

Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Indians

(Oklahoma Social Studies Standards, OSDE)

Tribe: Absentee Shawnee (ab-SEN-tee shaw-NEE) Tribe of Indians

Tribal website(s): <http://www.astribe.com/astribe>

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 - Northeastern United States, in the areas now known as the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania
- Forced Removal:

Treaties in the late 1700s and 1800s reveal the Shawnee had a large population.

In 1793, some of the Shawnee Tribe's ancestors received a Spanish land grant at Cape Girardeau, Missouri. The 1803 Louisiana Purchase from France, brought this area under American control. In 1825, Congress ratified a treaty with the Shawnees living at Cape Girardeau, Missouri, due to encroaching colonial settlement. Shawnees ceding their Missouri lands for a 1.6 million-acre reservation in eastern Kansas.

However, several years before this treaty was introduced, a group of Shawnees left Missouri to begin a journey south that led them into the territory of what is now the state of Texas, under the control of Spain. This group of Shawnees became known as the Absentee Shawnees.

The term “Absentee Shawnee” comes from a provisional clause in an 1854 treaty regarding surplus lands in the Kansas reservation which were set aside for the “absent” Shawnees. The outcome of the Texas-Mexico War (1846-1848) caused many Absentee Shawnee to leave Texas and move into the Indian Territory.

In the late 1800s, an Indian Agent from the U.S. government brought soldier from Fort Reno in Western Oklahoma and forced the tradition band of Absentee Shawnees located along the Deep Fork River to leave. This band was taken to south to the area known as Hog Creek and Little River where they were to remain. This group is known as the Big Jim Band. Another band stayed in Pottawatomie County near the town of Shawnee and is known as the White Turkey Band.

- Location In Oklahoma - Cleveland and Pottawatomie Counties; Shawnee, Oklahoma

Oklahoma Historical Society source to consider for Indian Removal information:
<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/i/in015.html>

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

Oklahoma Indian Country Guide: One State Many Nations page 5
http://s3.amazonaws.com/content.newsok.com/newsok/images/NIE/nie_docs/Indian%20Country%20Tab,%2036%20page.pdf

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
<http://www.awesomestories.com/images/user/5f8ef2bf69.jpg>
- Tribal lands after 1830
http://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/special/AIANWall2010/AIAN_US_2010.pdf

3. Population Past/Present

- Total tribal enrollment: 4,015
- Tribal enrollment in Oklahoma: 3,050
- Membership criteria is 1/8 blood quantum

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.”*

- The tribe is governed by the Absentee-Shawnee Executive Committee which consists of five tribal members—the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary, Treasurer, and Representative, all of whom are elected by the general membership.
- The Executive Committee meets the third Wednesday of each month.
- The Absentee Shawnee were organized in 1936 as the "Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma" under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act. The Absentee Shawnee Tribe possesses all the inherent powers of sovereignty held prior to the Constitution of the United States. The inherent right of self-government precedes the United States Constitution, and the governing body of the Absentee Shawnee has never relinquished any part of this sovereign right. Among the powers of self-government upheld by the actions of the Absentee Shawnee, are the power to adopt and operate a form of government of their choosing, to define the conditions of tribal membership, to regulate domestic relations of members, to levy taxes, to regulate property within the jurisdiction of the Tribe, to control the conduct of membership by legislation and to administer justice.

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.”*

The Absentee Shawnee are in the Central Algonquian language family:

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.

Because the Shawnee Indians moved around, they did not live in the more permanent shelters. Rather, they lived in round wigwams which were reminiscent to what we would call igloos. But instead of being made from ice, these wigwams were made from sheets of tree bark, tree saplings (which helped form the framework), cattails, thick brush grass and other natural materials.

In their everyday lives, the Shawnee Indians had no elaborate clothing or the stereotypical feathered headdress. Rather, they wore what other Indians wore – long skirts for the ladies and breechcloths to pants for the men. Except for battle, the Shawnee kept their hair long. They wore face paint and moccasins. For their sustenance, the Shawnee Indians farmed the land. The female Shawnee harvested corn as their main crop as well as other things like squash. The male Shawnee Indians did the hunting and fishing.

The Shawnee were also proud of their heritage and culture using storytelling as a way to pass along the history and stories of their ancestors.

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.”*

- Music
- Art - Women spent a lot of time doing arts and crafts. They are known for their beautiful woodcarvings, pottery and beadwork. They would also weave bags and rugs and create rope out of wild hemp.

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.”

Oklahoma Historical Society source to consider:

<http://www.okhistory.org/research/indianrecs>

Brief Timeline

- 1677: Early contact with non-Indians, a French trader La Potherie
- 1689-1763: French and Indian Wars, sided with the French
- 1754: Eskippakithiki, a Shawnee settlement abandoned
- 1763: Joined the Ottawa and other tribes in Pontiac's Rebellion against the British
- 1769: Shawnee warned Daniel Boone to leave "Kentucky"
- 1774: Fought Virginians in Lord Dunmore's War. (Lord Dunmore gave veterans of the French and Indian War who fought under him land that belonged to the Shawnee)
- October 6, 1774: Point Pleasant, West Virginia- Treaty - ceded land
- 1775: Sided with the British during the Revolutionary War
- 1782: The Shawnee joined by the Delaware, Wyandot, Miami, Ottawa, Chippewa, and Mingo in a Confederacy to remove settlers from Kentucky and Ohio.
- 1794: General Anthony Wayne defeated the Shawnee at Fallen Timbers, Ohio
- 1794: land ceded
- 1795: Treaty of Fort Greenville; proposed factory system
- 1802: factory established at Fort Wayne
- 1812-1815: War of 1812, at the end of the War, the colonial government of Virginia gave bonuses to soldiers in the form of military tracts, in Kentucky
- October 5, 1813: Battle of the Thames, Tecumseh killed
- 1815: many Shawnee residing near Cape Girardeau and on the Merrimack River near St. Louis. Delaware and Abesentee Shawnee moved into Arkansas and in 1820 moved to Texas

9. Current Information on tribe

- Absentee Shawnee Tribal Newsletters
<http://www.absenteeshawneetriben-sn.gov/newsletters.aspx>

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

- **Elder testimonials** (audio or written)
Web Little Jim, Comments on his own background and history of the Shawnees;
Interviewed by Julia Jordan, February 2, 1969;
<http://digital.libraries.ou.edu/cdm/ref/collection/dorisduke/id/1216>
<http://digital.libraries.ou.edu/cdm/ref/collection/dorisduke/id/1210>

Leaders

- Tenskwatawa (The Prophet)
<http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Tenskwatawa>
- Blue Jacket (Weyapiersenwah)
http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Blue_Jacket.html
- Fact: The Absentee Shawnee Tribe was one of the first seven tribes to become a self-governing nation during the 1900's.

Sources:

Tribal Nations Websites

<http://www.astribe.com/astribe/?reload>
<http://www.shawnee-tribe.com/default.htm>
<http://www.ntatutor.com/absentee-shawnee-tribe-of-indians-of-oklahoma.html>

Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission Website

Oklahoma Indian Country Guide, One State-Many Nations

Oklahoma Historical Society

University of Oklahoma Digital Libraries, Doris Duke Collection

Other Sources cited