

## Delaware Tribe of Indians

*(Oklahoma Social Studies Standards, OSDE)*

**Tribe:** Delaware Tribe of Indians

**Tribal website(s):** <http://www.delawaretribe.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 states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware

Location In Oklahoma – Bartlesville, Oklahoma

The Delaware Tribe is one of many contemporary tribes that descend from the Unami- and Munsee-speaking peoples of the Delaware and Hudson River valleys. The Unami and Munsee aboriginal homeland is situated within what are today the states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware.

The name collectively attributed to the descendants of such Unami and Munsee people is Delaware, yet the word Delaware is not of indigenous origin, nor did the Munsee and Unami speakers conceive of themselves as a united political organization until the eighteenth century. The term Delaware actually derives from the title given to Sir Thomas West or Lord de la Warr III, who was appointed the English governor of Virginia in 1610. When Captain Samuel Argall first explored what would later be named the Delaware Bay and River, he chose the name Delaware to honor the newly appointed Virginia governor. European colonists later applied the term in varied dialectical forms to reference the Unami-speaking groups of the middle Delaware River valley.

By the late eighteenth century the term had been extended to include all of the Unami-and Munsee-speaking peoples living in or removed from the Delaware and Hudson River valleys.

The southern Unami self-designation is Lenape, which roughly translates as “People” and was the term used by the inhabitants of the lower Delaware River. Most Delaware in eastern Oklahoma descend from such Unami speakers, with only a minority who count Munsee descent as well. Today, the southern Unami dialect is the language learned and used by the Delaware in eastern Oklahoma, and Delaware is the tribal name used by most tribal members, with Lenape as an often used synonym.

The tumultuous years surrounding the American Revolution led to a Delaware diaspora that would further define the nucleus of the Delaware Tribe and create the boundaries between the many Delaware-descended groups that exist today. By the eve of the American Revolution, most Delaware groups were living along the Ohio and Allegheny rivers. The pro-British Delaware groups were living in what is today the northwestern portion of Ohio, and pro-American Delaware groups were settled near the frontier city of Pittsburgh. Despite the mixed alliance, the Delaware were largely treated as defeated British allies at the close of the war. Following the American Revolution, different Delaware groups migrated north and west to Canada and Spanish Territory in order to escape American retaliation while others stayed within the Ohio Territory.

Three groups relocated to Canada following the American Revolution. The first group consisted of a few Northern Unami bands who had not followed the main body to the frontier and who joined the Iroquois on the Six Nations Reserve along the Grand River in what is today Ontario. The Delaware living on the Six Nations Reserve have maintained an identity separate from the Iroquois but are today considered members of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, a recognized First Nation of Canada. A second group of Canadian Delaware were originally Christian converts who followed the Moravian missionary David Zeisberger north to Canada after the American Revolution and, in 1792, established what would later become known as Moraviantown along the Thames River in Kent County, Ontario. The Moravian migration followed the Gnadenhutten Massacre of 1782 when the American militia slaughtered ninety peaceful Moravian Delaware living in the mission village of Gnadenhutten, Ohio. The third group relocating to Canada was a collection of pro-British Munsee bands who lived in northwestern Ohio during the American Revolution and who elected to settle at Munceytown along the Thames River in Canada prior to the arrival of the Moravian Delaware. Both the Moravian Delaware (Delaware of the Thames) and the Munceytown Delaware (Munsee-Delaware) are recognized today as First Nations in Canada.

Other Delaware groups decided to move further west to Spanish territory or remain within the boundaries of the new American state. The earliest movement consisted of both Unami and Munsee speakers who elected to move further west in 1789 to a settlement near what is today Cape Girardeau, Missouri, at the invitation of the Spanish after the American Revolution. Following a series of subsequent removals, the Cape Girardeau Delaware would later settle in Texas and eventually end up on a reservation with the Caddo and Wichita in what is today western Oklahoma. The western Oklahoma Delaware are federally recognized today as the Delaware Nation and are headquartered in Anadarko, Oklahoma. A second migration consisted of a few small groups of Christian Munsee and Unami converts who managed to remain behind

along the Hudson and Delaware River valleys following the American Revolution. The converts were eventually relocated with other Munsee and Mahicans living at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, to a reservation in Wisconsin. The descendants of such Munsee, Unami, and Mahicans are a federally recognized tribe today known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mahican Indians. A third group of predominately Munsee speakers settled with the Senecas along the Allegheny River in 1791, where they eventually merged with the Seneca by the twentieth century. Today, the descendants of such assimilated Munsee are members of the Seneca Nation of Indians who are located on the Allegany Indian Reservation in southwestern New York and are also a federally recognized tribe. Munsee and Unami descendant groups are thus scattered widely throughout North America, and most are recognized as members of acknowledged Indian Tribes in the United States or as First Nations in Canada.

The Delaware Tribe of today is composed of the descendants of the so-called main body of Delaware who elected not to relocate north or west but remained in Ohio following the American Revolution. There the Delaware Tribe became a powerful frontier force that participated in the intertribal resistance to the new American government during the late eighteenth century. Delaware military action against the United States ultimately ended when the Americans defeated the intertribal confederacy that included Delaware, Shawnee, and other woodland Indian forces at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1795. Following the defeat, the Delaware and others surrendered to the United States and signed the Treaty of Greenville after which they would never again take up arms against the Americans. The main body then joined other Delaware who had earlier settled, at the invitation of the Miami, along the White River in what is now Indiana.

By 1821 the Delaware on the White River in Indiana were again forced westward by the U.S. government to what is today a southwestern portion of Missouri. Given land along the James Fork of the White River in the hilly regions of the Ozark Plateau, the Delaware found it difficult to farm and grew increasingly unhappy. Beginning in 1829 and ending by 1831, the Delaware Tribe moved again, this time to the junction of the Kansas and Missouri rivers in present-day northeastern Kansas. The Delaware reestablished towns along the Kansas River.

Following the Civil War, white encroachment and railroad speculation increased, and the Delaware were pressured to cede their lands in Kansas and relocate to Indian Territory. A handful of Delaware elected to remain in Kansas. Today, the Delaware-Munsee Tribe is headquartered in Ottawa, Kansas, and is recognized by the state as the descendants of those Delaware who elected not to remove to the Cherokee Nation. It was determined that the Delaware desired the unoccupied lands in what is now northeastern Oklahoma immediately east of the ninety-sixth degree of longitude. Since the land belonged to the Cherokee Nation at the time, the Delaware decided to purchase a 10-by-30-mile tract of land from the Cherokee Nation that was situated along the upper Caney River valley. The Delaware thus agreed to removal so they would not become American citizens and chose the preservation option in the 1866 Cherokee Treaty in order to preserve their tribal government and not merge with the Cherokee Nation upon removal. The purchase of land equivalent to 160 acres per removed

Delaware was pursued in order to sustain an independent Delaware Tribe that was now going to occupy lands in the Cherokee Nation.

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>

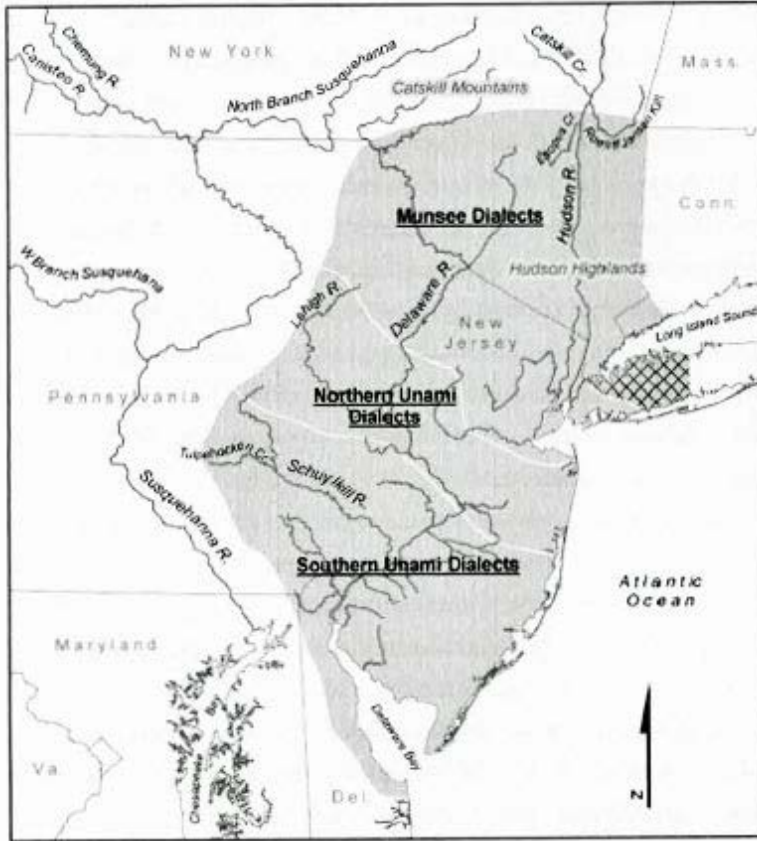
Oklahoma Indian Country Guide, Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department

[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)

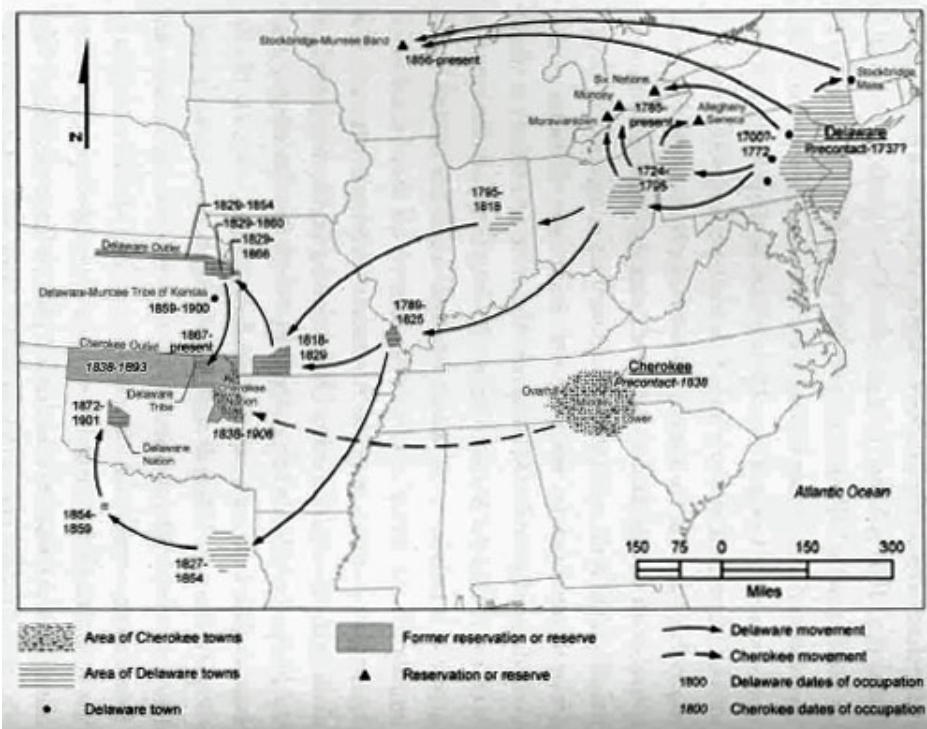
## 2. Maps

**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.”*

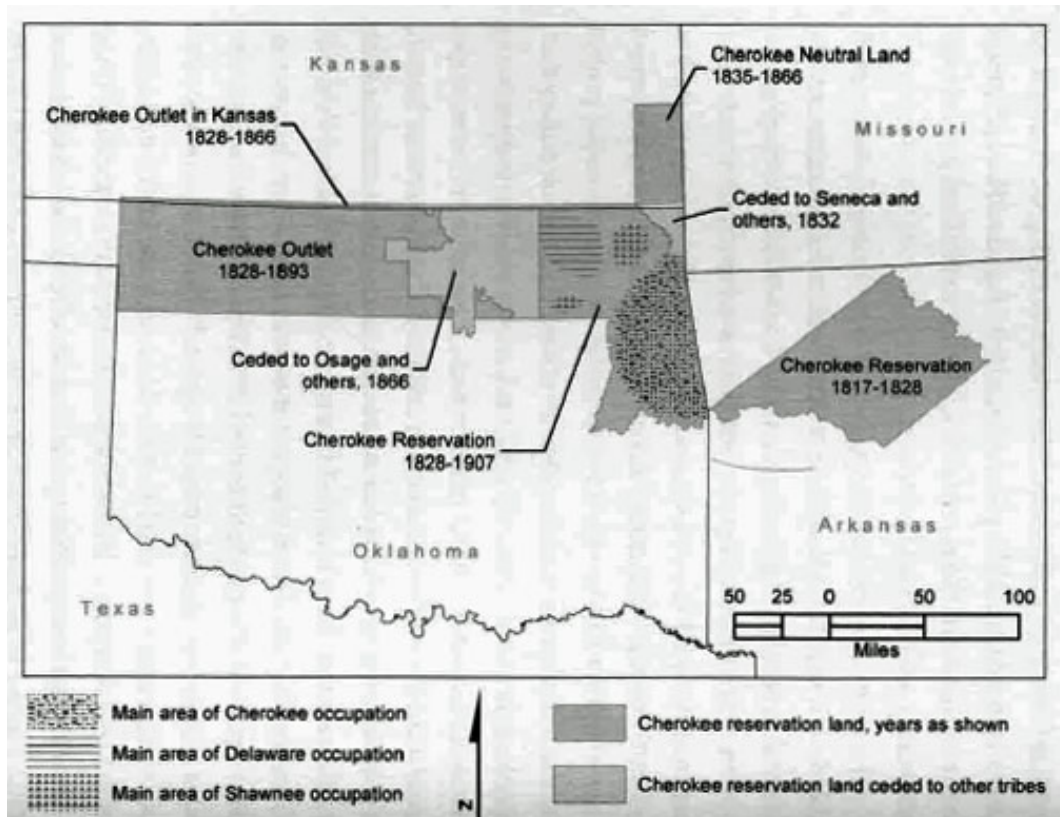
- Maps of tribal hometowns before 1830



- Relocation route by 1831



- Relocation route & location after 1866



### 3. Population Past/Present

- Total tribal enrollment
- Tribal enrollment in Oklahoma – 985 Delaware removed to the Cherokee Nation by the 1866 Delaware Treaty

### 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.”

Each village housed several matrilineages, each with their own understood hunting territory. Each lineage belonged to one of at least three clans, and both the clans and lineages were exogamous. During the winter months the villagers would disperse as each lineage would break up into smaller family foraging groups and make greater use of their lineage's hunting territory that surrounded the centrally located village. The villages were likely settled in the same location for long periods of time, and each was governed by a group of male sachems or lineage representatives. Although the sachems were male, the matron of each matrilineage was the chief-maker, as it was she who named and could replace lineage sachems. The villages were thus relatively egalitarian with political decisions ultimately being made by consensus within each lineage and the sachems acting as the political voice for the lineages of each autonomous village.

The Iroquois and the English subsequently pressured the Delaware groups to name a king who could represent the different villages and with whom the colonial government could engage treaty negotiations. Though paramount leaders were named for the displaced villagers, it is clear that such designated Delaware chiefs of the eighteenth century held a somewhat tenuous authority over the entirety of their people.

While the influence of Christianity on the Delaware Tribal Council was apparent, leadership positions continued to be achieved through matrilineal clan ascendancy until the mid-1860s. Thus, by the time of the Delaware's last removal to the Cherokee Nation, Delaware society was a religiously diverse population living in agrarian frontier villages with a clan-based political organization that maintained a strong alliance with the United States.

The Delaware tribal council includes chief, assistant chief, secretary, treasurer, and 3 council members. Tribal documents provide tribal members access to the tribe's major administrative documents, including the tribal constitution, trust bylaws, and memorandum of agreement between the Delaware Tribe and Cherokee Nation following the reinstatement of federal recognition.

## 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 Delaware Tribe is one of many contemporary tribes that descend from the Unami- and Munsee-speaking peoples of the Delaware and Hudson River valleys. Munsee and Unami are two closely related Algonquian dialects that were easily distinguishable from the languages of the other coastal Algonquian groups. The Unami dialect that contained southern and northern variants existed along the lower Delaware River. The southern Unami self-designation is

Lenape, which roughly translates as “People” and was the term used by the inhabitants of the lower Delaware River. Most Delaware in eastern Oklahoma descend from such Unami speakers, with only a minority who count Munsee descent as well. Today, the southern Unami dialect is the language learned and used by the Delaware in eastern Oklahoma, and Delaware is the tribal name used by most tribal members, with Lenape as an often used synonym.

The Lenape Language Preservation Project received a grant from the National Science Foundation to produce a dictionary database of Lenape. They had the database built to create a **Lenape Talking Dictionary**. Much of the funding went to digitizing and preserving their existing audiotapes which were made in past years with native speakers of Lenape. Please visit the dictionary at [www.talk-lenape.org](http://www.talk-lenape.org). Another feature is the addition of traditional stories in Lenape. The plan is to have these where they can be played one line at a time, or by paragraphs. There will be the English translation line-by-line.

## 6. Cultural Identifiers - ie. Mound Builders; Plains

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The Munsee and Unami bands were horticulturalists who cultivated gardens of corn and other cultigens in dispersed villages located along the floodplains of the Delaware and Hudson River valleys.

As the independent Munsee and Unami bands coalesced in frontier villages, the political life of such groups followed a pattern by which the independent village sachems centralized under a clan-based governing body. The Delaware political system that emerged in the mid-eighteenth century consisted of three clan chiefs who represented three matrilineal clans, the Wolf, Turkey, and Turtle clans. One clan chief acted as the first among equals and served as the Delaware spokesman. Each clan chief was also attended by councilors and war captains of the same clan. War captains were responsible for declaring war and protecting the people, while only the clan chiefs could declare peace. The councilors served as personal advisers for each clan chief.

The Delaware reestablished towns along the Kansas River and soon prospered from the emerging industry surrounding the migration of American settlers to the West for which the Delaware served as traders, ferry operators, military scouts, and guides.



The anti-Christian sentiment of the early nineteenth century lapsed on the Kansas reservation, and Christian missionaries were allowed to return. The missionaries soon set up schools and churches on the Delaware reservation, and many influential Delaware were either educated or converted by the Baptist, Methodist, or Moravian missions.

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

## 7. Fine arts

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Though once politically, regionally, and dialectally separable, the villagers of the Delaware and Hudson rivers followed a religion anchored by a vision experience carried out just before puberty and expressed through an annual harvest ceremony, war dances, curing rituals, and family-sponsored ceremonies. A vision gave to an individual a supernatural mentor, and such experience was enacted in song and dance by each visionary as the central event in the fall harvest ceremony, which later became known as the Gamwing or Big House Ceremony. The Big House Ceremony was an annually held twelve-day thanksgiving and world renewal ceremony during which the Delaware gave thanks to Kishelernukong, or the creator, and vision songs and dances were performed.

## 8. Significant events (i.e. 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 Unami and Munsee bands felt the pressure of European encroachment since the early seventeenth century beginning with Swedish and later Dutch colonization. Initial relations with the Dutch generally revolved around the fur trade and land cessions. The Unami and Munsee had access to European trade goods such as guns and steel through the Dutch but in turn had

to deal with the population loss that resulted from the early introduction of European diseases and warfare. By the time that the English wrested possession of the region from the Dutch in 1664, the Unami and Munsee had already been pressured to leave portions of their original homelands. The British subsequently established new settlements or renamed existing Dutch villages, and the growing number of English immigrants arriving in the late seventeenth century put further pressure on the Unami and Munsee to cede more land.

Two centuries of European encroachment ultimately led to the removal of the Unami and Munsee speakers from the Delaware and Hudson River valleys to the frontier of English occupation. The allied Six Nations and the English combined forces in the eighteenth century and relied upon misleading treaty agreements and the threat of military force to ultimately push the Unami and Munsee people to abandon their remaining homelands and move west. By the mid-eighteenth century, the majority of Munsee and Unami speakers had joined several villages along the Susquehanna, Allegheny, and Ohio rivers and were by then referred to collectively as the Delaware. Other displaced coastal and interior Algonquians such as the Shawnee, Conoy, and Nanticoke often joined the Delaware villages on the frontier. The refugees were then settled within territory claimed by the Iroquois, and the newly arrived residents were obliged to live as protectorates of the Six Nations. Since authority among the Delaware villagers rested in a group of sachems, British officials and Iroquois diplomats were often frustrated in their attempts to deal with the displaced peoples and broker land deals with the refugee villagers. The Iroquois and the English subsequently pressured the Delaware groups to name a king who could represent the different villages and with whom the colonial government could engage treaty negotiations. Though paramount leaders were named for the displaced villagers, it is clear that such designated Delaware chiefs of the eighteenth century held a somewhat tenuous authority over the entirety of their people.

By the eve of the American Revolution, most Delaware groups were living along the Ohio and Allegheny rivers. The pro-British Delaware groups were living in what is today the northwestern portion of Ohio, and pro-American Delaware groups were settled near the frontier city of Pittsburgh. Despite the mixed alliance, the Delaware were largely treated as defeated British allies at the close of the war. Following the American Revolution, different Delaware groups migrated north and west to Canada and Spanish Territory in order to escape American retaliation while others stayed within the Ohio Territory.

Three groups relocated to Canada following the American Revolution. The first group consisted of a few Northern Unami bands who had not followed the main body to the frontier and who joined the Iroquois on the Six Nations Reserve along the Grand River in what is today Ontario. The Delaware living on the Six Nations Reserve have maintained an identity separate from the Iroquois but are today considered members of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, a recognized First Nation of Canada. A second group of Canadian Delaware were originally Christian converts who followed the Moravian missionary David Zeisberger north to Canada after the American Revolution and, in 1792, established what would later become known as Moraviantown along the Thames River in Kent County, Ontario. The Moravian migration followed the Gnadenhutten Massacre of 1782 when the American militia slaughtered ninety

peaceful Moravian Delaware living in the mission village of Gnadenhutzen, Ohio. The third group relocating to Canada was a collection of pro-British Munsee bands who lived in northwestern Ohio during the American Revolution and who elected to settle at Munceytown along the Thames River in Canada prior to the arrival of the Moravian Delaware. Both the Moravian Delaware (Delaware of the Thames) and the Munceytown Delaware (Muncee-Delaware) are recognized today as First Nations in Canada.

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Following the Civil War, white encroachment and railroad speculation increased, and the Delaware were pressured to cede their lands in Kansas and relocate to Indian Territory. In 1866 the U.S. government signed its final treaty with the Delaware Tribe, ending one of the longest ongoing treaty relationships between the federal government and an Indian tribe. The Delaware Tribe was the first tribe to sign a treaty with the American government, doing so on September 17, 1778. Under the Treaty with the Delaware, 1866, or 1866 Delaware Treaty, the Delaware Council agreed to give up their reservation in Kansas and move to a region of their choosing on lands ceded to the federal government by the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, or Seminole, "or which may be ceded by the Cherokees in the Indian Country". Chief Conner's request for the right to purchase a 10-by-30-mile tract of land from the Cherokee Nation was also consistent with the Treaty with the Cherokee, 1866, a treaty being signed at the same time between the Cherokee Nation and the federal government. In this treaty the Cherokee Nation agreed to sell their lands west of the ninety-sixth degree of longitude for the resettlement of friendly Indians. The relocated friendly Indians were to pay the Cherokee Nation for the land and afterward would hold the land as their own separate reservation. From the land cession, the federal government then had the space to remove what were primarily tribes from the newly organized states of Kansas and Nebraska to reservations in Indian Territory. The 1866 Cherokee Treaty spelled out two options that were available for civilized Indians wishing to settle within the boundaries of the Cherokee Nation. The first option, also known as the incorporation option, was for the Indian tribe being removed to abandon their tribal organization and become Cherokee citizens. Tribes who wished to adopt Cherokee citizenship had only to pay the Cherokee Nation a sum of money for the right to citizenship, and they would ever after be treated as native citizens. On the other hand the second option, also known as the preservation option, allowed for the Indians being removed to preserve their tribal organization in ways that were not inconsistent with the constitution and laws of the Cherokee Nation. Tribes

who selected the preservation option in order to continue their tribal structure were required to pay two separate payments to the Cherokee Nation. The first payment was for citizenship that granted the relocated tribe the right to hold all rights as native Cherokee citizens. The second payment was for a parcel of land equal to 160 acres per man, woman, and child that would be set aside for the occupancy of the relocating tribe. It would appear then that the letter from Chief John Conner was informing the Cherokee Nation of the Delaware Tribe's intent to pursue the preservation option as stipulated by both the 1866 Delaware Treaty and the 1866 Cherokee Treaty with the United States. The Delaware thus agreed to removal so they would not become American citizens and chose the preservation option in the 1866 Cherokee Treaty in order to preserve their tribal government and not merge with the Cherokee Nation upon removal. The purchase of land equivalent to 160 acres per removed Delaware was pursued in order to sustain an independent Delaware Tribe that was now going to occupy lands in the Cherokee Nation.

Oklahoma Historical Society source to consider:

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

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

The tribe received a Basic Library Services Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). A three-year plan was developed to partner with the Bartlesville Area History Museum and Bartlesville Public Library to conserve and enhance the Delaware Tribe's Tribal Library through digitization. Tribal and historical documents are now being scanned and digitized using PastPerfect, a state-of-the-art museum document cataloguing software. They continue to collect books, other documents, images, and artifacts.

The mission of the Delaware Tribe's Historic Preservation Office (DTHPO) is to ensure the protection and preservation of cultural and historic resources that are significant to Delaware tribal heritage. We work to manage these important tribal resources through consultations with public and private agencies and museums as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). The DTHPO maintains and periodically updates a geospatial database of Delaware cultural and historic sites located in fourteen states from New York to Oklahoma as well as manages the use and preservation of these locations through various programs and federally-funded projects.

The Delaware Tribe Environmental Program (DTEP) currently operates under a U.S. EPA GAP Grant. The GAP grant offers a unique opportunity to the Delaware Tribe of Indians to

administer its own integrated environmental program, develop the capability to manage specific programs, and establish a core program for environmental protection. Funding with this grant will be the only way the tribe can establish the program, since additional resources are not available through the general operation budget. The project goal is to develop a Delaware Tribal Environmental Office, with an initial project being the implementation of a tribal recycling program. The objective of this project is to put into action the long-held tribal value of caring for the land. We plan to do this by putting in place the staff and materials for an environmental program, increasing tribal members' and employees' awareness of environmental issues, and partnering with the City of Bartlesville to increase the amount of recycled materials that would otherwise go to a landfill.

The Powwow Committee is planning a fund-raiser for the upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> Delaware Pow-wow, which is held in May.

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

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