

## The Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Oklahoma

(Oklahoma Social Studies Standards, OSDE)

**Tribe:** The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Mvskoke

**Tribal websites:** [www.muscogeenation-nsn.gov](http://www.muscogeenation-nsn.gov)

### 1. Migration/movement/forced removal

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 2.3** *“Integrate visual and textual evidence to explain the reasons for and trace the migrations of Native American peoples including the Five Tribes into present-day Oklahoma, the Indian Removal Act of 1830, and tribal resistance to the forced relocations.”*

Preremoval:

The Mvskoke have lived in the Southeast portion of what is now the United States of America for thousands of years. Early ancestors of the Muscogee constructed magnificent earthen pyramids along the rivers of this region as part of their elaborate ceremonial complexes. The historic Muscogee later built expansive towns within these same broad river valleys in the present states of Alabama, Georgia, Florida and South Carolina.

Treaty of 1832

In the early 19th century, the United States Indian policy focused on the removal of the Muscogee and the other Southeastern tribes to areas beyond the Mississippi River. In the removal treaty of 1832, Muscogee leadership exchanged the last of the cherished Muscogee ancestral homelands for new lands in Indian Territory (Oklahoma). Many of the Lower Muscogee (Creek) had settled in the new homeland after the treaty of Washington in 1827. But for the majority of Muscogee people, the process of severing ties to a land they felt so much a part of proved impossible. The U.S. Army enforced the removal of more than 20,000 Muscogee (Creeks) to Indian Territory in 1836 and 37.

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 2.7** *“Compare and contrast multiple points of view to evaluate the impact of the Dawes Act which resulted in the loss of tribal communal lands and the redistribution of lands by various means including land runs as typified by the Unassigned Lands and the Cherokee Outlet, lotteries, and tribal allotments.”*

## Dawes Act

In the late 1800s the Dawes Commission began negotiating with the Muscogee Nation for the allotment of the national domain. In 1898, the United States Congress passed the Curtis Act which made the dismantling of the National governments of the Five Civilized Tribes and the allotment of collectively-held tribal domains inevitable. In 1890, the noted statesman Chitto Harjo helped lead organized opposition to the dissolution of Muscogee National government and allotment of collectively-held lands. In his efforts he epitomized the view of all Muscogee people that they possessed an inherent right to govern themselves. For individuals like Chitto Harjo it was unimaginable that the Nation could be dissolved by the action of a foreign government. This perception proved to be correct.

## 2. Maps

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 2.3** *“Integrate visual and textual evidence to explain the reasons for and trace the migrations of Native American peoples including the Five Tribes into present-day Oklahoma, the Indian Removal Act of 1830, and tribal resistance to the forced relocations.” Maps of tribal hometowns before 1830; original homeland map.*



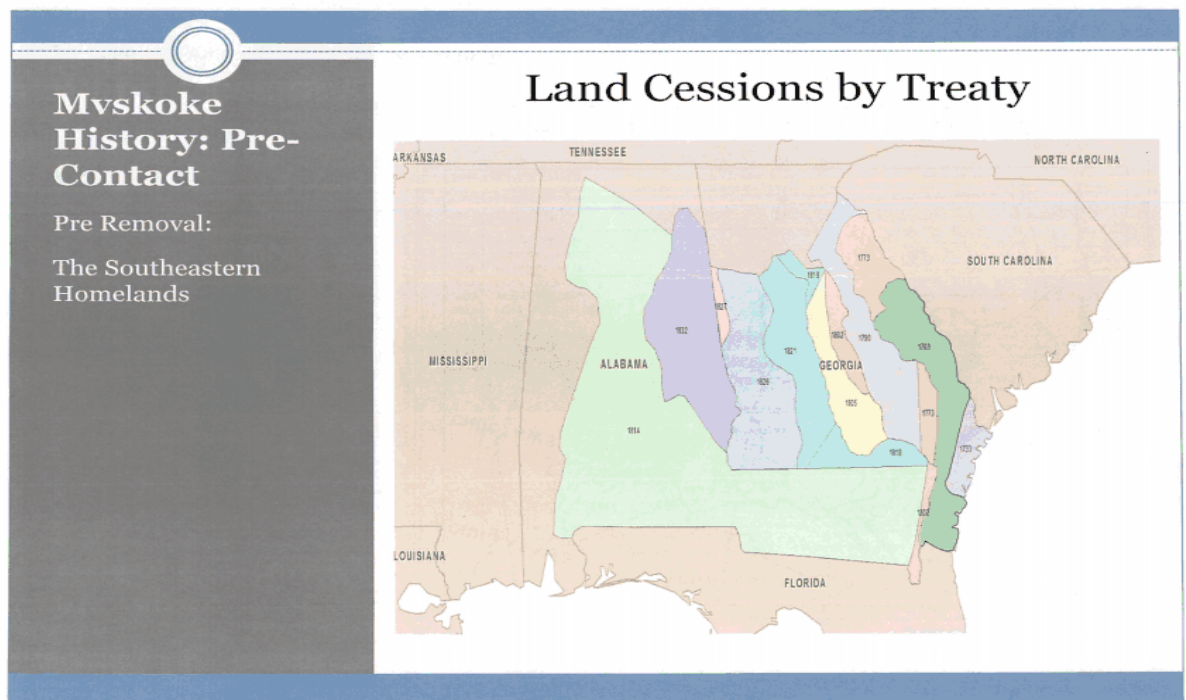
Pre Removal:

### Locations of Mvskoke Towns

- Upper Creeks: Lived along the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers in Alabama. Many Upper Towns were close to Ft. Toulouse and supported the French.
- Lower Creeks: Lived along the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers in Georgia. Many Lower Towns were close to Florida and were friendly to the Spanish.



Powerpoint from Muscogee (Creek) Nation: Mvskoke History: A Short Course  
For Muscogee Nation Employees 2013

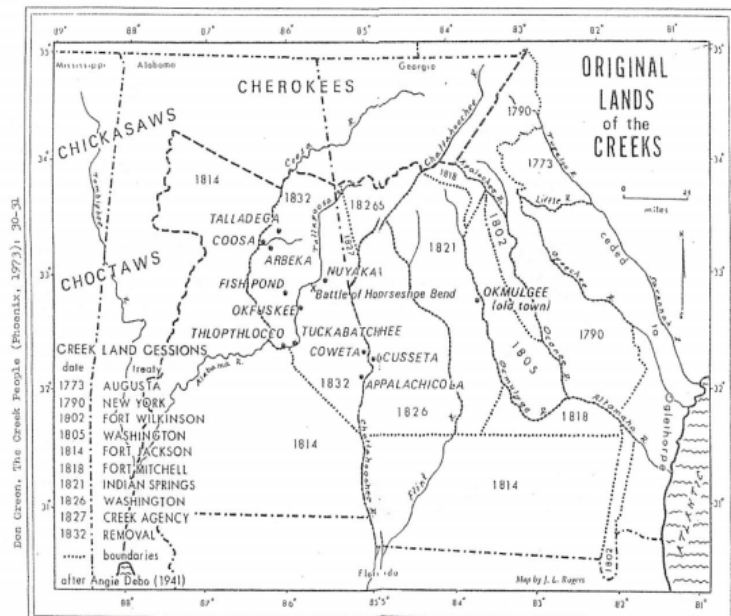


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For Muscogee Nation Employees 2013

## Mvskoke History: Pre- Contact

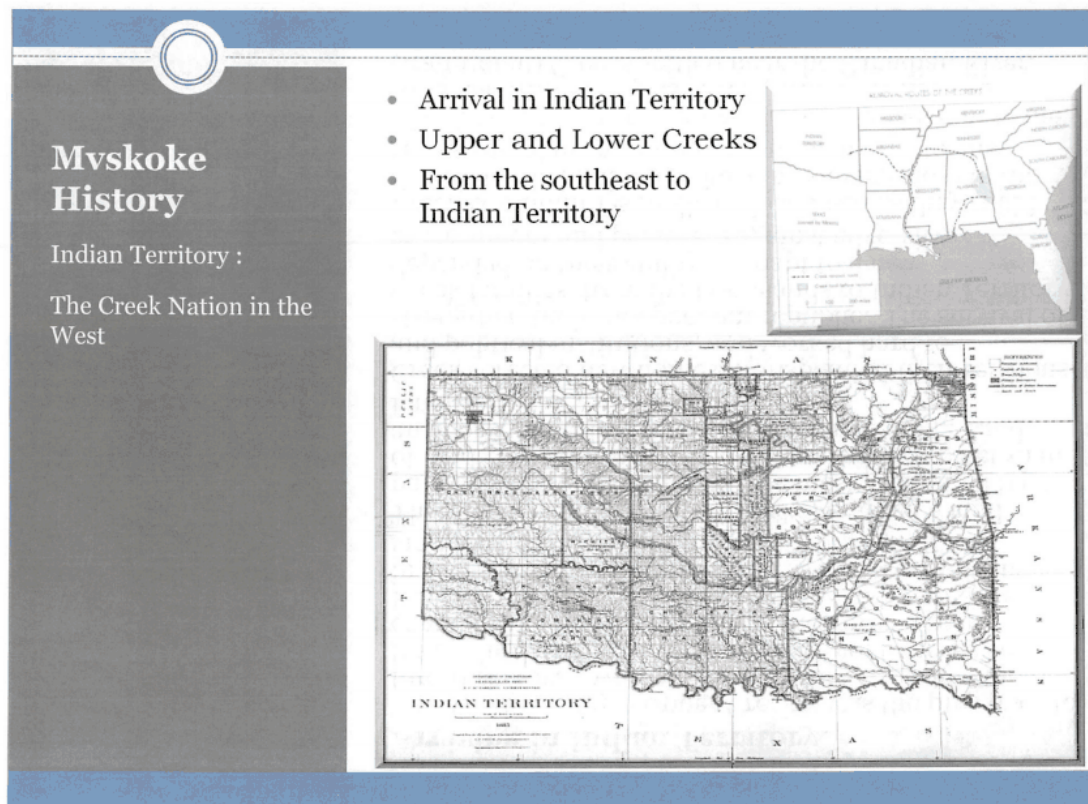
Pre Removal:

The Southeastern  
Homelands



Up until the formation of the United States, Creek leaders had entered into Treaties with European Nations however, after the Revolutionary War, McGillivray negotiated with the U.S. to obtain federal recognition and protection.

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### 3. Population Past/Present

Total tribal enrollment – 63,000  
Tribal enrollment in Oklahoma

#### 4. Government; Chiefs vs Chairman; Elected or Paternal

**US Government C3 Standard 3.4** *“Summarize and explain the relationships and the responsibilities between national and state governments including tribal and local governments.*

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard** *“The student will analyze the formation and development of constitutional government in Oklahoma. 1) Compare and contrast the development of governments among the Native American tribes, the movement for the state of Sequoyah . . . 2) Describe and summarize attempts to create a state constitution joining Indian and Oklahoma Territories including the impact of the Progressive and Labor Movements resulting in statehood on November 16, 1907.”*

- In 1867, the Muscogee people adopted a written constitution that provided for a Principal Chief and a Second Chief, a judicial branch and a bicameral legislature composed of a House of Kings and a House of Warriors. Representation in both houses of this Legislative assembly was determined by tribal town. This "constitutional" period lasted for the remainder of the 19th century.
- The Muscogee (Creek) Nation 1974 Constitution continued the 1867 constitutional organization of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government, with distinct separation of power among the three.
- The Executive Branch includes the Office of the Principal Chief, Second Chief, Tribal Administrator and Chief of Staff who oversee the daily operations of the tribe.
- The Legislative Branch is comprised of the National Council of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and oversees proposed legislation.
- The Judicial Branch is divided into two branches including the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court and Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is the Nation's highest court with original jurisdiction over challenges to the Constitution of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and appellate jurisdiction over cases appealed from the District Court. The Supreme Court is the final authority on the Constitution and Laws of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

#### 5. Language Group

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 4.1** *“Compare and contrast the successes and failures of the United States policy of assimilation of the Native Americans in Oklahoma including the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and the effects of the Indian Boarding Schools (1880s-1940s) upon Native Americans' identity, culture, traditions, and tribal government and sovereignty.”*

- **Creek (Mvskoke) is a Muskogean language with about 4700 speakers in the US states of Oklahoma and Florida.**

## Muskogee Vowels

<u>Character We Use:</u>	<u>Sometimes Also Used:</u>	<u>IPA symbol:</u>	<u>Muskogee pronunciation:</u>
a	a:, ā	a ~ a <sup>1</sup>	Like the <i>a</i> in <i>father</i> . It is sometimes, but not always, lengthened.
e	i	ɪ ~ ɛ	Like the <i>i</i> in <i>pit</i> . Some speakers pronounce it more like the <i>e</i> in <i>pet</i> . Since many Creek speakers use the letter <i>e</i> to represent both short and long <i>e</i> (instead of using the <i>ē</i> character below), be aware that Creek words written with this letter may sometimes be pronounced with an <i>eas</i> in <i>Pete</i> instead.
ē	e, ě, i, i:	ī ~ i <sup>1</sup>	Like the <i>e</i> in <i>Pete</i> . It is sometimes, but not always, lengthened.
i	ae, æ, ai, ii, e	ej ~ e	Like the <i>ai</i> in <i>bait</i> . In the past, this sound was more commonly pronounced like the <i>i</i> in <i>bite</i> , but few if any speakers pronounce it that way anymore.
o	o:, ō, ω	o ~ o <sup>1</sup>	Like the <i>o</i> in <i>note</i> . It is sometimes, but not always, lengthened.
u	o, oo	ū	Like the <i>u</i> in <i>put</i> .
ue	oe, œ	oj ~ wi	Like the <i>oy</i> in <i>boy</i> or the <i>wee</i> in <i>weed</i> .
v	a, u	ʌ	Like the <i>u</i> in <i>cup</i> .

## Muskogee Consonants

<u>Character We Use:</u>	<u>Sometimes Also Used:</u>	<u>IPA symbol:</u>	<u>Muskogee pronunciation:</u>
c	ch, č	t <sup>1</sup> ~ d <sup>3</sup>	Like <i>ch</i> in <i>char</i> or <i>j</i> in <i>jar</i> .
f		φ ~ β	A bilabial fricative, like an English "f" or "v" sound but pronounced without touching the upper teeth to the lower lip. The Spanish "v" and the Japanese "f" sound

			like this Creek sound.
h		h	Like <i>h</i> in English <i>hay</i> .
k		k	Like the unaspirated <i>k</i> in <i>sky</i> .
l		l	Like <i>l</i> in <i>light</i> .
m		m	Like <i>m</i> in <i>moon</i> .
n		n	Like <i>n</i> in <i>night</i> .
p		p	Like the unaspirated <i>p</i> in <i>spin</i> .
r	hl, th, ɬ	ɬ	This sound is a lateral fricative that doesn't really exist in English. It sounds like the "ll" in the Welsh name "Llewellyn." Some English speakers can pronounce it well if they try to pronounce the "breathy l" in the word <i>clue</i> without the <i>c</i> in front of it.
s		s~š~z	Like <i>s</i> in <i>sue</i> . Sometimes it sounds more <i>sh</i> in <i>shoe</i> or <i>z</i> in <i>zoo</i> .
t		t	Like the the unaspirated <i>t</i> in <i>star</i> .
w		w	Like <i>w</i> in <i>way</i> .
y		j	Like <i>y</i> in <i>yes</i> .

## Muskogee Double Consonants

When a Muskogee word is spelled with double letters, like *esse* (hair) or *cetto* (snake), the consonant must be pronounced with double length. For an English speaker, the easiest way to pronounce a consonant with double length is to imagine a word break between the two consonants. The **s** sounds in "dress suit" are pronounced like the ones in *esse*, and the **t** sounds in "night-time" are pronounced like the ones in *cetto*.

## 6. Cultural Identifiers – i.e. Mound Builders; Plains

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 4.1** “Compare and contrast the successes and failures of the United States policy of assimilation of the Native Americans in Oklahoma including the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and the effects of the Indian Boarding Schools (1880s-2013) upon Native Americans’ identity, culture, traditions, and tribal government and sovereignty.” *Oklahoma schools only*

- Indian territory Creek boarding/day schools

- Tullahassee Manual labor school was located ten miles north of present town of Muskogee.
- Koweta Mission a day school was opened in 1843
- Loughridge Boarding School was opened in 1851.
- Ashbury Manual labor school was opened by the Methodist Northeast of Eufaula.
- Harrell Institute a Methodist school was awarded a charter in 1881, as the Creek Nation's first Higher Education Institution in Muskogee.
- Bacone College (Indian University) was awarded a charter and land grant from the Creek Nation in 1885.
- In the 1890's leveraging Mission operated near Wetumka, Nuyaka Mission west of Okmulgee and Yuchi in Sapulpa
- Wealaka replaced Tullahassee, which burned in 1880.

Oklahoma Historical Society source to consider for Boarding Schools:  
<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/a/am012.html>

## 7. Fine arts

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 4.1** *“Compare and contrast the successes and failures of the United States policy of assimilation of the Native Americans in Oklahoma including the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and the effects of the Indian Boarding Schools (1880s-1940s) upon Native Americans’ identity, culture, traditions, and tribal government and sovereignty.”*

- **Creekfestival.com**
- **Acee Blue Eagle, Artist**
- **Joy Harjo, Poet**
- **Suzan Shown Harjo, Poet, writer**
- **Jim Pepper, jazz musician**
- **Will Sampson, Film Actor**
- **Cynthia Leitich Smith, Children and young adult author**
- **Willima Harjo LoneFight, Author.**

## 8. Significant events (ie. Massacres, Battles, Supreme Court cases...)

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 2.4C** *“Summarize the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction Treaties on Native American peoples, territories, and tribal sovereignty including the a) Required enrollment of the Freedmen, b) Second Indian Removal and the role of the Buffalo Soldiers, c) Significance of the Massacre at the Washita, d) Reasons for the reservation system, and e) Establishment of the western military posts of Fort Sill, Fort Supply, and Fort Reno.”*

## Revolutionary War era

Like many Native American groups east of the [Mississippi](#) and Louisiana Rivers, the Creeks were divided in the [American Revolutionary War](#). The Lower Creeks remained neutral; the Upper Creeks allied with the [British](#) and fought the American Patriots.

After the war ended in 1783, the Creeks discovered that Britain had ceded Creek lands to the now independent [United States](#). Georgia began to expand into Creek territory. Creek statesman Alexander McGillivray rose to prominence as he organized pan-Indian resistance to this encroachment and received arms from the Spanish in Florida to fight trespassers. McGillivray worked to create a sense of Creek nationalism and centralize Creek authority. He struggled against village leaders who individually sold land to the United States. By the Treaty of New York in 1790, McGillivray ceded a significant portion of the Creek lands to the United States under President [George Washington](#) in return for federal recognition of Creek sovereignty within the remainder. However, when McGillivray died in 1793 Georgia continued to expand into Creek territory.

## Red Stick War



Menawa visited Washington, D.C. in 1826 to protest the Treaty of Indian Springs. Painted by Charles Bird King.

The Creek War of 1813-1814, also known as the Red Stick War, began as a [civil war](#) within the Creek Nation, only to become enmeshed within the [War of 1812](#). Inspired by the fiery eloquence of the [Shawnee](#) leader [Tecumseh](#) and their own religious leaders, Creeks from the Upper Towns, known to the Americans as Red Sticks, sought to aggressively resist white immigration and the "civilizing programs" administered by U.S. Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins. Red Stick leaders William Weatherford (Red

Eagle), Peter McQueen, and Menawa violently clashed with the Lower Creeks led by William McIntosh, who were allied with the Americans.

On August 30, 1813, Red Sticks led by Red Eagle attacked the American outpost of Fort Mims near Mobile, Alabama, where white settlers and their Indian allies had gathered. The Red Sticks captured the fort by surprise, and a massacre ensued, as prisoners—including women and children—were killed. Nearly 250 died, and panic spread across the American southwestern frontier.



Andrew Jackson and William "Red Eagle" Weatherford after the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, 1814

Tennessee, Georgia, and the Mississippi Territory sent militia units deep into Creek territory. Although outnumbered and poorly armed, the Red Sticks put up a desperate fight from their strongholds. On March 27, 1814, General [Andrew Jackson's](#) Tennessee [militia](#), aided by the 39th U.S. Infantry Regiment plus [Cherokee](#) and Creek allies, finally crushed the Red Sticks at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend on the Tallapoosa River. Red Eagle surrendered personally to Andrew Jackson, announcing himself as William Weatherford.

Though the Red Sticks had been soundly defeated and around 3,000 Upper Creeks died in the war, the remnants held out several months longer. In August 1814, exhausted and starving, they surrendered to Jackson at Wetumpka (near the present city of Montgomery, Alabama). On August 9, 1814, the Creek nation was forced to sign the Treaty of Fort Jackson, which ended the war and required them to cede some 20 million acres (81,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of land—more than half of their ancestral territorial holdings—to the United States. Even those who had fought alongside Jackson were compelled to cede land, since Jackson held them responsible for allowing the Red Sticks to revolt. The state of Alabama was carved largely out of their domain and was admitted to the United States in 1819.

Many Creeks refused to surrender and escaped to Florida. Some allied themselves with Florida Indians (who eventually become collectively called the Seminoles) and with the

British against the Americans. They were involved on both sides of the Seminole War in Florida.

Oklahoma Historical Society: <http://www.okhistory.org/research/indianrecs>

## 9. Current Information on tribe

Contemporary Creek



 A Creeks U.S. Army soldier preparing [frybread](#) during a 2004 pow-wow in [Iraq](#)

Most Muscogees were removed to Indian Territory, although some remained behind. There are Muscogees in Alabama living near Poarch Creek Reservation in Atmore (northeast of Mobile), as well as Creeks in essentially undocumented ethnic towns in Florida. The Alabama reservation includes a bingo hall and holds an annual powwow on [Thanksgiving](#). Additionally, Muscogee descendants of varying degrees of acculturation live throughout the southeastern United States.

The tribal government operates a budget in excess of \$106 million, has over 2,400 employees, and maintains tribal facilities and programs in eight administrative districts. The nation operates several significant tribal enterprises, including the Muscogee Document Imaging Company; travel plazas in Okmulgee, Muskogee and Cromwell, Oklahoma; construction, technology and staffing services; and major casinos in Tulsa and Okmulgee. The tribal population is fully integrated into the larger culture and economy of Oklahoma, with Muscogee Nation citizens making significant contributions

in every field of endeavor, while continuing to preserve and share a vibrant tribal identity through events such as annual festivals, ball-games, and language classes. The Nation's historic old Council House, built in 1878 and located in downtown Okmulgee, was completely restored in the 1990s and now serves as a [museum](#) of tribal history.

Green corn ceremonies are still practiced today by many different native peoples of the Southeastern Woodland Culture, including the Creek. The ceremony is marked with dancing, feasting, [fasting](#) and religious observations. The Stomp Dance and Green Corn Ceremony are both highly revered gatherings and rituals that have largely remained non public.

#### **10. Other information (ie. Elder testimonials; Guest speakers; Literature; Famous Tribal members...)**

Hwy 75 & Loop 56  
Okmulgee, OK 74447  
(918) 732-7600  
(800) 482-1979

#### **Sources:**

Mvskoke History: A Short Course

[http://www.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/Mvskoke\\_History\\_Powerpoint.pdf](http://www.ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/Mvskoke_History_Powerpoint.pdf)

Oklahoma Historical Society source to consider for Indian Removal information:

<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/i/in015.html>

The Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Indian.html>

Oklahoma Indian Country Guide, Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department  
[NIE 2011 OK Indian Country Guide\[1\].pdf](#)

Oklahoma Historical Society

Oklahoma Indian Country Guide, Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department *One State Many Nations*

The Library of Congress