



THE CHICKASAW NATION POST-REMOVAL

Student Reference Material

PRELUDE TO REMOVAL

Chickasaw Removal into Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma)

- President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act on May 28, 1830. This initiated the forced removal of numerous American Indian tribes from their Southeastern homelands, including the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole tribes.
- The historic Chickasaw homelands includes present-day states Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee. The Natchez Trace, the ancient animal trails carved out by prehistoric animals, are culturally and historically significant to the Chickasaw people. Their historic homelands were eventually ceded to the United States government, which used the land for American settlement.
- The Chickasaws were among the last Southeastern tribes to relocate to Indian Territory, beginning in 1837.

POST-REMOVAL 1837-1861

- In 1837, the Chickasaws purchased an interest in lands and resources from the Choctaws in Indian Territory, this was outlined in the 1837 Treaty of Doaksville.
- After signing the treaty, the Chickasaw people were removed from their homelands into Indian Territory amongst the Choctaw Nation, becoming subjected to their laws.
- This area would eventually become the Chickasaw District within the Choctaw Nation.
- The Chickasaws endured many hardships and devastation as many, young and old, perished due to dysentery, smallpox, exposure to the elements and starvation.

POST-REMOVAL 1837-1861

- Upon arrival into Indian Territory, the rations and provisions promised by the federal government were either understocked or spoiled.
- The Chickasaws encountered threats and hostility from other American Indian tribes who sought to protect their land and resources. The tribes were unaware of removal and Western settlement.
- Staying within the terms of the 1837 Treaty of Doaksville, over the next decade the Chickasaw people selected Edmund Pickens as the first Chief of the Chickasaw District of the Choctaw Nation. They also continued their tradition of having a council.
- Leading up to 1854, the Chickasaw leaders worked hard to create a constitutional government. Ultimately, the Chickasaws would separate from the Choctaws; establishing the current jurisdictional boundaries of the Chickasaw Nation (13 counties in south-central Oklahoma).
- In 1856 at Pennington Creek (Tishomingo, Oklahoma), the Chickasaw Nation drafted their own constitution, developing the position of governor, as well as the three-branch style of government, including executive, legislative and judicial departments. Mr. Cyrus Harris became the first governor of the Chickasaw Nation.

POST-REMOVAL 1861-1900

- Despite uprooting from their historic Chickasaw homelands and the imposing threats of change and uncertainty, the Chickasaws persisted, allowing them to retain their traditional customs, including stomp dance, stickball, Chickasaw language and foods, to name a few.
- In 1887, President Grover Cleveland broke up reservation land to be sold to individuals. Reservations refer to lands that were lawfully owned by particular American Indian tribes. Each American Indian in Indian Territory registered on a tribal roll called the Dawes Roll. The tribal rolls provided each American Indian citizen with a particular amount of land, given their age and family status.

POST-REMOVAL 1861-1900

- Unlike their historic homelands of Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee, the Chickasaws' new lands in Indian Territory were not sustainable for farming.
- Still, they persisted in rebuilding their communities, businesses, schools and livelihoods.
- With the turn of the century in the 1900s, the Chickasaws joined with their neighboring tribes in Indian Territory in an attempt to gain their own statehood to be called the *State of Sequoyah*. The proposed state was to be named in honor of Sequoyah, the Cherokee who created a writing system in 1825 for the Cherokee language. This attempt was rejected by the United States. Outnumbered, the American Indian tribes in Indian Territory were powerless in the unionized state that would become Oklahoma in 1907.

DOUGLAS H. JOHNSTON

- From 1906 to 1971, the U.S. president appointed the Chickasaw leader to handle administrative matters for the Chickasaw Nation. Douglas H. Johnston was the first U.S. presidential-appointed governor for the Chickasaw Nation.
- Douglas H. Johnston 1906-1939
- Floyd E. Maytubby 1939-1963
- Hugh Maytubby 1963
- Overton James 1963-1971



Governor Douglas H. Johnston

ELECTING GOVERNORS

- In 1971, under the direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Chickasaw people were authorized to elect their own governor.
- Overton James became the first elected Chickasaw governor since 1904.
- Since 1971, the Chickasaw people have elected their own Governor of the Chickasaw Nation.
- The title “governor” was chosen rather than “chief” to serve as the “supreme executive power.” The Chickasaw Nation has had one “chief” who lead their people in the Chickasaw District within the Choctaw Nation. After developing their own constitution, the term chief was no longer used. Historically, the title *Minko* (leader) was used to address our Chickasaw leader.



Governor Overton James

A NEW BEGINNING

- In 1979, the United States Department of the Interior (DOI) and federal district court approved a draft of a new Chickasaw Constitution. It was ratified by a 92 percent vote among all Chickasaws.
- On August 27, 1983, seven fundamental differences of the constitution were agreed upon and ratified. These seven differences included: the length of the governor's term, term limits for elected and appointed positions, whether to have a lieutenant governor and if salaries should be set by the legislature or governor, blood quantum requirements for executive branch, the location of the seat of government and the election of tribal judges.

Constitution

CONSTITUTION OF THE CHICKASAW NATION

The following language is as originally ratified on August 27, 1983, and
as amended as of June 21, 2002.

[Table of Contents has been added for convenience.]

[PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION](#)

ARTICLES

<u>I.</u>	<u>NAME.</u>
<u>II.</u>	<u>CITIZENSHIP.</u>
<u>III.</u>	<u>RIGHTS OF SUFFRAGE.</u>
<u>IV.</u>	<u>BILL OF RIGHTS.</u>
<u>V.</u>	<u>DIVISION OF THE POWERS OF GOVERNMENT.</u>
<u>VI.</u>	<u>LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.</u>
<u>VII.</u>	<u>PRIVILEGES, DUTIES & POWERS OF LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.</u>

PRESENT-DAY

- Today, the Chickasaw Nation is economically strong, culturally vibrant and full of energetic people still dedicated to the preservation of family, community and heritage. Since the 1980s, tribal government has focused most of its efforts on building an economically diverse base to generate funds that will support programs and services to both Chickasaw and other Native Americans.
- Businesses have flourished, programs and services have grown, and the quality of life for all Chickasaws have been greatly enhanced. The Chickasaw Nation's current three-branch system of government was re-established with the ratification of the 1983 Chickasaw Nation Constitution. The elected officials provided for in the constitution believe in a unified commitment, whereby government policy serves the common good of all Chickasaw citizens. This common good extends to future generations, as well as today's citizens.
- The structure of the current government encourages and supports infrastructure for strong business ventures and an advanced tribal economy. The use of new technologies and dynamic business strategies in a global market are also encouraged. As in times past, the Chickasaw work ethic is very much a part of everyday life today. Monies generated in businesses are divided between investments for further diversification of enterprises and support of tribal government operations, programs and services for American Indian people. This unique system is key to the Chickasaw Nation's efforts to pursue self-sufficiency and self-determination, which helps ensure that Chickasaws stay a united and thriving people.



THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

- Governor Bill Anoatubby began working for the Chickasaw Nation in 1975 as the health services director. A year later, he was asked to direct the finance department. In October 1978, he was promoted to the position of special assistant to the governor and controller.
- In 1979, he was elected as the tribe's first Lt. Governor. Gov. Anoatubby was elected to his first term as governor in 1987. In his first term, Gov. Anoatubby established goals of economic development and self-sufficiency for the Chickasaw Nation and its people. Today, the Chickasaw Nation is well on the way to achieving those goals.
- In 1987, the tribe had about 250 employees. Today, the Chickasaw Nation employs nearly 13,500 people. The financial condition of the tribe has been improved tremendously. Funding for tribal operations has grown exponentially. Tribal assets have grown two-hundred fold. Gov. Anoatubby is committed to meeting the needs of Chickasaw people through programs and services



Governor Bill Anoatubby

THE LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT

- The Chickasaw Nation Legislature is composed of 13 members, elected from the Chickasaw Nation's four legislative districts: Panola, Pickens, Pontotoc and Tishomingo.
- Members of the Tribal Legislature are citizens and registered voters of the Chickasaw Nation at least 25 years of age who have lived within the Chickasaw Nation jurisdictional boundaries for at least one year and their respective district for at least six months prior to being elected to office.
- Once elected, they must remain residents of their elected district during the tenure of their office, which is up for re-election every three years.
- The Chickasaw Legislature is structured much like the U.S. Legislature, with scheduled sessions, committees, the formation of procedures and regulations, the approval of budgets and the establishment of law.

THE JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

The judicial powers of the Chickasaw Nation shall be vested in the Supreme Court and a lower District Court. The Supreme Court shall consist of three Supreme Court Justices elected by popular vote by qualified Chickasaw voters of the Chickasaw Nation. The District Court is comprised of a District Judge and Court Advocate who are appointed by the Supreme Court.



THE CULTURAL CENTER

- More than 20 years of planning went into the Chickasaw Cultural Center, which now serves as a cultural home and an embodiment of the Chickasaw people's legacy and resilient spirit. Offering a Smithsonian-caliber experience, this world-class destination is dedicated to helping people of all ages and backgrounds share in and celebrate Chickasaw history, culture and traditions.
- Through beautiful scenery, natural architecture and interactive exhibits, the Chickasaw Cultural Center tells the stories of Chickasaw individuals and families who have struggled, fought and persevered across generations to make Chickasaws the united and unconquerable people they are today.



CHICKASAW NATION MEDICAL CENTER



The Chickasaw Nation Medical Center (CNMC) was built in 2010. Prior to this, the Chickasaw citizens and other Native Americans utilized the Carl Albert Indian Health Facility. The new CNMC has many things to offer, including a fully-supportive clinic on one side and hospital on the other. This is another example of how resiliency and determination benefits the Chickasaws of the past and the Chickasaws of the future.

CHICKASAW POST-REMOVAL

- Though the Chickasaw people were uprooted from their historic homelands, they continue to honor their culture, practice their traditions and provide for their citizens.
- The mission of the Chickasaw Nation is to enhance the overall quality of life of the Chickasaw people.
- Through strong business sense, effective leadership and a commitment to their citizens, the future of the Chickasaw Nation looks brighter than ever.



REFERENCE

- For more information regarding Chickasaw history and culture, please visit www.chickasaw.net.