

## Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Indians, Oklahoma

*(Oklahoma Social Studies Standards, OSDE)*

**Tribe: Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Indians, Oklahoma**

**Tribal websites(s):** <http://www.omtribe.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.”

At one time the Otoe and Missouria, along with the Winnebago and Iowa Tribes, were once part of a single tribe that lived in the Great Lakes Region of the United States. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the tribes separated from each other and migrated west and south although they still lived near each other in the lower Missouri River Valley.

The Otoes also call themselves Jiwere (jee-WEH-ray) and the Missourias who call themselves Nutachi (noo-TAH-chi) were related to each other in language and customs, but they were still two distinct people.

The name of the state of “*Nebraska*” is two Otoe-Missouria words “Ni Brathge” (nee BRAHTH-gay) which means “water flat”. This name came from the Platt River which flows through the state and at some places moves so slowly and calmly that it is flat.

The state of Missouri and the Missouri River are both named after the Missouria Tribe, which once lived in the region and controlled traffic and trade along the Missouri River and its tributaries. Trade was a vital part of Otoe and Missouria life for centuries. They traded with the Spanish, French and Americans for various goods. All three nations courted the Otoes and Missourias for exclusive trading agreements.

In the summer of 1804, the Otoe and Missouria were the first tribes to hold council with Lewis and Clark in their official role as representatives of President Jefferson. The captains presented to the chiefs a document that offered peace while at the same time established the sovereignty of the United States over the tribe.

Unfortunately, contact with Europeans also brought new diseases. Smallpox decimated both tribes and weakened their hold on the region. The Missouri Tribe lost many people to disease and warfare with other tribes killed many of the healthy warriors. In the late 1700s, with few people remaining, the Missourias went to live with their relatives the Otoes.

The Otoe-Missourias were predominately hunter-gatherers. They did grow and harvest corn, beans and squash, but this mostly subsistence farming was intended to supplement the bison and other game that made up the majority of the Otoe-Missouria diet. As was their tradition, the tribes would migrate to follow the buffalo, but they stayed in a general area of Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Kansas.

The traditional lands of the Otoe-Missouria people were desirable farming lands to the settlers from the east. As more and more settlers came onto Otoe-Missouria land, the tribal people fought to protect it. Although a small tribe, the Otoe-Missourias bravely fought any who attacked them including the white settlers who had essentially squatted on the tribe's land. This created a conflict for the United States government and they took action to protect settlers.

A little over 25 years after their council meeting with Lewis & Clark, the Otoe & Missouri agreed to their first official cession of land to the United States in 1830. Additional cessions followed in 1833, 1836, and 1854. In 1830 the Otoe & Missouri negotiated another treaty with the United States that ceded their hunting grounds in Iowa to the government for white expansion.

Also in 1830, the Nemaha Half-Breed Reservation was established by the Treaty of Prairie du Chien. This treaty set aside a tract of land in Nebraska for the mixed-race descendants of the Otoe, Iowa, Missouri Omaha, and the Yankton and Santee Sioux tribes. The land on which the Nemaha Half-Breed Reservation was created originally belonged to the Otoes. For this reason, the treaty set forth that the Omahas, Iowas, and Yankton and Santee bands of Sioux would pay the Otoes the sum of \$3000 for their "half-breeds" to live on the reservation. In 1860 the Nemaha Half-Breed Reservation was broken into individual allotments by the United States.

Westward expansion by white settlers continued through the 19th century. The settlers encroached on the traditional lands of the Otoe-Missouria making them unable to participate in their traditional hunts. In 1833, the tribe moved from their older villages on the Platte and Missouri Rivers to present day Yutan (NE), where they were introduced to formal education. From 1833 to 1841, Otoe-Missouria pupils learned rudimentary reading and writing, but the principal instruction was in Christianity. Unsatisfied with the education they were receiving, the Otoe-Missouria destroyed the mission school. They then deserted the new village of Yutan for refuge deeper in the Platte Valley.

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William Medill, presented a plan for the confinement of the Otoe-Missouria on a small reservation in 1848. Convincing the tribe that such placement was in their best interest took a few years. In 1853 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, George Manypenny assured the tribe that the reservation would be situated on old and familiar tribal territory. The tribe accepted the proposal. A small group of Otoe men traveled to Washington D.C., where they signed a treaty. All of their land west of the Missouri River was ceded to the government, except for a tract that was to be the reservation--an area of approximately 162,000 acres.

After the treaty was signed, the newly ceded lands were opened up to white settlement. Before the tribe could move to their new reservation, an influx of white settlers moved onto the land. Chiefs petitioned the government in the fall of 1854, complaining of the encroachment on the villages. The Otoe-Missouria decided to move to the newly assigned reservation as hastily as possible. Discontent with the original tract of land assigned to be their new home, the Otoe-Missouria requested that the tentative reservation be moved five miles to the east side of the Big Blue River. They desired a more defensible location with access to timber. This request necessitated a supplemental treaty signed on December 9, 1854.

Despite the delays, the tribe was destined to move again. Protesting the Treaty of March, 1854, the tribe complained to Agent George Hepner that the provisions of the treaty had not been met. Hepner offered them services and goods that amounted to about \$8,000 in compensation. He also told the tribe that they would be removed and relocated to the reservation--by force if necessary. Shortly thereafter, the tribe began their walk of removal. The whole tribe of less than 500 people, with meager supplies and minimal possessions departed for the Big Blue River and reservation life.

For 26 years the Big Blue Reservation in southeastern Nebraska was the home of the Otoe-Missouria Tribe. It was a strip of land 25 miles in length and 10 miles wide. The site was selected on the basis of its potential agricultural yield, although the Otoe-Missouria were not a farming people. The women had sown patches of crops for hundreds of years, but the tribe was actually hunter-gatherers and had chosen to follow the buffalo for subsistence. With confinement to the reservation, the government hoped to promote agriculture and banned the buffalo hunt. The lands actually known to be Otoe and/or Missouriia lands and hunting grounds were located where the states of Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Kansas meet. Once confined to the reservation, these lands were ceded to white settlers.

Although the promised annuity payments from the government were not paid, an agency farm, saw & grist mill and school were constructed on the reservation. A Blacksmith shop was also built. When some of the government annuity payments did arrive, Agent Dennison stole \$13,000 and fled the reservation. After drought destroyed

their crops, the annuity money was needed to buy food for the tribal members. The environment and the theft added to the miserable existence and anger of the Otoe-Missouria on the Big Blue Reservation. Enraged and desperate, the tribe (including women and children) pursued Dennison and took him captive until he returned \$4,000 of the annuity money. The Otoe-Missouria never received the rest. The office of Indian Affairs chose to ignore the incident.

John Baker was assigned as agent after Dennison. By his term however, the tribe was fed up with the disreputable agents and the dishonest white Nebraska businessmen who pilfered annuity money from the Otoe-Missouria Tribe. Frustrated with their treatment, the tribe set the agency wheat field on fire in protest of the life that was being forced upon them.

The period of 1867-1869 was extremely hard for the tribe. They suffered from reduced rations, severe winters and an alarming mortality rate. The new Indian Agent Green documented some common phrases in Otoe-Missouria such as “my children are very sick”, “no medicine and cannot eat” and “my wife is sick and very bad”. Under these conditions a new treaty was “negotiated” in February 1869. The treaty set forth that part of the reservation would be sold to railroad lines for right-of-way and that 92,000 acres would be surveyed and appraised for sale. It also stated that a delegation would be sent to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) to explore a new settlement.

Tribal reaction concerning the treaty was decidedly mixed. Part of the people considered removal to be a better alternative than staying on the Big Blue. Others felt that the tribe should cling to the land regardless of the hardships. The rift would widen and eventually split the tribe. The tribe divided into two main groups—the Coyote Band and the Quaker Band. These bands were based on ideology, not clan or birthrights. The Coyote Band favored immediate removal to Indian Territory and Medicine Horse was their principal spokesman. The Quaker Band favored staying on the Big Blue Reservation. After years of suffering under the Office of Indian Affairs, the Coyote Band, led by Little Pipe and consisting of some 160 Otoe-Missouria people, escaped the Big Blue reservation for a new life in Indian Territory.

For the remaining tribal members conditions on the Big Blue Reservation in Nebraska worsened. They petitioned the government to remove the entire tribe to Indian Territory in hopes of a better life. On October 5, 1881 a procession of 320 Otoe-Missouria left Nebraska for a new reservation in Indian Territory purchased with the funds from the sale of the remaining lands of the Big Blue. Tribal possessions were transported by wagon and ponies. The assemblage walked for eighteen days and arrived at the new agency on October 23, 1881. The Coyote Band rejoined the tribe at the Red Rock site in 1890. Today, the Otoe-Missouria Tribal Complex is still located in Red Rock, OK.

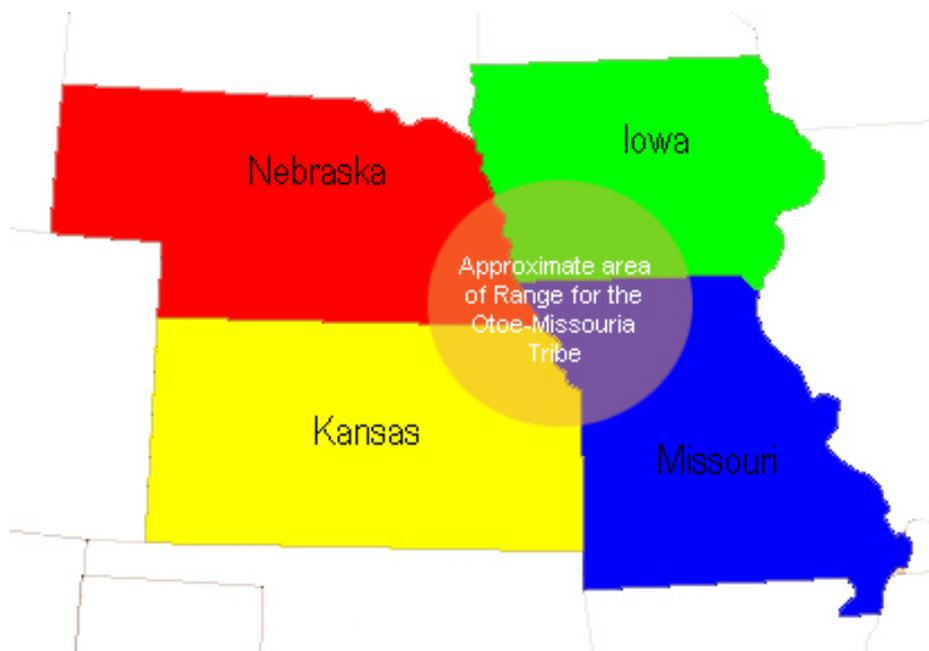
**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 2.7** “Compare and contrast multiple points of view to evaluate the impact of the Dawes Act which resulted in the loss of tribal communal lands and the redistribution of lands by various means including land runs as typified by the Unassigned Lands and the Cherokee Outlet,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

- Original Homeland - As was their tradition, the tribes would migrate to follow the buffalo, but they stayed in a general area of Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Kansas.
- Location In Oklahoma – The original reservation in Indian Territory was broken up in the Allotment Act (or Dawes Act of 1887). The lands were surveyed and given to individual Indians of the tribe. Land deemed “surplus” was opened for white settlement. By assigning allotted land to individual tribal members, the tribe was literally divided by miles.

## 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 & location after 1881



### 3. Population Past/Present

- Total tribal enrollment 3,049
- Tribal enrollment in Oklahoma 2,086

### 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.

The Otoe-Missouria Tribe is governed by a seven person elected body known as the Tribal Council. The Council consists of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary,

Treasurer, 1<sup>st</sup> Member, 2<sup>nd</sup> Member and 3<sup>rd</sup> member. The Tribal Council members each serve a three year term.

Through its many treaties, the Otoe-Missouria Tribe has a long history with the federal government. Today, several of the social programs offered by the tribe to its citizens are funded by federal grants. Additionally, the federal government manages tribal lands and supervises the tribe's business enterprises through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Tribal gaming is regulated by a federal body known as the National Indian Gaming Commission which grants gaming licenses to tribes and regulates the Indian gaming industry for compliance with the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA).

As a sovereign nation, the Otoe-Missouria Tribe sets its own taxes on tribal lands and is not subject to the tax laws of the state of Oklahoma. However, the state and tribe do have a tobacco compact in place which allows the state to collect a percentage of sales tax from the tribe's sale of tobacco products in lieu of the tribe enforcing state taxation laws on non-Indians who purchase tobacco from tribes. Additionally, the tribe and the state of Oklahoma have agreements in place for gaming. The IGRA requires written compacts between states and tribes in relation to Class III Indian Gaming.

State and local government do not have jurisdiction on Indian land. For the benefit of state and tribal citizens, many tribes have entered into cross-deputization agreement in regards to law enforcement. The Otoe-Missouria Tribe and the City of Perry, Oklahoma have such an agreement in place.

**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 Otoe-Missouria Tribe is governed by a seven person elected body known as the Tribal Council. The Council consists of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, 1<sup>st</sup> Member, 2<sup>nd</sup> Member and 3<sup>rd</sup> member. The Tribal Council members each serve a three year term. The Constitution of the Otoe-Missouria Tribe was ratified on February 4, 1984

## 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 Otoe-Missouria language is a Siouan language spoken by the Otoes, Missouriias, and Ioways. It is closely related to the Ho-chunk (Winnebago) language, and is more distantly related to the Dhegiha languages (Ponca, Omaha, Osage, Quapaw, Kaw).

Otoe and Missouriia children were taken away from their parents and sent to government boarding schools to be "civilized". The children had to learn English. Tribal elders remember being punished for speaking their native language at school. The stigma of speaking the traditional language passed into the home. Some tribal members did not teach their children their language because they did not want them to be punished in school or because they thought it would be better for them to learn "white ways".

Because so many of the traditions and the language were discouraged by the government, much of the language has been lost. Today the tribe is struggling to maintain what knowledge of the language still exists. Some of the information gathered by the tribe regarding the language was documented by non-Indians, missionaries and government agents.

In 1834, a missionary named Reverend Moses Merrill created a system of writing the Otoe language. He published a book of Otoe church hymns called *Wdtwhltl Wdwdklha Tva Eva Wdhonetl*. The title of the book translates to "Otoe book their song sacred". This book is considered to be the first book ever published in Nebraska.

Also, many of the dances, societies and social norms of the Otoe-Missouria were lost as tribal members were pressured to conform to the ways of dominant society and the younger generations were taught to reject these "backward ways" at military style boarding schools. These losses broke down the social structure of the tribe further.

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

## **6. Cultural Identifiers - ie. 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-1940s) upon Native Americans' identity, culture, traditions, and tribal government and sovereignty."

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The second peyote church, also organized in 1914, was called the First Born Church of Christ. It was initiated by Johnathan Koshiway, Sac and Fox roadman, for Otoe peyotists in Oklahoma. Legally incorporated, the articles of incorporation for the First Born Church of Christ were drafted with assistance from attorney Henry S. Johnston of Perry, Oklahoma. The charter named Charley Whitehorn as the deacon, or first officer, as well as 10 directors, one of whom was Koshiway. In the organization's statement of purpose, Christianity was emphasized, tobacco prohibited from its services, and peyote was not mentioned.

## 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.”

Many of the Otoe-Missouria dances and also the songs that accompanied them were lost as tribal members were pressured to conform to the ways of dominant society and as the younger generations were forced to attend military style boarding schools. For example, there were songs that went along with our stickball games, which we no longer play, personal and family songs that are no longer sung, and songs that went along with our harvest, such as songs for the bean dance, which is no longer carried out.

Many art forms of the Otoe-Missouria have been lost due to relocation and pressures to conform to the dominant society. Most of the artwork, as it was in other tribes, was for utilitarian purposes. Baskets and bags were beautifully hand crafted from reeds gathered by the river. Awls, hide scrapers, combs, and other useful items were created from the bone of buffalo and other game and then decorated, often telling stories through the artwork. Many weapons were also creatively decorated telling stories of past battles or maybe carved with an animal that the warrior wished to emulate or take on the characteristics of during warfare.

Although, many of those art forms are no longer practiced, there are a few that are still carried out today. Beads became a very important part of Otoe-Missouria dress when they were introduced to us at the onset of European trade. We used them to decorate our clothes and moccasins, and they are still being used today in our traditional clothing

that's worn during our social gatherings. Ribbon work is also a prominent identifier of Otoe-Missouria dress and many of the designs used to make up our clothing are floral patterns. Being a woodlands tribe, the Otoe-Missouria recognized the beauty in their surroundings and showed respect to it by incorporating the designs in our clothing.

## **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 Otoe & Missouri Tribes were the first tribes to sit in government to government council with the newly created country of the United States of America. They met in 1804 near the town that is today known as Council Bluffs, Iowa named for this historic meeting.

In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase gave the U.S. government 828,800 square miles of territory claimed by France. The U.S. paid 15 million dollars for the Louisiana Territory. France's claim on the land was the only thing sold, not the actual territory, which belonged to the tribes who inhabited the land.

President Thomas Jefferson commissioned the Corps of Discovery. He named U.S. Army Captain Meriwether Lewis its leader. In turn, Lewis selected William Clark as his exploration partner. Their goal was to explore the land claimed through the Louisiana Purchase and to establish trade and sovereignty over the Native peoples along the Missouri River.

On the 13th of June 1804, Lewis and Clark noted in their journals the location of a Missouri village between the confluences of the Chariton and Grand Rivers in Missouri. They wrote "...behind a small willow island in the bend is a prairie in which the Missouries Indians once lived and the spot where 300 of them fell a sacrifice to the fury of the Saukees. (Sac)"

The journal continues . . . "This nation (Missouries) once the most numerous nation in this part of the Continent now reduced to about 80 families. And that few under the protection of the Otteaus (Otoes) on R. Platt who themselves are declining."

Lewis and Clark traveled through the lands of the Otoe & Missouri people. By this time the Missourias had joined with the Otoes for protection. According to the journals of

Lewis "Those two parts of nations, Ottos and Missouriies, now residing together is about 250 men. The Ottos composing 2/3 and Missouriis 1/3".

Many of the Otoes and Missouriias were away hunting buffalo when the Lewis and Clark expedition reached their towns. The Corps sent out two men to search for the hunting party, but they returned without finding any sign. Lewis and Clark decided to proceed up the Missouri River without meeting the chiefs of the tribe.

On July 22, 1804 Clark wrote in his journal "much nearer the Otteaus town than the Mouth of the Platt, we concluded to delay at this place a few days and Send for Some of the Chiefs of that nation to let them Know of the Change of Government. The wishes of our Government to Cultivate friendship with them. the Objects of our journey and to present them with a flag and some small presents."

The following day Lewis and Clark sent George Drouillard and Peter Cruzatte with tobacco to the Otoes and Pawnees. Clark wrote in his journal "At this season of the year all the Indians in this quater are in the Plains hunting the Buffalo from Some Signs seen by our hunter and the Prairies being on fire in the derection of the Village induce a belief that the Nation have returned to get green Corn."

When the men returned two days later on July 25 Clark wrote, "They saw fresh signs of a Small party but could not find them, they having taken precausions to Conceal the rout which they went out from the Village - the Inds. of the Missouriies being at war with one & the other or other Indians, move in large bodies and Sometimes the whole nation continue to Camp together on their hunting pls "

Three days later Clark wrote in his journal "Drewyer (Drouillard) brought in a Missouriie Indian which he met with hunting in the Prairie. His party was small consisting of 20 lodges. This Indian is one of the fiew remaining of that nation, & lives with the Otteauz, his camp about 4 miles from the river, he informs that the 'great gangue' of the nation were hunting the Buffalow in the Plains."

Clark went on to note that the language spoken by the Missouriia man "appeared to make use of the Same pronouncation of the Osarge (Osages), Calling a Chief Inca." The Osage and Missouriia languages are both of the Siouan language family. It is possible that the Missouriia man used the word "Hinka" which translates as "my father".

As representatives of President Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark were charged with the responsibility of conveying U.S. sovereignty over the indigenous people they met on their journey. To do that, the captains felt they must meet with chiefs. On July 29, 1804 the expedition sent a Frenchman to invite the Otoe & Missouriia Chiefs to another meeting.

On July 30, the expedition decided to set up camp on a bluff on the west side of the Missouri River. This bluff became known as Council Bluffs from the meetings held there with the tribes during the next few days. The city of Council Bluffs, Iowa is named after this location although the city of Council Bluffs is actually several miles away from where Lewis & Clark made camp.

August 2, 1804 Clark wrote "At sunset Mr. Fairfong (Otoe interpreter resident with them) and an Otteau & Missouri Nation came to camp, among those Indians 6 were Chiefs. Capt. Lewis & myself met those Indians & informed them we were glad to see them and would speak to them tomorrow."

The following day Lewis and Clark held the first formal meeting between official representatives of the United States and the Otoe-Missouria Tribe. The soldiers marched in full regalia and demonstrated their skills with weaponry in a show of military strength. The utmost military decorum was observed at all times. This display establishes the routine for subsequent councils.

Lewis & Clark continued their presentation with a speech that Lewis would make again and again to the tribes encountered on the way to the Pacific Coast. In essence, it was patronizing and audacious considering they were surrounded by tribes who could have done away with them at any time.

During the Council, the Otoes & Missourias were told they were the "Children" of the "Great Father". Clark wrote "after Delivering a Speech informing thos Children of ours of the Change which had taken place (the election of Jefferson and the Louisiana Purchase), the wishes of our government to Cultivate friendship & good understanding, the method of good advice & Some Directions"

The "good advice and Some Directions" were related to trade. The U.S. government wanted to acquire the exclusive trade of all the tribes encountered by the expedition. Therefore, Lewis & Clark offered trade and protection to the Otoes & Missourias if the tribes agreed to no longer trade with the French and the Spanish.

Of the speech, Clark wrote in his journal "Those people expressed great satisfaction at the Speech Delivered. They are no orators." How Captain Clark drew this conclusion is unknown considering all tribes documented and shared their customs, beliefs, practices and histories through oral tradition.

Clark noted the response of the chiefs in his journal, "each Chief & principal man delivered a Speech acknowledging ther approbation to what they had heard and promised to prosue the good advice and Caustion, they were happy with Ther new fathers who gave good advice & to be Depended on."

At the conclusion of this first meeting, each chief received gifts including a Peace Medal. Following the practice established by European Kings with colonists, President Jefferson gave Lewis & Clark 89 Peace Medals to distribute to tribal leaders as tokens of friendship and the newly-established U.S. sovereignty over the lands acquired through the Louisiana Purchase.

Different types of Peace Medals were distributed to different Chiefs based on their perceived rank. Clark wrote “Delivered two of a medal of Second Grade to one for the Ottos & and one for the Missouri part of the nation present and 4 medals of a third Grade to the inferior Chief two for each tribe.”

Peace Medals became highly prized among Native people as future presidents also used them in relations and negotiations with tribes. As their popularity grew, private companies created their own Peace Medals to give away as well. Peace Medals are frequently seen in 19th century Native American portraiture and many Otoe-Missouria Chiefs are shown wearing their Peace Medals in historical archives.

The chiefs that were present at the first meeting with Lewis and Clark were noted in Clark’s journal as “We ár ruge nor (Otoe) Little Thief, Sh n gö t n gö (Otoe) Big Horse , We the a (Missouria) Hospitality, Shon Guss Còn (Otoe) White Horse, Wau pe ùh (Missouria), Āh hǒ nīng gǎ (Missouria), Baza cou jà (Otoe), Āh hǒ n gǎ (Missouria).”

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

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

As a sovereign nation, the Otoe-Missouria Tribe determines its requirements of membership. In 2008, the tribe lowered its blood quantum membership requirement to 1/8 Otoe-Missouria blood. The result has been a 230% increase in tribal membership. In 2013 there are 3,049 enrolled tribal members who live throughout the world with the majority living within the state of Oklahoma.

The tribe owns four casinos, a hotel & event center, several short-term lending firms, a propane company and a cattle ranch. These enterprises have helped to improve the lives of tribal members as profits have been parlayed into new housing, education scholarships, elder feeding programs, youth leadership programs, tribal law enforcement and other social services.

Additionally, the Otoe-Missouria language which was nearly lost through assimilation is again being taught in classrooms. The tribe’s Head Start Program and After School Programs incorporate Otoe-Missouria into their classroom and a satellite class in Edmond, OK offers lessons to all ages.

For 132 years, the Otoe-Missouria Tribe has held its Annual Encampment in Red Rock, OK. The four day event held in July is one of the most important cultural gatherings for the Otoe-Missouria people. The event is open to the public.

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

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Otoe-Missouria mothers knew the impending fate that awaited their sons and other sons of America. The draft would be inevitable, so the Otoe mothers took action by becoming organized for the sole purpose of being of service to these young men and their families. Continuing their efforts, the mothers prepared for official membership with the National War Mothers Organization in 1943 and became the first Native American War Mothers in history. They celebrated their 66<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on September 22, 2009.

Although their funds are minimal, our small group of Otoe War Mothers is still giving selflessly today. They strive to provide for our veterans, their families, and other War Mothers in need. It is through other's generous gifts of money, shawls and blankets that the Otoe War Mothers are able to honor our War Veterans and Servicemen in an admirable and appropriate way in which they deserve.

The founding mothers included Ada Black, Madge Dent, Lina DeRoin, Fannie Grant, Mary Harragarra, Lizzie Homeratha, Josie Littlecrow, Hazel Pettit, Bessie Kent, Thelma Hudson, and Carrie Koshiway. The first officers were Mary Harragarra as President and Josie Littlecrow as Vice-President. Lizzie Homeratha served as Recording Secretary, Thelma Hudson as Corresponding Secretary, Ada Black as Custodian of Records and Fannie Grant as Chaplin.

#### **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](#)