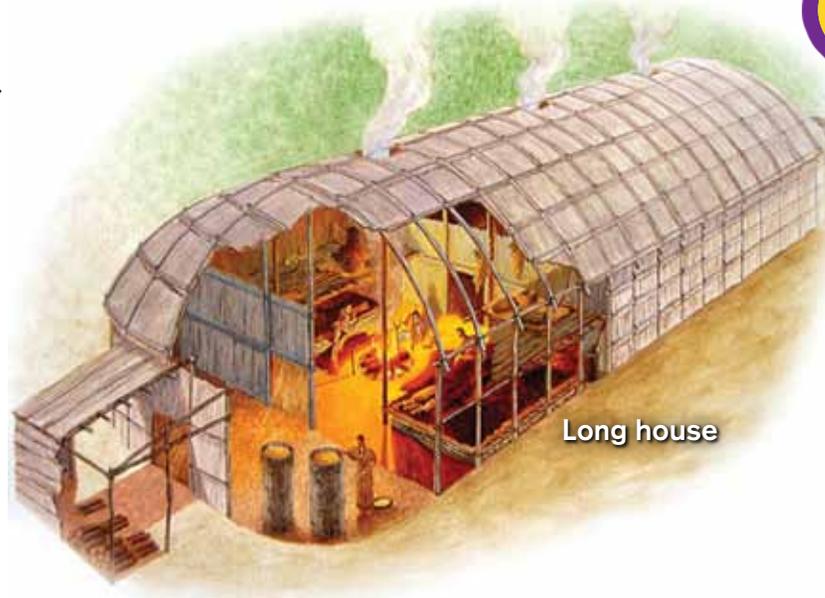
It is more than a replica of the Chickasaws’ traditional dwelling structures. It is a living representation of the Chickasaw people’s lives in their ancestral homelands before removal to Indian Territory in 1837.





Delaware Nation

The Lenape lived in structures of differing size and type according to season. Such structures were known as long houses and often were home to multiple families, approximately 20 feet wide and sometimes over a 100 feet long. Formed from hickory wood saplings set into the ground opposite of one another; the saplings then would be bent into arches and tied together at the top. Large sheets of bark (often from chestnut trees) were used to construct the walls & ceilings, always leaving a smoke hole at the top to allow air flow and prevent the structures from becoming smoke filled from internal fires. Wooden poles were placed horizontally along the inside of these structures and were used to hang cooking pots and other items used in daily life. These long houses were seasonal structures occupied during winter and could be found in clusters atop hills. These seasonal locations were also often surrounded by large stockade fences shaped from trees. Should a village not be contained within a stockade, it would often consist of various size long houses spread over a several acres. Mobility during the summer was essential in maintaining food sources; groups would follow the migratory movements of both large and small game in order to provide subsistence year around.



Long house

Furnishings inside these Long Houses included woven reed mats spread across the floors and hanging upon walls. Often these items were decorated through natural dyes. Carved faces and images were found in the homes of Lenape leaders where ceremonies were often held. There were also sweathouses which would accommodate up to four men and were constructed near waterways. These sweathouses, or their more



Sweat lodge

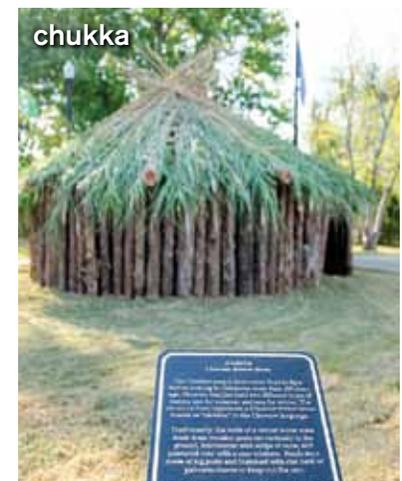
common name of sweat lodges, were constructed in the same method as the long houses and sealed with clay. The description of the Long House indicates the carvings which were an integral part of Lenape spirituality. The homes containing carvings were sometimes also referred to as the Big House based upon the ceremonies often taking place within those dwellings.

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Choctaw Nation

The traditional house is known as “chukka” in the Choctaw language. The Choctaw ancestors conceived and designed the chukka to transform common local raw materials into comfortable and strong buildings that met their basic needs of shelter, protection, and storage. Like today, these houses served as the physical setting of family life, a comfortable place to visit with friends, to share meals, and to sit back and relax from a day’s work and stress. The specific forms of traditional Choctaw houses have changed through time, to meet changing needs and tastes. James Adair documented the mid-1700s construction of Chickasaw / northern Choctaw houses in impressive detail (Adair 1775:419-420) House-building was a well-organized activity, in which community members



chukka



Detail of summer house/pavillion "Choctaw Village Near the Chefuncte" - Francois Bernard (1869).

came together to raise a family's dwelling. The work could be completed in just one day. Work commenced with setting a series of forked posts in the ground in a circular shape, about five or six feet high. These basically served as the studs for the walls and as the outer support for the roof. Four large pine posts were then emplaced in the ground near the center of the house to help hold up the center of the roof. Heavy logs were laid with one end on these vertical wall posts, and the other, raised up on one of the four big posts set near the center of the house. Dry poles were set atop these sloping roof logs, and woven with the oak splints. After the framework was complete, the entire structure was daubed with clay mixed with dry grass. This served as an insulation, similar to adobe of the southwest. When the daubing was half-way dry, the roof

was thatched with dry grass. Poles were laid on top of the thatch and securely lashed down to hold the thatch in place. The doors were made wide enough for only one person to enter, while the houses usually had a winding entrance for six or seven feet to slow cold wind and intruders. The floor of the house was often made a meter lower than the surrounding ground. This helped make the house warmer, and provided protection from enemy bullets. Beds lined the inner walls of the house. These set up several feet off the ground on a platform of oak, making it harder for fleas to attack. A fire was burned in a hearth on the ground at the center of the hut in the evening and covered with ashes at night. The walls themselves are decorated with tanned and painted hides, baskets, woven belts, and weapons ready to defend the community in

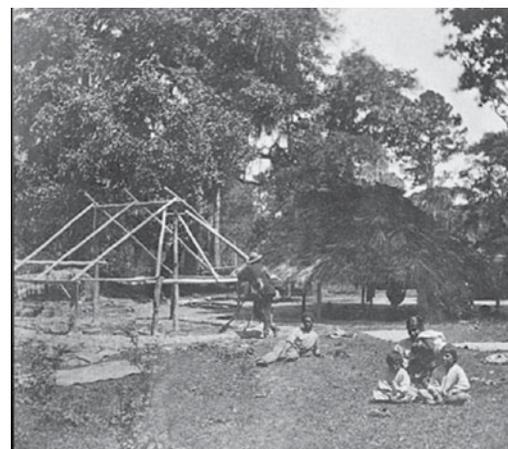
an instant. A type of winter house was also made in the southern part of Choctaw country. These round, domed structures had frames made of small saplings and were thatched with palmetto on their rooks and walls. [There was] A hole in the top of the roof for smoke to escape (Bushnell 1909:7). The large door visible in one surviving image suggests that Choctaws living in this area had less cold to deal with than their northern neighbors. Period descriptions (e.g. Adair 1775:419; Anonymous 1918[1755]), indicate that unlike the traditional winter houses, Choctaw summer houses were rectangular in outline, with a peaked, gabled roof. These roofs had an opening at each end to promote airflow and allow smoke to escape. Walls were solid, and covered in clay mortar, like a winter house. Sometimes, they were even white-washed with powder from burned mussel shells. According to Adair (1775:418-419), summer house construction began



"Choctaw Camp on the Mississippi" - Karl Bodmer (1834).

with setting vertical pine posts in the ground at the corners of the structure. Additionally, three tall posts were vertically emplaced along the center line of the house, one at each gabled end, and one in the center. A long, horizontal ridge pole was to the top of these posts. Sometimes, the rafters were long saplings that laid across the entire roof. They were notched at the ridgepole and fasted with strips of oak or hickory. Lathing was

made of split saplings, and the roof was covered in split pine or cypress clapboards. These were then covered in bark and weighted down with an elaborate system of heavy logs. Doors were made from split poplar, chosen because of its light weight. The interior of these structures had raised beds made of cane.



Construction of Choctaw summer house/pavillion (National Anthropological Archives).

Traditional Dress

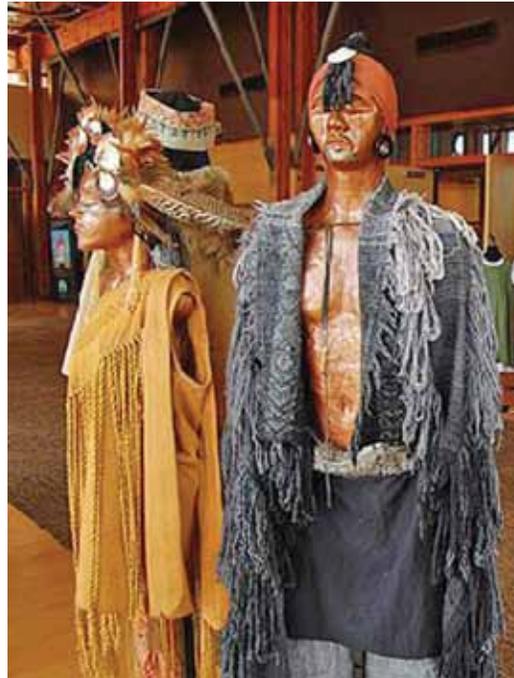
Chickasaw Nation

Before European contact, Chickasaw women wore dresses made from skins sewn together with fishbone needles and deer sinews. In winter, they wrapped themselves in buffalo-calf skins with the fur inward. The women made shoes from skins of deer, bear and elk, carefully tanned and smoked to prevent hardening. The Southeastern-style moccasin was very distinctive in that it was constructed with the seam at the top of the footwear.

The basic male garment was the breechcloth; in the heat of summer their only clothing was a shirt of dressed deerskin. Longer garments of panther, deer, bear, beaver and otter skins, the fleshy side out, warmed them in winter. Hunters wore deerskin boots reaching to the thigh to protect against brambles and thorny thickets.

During winter, when it was necessary to protect the lower limbs from contact with underbrush, hide garments called “leggings” were added. The lower borders of these were tucked under the upper edges of the moccasins, and the upper ends were usually carried high enough so that they could be fastened to the belt by means of straps.

Europeans came with newer fabrics. Over time, clothing morphed into the traditional ribbon



Chickasaw Cultural Center: Display of traditional Chickasaw garb.

shirts and dresses commonly observed now.

The ribbon dress is fashioned after European and settlers’ prairie dresses, which were popular across the plains in the 19th century. The ribbons on the dresses and shirts are worn for adornment, but might also show family or clan colors. Regalia is worn for special occasions.

At the time of removal, most Chickasaw women wore “pioneer dresses” made from cotton. An apron was worn for practical cooking purposes.

A woman would choose the color that represented her family for a

dress that would be worn at ceremonial or special occasions. This dress would have ribbons sewn onto the yoke and on the wristbands. Ruffles were sewn onto the dress at the yoke and at the bottom hem.

For ornamentation, Chickasaw women would decorate their dresses with silver brooches that featured long ribbons attached. A silver comb was often worn by Chickasaw women. This piece of adornment was decidedly Spanish in origin. Long ribbons were often attached to the combs, which hung to the ankles of the wearer as well.

The intricate beaded collars worn at the yoke of the dress were an adaptation of the style of necklace being worn by some European women. The Chickasaws took this style and incorporated it into their culture by constructing the piece with the newly acquired glass beads, a practice of many Southeastern tribal cultures.

Chickasaw men and women at the time of removal adopted many of the social habits of European society. They wore their hair in similar fashion and dressed according to the fashion of the time period. However, certain aspects of

their ancient culture continued to be represented in ceremonial attire.

After coming into contact with the French, Spanish and English, trade goods exchanged were much different from what Chickasaws had known for centuries. Among the new items being offered for trade were cloth, silver, glass beads, headwear, manufactured boots and many other metallic ornaments and clothing staples. Chickasaw men began to slowly incorporate certain aspects of these new clothing items into their apparel. This assimilation of clothing was quite natural to the Chickasaws. Much of their traditional clothing was an assimilation of other tribal cultures with which they had come into contact through trade before European culture arrived in North America. Soon, many Chickasaw men were wearing trader’s coats and pants, footwear, fur caps and cloth shirts.

The Chickasaw turban was taken from French culture. In later years, the turban was replaced by the common straw hat. The accessories on the hat included a decorative band, deer-hair roach with eagle, hawk or turkey feather attached, white plume and a hat pin. In more modern times, the straw hat has been replaced by the black felt cowboy hat by many Chickasaw men.

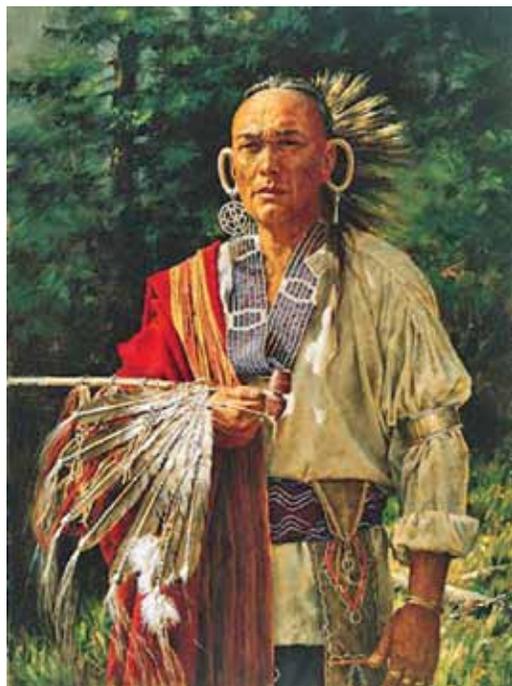




Delaware Nation

The Lenape, despite living in the northeastern woodland climate, generally dressed lightly. The men wore a breechcloth of animal hide (deer) while the women wore a lapped (wrap around) skirt. Belts were generally fashioned from animal hide and decorated with wampum shell. Upper body garments were made of deer hide which would be substituted by blankets after contact with European people. Such blankets were referred to as matchcoats or duffels. Blankets were worn over the right shoulder with the ends loosely knotted or held together by a belt. During winter months the blanket or hide would be substituted by bear, beaver, raccoon or other animal skins sewn or somehow skewed together, for more warmth. Turkey feathers provided capes, some of them involving “painted” feathers, which were tied to hemp backing. Hemp was used also in what are known as burden straps, which were used for carrying heavy materials such as wood.

Moccasins were made of deer or moose hide with ankle flaps and thongs to tie them as we do with modern shoes. A form of temporary footwear came from corn husks, although one wonders how sturdy such a “shoe” would be. In winter, leggings made from animal hide were worn. Snow shoes constructed from wood and likely animal sinew were used during the winter to allow mobility in deep snow. Wampum, a bead fashioned



A Lenape peace emissary (by Robert Griffing)

from Quahog shells (more commonly known as the Western North Atlantic hardshell clam), was used to adorn clothing along with paint and quill to create motifs. Wampum was also used to create necklaces and bandolier straps for adornment.

Because the Lenape were living in what is known as the eastern woodland part of the U.S., copper from the Great Lakes region was also used for adornment in the form of earrings and necklaces with dyed animal hair creating a tassel of sorts. Dying was done with the use of natural elements such as ochre (red) and various plant species. Men wore head bands of snake skin or feathers and often times the feathers were arranged standing straight up in headbands. Roaches,

an ornamental headdress worn by men, were constructed of dyed deer hide attached to a hemp base. Roaches were placed along the center of the head and tied with a leather thong beneath the chin, much as they are today. Men would also wear tobacco pouches around their necks in hide bags in which pipes and tobacco were carried. Lenape men often sported clean shaven heads except for a long scalp-lock left at the crown of the head, while many wore their hair long and loose. Women would braid their hair, often with four braids, held together by a “club” covered with hide and adorned with wampum.

Face painting and tattooing were often elaborate. We have little information on how the tattoos were created, but one would assume a bone or wooden awl was used to create a design on the skin which would be colored with natural dyes. The Lenape used bear grease (fat) liberally applied to the skin to promote warmth, prevent sunburn and keep the insects at bay. The same grease was also applied to the hair.

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Choctaw Nation

In the millennia before Europeans entered Choctaw country, women designed, produced and wore clothing that was both functional and beautiful. Rather than purchasing their materials, they drew upon a great deal of traditional knowledge, skill, and hard work to transform natural objects into the raw materials that were needed to make clothing. The two primary materials that they used include tvlhko (buckskin) and nan tvnna (cloth) made by Choctaw people. In the centuries leading up to European contact, the basic unit of clothing that women wore was the alhkuna, a type of wrap-around skirt (Swanton 1946:472). We know that Southeastern Tribes sometimes made these skirts from buckskin (Adair 1775 6-7), and at times and places Choctaws probably did too. However, our best existing source (Anonymous 1918[1755]:67-68) says that Choctaw women in the early 1700s made their alhkuna out of a piece of fabric, as thick as canvas that was created from a combination of buffalo wool and plant fiber. The fabric is said to have been “double like a two-sided handkerchief”, and to have measured approximately 54 inches wide by 160 inches long. The garment was wrapped around the waist and tied on to make a skirt that probably went down to about the knees. Mississippi is very warm and humid in the summer, and this light, cool garment was usually



all that our grandmothers wore during the hot season. During the cool season, the alhkuna could be augmented with several other pieces of clothing. One of these, a turkey feather mantle, is known as kasko in the Choctaw language (Byington 1915:225). These were made by attaching the iridescent feathers from the turkey's breast to both sides of a net. The feathers over-lapped each other and created a warm, soft garment (Adair 1775:423). Written accounts also indicate that many Southeastern women, instead of wearing a feather mantle, draped a long, rectangular piece of cloth or buckskin over their upper body, wrapping it over their left shoulder, and tying it under their right arm (Elvas 1995[1557]:75-76). In cold weather, Choctaw women, like their Chickasaw relatives to the north, probably wore robes made from the hides of young buffalo (Adair 1775:8). These robes were tanned with the fur on, and were worn with the fur side of the robe against the wearer. Many of the robes worn by women in the Southeast were decorated on the flesh side with a variety of elaborate painted designs, and probably also shell beadwork. On cold days, or when traveling through thorny patches, Choctaw women often wore buckskin pucker-toed moccasins. The long uppers of the moccasins extended halfway up the calf where they nearly met the bottom of the alhkuna.



Choctaw man
BISKINIK | November 2014

Choctaw Cold Weather Clothes

The Choctaw man wore a painted robe, anchi, made from a softly tanned fur-on bison hide. A buckskin breechcloth, apokshiamia, hangs from his waist, and buckskin leggings protect his legs. He wears short, male-style moccasins, tvlhko shulush, on his feet. He wears his hair long. This set Choctaw men apart from the men of other Southeastern Tribes of the time, who kept their hair short or shaved. He carries a quiver, oski naki ailhto, full of arrows and a bow, iti shibata, for the fall deer hunt.

The clothing worn after the turn of the 19th century was similar to that worn by the white settlers. The dress style changed among the women of the white settlers, but the Choctaw women continued to wear the loosely fitted dress with the hemline just above the ankle. During the early 1900's, the women began to adopt the dress style of that era and ready-made dresses were available for purchase.



Choctaw woman
BISKINIK | November 2014

The clothes for ceremonial activities were colorful and carefully sewn by hand. The origin and date of the adoption of this distinctive dress is not certain, but it is similar to the traditional peasant dress in Brittany's Province of France during the early 1800's. The handmade dress has a full sleeve and flowing skirt with ruffles requiring up to six yards of colorful cotton material. The Choctaw dress of today is usually of solid color of green, red, blue, purple, or other bright color, with contrasting color trim. The decorative trim symbolizes the mountains and valleys with a path or trail beside them. The circle and cross symbolizes the sun and the stars. The diamond shaped trim is said to symbolize respect for nature, such as respect for the diamond-backed rattlesnake.

A decorative white apron with contrasting trim and ruffles was an integral part of the Choctaw woman's dress. It is decorative as well as functional. The marital

status of the woman determines the opening of the dress. The unmarried woman's dress is opened in the back, while the married woman's dress is opened at the front for accessibility to nourishment for an infant.

Ornaments worn with the dress for special occasions include a beaded decorative comb on the crown of the head. Other beaded decorations include earrings, medallion, collar necklace in a diamond lace design, and shoulder necklace. Multi-color ribbons are normally worn at the back as decorations while performing the Choctaw social dance. A white handkerchief is worn at the neckline and a pair of moccasins completes the ensemble.



Lorelei Sullivan wears a Choctaw dress to greet visitors at Tribal Headquarters



Traditional Stories & Tales



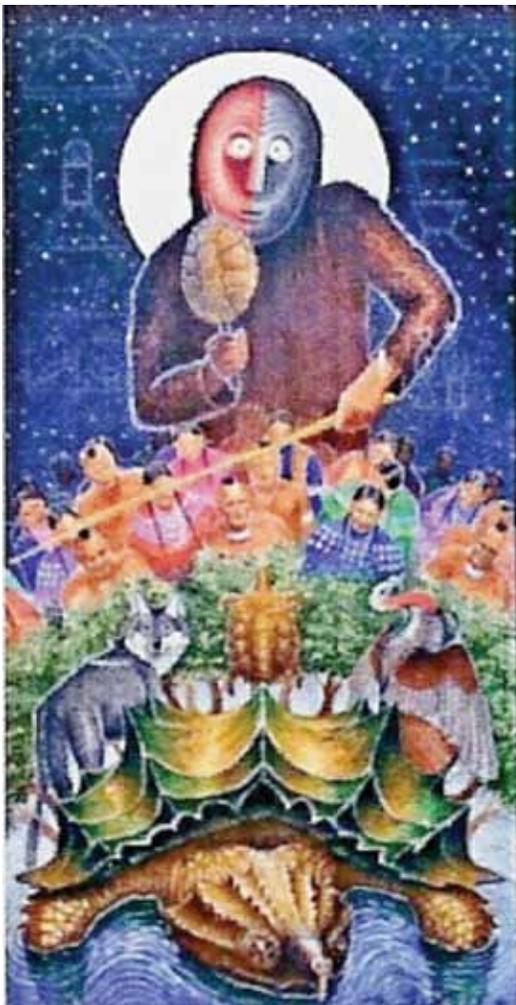
Delaware Nation

The Delaware creation story tells us one day the rain came and the People prayed to our Creator as the waters rose. The Creator directed the People to a large hill and told them to camp upon it. As the rain continued to fall the water began to

pool and rise around them, so they moved to the very top of this hill. As the water crept up toward them, wetting their feet, the hill began to tremble and shake. Rising up with the People upon its back was the great Taakox, or turtle, who had been hiding beneath the hill for many years. Taakox saved the Delaware people and they survived upon his back until the waters receded. In the book, *Turtle Tales: Oral Traditions of the Delaware Tribe of Western Oklahoma*, Martha Ellis tells the story of how we came to this continent, often referred to by Northeastern and Canadian Indian people as Turtle Island;

The Walum Olum (red score) is our recounting of “where we come from.” Recorded in what are known as mnemonic glyphs (somewhat similar to Egyptian hieroglyphs), these stories were traditionally shared through storytelling and at some point an individual decided to record the stories onto wooden strips. The assumption by late 19th and early 20th century interpreters of the Walum Olum is that the oral tradition was passed down from one person to another although if this selection were based upon clan, family or other remains unknown. The part which intrigues is within what is called Book Three of the Walum Olum, in verses fifteen through seventeen: “All of them said they would go together to the

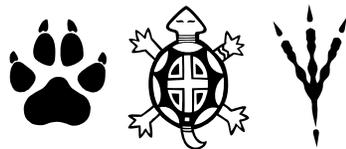
land there, all who were free . . . the Northerners were of one mind and the Easterners were of one mind; it would be good to live on the other side of the frozen water. Things turned out well for those who stayed at the shore of water frozen hard as rocks, and for those at the great hollow well” The mnemonic glyphs were interpreted in the late 19th century by Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, and from his interpretation the Walum Olum suggests two groups of people decided to leave their homelands in what is now modern day Siberia moving across the once frozen Bering Strait southward across the Yukon until arriving at the head waters of the Mackenzie and Columbia Rivers. There, one group would move southeasterly over the subsequent generations eventually arriving at Namaesi Sipu, or the Mississippi River. This group would push on to the Atlantic coast after joining forces with the Mengwe and waging war on the Alligewi (Allegheny) groups living along the eastern bank of the Mississippi. The Alligewi attacked them upon seeing their great population as they began crossing the river despite initially granting them passage. Although the Delaware would remain for many years along the Mississippi according to the Walum Olum, news of pristine forests and streams abundant with game, fowl and fish brought back by explorers and hunters would compel them



“My mother used to say, we came from another island (I guess I will say), not in this . . . She said, “We crossed, we had to go a way up in the North Pole, and the ocean was all frozen.” They had to go that way. So, these Delawares did have plenty to eat on, but they ran out of food right in the middle. So they started eating whatever, they were so hungry. Finally, they got on this side and that is all I know. My mother was telling us. That’s all.”

to continue their move eastward. As the Delaware migrated east they would settle upon the four great rivers; the Susquehanna, Potomac, Hudson and Delaware.

These people called themselves Woapanachke which translates into “the people of the sunrise country.” As the first inhabitants of what is now the northeastern United States, the Woapanachke or Lenni Lenape, were known as the grandfathers addressing other tribes within the Algonkian family as their grandchildren. The kinship ties among the tribes comprising the Algonkian group considered the Delaware to be the oldest existing tribe among them which suggests we were the first to occupy the region. According to the Walum Olum not all the Delaware people moved into the four rivers area but one group remained along the eastern bank of the Mississippi while another group remained west of the river. From the Delaware who settled in the northeastern part of our continent would come our three clans; the Munsee (Wolf Clan), the Unami (Turtle Clan) and the Unalachtigo (Turkey Clan).



Choctaw Nation

Traditional Choctaw Stories

As with all “indigenous cultures” around the world, Choctaw stories are representative of “why stories” found in most Native American tribes. “Why stories” sought to express the significance and meaning of the world around them. The natural elements, the traits and behavior of animals and explanations of “how things



came to be” are the basis of “oral storytelling” passed down through generations. Many stories were open-ended and taught cultural values, manners and tradition.



Why the Rabbit Has a Short Tail



A very long time ago, only the Red People and the wildlife were on this land. At that time, the rabbit had a long tail.

Early one very cold morning, he was hopping and playing. He looked toward the trail and saw a fox coming. The fox had some fish. “Wow! I’ll ask him where he caught the fish,” thought the rabbit. When the fox arrived, Rabbit asked, “Fox, where did you catch those fish?” The fox said to him, “I caught them at the branch. Although the branch was frozen, I dug a small hole in the ice and put my tail through the hole. I sat there for quite a while and my tail began to get heavy. I pulled my tail out and the fish were hanging on it.”

The rabbit hopped very quickly toward the branch. When he got there, he dug a small hole in the ice and put his tail through it. It was very cold but the rabbit kept sitting on the ice. When he thought he had enough fish, he pulled his tail but it was frozen to the ice. He couldn’t take his tail out so he pulled again. He pulled so hard that his tail snapped. That is why the rabbit has a short tail.



The Economic Impact of the Tribes on Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY –

In 2011, Oklahoma City University (OCU) Meinders School of Business studied the economic impact of tribal governments in Oklahoma.

Results of the study, released in 2012, revealed that the Chickasaw Nation made a contribution of more than \$2.4 billion to the Oklahoma economy in 2011.

According to the report, the Chickasaw Nation employed more than 10,000 workers in Oklahoma with a payroll of \$318 million.

All told, activities of the Chickasaw Nation, including multiplier effects, account for approximately 16,000 jobs, \$525 million in income to workers and \$2.43 billion in state production of goods and services.

Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby said the economic impact is a result of the tribe's overall mission.

"Economic development is a vital part of our core mission to enhance the overall quality of

life of the Chickasaw people," Gov. Anoatubby said. "We strive to operate our government and business operations in a manner which enhances opportunities for all Oklahomans. This study seems to confirm that we are achieving that goal."

In a study of all 38 federally-recognized tribes in the state, researchers found the tribes contributed \$10.8 billion to the state economy in 2011 and supported the equivalent of 87,174 full-time jobs and \$2.5 billion in state income when multiplier impacts were taken into account.

Dave Lopez was Oklahoma Secretary of Commerce when the study was released.

"The economic impact analysis shows that Oklahoma tribal governments have a significant and beneficial impact on Oklahoma's overall economy," Lopez said at the time. "As made evident by the results in the study, Oklahoma's tribes provide economic opportunities and growth to all Oklahomans – particularly in rural areas of



the state – and also help to lower the financial obligation of the state government by providing essential education, health, social and economic development services to their respective citizens."

Seven Oklahoma tribes participated in the study: the Cherokee Nation, the Chickasaw Nation, the Choctaw Nation, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Peoria Tribe and the Shawnee Tribe. ERPI collected business and government data from

participating tribes, compiled the data and then extrapolated it to all Oklahoma tribes on a per citizen basis in order to capture total tribal spending, business revenues and employment figures. Then, study authors used this data to determine the multiplier effect of tribal economic activities – the number of non-tribal jobs and income supported by the tribes.



THEY'LL KNOW WE ARE

Choctaw



The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is the third-largest federally recognized tribe in the United States. 200,000 Tribal Members Worldwide

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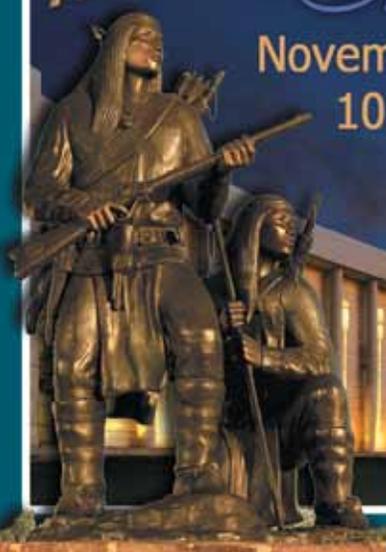
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