

## Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma

*(Oklahoma Social Studies Standards, OSDE)*

**Tribe:** Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma

**Tribal websites:** <http://www.ottawatribe.org>

### 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.”*

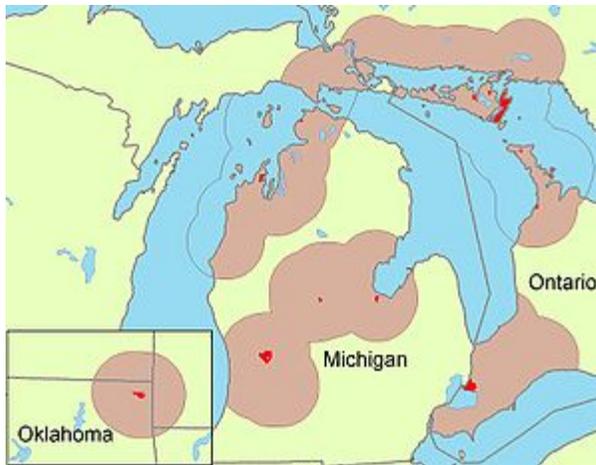
**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 2.7** *“Compare and contrast multiple points of view to evaluate the impact of the Dawes Act which resulted in the loss of tribal communal lands and the redistribution of lands by various means including land runs as typified by the Unassigned Lands and the Cherokee Outlet,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

- Original Homeland – present day Ontario, Canada and Michigan
- Location in Oklahoma - Location in Oklahoma – Far northeastern Oklahoma in an area which includes the Eastern Shawnee, Seneca-Cayuga, Miami, Modoc, Peoria, Quapaw, and Wyandotte Tribes of Oklahoma
- "Ottawa" or "Odaawaa" comes from the word, *Adaawe*, which means "to trade." They traded with other tribes and eventually the French. Ottawas are part of the [Three Fires Confederacy](#), with the Ojibwa and [Potawatomi](#). The Oklahoma Ottawas are descended from Ottawa bands that moved from [Manitoulin Island](#) and the [Bruce Peninsula](#), both in Ontario, Canada, south into [Michigan](#). They agreed to settle near [Fort Detroit](#) and the [Maumee River](#) in [Ohio](#).
- Pressured by the passage of the [Indian Removal Act](#) of 1830, the Ottawa of Blanchard's Fork, Roche de Bœuf and Auglaize Reserves of Ohio signed a treaty in 1833. The treaty ceded their lands in Michigan, Ohio, and [Illinois](#) in exchanged for lands in first [Iowa](#), then [Kansas](#). They did not relocate until April 1837. Of the 600 Ottawa who emigrated to Kansas, "more than 300 died within the first two years, because of exposure, lack of proper food, and the great difference between the cool, damp woods of Ohio and the dry, hot plains of Kansas."
- One of the greatest Indian chiefs to appear on the American continent was Chief Pontiac. Pontiac was the head of a loose confederacy consisting of Ottawa, Ojibwa, and Potawatomis.

- As previously stated, the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma is made up of descendants of the Ottawa who after migrating from Canada into Michigan agreed to live in the area around Fort Detroit and the Maumee River in Ohio. After the passage of President Jackson's Indian Removal Bill in 1830 there were villages in Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan. In 1833, they signed over their lands in Ohio, Michigan and Illinois. They were very hesitant to move, and it wasn't until April 1837, that the Ottawa of Blanchard's Fork, Roche de Boeuf, and Oquanoxies's Village agreed to immigrate to a new site in Kansas. Within five years of the move nearly half of the Ottawa had died.
- The Ottawa knew that in order to survive their children must be educated. In 1862 the Ottawa were allotted 74,000 acres of land. The Ottawa gave 20,000 acres of that land to be used and sold to raise money to build a Baptist school for the education of whites and Indians. This university was named after the Ottawa. The Indians made an arrangement with the university that the Ottawa children would be educated free of charge. The reservation where the Ottawa lived became a township named after them. They lived there until 1867.
- In 1867, the Ottawa sold their land in Kansas and moved to Indian Territory, in Oklahoma. There they entered into a contract with the Shawnee tribe to purchase approximately 14863 acres, which was part of the Shawnee reservation. When the tribe moved to Oklahoma in 1867 more of the Ottawa had died and only about 200 were left.
- At the time of the Dawes Act of 1887 in Oklahoma, lands formerly purchased from the Shawnee and now under control of the Ottawa, were broken up into individual allotments. This caused considerable trouble for the tribe, but their most difficult days were ahead. In 1891, 157 Ottawa were allotted land, and the US federal government sold the rest of their tribal lands. In 1936, the tribe organized under the [Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act](#) and gained federal recognition. In 1956 The United States Government decided that the Ottawa Tribe served no purpose and terminated them. This was a long dark period in the Tribes history but they did not give up and on May 15, 1978 the Ottawa Tribe was restored. The Ottawa Tribe was reestablished as a federally recognized government when the Ottawa Council and U.S. Congress ratified the Constitution in 1979.

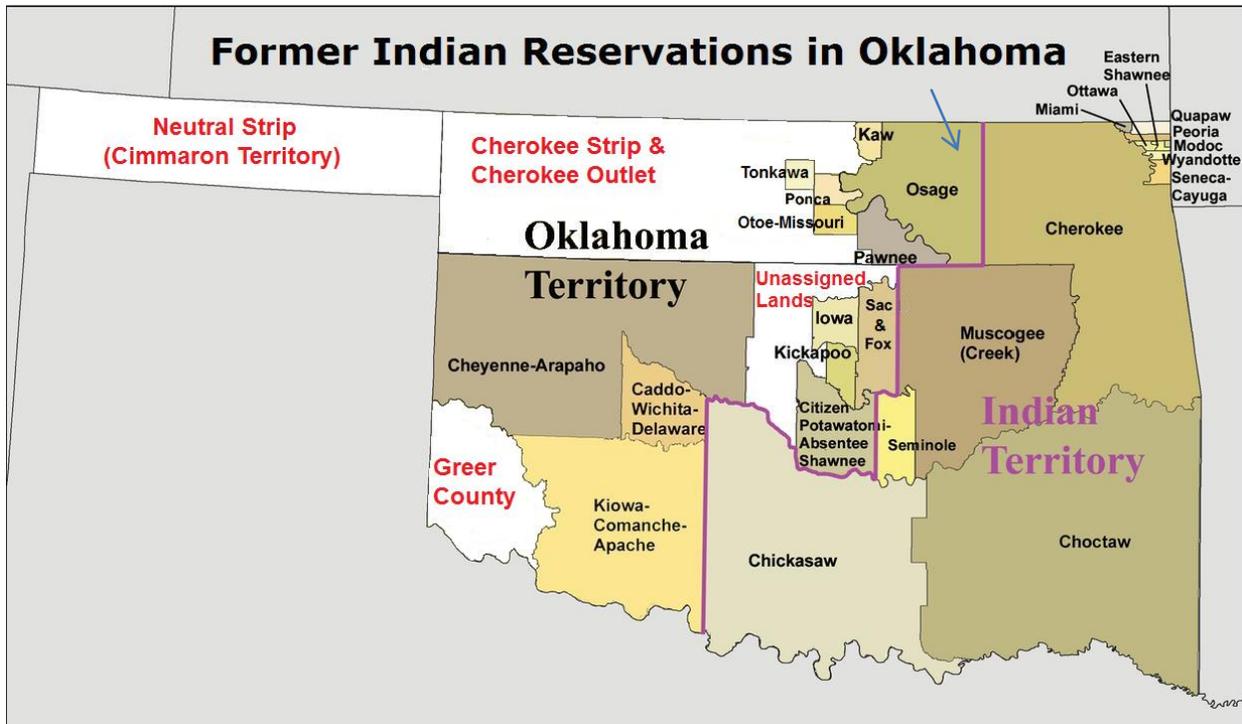
## 2. Maps

**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.”*



Odaawaa (Ottawa) population areas in Ontario, Michigan and Oklahoma. Reserves/Reservations and communities shown in red.

Tribal lands after 1830



### 3. Population Past/Present

- Total tribal enrollment: 2,500

- Tribal enrollment in Oklahoma
- Membership criteria: All members must be of direct lineal descent from an individual on the base tribal roll. There is no minimum blood quantum required.

#### **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.”*

- Tribal Government leadership

The Government structure of the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma was made up of band chiefs who formed a governing council with a head chief. Each band elected their own Chief and then these Chiefs would elect a Head Chief. Now they have a Chief, Second Chief, Secretary/Treasurer, First Councilman, and Second Councilman. These people are elected from every member of the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma age 18 and over.

#### **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.”*

##### **Ottawa language**

The Ottawa (Odawa) language is of the Anishinabemowin language family. It is closely related to the Ojibwa and Potawatomi languages. Language revitalization efforts have been underway for many years within the Ottawa community in Oklahoma.

## 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.”*

### History of Ottawa University and the Ottawa Tribe

Founded in 1865, Ottawa University has an especially rich heritage and fascinating history. Throughout its nearly century and a half, the University has endeavored to educate its students (many from traditionally underserved student populations) for lifetimes of enlightened faith, exemplary service, inspired leadership and personal growth and significance.

This tradition began with the Ottawa Indian tribe. The University’s roots can be found in the work of Baptist missionaries in collaboration with the Tribe then located on the banks of the Marais des Cygnes (“river of swans”) in what would become the town of Ottawa, Kansas, located approximately 40 miles southwest of Kansas City. Reverend Jotham Meeker and his wife, Eleanor, labored ceaselessly to improve the lives of the Ottawas, serving as ministers, nurse and doctor, business agents, marriage counselors, teachers, and of course, as spiritual counselors. Their seminal work, the prophetic vision of tribal leaders, and the engagement of others such as John Tecumseh (Tauy) Jones led to an eventual agreement between the Kansas Baptist denomination and the Ottawa Tribe to form a school for the benefit of the children of the Ottawas.

The original intent was to charter a boarding school for “the children of the Tribe between the ages of six and eighteen who shall be entitled to be received at such institution, and to be subsisted, clothed, educated, and attended in sickness...to continue so long as any children of the tribe shall present themselves for their exercise.” The Tribe endowed 20,000 acres of its land to be utilized in lieu of a cash endowment to support the fledgling institution, which had no other means of income. Operating funds were to be received through the sale of land subject to various terms and conditions. In exchange, the Baptists agreed to build and operate the school with a promise to provide the free education contemplated in the agreement. A board was formed, operations undertaken, and the idea of the initial school soon extended to the formation of a college-motivated by the desire for higher education for tribal members, the Baptists, and the recognition by townspeople that a college could act as an economic growth engine in a still emerging community with great ambitions. Similar institutions were seeded all over America in the same general timeframe by many different church denominations. This accounts for the relatively large number of smaller private colleges and universities which dot the landscape of our country to this day.

While the purposes and aspirations of the new college were noble, not all of the actions of those initially involved were equally so. Though instructed by a treaty personally signed by President Abraham Lincoln, governance of the new board was at times loose and there were intimations of self-dealing related to some of the land sales. The new school struggled in the general environment of a still settling frontier, the aftermath of the Civil War, ongoing aggrandizement of Indian lands by whites (including some of that of the Ottawas, who later moved to Miami, Oklahoma where tribal headquarters remains today), and roving bands of marauders and partisans (Quantrill's raiders had killed 150 Lawrence citizens just three years earlier in an infamous raid just 20 miles to the north of Ottawa). Poor oversight and accounting practices led to the diminishment of some of the lands originally intended to support the school, but these and other difficulties were eventually overcome as new leadership was interjected into the governance of the institution allowing the nascent college to persevere.

Despite many challenges, Ottawa's Christian heritage and relationship with the Ottawa Indians remain alive and powerful today. In October of 2008, newly installed University President, Kevin C. Eichner, signed a new agreement with Chief John Ballard of the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma through which the historical connection between the University and the Tribe was significantly refreshed and expanded. Under this agreement, any certified tribal member is eligible to attend the residential college in Ottawa free of tuition, board, and room charges and any of the University's adult on-ground or online programs tuition-free. This new agreement, fully and unanimously endorsed by the University's Board of Trustees and the Ottawa Tribal Council, is to be preserved "in perpetuity" and has resulted in a significant increase in the number of Ottawa Indian students enrolling throughout the University and to a re-kindling of an even stronger and more positive relationship with the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma. It has been widely celebrated by faculty, alumni and friends of the University and tribal members as emblematic of the institution's core mission and principles and as an enduring commitment to the mutual purposes of the Tribe and the University.

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."

## 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.”

\*Please see #1

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

## 9. Current Information on tribe

The Ottawa Tribe issues its own tribal vehicle tags. They operate two tribal smoke shops; one gas station, the Otter Stop Convenience Store; and one casino, the High Winds Casino. The tribe operates a Community Health Program and the Healthy Living Center in Miami, as well as a Department of Environmental Protection. They also publish the *Adawe News* for tribal members, as well as offering Ottawa language classes. Other services:

- The Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma Social Services provides assistance, to enrolled members of the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma.
- The goal of the Social Services Program is to promote personal and family unity, economic and social stability, have tribal members work toward attainment of self-sufficiency when assistance or services are not available, or not being provided by state, local or other agencies. Programs available through Social Services are: Child Protective Services, Indian Child Welfare, Promoting Safe and Stable Families and Education.

The Community Health Program provides information, referrals and resources pertaining to personal health. Also available is a state of the art exercise program for individuals who are unable to use the traditional exercise equipment.

The Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma's annual powwow is held every Labor Day weekend.

## 10. Other information

The Ottawa (Odawa) exist in numerous, separate tribes with their own unique relationships to the governments of Canada, the United States, and various U.S. states. Some are completely Ottawa in their designation, while others are a mixture of Ottawa,

Potawatomi, Ojibwa, and Shawnee. The Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma is the southernmost of all Ottawa communities. These include:

- Gun Lake Band of Grand River Ottawa Indians, Michigan
- Maple River Band of Ottawa, Michigan
- Muskegon River Band of Ottawa Indians, Michigan (formerly *Northern Michigan Ottawa Association, Unit 5*)
- [Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point](#), Ontario
- [Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation](#), Ontario (formerly "Cape Croker First Nation")
- [Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish](#) Band of [Potawatomi](#) Indians of Michigan
- [Mattagami First Nation](#), Ontario
- [Mississauga First Nation](#), Ontario
- [Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Nation](#), Michigan
- [Saugeen First Nation](#), Ontario

#### **Sources:**

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](#)

[www.ottawatribe.org](http://www.ottawatribe.org)

Oklahoma Indian Country Guide: *One State, Many Nations*; Travelok.com

Ottawa History Project

Additional Photos:

