

## Kaw Nation, Oklahoma

(Oklahoma Social Studies Standards, OSDE)

**Tribe:** Kaw Nation, Oklahoma

**Tribal website(s):** <http://kawnation.com>

Koln-Za or Kanza became phoneticized by first the French, then the English to Kansas and Kaw.

### 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.”*

Historians and ethno historians have determined that the Kaw, Osage, Ponca, Omaha, and Quapaw — technically known as the Dhegiha-Siouan division of the Hopewell cultures of the lower Ohio Valley — lived together as one people in the lower Ohio valley prior to the white invasion of North American in the late 15th century.

Sometime prior to about 1750, the search for better sources of game and pressure from the more powerful Algonquians to the east prompted a westward migration to the mouth of the Ohio River. The Quapaws continued down the Mississippi River and took the name “downstream people” while the Kaw, Osage, Ponca, and Omaha — the “upstream people” — moved to the mouth of the Missouri near present-day St. Louis, up the Missouri to the mouth of the Osage River, where another division took place. The Ponca and Omaha moved northwest to present-day eastern Nebraska, the Osage occupied the Ozark country to the southwest, and the Kaws assumed control of the region in and around present-day Kansas City as well as the Kansas River Valley to the west.

On July 4, 1804, Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery was camped on the site of a Kanza (Kaw) village near the mouth of the Kansas River. They had been told of the proud warriors who inhabited this area, but did not encounter the tribe, who were hunting buffalo in the western part of present-day Kansas.

The Kaw Nation derived its name from the Siouan *aca*, “south wind,” a reference to the tribe’s role in war ceremonials, using the power of the wind when recognizing warriors. Among the many variations of the name given by French traders and other Europeans

were “Kanza” or “Kansa.” By the mid-18th century, the “Wind People” were the predominant tribe in what became the state to which they gave their name (Kansas). Their territory extended over most of present-day northern and eastern Kansas, with hunting grounds extending far to the west.

**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.”*

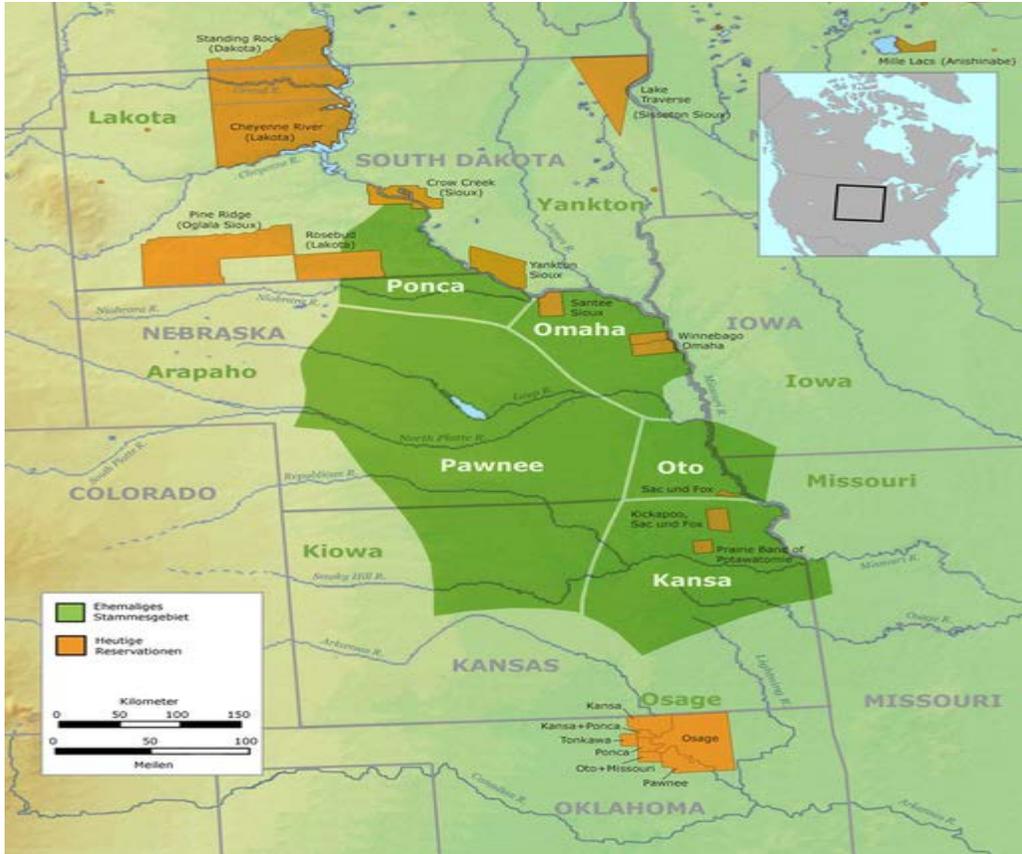
Original Homeland - The treaty of 1825 reduced the tribe’s 20 million-acre domain to a 30-mile wide 2 million-acre reservation beginning just west of future Topeka. Promised annuities were seldom delivered or were obligated to unscrupulous traders, while disease decimated the tribal population. When railroad, town and land speculators coveted the 1825 treaty lands, the Treaty of 1846 further reduced Kaw territory to 256,000 acres at present-day Council Grove. The subsequent Treaty of 1859 removed the town of Council Grove from Kaw lands and gave the tribe only 80,000 of the poorest acres, sub-divided into 40-acre plots for each family.

Location In Oklahoma - Finally, on May 27, 1872, over the strong protests of Chief Allegawaho and his people, a federal act moved the Kanza to a 100,137-acre site in northern Kay County, Oklahoma.

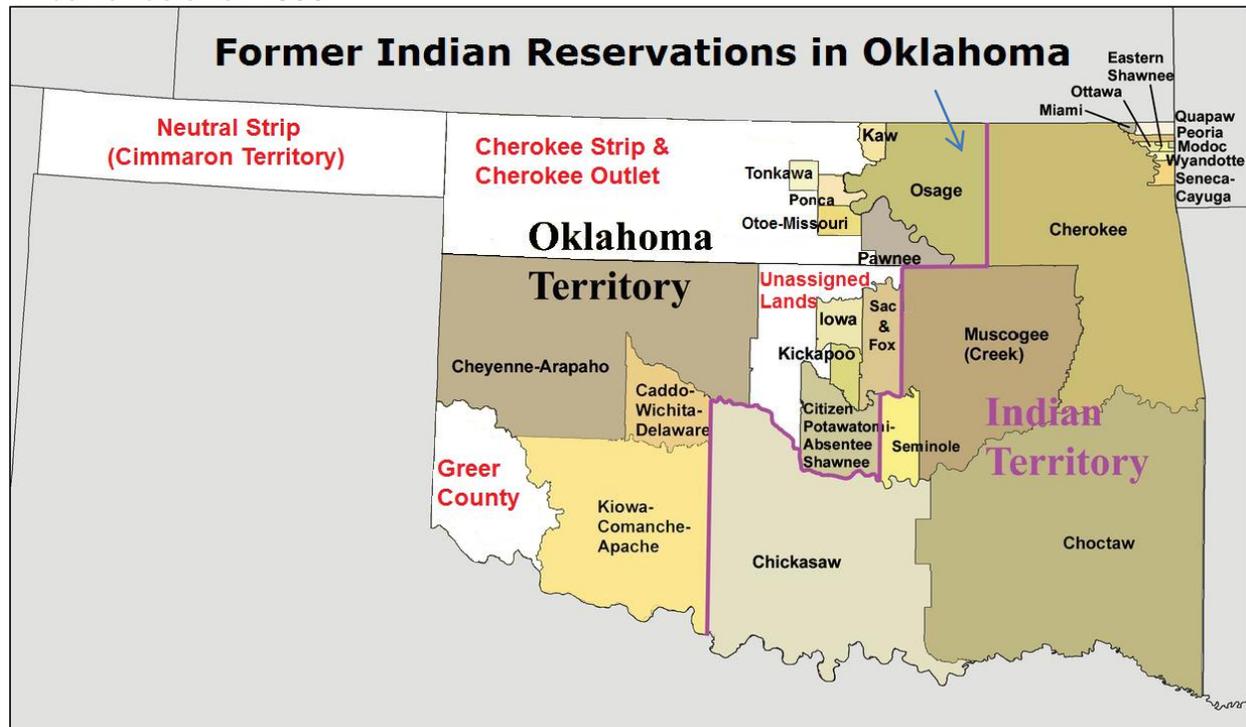
Oklahoma Historical Society source to consider for Indian Removal information:  
<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/i/in015.html>

## 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



### 3. Population Past/Present

- Total tribal enrollment: From a population of several thousand, the Kaw had declined through disease and starvation to 1,500 by 1800, to 553 by 1872, and to 194 within 16 years of the move to Oklahoma's Indian Territory. The Kaw Nation of Oklahoma has survived adversity and today is a federally-recognized self-governing tribe of 3,323 members.
- Membership criteria: Citizenship requirements are defined in Article III of the Kaw Nation Constitution ratified-2011. The primary requirement is a demonstrated line of ancestry from one or more individuals listed on the 1902 Kaw Indian Allotment Roll.

### 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 Honorable Guy Munroe is the current Chair of the Kaw Nation. In September 2010, he was elected by tribal citizens to serve his fourth term in office. Under the new Ratified Constitution – August, 2011, the Tribe has two legislative bodies: a seven-member Tribal Council and a General Council composed of all adult tribal members. The Tribal Council is empowered to act by majority vote.

The constitution also provides for a judicial branch, composed of a Supreme Court consisting of three justices, and such inferior courts as may be established by tribal law. The constitution provides that justices of the Kaw Supreme Court and judges of the inferior courts are selected by the Tribal Council and confirmed by the General Council.

### 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 traditional language of the Kanza people is Kaánze Íe, or simply Kanza. Although it is a separate language, it is closely related to the languages of the Osage, Ponca, Omaha, and Quapaw tribes. Kanza is a Siouan language, and so it also has similarities in grammar and vocabulary with Ioway, Otoe-Missouria, the languages of the Sioux peoples, as well as more distant ties to Crow, Mandan, Hidatsa, Biloxi, and others. During a long and very devastating period in the history of the tribe, usage of the language began to taper off dramatically. This trend continued on into the Twentieth Century, until only a handful of the fullbloods in the 1970s could speak the language fluently. Today, all these elders are gone. The Kanza people today speak English as a first language, but many can still understand and use Kanza words and phrases.

## **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.*

These plains Indians were known as the wind people. After removal from Kansas, much of the tribe's traditional ways and culture diminished in a short time. The government mandated tribal children to go to school, yet they were not allowed to speak their tribal language and were punished for doing so. In the mid-1880s, three members of the Kaw tribe visited the people of the Waxáxonlin (Pawhuska) division of the Osage, to offer them a ceremonial drum, symbolizing cultural interexchange and aimed at heritage preservation.

The Kanza called their dance l'Loshka Wachín. Little Jim, Barkley Delano and Jim Pepper, all prominent young men in the Kaw Tribe, stayed at the home of Mozhon Okashe (Mashunkashey), near modern day Pawhuska, Okla. They remained among the Osage throughout the winter to discuss what form and structure the new dance would take among the Osage. Mozhon Okashe assumed a great responsibility when he and his family accepted the drum to be used in the dance in the name of his young son, Ben Mashunkashey, the first Pawhuska Drum Keeper. The first I-Lo-Skah (Inlón-shka), the Osage name for the dance, was held soon afterward under the leadership of Mashunkashey.

The 1984 I-Lo-Skah ceremony was selected to observe the Centennial by elders of the Pawhuska District.

Oklahoma Historical Society source to consider for Boarding Schools:

## 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.”*

- Art



The statue named “Southwind” was designed by sculpture artist Todd Whipple of Wichita, Kansas, with the layered metal to allow the wind to pass through so the rider becomes one with the wind. This also allows the wind to continue its way to respect the south wind and the people who use its name. The rider throws his hands into the air; he is ready to be with the wind. “Kanza: People of the South Wind.”

## 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 Lewis and Clark expedition had a profound effect upon the Kaw. As people learned about the desirable lands along the Missouri and Kansas Rivers, the Kaws presented a formidable obstacle to westward expansion. Their warriors maintained control of the lower Kansas valley against both the white man from the east and alien tribes from the west. A succession of treaties sought to change the Kaw from an independent, semi-sedentary people into individual family farmers on the model of white agricultural society. The results were devastating to the tribe.

In June 1898, Charles Curtis sponsored a bill in Congress which upon passage came to be known as the Curtis Act. The reservation was broken into individual Indian allotments, and Congressman Curtis (one-eighth Kaw) and his three children received 1,625 acres.

Oklahoma Historical Society source to consider:

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

## 9. Current Information on tribe

The Kaw Nation sponsors a Powwow during Council Grove’s annual Washunga Days in June. The Kaw Nation’s Annual Oklahoma Powwow is held at Washunga Bay the first weekend in October. Visitors are welcome at both events.

## 10. Other information

- Kanza Last Full Blood



William A. Mehojah

- Literature- *The Kansa Indians: A History of the Wind People*
- Famous tribal members



- Monchousia (White Plume)
- Kaw Nation Timeline download at <http://kawnation.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Timeline.pdf>.

**Sources:**

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

Kaw Nation website: [kawnation.com/](http://kawnation.com/)

Oklahoma Historical Society

Oklahoma Indian Country Guide, Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department

Redish, Laura and Lewis, Orrin. "Kansa Indian Fact Sheet." *Native Languages of the Americas*. 2013. Web. 18 Nov. 2013.

The Library of Congress