

## Citizen Potawatomi Nation

(Oklahoma Social Studies Standards, OSDE)

**Tribe: Citizen Potawatomi Nation**

**Tribal website(s):** <http://www.potawatomi.org/>

The translation of our name refers to our duty to the Council, Keepers of the Fire. Potawatomi are responsible for protecting and nurturing the Neshnabek council fire, for it is at the root of our culture and defining to us as a people. Still today, we are called upon to re-kindle the flames of our past, lighting the path to our future as Neshnabek.

### 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.”*

Traditionally we are known as the Neshnabek [Man Sent Down From Above], a confederated nation comprised of the Ojibwe, Odawa and Bodewadmi [Potawatomi]. Our confederacy is referred to as the Three Fires Council, recognizing that each tribe functions as brethren to serve the alliance as a whole. The Ojibwe, our eldest kinsmen, were first in igniting the flames of the Council. They are the Keepers of the Medicine and Faith, entrusted with the sacred scrolls and teachings of our ancient Midewewin Lodge. The Odawa were second to build a fire as one people. They are the Keepers of the Trade, responsible for providing food and goods to the Nation. In the past, they commissioned and conducted large hunting and trading expeditions that created inter-tribal and later European alliances. Devoted to the Council and their duty to the people, they were fierce warriors and protectors of the vast trade network controlled by the Neshnabek. As Bodewadmi, we are the youngest brother and last to build our own fire

Originally, the Potawatomi were part of the Three Fires Council made up of the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Odawa, collectively known as Anishnabek peoples. By the end of the 18th century, tribal villages were being displaced by white settlements, ultimately ushering in the American treaty era. Through a series of treaties, beginning in 1789, their tribal estate equating to more than eighty-nine million acres was gradually reduced in size.



**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 - For many Native American tribes the forced removal of their people marks

a defining moment in their culture and history. For the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, that time is often referred to as the Trail of Death, the forced removal of the Potawatomi from Indiana.

In 1838, nearly 900 Potawatomi began the 660 mile walk from Twin Lakes to the prairies of Kansas. Many Potawatomi died during the Trail of Death, mostly elders and children, and though the loss of life was great, there was also a loss of culture and history.

- Location In Oklahoma – the tribal headquarters is located south of the city of Shawnee.

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, Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department

[http://s3.amazonaws.com/content.newsok.com/newsok/images/NIE/nie\\_docs/Indian%20Country%20Tab,%2036%20page.pdf](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; original homeland map

Tribal lands after 1830

The federal government continued to reduce Potawatomi land holding by removing them to smaller reserves in Iowa, Missouri, and finally Kansas in 1846. In 1861, the Potawatomi in Kansas was officially divided by way of treaty. The treaty required its signers to surrender their tribal membership and adopt U.S. citizenship, in-turn creating the foundation for the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. It was a decision that forever shaped the culture and lives of our people and subsequently led to their eventual migration to Indian Territory [Oklahoma].



## 3. Population Past/Present

- The Citizen Potawatomi Nation is a federally recognized tribe of more than 30,000 tribal citizens around the world.
- Membership criteria  
To be eligible for Citizen Potawatomi Nation citizenship individuals must be able to provide documents connecting them to an enrolled lineal ancestor. Any degree- descendant of tribal member.

#### **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 Citizen Potawatomi Nation constitution was created in 1938, amended in 1985 and again in 2007, forming the structure which incorporates executive, legislative, and judicial functions.

Government leadership consists of a three person Executive Committee and a 16 person legislature representing more than 30,000 tribal citizens.

The current chairman is John “Rocky” Barrett. Chairman Barrett is responsible for the daily operations of the tribe and its businesses.

#### **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 Citizen Potawatomi are Algonquian-speaking people who originally occupied the Great Lakes region of the United States.

Goal of the Language Department:

The Goal of our department is the promotion, perpetuation, and use of the Potawatomi language. It is our vision to see our language used again in a variety of settings not just spiritual but everyday life. This requires people to not be afraid to make mistakes and to simply use the language whenever they are add the tribal buildings or wherever they are.

The language department provides a dictionary, common phrases and conversations. Conversations consist of greetings, family, people, food, common words and various categories that may be downloaded with the Potawatomi words.

<http://www.potawatomi.org/lang#languagehome>.

## 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.*

The history and lifeway’s of the Citizen Potawatomi is shared at their Cultural Heritage Center. History of the Seven Fires prophecy, Pre contact years and the Years of War is included. Videos from life in Kansas during the 1930’s are documented. This includes traditional activities such as making reed mats, building a wigwam, and drying pumpkin.

Lifeway’s include both traditional and contemporary lifeways. Traditional ways include Black Ash Basketry, Dwellings which include the wigwam, Maple syrup making, storytelling, songs, games and other topics.

Contemporary lifeway’s include information on the Family Reunion Festival, Gathering of Potawatomi Nations, Art work, songs, dance styles and regalia making.

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

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.”*

Culture, traditions and language is vital to the Citizen Potawatomi. Through the Cultural Heritage Center, Language Department and Cultural projects, the tribe is preserving and digitizing their history. The language is being taught at the tribal head start program. Lessons are available online and the Cultural Heritage Center provides the rich history of the Citizen Potawatomi.



Bandelier bag with woodland beaded designs. Artifacts such as this can be seen at the Cultural Heritage Center.

## 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.”*

The arrival of Europeans frayed the common threads of inter-tribal relationships significantly. Old enemies joined forces to combat a mutual enemy that threatened the very existence of all indigenous communities with whom they came into contact. Wars such as the Beaver [mid-1600's], Fox [1712-1733] and French and Indian [1754-1763] pressured ancient alliances as various groups found the advantages of firearms, metal tools, and woven textiles, made available by Europeans, to be the element they needed to secure their dominance over neighboring peoples. Branded as superior warriors, the Neshnabek [Potawatomi, Odawa and Ojibwe] were sought out and recruited by every European belligerent to aid in their occupational wars for North America. The confederacy fought alongside the French as far east as Pennsylvania against the Dutch-supported Five Nations and as far south as Tennessee against the Chickasaw-allied British.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Anglo trade goods and practices were as common within Potawatomi villages as song and dance, serving as the catalyst for Potawatomi participation in the American Revolutionary War. Those Potawatomi [Detroit and St. Joseph] who not only relied on but controlled much of the northern trade allied with Britain in an attempt to permanently secure European imports. Other villages, led by Siggenauk [Blackbird], joined the rebel force to fight a cause that paralleled their own land conflicts decades before. Learning from past territorial engagements, many headmen and their respective villages stayed neutral in the conflict as they watched their kinsmen fight for liberties that would soon prove to be false.

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

## **9. Current Information on tribe**

### **Newspaper article:**

Secretary Jewell Signs Historic Agreement with Citizen Potawatomi Nation- November 25, 2013

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn today joined Citizen Potawatomi Nation Chairman John Barrett to formally approve tribal leasing regulations that will help spur investment and commercial development on the nation's trust lands in central Oklahoma.

“The Citizen Potawatomi Nation now has the authority to decide how it wants to do business on its lands, making it easier for families to do things like buy and build houses or open businesses in the communities where they have lived for generations,” said Secretary Jewell, who also serves as chair of the White House Council on Native American Affairs. “Today’s action encourages economic development on Indian lands, generating investment, new jobs and revenues. I applaud Chairman Barrett and Vice-Chairman Linda Capps for their leadership on this initiative and look forward to working with other tribes across the nation to maintain tribal sovereignty and promote tribal self-determination and self-government.”

Today’s signing ceremony comes on the heels of the 2013 White House Tribal Nations Conference, when leaders from all 566 federally recognized tribes are invited to Washington, D.C. to interact directly with the President and senior cabinet and administration officials. The conference – the fifth for the Obama Administration – continues to build on the President’s

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

- Famous tribal members
- Jim Thorpe, the World’s Greatest Athlete is Potawatomi and Sac Fox. Charlotte Vieux, a Citizen Potawatomi member was Jim Thorpe’s mother.
- Art by Woody Crumbo, a citizen of the Citizen Potawatomi. He was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and nominated as an Oklahoma Goodwill Ambassador.



- [Timeline download](#)

- Timeline History of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation is available from Cultural Heritage Center.
- A timeline beginning with the 1600's to the 2012's is provided. The timeline includes the First European Account, Contact with Explorers, Peace Treaties, Battles and Wars of the Potawatomi and Current timelines to the year 2012.

**Sources:**

Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal website

Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center

Clark, Blue. Indian Tribes of Oklahoma. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman. 2009.

Other sites of interest:

Oklahoma Historical Society

Oklahoma State Library

Forest County Potawatomi (Wisconsin);

Hannahville Indian Community Tribe of Potawatomi Indians (Michigan);

Walole Island First Nation (Ontario);

Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation (Kansas);

Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians (Michigan/Indiana)

The Library of Congress