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Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Challenge Bowl 2019

Elementary Study Guide

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"A Struggle to Survive"

The Muscogee Women: Keepers of the tradition and culture of the nation.

Since the beginning of time the women of this nation have played a major role in the existence of the Muscogee people and to this day their contribution has successfully allowed this nation to survive.

Today, this struggle is yours to bear, and today's challenge is made more difficult by the fact that now you must be able to walk in two worlds and still maintain your balance.

The structure of our ancient society is still intact in some parts of our nation today, and you, the Muscogee women, must protect this to ensure that future generations of Muscogee people have a foundation to build on and an identity to be proud of.

In your educational experience you have learned that listening is a key ingredient for learning. As a student of this nation, you have learned the ways of our people and now as you move forward to represent this Nation of people, you must also expose the humbleness that our ancestors also displayed in their daily lives.

As you learn the history of our people, both in the written and oral form, you can feel and touch the spirit that they possessed and this spirit is among us today. This is the same spirit that compelled you to be here today.

History tells us, that we, the Muscogee people, have endured tremendous tribulations, from ethnic cleansing, forced removal and religious genocide, to the dissolving of tribal governments and then finally, the attempt to separate the Indian from the person through enrollment of young Muscogee (Creek) children to "Finishing School," later called "Boarding Schools."

The horror stories that have been relayed to us by the ones that have gone on before us, we must not dwell on or forever hold a grudge. Their stories must never be forgotten. We must listen to these stories and learn from them so that history does not repeat itself.

The road that we travel today was planned out for us many, many years ago by a Creek leader named Opothle Yahola in a speech given at Asbury Mission on the North Fork in November, 1859.

He said: "My brothers, many, many, many years ago, when I was a child, there was a beautiful island in the Chattahoochee River. It was covered with stately trees and carpeted with green grass. When the Indian was hungry and could not find game elsewhere, he could always go to the island and kill a deer. An unwritten law forbade the killing of more than one deer, and even then, the hunter might resort to the island only when he had failed elsewhere. But the banks of that island were of sandy soil. As the floods of the river rolled on this side and on that, the banks wore away and the island shrunk in size. When our people left the country, the island had become so small that there was only room for two or three of the great trees and most of the green grass was gone. The deer, once so plentiful there had entirely disappeared.

“I have since learned that there is a kind of grass which, if it had been planted on the banks of that beautiful island, might have saved it. The grass strikes its roots deeply into the sandy soil and binds it so firmly that the waters of the flood cannot wear it away.

“My brothers, we Indians, are like that island in the middle of the river. The white man comes upon us as a flood. We crumble and fall, even as the sandy banks of that beautiful island in the Chattahoochee. The Great Spirit knows, as you know, that I would stay that flood which comes thus to wear us away, if we could. As well might we try to push back the flood of the river itself.

“As the island in the river might have been saved by planting the long rooted grass upon its banks, so let us save our people by educating our boys and girls and young men and young women in the ways of the white man. Then they may be planted and deeply rooted about us and our people may stand unmoved in the flood of the white man.”

So let us not forget, from where we came.

Today starts another chapter in our history, as we continue down this path that our forefathers had planned for us. For this nation to survive with its traditions, culture and language, it is incumbent for the Muscogee women to regain its strength and to inspire other women to step forward and say “Yes, I am a Muscogee Creek woman, I know who I am, I know where I’ve been and I know where I am going.”

As a role model for the next group behind you, how many will you inspire? How many will follow in your footsteps? Let’s hope and pray there will be many.

MVTO

God Bless All

Wilbur Chebon Gouge

Muscogee History

PRE-REMOVAL: THE SOUTHEASTERN HOMELANDS

The Creation Story

The creation of the Muscogee (Creek) as described by Jean Chaudhuri begins with the seeds of life slowly stirring deep inside the darkness of the earth. Mother earth was completely covered by water in the beginning. The seeds of life, mixed with the earth's soil and the water, generated the first traces of life. Heated by the sun, those traces of life formed into the living beings inside the earth. Eventually, the living beings needed more warmth and light for their development. Eager for knowledge, the inhabitants needed to escape from the confines of the earth's center. The crawfish tried to lead the journey out from the depths of the earth and to the outside world. However, the crawfish was unable to break through the mud, and become stuck between the earth's inner and outside worlds. The escape route was blocked for all the inhabitants by the struggling crawfish.

The turtle, very well suited for the muddy conditions between the two worlds, decided to lead the way to the next world. The turtle pushed its way from the center of the earth, and into the next world, all of the other living beings climbed up on its back. The turtle with all the living beings on its back gradually emerged through the mud and water into a world of darkness, fog and air. All the living beings had made the journey to a new world of enlightenment atop the great transporter, the turtle. Unfortunately, this world was blanketed with a dense fog, caused by the elements of the sun and water. Eventually, the water receded and the living beings left the turtle's back for dry land. Again, the animals and humans lived in the dark and cold, wandering around the vastness of the earth. Frightened by the darkness caused by the dense fog, the animals and humans began to call out to one another. The animals and humans gathered together in groups to comfort each other. All at once, the animals and humans began to pray and chant to the creator for help from the darkness of the fog.

Hesaketvmese (he-saw-key-duh-me-see), the master of breath, answered the prayers of the animals and humans and gave relief from the haze of the fog. A strong wind from the east began to blow and pushed the dense fog away. The removal of the fog signaled the beginning of a new world. The animals and humans were able to see one another for the first time. The animals and humans were very appreciative of one another for coming together in a time of despair. Animals and humans continued the kinship bonds which had formed between them. Humans became clan brothers of the specific animals which were present when the fog lifted. Humans learned from the animal's keen sense of their environment and took on characteristics that would facilitate survival. Thus began the life of the Muscogee (Creek) people and the life of the clans. Remembering, honoring, and respecting these values of animals and humans are a sacred tradition.

The Mississippian Era

Many of our Muscogee (Creek) ancestors lived for over a thousand years in southeastern North America, in what are now the states of Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina and Florida. Over time, their culture evolved into what is now called the **Mississippian Culture**. During the Mississippian time period they built huge earthen mounds. They did so by carrying

the dirt in baskets to the mound site. These mounds were built for various purposes. Some were platforms for the homes of chiefs, some were for religious ceremonies and some were for burials. They are the only structures that remain of the many highly organized and flourishing tribal towns of the Mississippian society. As many as 2,000 to 3,000 people inhabited these tribal towns.

Mound Sites

Although many of the ancient mounds have been destroyed by farming and development, some have been preserved. They are the only visible remains of the Mississippian Culture that can be found throughout the southeastern United States. One of the best preserved of these town sites is the **Ocmulgee National Monument** near present-day Macon, Georgia. (See photos below)

127 miles northeast of Ocmulgee National Monument is the site of the **Etowah Mounds**.

Southeastern Ceremonial Complex

One notable aspect of the Mississippian culture, was the artwork that was produced. Today it is referred to as the **Southeastern Ceremonial Complex**. It includes engraved copper, finely carved stone and shell necklaces and pendants, stone statues, and intricately wrought stone maces, clubs and hatchets as well as pottery.

Creek Trading: European Contact Era

The first documented European to come among the Mississippians was Hernando DeSoto, who came in 1540. He found them living a communal life. They grew vast fields of corn, beans and squash. The men tilled and helped the women plant, then, it was up to the women to tend the fields. The crops produced were available to everyone and the excess was stored for future use. The rivers and streams were teaming with fish which were caught using spears, bows and arrows, fish weirs and plants. The forests were abundant with game, fruits and nuts. They got honey from beehives and traded with other natives for salt. The people were strong and healthy and didn't have to work very hard to thrive in the resource rich region of the southeast.

DeSoto did not come in peace. He was searching for gold. To ensure his safe passage through the cheifdoms, DeSoto routinely arrested the Chief and took him along as a hostage to the next chiefdom. He forced the men and women to carry his equipment and use their stored food to feed his army of several hundred men and animals. Thousands of native people were killed by DeSoto's army. Thousands more died from the diseases his expedition brought from Europe, such as measles, small pox and 'the plague'. The loss of so many people devastated the chiefdoms. The people who survived moved away from the areas where sickness had occurred and banded together to form new towns. They preserved as much of their old culture as they possibly could.

After De Soto's expedition, there were more Spanish expeditions. Tristan De Luna came in 1560 and Juan Pardo in 1566. Both were in search of the lush life of the chiefdoms that De Soto had described. They were disappointed and dismayed to see that the population was much smaller and thistles and weeds grew in place of the previously cultivated fields that had stretched from one town to the next. Nearly 100 years passed before the Europeans came again.

The Creek's Relation with the U.S.

In 1796, President Washington appointed Benjamin Hawkins as the Southeastern Indian Superintendent. Hawkins implemented an assimilation policy. For 20 years he was able to destruct the traditional Creek system of government. He encouraged the council to create an executive committee and appoint a national police force, who was to arrest and punish tribal members who violated tribal law. He also urged them to allow missionaries to establish schools and instruct the Muscogee children in Christian religion, the English language, mathematics and the English farming and social practices. Hawkins also wanted to change the social structure by switching the roles of women and men. In order to survive, many "Lower Creeks" did make this change as the deerskin industry declined. But only a few of the "Upper Creeks" did. This created some resentment among the "Upper Creeks" who wanted to maintain the traditional Muscogee way of life.

This division between the two groups of "Creeks" was made worse by the U.S. Government's plan to convert an old trading path into a Federal Road that would cut right through the Creek Nation. The road was first intended to be a postal route from Washington to New Orleans. The Upper Creeks knew that the road would enable more and more white settlers to come with their families, herds, and slaves and kill their game, cut their trees, foul their water, sell whiskey to their young and settle in their land.

To preserve their traditional existence, Creeks emulated their white neighbors to convince the alien society that native people were being assimilated, in hopes that they would be left alone and in peace. Based on what he saw among the Creeks, Benjamin Hawkins, Indian agent, believed that he was bringing civilization to the Muscogee's.

A century of trading, intermarriages and factions produced fertile ground for the agitations of Tecumseh. In 1811, Tecumseh and his followers came to Tuckabatchee, a major Creek population and political center located on the west bank of Tallapoosa River, to ask the main Upper Creek town to join in his revolution against the U.S. A group of Koasati warriors accompanied Tecumseh to his home in Shawnee territory. In the spring of 1812, on their return home, they executed several white settlers in Tennessee. As a result, the Secretary of War instructed the Tennessee governor to retaliate, which was a precursor to the conflict between the Creeks and Andrew Jackson.

The Red Stick Warriors

Tecumseh's speech struck a chord with many of the warriors at Tuckabatchee. Angered by the events of the last 15 years, a group of "Upper Creeks" emerged to ward off the impending destruction of the Muscogee Nation. Hillis Hadjo (Josiah Francis), Cussetah Tustenuggee (High Head Jim), Paddy Walsh and Peter McQueen, among others, advocated the return to traditional ways, severing all ties with Americans, expelling all whites and mixed-blood Creeks who lived like whites, and overthrowing the leaders who responded to Hawkins more than their own people. This group came to be known as the Red Stick Warriors. For two years, the Red Sticks fought twelve major battles known as the Creek War of 1813-1814. The more traditional Creeks were against the new life that was being introduced. Encroachment of the whites into the traditional lands of the Upper Creeks instigated the Red Stick War. This conflict was looked upon by the U.S. as a means to weaken Creek people by pitting one side against the other (divide and conquer).

The Battle of Horseshoe Bend

The Red Sticks at Horseshoe Bend were led by the respected war leader Menawa. The previous December, he had led some of the inhabitants of six Upper Creek towns (Nuyaka, Okfuskee, Eufaula, Fish Pond, Okchaya and Helvpe), to a bend in the Tallapoosa River where they built a fortified town. They constructed a village of 300 log homes at the southern toe of the bend, and a fortified log & mud wall across the neck of the bend for protection. Calling the encampment Tohopeka (doe-hoe-be-guh), Menawa hoped that the wall would hold off attackers or at least delay them long enough for the 350 women and children in the camp to escape across the river if necessary. To defend Tohopeka (doe-hoe-be-guh), he had around 1,000 warriors of whom about a third possessed a musket or rifle; the rest fought using bows & arrows, tomahawks and war clubs.

Approaching the area early on March 27, 1814, Commander Andrew Jackson split his command of 3,300 men and ordered Brigadier General John Coffee to take the 1,300 mounted militia and the allied Creek and Cherokee warriors downstream to cross the river at the toe of the bend.

From this position, they were to act as a distraction and cut off the Red Sticks' line of retreat. Jackson moved towards the fortified wall with the remaining 2,000 men of his command.

At 10:30 AM, Jackson's army opened fire with two cannons. For 2 hours they shot 6-pound and 3-pound cannon balls at the wall, but could not penetrate it. The 1,000 Red Sticks stood on the inside of the wall shouting at Jackson's army to come and fight them in hand to hand combat. While the canons were firing, three of Coffee's Cherokee warriors swam across the river, stole several Red Stick canoes and canoed their Cherokee and Lower Creek comrades across the river to attack Tohopeka (doe-hoe-be-guh) from the rear. Once across the river, they set fire to several of the homes.

Around 12:30 PM, when Jackson saw the smoke rising from the burning houses, he knew that Coffee was attacking from the rear. He ordered his men forward and they scaled the walls. In the brutal fighting, the Red Sticks were outnumbered and out gunned, but they fought fearlessly. "Arrows, spears and balls were flying, swords and tomahawks were gleaming in the sun." Seeing that there was no way for them to defeat his army, Jackson offered them a chance to surrender, but they fought even harder. Fighting in the camp raged through the day as the Red Sticks made a valiant final stand. At the end of the day, over eight hundred Red Sticks were slain, 557 on the battlefield, 300 shot in the river. Menawa lay wounded and unconscious until nightfall, when he crawled to the river and escaped by climbing into a canoe. Having lost so many warriors, the Red Sticks would never again be able to pose a military threat to the South.

After The Battle of Horseshoe Bend

Andrew Jackson built Fort Jackson at the confluence of the Coosa and Tallapoosa, right in the heart of the Red Stick's Holy Ground. From this position, he sent out word to the remaining Red Stick forces that they were to sever their ties to the British and Spanish or risk being wiped out. Noted Red Stick leader William Weatherford (Red Eagle) was not present at Horseshoe Bend, but he was wanted for the attack on Fort Mims. Understanding his people to be defeated, he walked into Fort Jackson and surrendered, telling Jackson that if he had warriors, he would still fight and contend till the last. As a matter of vengeance, 22 million acres of land, what was determined to be equivalent to the expenses of the war, was ceded to the U.S. under the Treaty of Ft. Jackson in 1814.

REMOVAL ERA

The Indian Removal Act

In 1829, Andrew Jackson was elected president largely because of his defeat of the Red Stick Creeks and his support for the Removal Policy. He immediately went to work on the Removal of all tribes in the east. Although opponents of the Removal claimed it was an immoral violation of the spirit of the treaties with the tribes, Jackson still won. On May 26, 1830, the Removal Act was signed into law. Jackson appointed commissioners to negotiate Removal treaties, targeting the Southeastern tribes first because of their gold mines and fertile land.

Although less than three thousand Creeks voluntarily emigrated to the west, the Creek leaders had every intention of staying in their homelands and did everything they could to fight

Removal. They were pushed to their breaking point by many factors. Not only were the people starving, their lands had been stolen on a daily basis, whites were committing acts of violence against them and more and more whites were encroaching on what land they had left. Creditors charged them with false debts. The state of Alabama passed a law that placed all Indians under Alabama state law and yet Indians were not allowed the right to testify in court, thus they had no way of defending themselves. Several leaders went to Washington to make the officials aware of their situation, but no action was taken, just another worthless treaty that the government had no way of upholding. Whiskey was also used to defraud the Creek people. All this led them to begin to retaliate against the whites. The U.S. government used their retaliation as justification to begin the forced Removal of over 20,000 Creek people from the southeast.

Many of the Tribal Towns brought with them their sacred fire which helped them persevere on their long journey from the homeland. This fire was the focal point for many of the Tribal Towns as they established roots in their new lands.

The Sinking of the Monmouth (mon-muth)

As told by Dave Barnett, Tuckabatchee Tribal Town

"When we boarded the ship, it was at night time and it was raining, cloudy and dark. There were dangerous waves of water. The people aboard the ship did not want the ship to start on the journey at night but to wait until the next day. The men in command of the ship disregarded all suggestions and said, "The ship is going tonight."

The ship was the kind that had an upper and lower deck. There were great stacks of boxes which contained whiskey in bottles. The officers in charge of the ship became intoxicated and even induced some of the Indians to drink. This created an uproar and turmoil.

Timbochee Barnett, who was my father, and I begged the officers to stop the ship until morning as the men in charge of the steering of the ship could not control the ship and keep it on its course but was causing it to go around and around.

We saw a night ship coming down the stream. We could distinguish these ships as they had lights. Many of those on board our ship tried to tell the officers to give the command to stay to one side so that the night ship could pass on by. It was then that it seemed that the ship was just turned loose because it was taking a zig-zag course in the water until it rammed right into the center of the night boat.

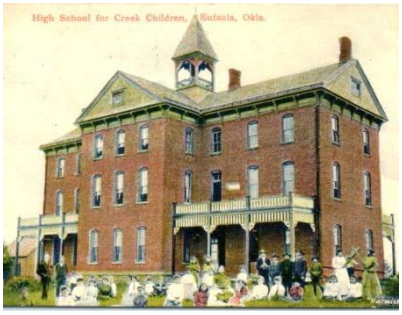
Then there was the screaming of the children, men, women, mothers and fathers when the ship began to sink. Everyone on the lower deck that could was urged to go up on the upper deck until some of the smaller boats could come to the rescue. The smaller boats were called by signal and they came soon enough but the lower deck had been hit so hard it was broken in two and was rapidly sinking and a great many of the Indians were drowned. Some of the rescued Indians were taken to the shore on boats, some were successful in swimming to shore and some were drowned. The next day the survivors went along the shore of the Mississippi river and tried to identify the dead bodies that had been washed ashore. The dead was gathered and buried and some were lost forever in the waters."

INDIAN TERRITORY ERA

Arriving In Indian Territory

Creeks erected new homes, transplanted their religious and political institutions, and worked hard to strengthen their independent republic. The survival of Creek families, from the homelands to Indian Territory, depended on their ability to adapt to a new environment and persevere against adversity. Creek communities replicated as much as they could, the life left behind in the East, by staying close to the rivers and planting corn fields in their new towns. Upper Creeks resided in the southern half of the Muscogee Nation with the Lower Creeks living predominately in the northern half. The Lower (non-traditional) Creeks resided near the Arkansas and Verdigris rivers, while the Upper (traditional) Creeks settled near the Canadian river.

Creek Schools



The tribal school system of the Creek Nation, funded from annuities, consisted of 7 boarding schools for Indian children, 3 boarding schools for the descendants of Freedman and 65 day schools. Tullahassee Manuel Labor School was located ten miles north of Muskogee. The Koweta Mission day school was opened in 1843. Loughridge Boarding School was opened in 1851. Asbury Manual Labor School was opened by the Methodist northeast of Eufaula. Harrell Institute, a Methodist school was awarded a charter in 1881 as the Creek Nation's first higher education institution in Muskogee. Bacone College (Indian University) was awarded a charter and a land grant from Creek Nation in 1885. In the 1890's, Levering Mission operated near Wetumka, Nuyaka Mission was west of Okmulgee and Yuchi Mission was in Sapulpa. Wealaka replaced Tullahassee, which burned in 1880.

Teachers were appointed at a uniformed salary of $25 a month with the requirement of an average of 10 pupils. An additional $2 a month for each additional pupil was added to the average. In the early 1900's, the Superintendent for Creek schools estimated the literacy rate for Creeks who could read and write the language to be 95%.

Allotment in Indian Territory, 1887-1907

Units of acres allotted were as follows: head of a family = 160 acres; single person 18 years old and older = 80 acres; boys under 18 years old = 40 acres. Married Indian women were not entitled. In regard to allotment, full bloods were not allowed to sell their allotments for 25 years, allotments were held in "trust" by the Federal Government for 25 years, mixed bloods were allowed to sell immediately, and guardians were appointed to handle the allotments of full bloods and orphans. The allotment process proved disastrous for tribes culturally, politically, and economically. Culturally, the notion of private ownership seriously conflicted with the deeply held Creek tribal belief that land was a sacred resource to be used communally. Politically, the allotment process seriously eroded the role and authority of the Creek tribal government. Economically, 60 million acres of land had been sold as "surplus" in accordance with the Dawes

Act. Government officials often intentionally allotted poorer land to Indians and labeled more desirable parcels "surplus" for sale to settlers.

STATEHOOD ERA

U.S. Citizenship

All members of the Five Civilized Tribes were made U.S. citizens in 1901. Tribal members, including Creeks, did not lose their tribal citizenship or rights when they became American citizens. The Creek people maintained a strong tribal identity. In 1903, the final elections for Principal Chief and National Council were held. In 1906, the Five Civilized Tribes Act attempted to dissolve the tribal governments, timeline extended to June 1907.

In 1907, the final National Council meeting at the Council House on 6th Street in downtown Okmulgee was conducted. The meeting lasted for 3 days as the council sought to resolve all pending issues of national importance before closing the tribal government. At this point, the Creek government was not recognized and a period of federally appointed chiefs begins. Creek Nation could no longer elect its own head of government but was forced to accept the Bureau of Indian Affairs' choice for Principal Chief.

HEREOS OF THE MUSCOGEE PEOPLE

ALEXANDER McGILLIVRAY, also known as Hopere Micco, was born around 1750, near present day Montgomery, Alabama. McGillivray was born to a Scot fur trapper, Lachlan McGillivray and to a half-Creek, half French woman named Sehoy Marchand. Alexander grew up during a very important time for the Creek people. Spain, France and Great Britain had all moved into Creek territory and each was vying for the support of the Creek Nation. The Creeks were able to trade with all three foreign powers without favoring any one of them.

Alexander worked at his father's trading post until he was about fourteen. The trading post was located near the Tallapoosa River in Alabama. During the 1760's, Lachlan sent Alexander to schools in Savannah and Charleston to receive his education. Lachlan McGillivray fled to Scotland in the early 1770's. He had been loyal to Britain, and the American colonists had seized many properties of British sympathizers. Since he was left behind with his mother, Alexander was able to explore the ties with his Creek relatives. By 1775, he was recognized as a young leader among the Upper Creek tribal towns. Alexander, who never got over his father's losses at the hands of the United States, led some Creek warriors in a British attack on Georgia in 1779.

In 1780, British forces were attacked by Spain in Florida. McGillivray again led Creek warriors in aiding the British. He refused to deal with the new American government, and entered into a treaty relationship with Spain in 1784. McGillivray helped organize Upper and Lower Creeks in resisting white intrusion into the Creek country, and was a part of the Creek people's declaration of war upon the state of Georgia in 1786.

Alexander McGillivray experienced many changes in the Creek way of life during his lifetime. His leadership made it possible for the Creek people to have formal, governmental relations with Great Britain and Spain. By 1787, the United States Constitution was adopted, and the agreements the Creek people had with foreign governments began to weaken. President George Washington wanted to begin a United States federal Indian policy. In 1790, Washington's cabinet representatives negotiated the Treaty of New York with McGillivray and 29 Mekkos of the Creek Nation. The treaty recognized borders of the Creek country; the United States promised to remove white trespassers from Creek lands, but called for the Creek people to cede lands to the United States. This treaty set a pattern which would continue into the next century where tribal peoples would give up lands for promises made by the United States; promises that were often broken or ignored.

McGillivray continued to provide leadership for Creek concerns, and resisted white intrusion into the Creek country until his death in 1793.

MENAWA was born in 1766. During the Creek War of 1813, he was the Heneha (Second Chief) of Okfuskee tribal town. According to William Weatherford, as Heneha of Okfuskee, he controlled the Red Sticks, so named for the painted red sticks they carried, one of which was thrown away each day to count down the days to an important event.

Menawa led the Red Sticks into battle against an American army of 3,300 soldiers led by Andrew Jackson. Even after realizing that his strategy was not going to work, he and the Red Stick Warriors went head to head with the American army, in what is known as the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. He was wounded seven times and laid unconscious among the dead until nightfall. Under the cover of darkness, he crawled to the river where he found a canoe. Later, he told the remainder of the survivors to return to their home towns and make peace as best they could.

The Creek Nation was split on how best to deal with the overrun of their lands by the whites. William McIntosh was for the American side. McIntosh, along with other lesser leaders, signed the illegal Treaty of Indian Springs, agreeing to sell Muscogee lands. Menawa and others were outraged. They executed McIntosh, in accordance with tribal law on April 30, 1825.

During the Seminole Wars in 1836, Menawa's property was confiscated by the whites, and his family forced west. He followed later. Nothing is known of Menawa after he moved west, not even where he is buried. He fought Removal for a long time.

WILLIAM WEATHERFORD was born in 1780. He was the son of a Scottish trader and a Creek woman of the Wind clan named Sehoy. His early childhood was spent on his father's plantation near present day Wetumpka, Alabama. His mixed background enabled William to easily cross back and forth between the Creek and white worlds, a characteristic that would aid him throughout his life.

The Shawnee leader named Tecumseh came to the Creek country in 1811 to rally the Creeks to join his confederacy and rise up and rid their land of all whites. William, who is also called Red Eagle, attended the gathering of Chiefs and warriors at Tuckabatchee, where Tecumseh spoke. His message captured the feelings and emotions of many

Creek warriors, including Weatherford. He began to spread the message throughout the Muscogee tribal towns.

In August of 1813, Weatherford and other Red Sticks attacked Ft Mims in retaliation for the Battle of Burnt Corn. About 400 people were killed including many half-blood Creeks who had taken refuge there. News of the attack caused a panic throughout much of the south. General Andrew Jackson began marching to the Creek country, intent on subduing any further attacks by the Red Sticks. He destroyed every Creek town he came to along the way. He was especially looking to capture and punish William Weatherford for Ft. Mims.

It just so happened that Weatherford was absent from Horseshoe Bend when Jackson's army attacked. After defeating the Red Sticks at Horseshoe Bend, Jackson ordered his men to capture William Weatherford. In the weeks after Horseshoe Bend, Weatherford realized that to continue fighting would destroy not only what were left of his warriors, but their families as well. The women and children were hiding in the forests where they were growing sick and dying of starvation. Out of concern for them and not for his own fate, Weatherford surrendered. Catching Jackson by surprise by bravely walking straight into his camp, Weatherford introduced himself to Jackson and told him he was not afraid of him. He was only surrendering to save his people from more disaster. Jackson admired Weatherford for his bravery and decided to trust in his promise to persuade the remaining Red Sticks to surrender. Weatherford walked away free.

OPOTHLEYAHOLA (oh-bith-thee-ya-ho-la) was born around 1798. He was a member of the Upper Creek tribal town of Tuckabatchee. He was the speaker for his tribal town Mekko, Big Warrior. Opothleyahola (oh-bith-thee-ya-ho-la) always challenged the power of the Lower Creek Chiefs, who were friendly with the white people. He believed that anything that concerned the homelands should have the consent of the whole Creek Nation. Opothleyahola (oh-bith-thee-ya-ho-la) spoke out many times against treaties that ceded land to the whites. Although he signed many treaties, it was often under duress.

Under the Treaty of Indian Springs in February of 1825, the signing Creek Chiefs sold land to the U.S. which was illegal by Creek law. Opothleyahola (oh-bith-thee-ya-ho-la), along with others went to Washington, D.C. to protest the terms of the treaty. Under the new treaty he insisted upon the removal of white intruders who were invading Creek lands. A new treaty was made in 1826 which nullified the Treaty of Indian Springs. This is the only time in history that the U.S. government has agreed to nullify a treaty.

Noting the success of Georgia in getting Creek lands, the state of Alabama began to exert pressure on their state government and the federal government. This pressure eventually forced the Creeks to sign a treaty in March of 1832, by which the Creeks gave up all their lands east of the Mississippi river. The Creeks were given 5 years to leave their Alabama homes, and in 1836 Opothleyahola (oh-bith-thee-ya-ho-la) led 8,000 of his people to Indian Territory, now Oklahoma.

The Creeks had not been in their new homeland long, when the Civil War began. This was no real affair of the Creeks, and the wiser leaders counseled the tribe to stay neutral. However, circumstances were forcing them to join either the North or the South. Both sides promised the Creeks that if they joined their side, their current homelands would be protected, and they would be able to retain them.

Wanting to remain neutral, Opothleyahola (oh-bith-thee-ya-ho-la), decided to lead his people to a Union Army camp in Kansas. He led 10,000 of his followers (known as the Loyal Creeks) who traveled with all of their belongings and cattle to Kansas. They had to fight Confederate companies along the way, but the Loyal Creeks ran out of ammunition and guns, and were scattered. The survivors reached the Union camp, many wearing no warm clothes or shoes and had no food. In Kansas, 240 Creeks died of famine and exposure and many amputations occurred. Opothleyahola (oh-bith-thee-ya-ho-la), broken in health, but dauntless in spirit, rode in severe winter conditions to officers in another Army camp. He was unsuccessful in getting the help that was promised his people. He never recovered from being sick and exhausted. He died the following spring, March of 1863 and was buried in an unmarked grave near the Sac and Fox agency in Kansas. His people never forgot him because of his leadership, courage and concern for the Creek people.

WARD Co-cha-my (COACHMAN) was among a small number of Creeks yet remaining in Alabama, a son of Jim Boy, he did not remove west until about 1845. Three years later he returned to Alabama to aid some of his people in immigrating to the Indian Territory. He arrived at Fort Smith, June 24, 1848, with a party of sixty-five Indians, but despite his earnest efforts, he was unable to secure a number who were held as slaves by white people. In a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in D.C. he wrote, *"I think there yet remains in Alabama not less than 100 Creeks and most of them in a deplorable condition; a man by the name of Dickerson in Coosa County has one family, a woman and her children, 7 in number. A Mr. Floyd and a Rev. Mr. Hays both of Autauga County have each a number of Creeks. I tried to get these but was prevented doing so by threats of their would-be masters. I shall get them yet - but not this season; when the waters are in good boating order next season you will hear from me again."*[1]

Ward Coachman served as clerk of the district court of Deep Fork District in 1868 and as a member and speaker of the House of Warriors in 1875. He was court clerk of the Wewoka District in 1873-4, served as a member and President of the House of Kings in 1888 and was dispatched as a delegate from the Creek Nation to Washington upon five different occasions in 1881-2. In the fall of 1875, Ward Coachman was chosen second chief and became Principal Chief of the Creek Nation upon the impeachment of his predecessor on December 15, 1876.

CHITTO HARJO, whose English name was Wilson Jones, was a full-blood Creek Indian with traditional values. After the Green Peach War, and Isparhecher's (is-bar-heech-chee) retirement from public affairs, Harjo became the acknowledged leader of the dissident full-blood Creeks, who were opposed to the division of Creek lands in the Indian Territory. Early in the 20th century, there was great pressure to divide Creek lands into individual allotments and dissolve the tribal government. The dissident Creeks who were followers of Harjo were few, but were very determined to recapture and resume the traditional ways of the Creeks. These Creeks felt that they had been wronged by the federal government and that both the spirit and the law of past treaties had been violated. These, and their cherished hereditary rights and immunities had been destroyed. They believed the government had treated them as people of no value and in fact, there was much truth of this in the way the government's relations were held.

In 1901, Chitto Harjo tried to establish a separate political status for his followers at Hickory Ground. However, the government sent troops to take Harjo and his followers into custody. They were indicted, tried and convicted in federal court, but were later reprimanded and paroled by the court. Over the following years, Creek tribal lands were divided into allotments, and the "Snake Band" refused to select any lands for their respective allotments. Arbitrary selections were then made for them.

Late in 1906, a Special Senate Investigating Committee came to Indian Territory to investigate and report on general conditions. Chitto Harjo, with some followers, was present, and he was recognized by the Committee and given the opportunity to speak. With great dignity and solemnity, Harjo gave a spellbinding speech, telling the Senators of the dealings between his people and the federal government. He told how the Creeks were forced to give up their homelands in Georgia and Alabama for lands in the west, even though they had been promised these lands would be theirs forever. The Creeks made a recovery from the terrible march from their old homelands to the area later to become Indian Territory. Then, the Civil War began. Harjo told of how he joined the Union Army, thinking to protect his home, land and family. But after the Civil War, the federal government made the Creek people give up a major portion of their lands.

In 1907, Indian Territory became a state. A rumor started that Harjo was leading an insurrection. He knew nothing about this, until he was told the state militia was looking for him. He and some of his followers fled into Choctaw country and he lived with friend Daniel Bob, where he died in 1913.

Muscogee
Customs &Traditions

Families/Clans

Clans are the basis of a family within the traditional Muscogee society. Unlike the Europeans, clan members are considered family instead of members of 'blood relation'. Clans are composed of all people who are descendants of the same ancestral clan grouping. Each person belongs to the clan of his or her mother, who belongs to the clan of her mother; this is called matrilineal descent. Fathers are important within the family system, but within the clan, it is the mother's brother (the mother's nearest blood relation) who functions as the primary disciplinarian and role model. The same titles are used for both family and clan relations. For example, clan members of approximately the same age consider each other as brother and sister, even if they have never met before. Elder clan members are considered the grandparents to the younger clan members.

When a marriage took place, the man would leave his parents to live with his wife's family. When a home was built for them, all the property and contents belonged to the wife. A man's home was not usually where he spent most of his adult life, but the home of his mother and the other women of his clan. In case, a stranger visited the town and made known to what clan he belonged, it was the duty of a man married into that clan to invite him to his house. In case of separation, the woman would gather all of her husband's belongings and set them outside their home. That was a sign she wanted him to leave and go back to his mother's home.

Traditionally, the father had no care of his own child. The invariable custom was, for the women to keep and rear all the children; having the entire control over them until they were able to provide for themselves except for the disciplinarian role. The women appeared to have sufficient natural affection for them: they never struck or whipped a child for its faults.

Cultural values were essential in raising children to become respected clan members. Elders observed them during their childhood so when the time came to choose a leader, the elders would know who would be best suited for the position of their clan or tribal town. Children were taught respect for the elders from an early age in the following ways.

Children:

- left the room or went outside when elders were talking.
- never interrupted a conversation.
- spoke only when spoken to.
- never looked into the eyes of an elder when being spoken to.
- shook hands with an elder only when the elder extended their hand.
- did chores when told to do so without asking questions.
- were always last to eat during feast or gatherings.

Clan names were orally passed down to the next generation. It was important to know one's own clan. During the ceremonial dances, the men and boys were seated according to their clan. At one time, there were more than fifty known clan names although some may not be true clans. The elders would randomly ask the children their clan name to make certain they knew. Sometimes, a family would have a picture or sketch of their clan on pottery or a tattoo on their body to represent their clan.

Clan ties were strong; they served as a traditional bond. The clan system added structure to Muscogee society by influencing marriage choices, personal friendship and partnerships with other tribal towns in tribal affairs. For instance, if a clan family needed assistance to build a home, the clan members would come together and help build his home or if food was needed, clan members would provide food for them. Clan families looked after one another.

It was traditionally considered a serious offense to kill or eat one's own clan animal or to marry into one's own clan. Clan members would discipline a member if he/she committed any one of these offenses. To marry into one's own clan was the most serious offense which had severe consequences.

Tribal Towns

Tribal towns were actually villages of the Muscogee people, but the Europeans viewed them as towns because of their structural lay-out. A family dwelling consisted of little squares, or rather of four dwelling-houses inclosing a square area, exactly on the plan of the public square. Every family, however, did not have four houses; some had three, others had two and some but one, each built according to the number of his family. For those who were wealthy had four buildings, one was used as a place to cook food and used as a winter house also known as a 'hot house', another was a summer house and hall for receiving visitors, the third house was the storage for food and other provisions. The last house was two stories high and was divided into two apartments; the lower story of one end being the potato house, where roots and fruits were stored. At the other end of this building, both upper and lower stories were open on three sides. The lower story served as a shed for their saddles, pack-saddles, gears and other lumber. The loft overhead was a very spacious, airy, and a pleasant pavilion where the chief of the family relaxed during the summer and received his guests. The fourth part of the apartment was a storage place for deer-skins, furs, and other merchandise for his customers especially if he was quite wealthy. Sometimes a porch was built in front of the house. Smaller families and the less wealthy built one, two or three houses which suffice their purposes.

Each of these groups of buildings was occupied by one family and the 'houses of daughters' were those adjoining in the same block or district. Every home had a garden and a parcel of land according to the number in his family. The boundary between each group of houses or property was a strip of grass, erection of poles or any other natural or artificial means to show a boundary. The houses were in a more elaborate pattern with several families living just several hundred feet from each other.

This organized pattern of dwellings surrounded a public square with four arbors, a council house, *cukofv rakko* (jo-go-fuh thock-go), which consisted of a mound and a chunky yard. Within the square was the sacred fire or *poca* (bow-jah), grandfather, and the ceremonial ring, *paskofv* (bas-go-fuh); both were considered sacred. This was the sacred ground where dances, songs and prayers were held. The council house or mound was the meeting place for the chief, *Mekko* and his advisors or warriors. The ground that contained the square and mound was considered the men's domain. Women were not allowed within the square or in the mound unless given permission by the *Mekko.* The chunky yard was the playing field for the stick ball and other games.

Each tribal town had a name and was organized by membership in a specific Tribal Town or *Etvlwv* (e-dull-wuh). Each *tvlwv* (dull-wuh) acted as both an independent community and a member of

the larger "Confederacy" of the Muscogee nation. When some of the towns became crowded or overpopulated, another town was built by the same *Etvlwv* (e-dull-wuh) but gave it a different name. In the mid-1700s, there were sixty to seventy towns, besides the many *Etvlwv* (e-dull-wuh) not counted and on average about two hundred inhabitants to each town, giving approximately eleven thousand inhabitants.

It was very important to know one's own tribal town and clan. This served as identification when visiting another town or area. Although, later Europeans labeled the towns, *Upper* and *Lower*, geographically, the only distinction was their tribal town. Upper towns were located in the upper portion of Alabama near the Tallapoosa and Coosa rivers. They were considered as the traditionalist because of their resistance to European lifestyles and ways. The lower towns were located in Georgia near the Chattahooche and Flint rivers. They accepted the European lifestyle and allowed European men to marry their women.

Beliefs

The *Mvskokvlke* (moss-go-gull-key), Muscogee people, were spiritual people who believed in a higher power or deity, *Epofvnka* (e-book-fun-gah), 'the one who is above us', whose power was considered above all. They also believed that every living thing had a spirit including water, earth, wind and fire. It is believed that the knowledge and wisdom of the *kerrv* (kith-tha), prophet, and the healing knowledge of the *helis haya* (he-list hi-yah), medicine men, were given to them by *Epofvnka* (e-book-fun-gah). The following are other beliefs that tribal traditionalist still consider their own.

- Tribal elders believe children are aware of the spiritual world, thereby, can see spiritual beings around them. They also believe children can sense the good and evil in a person. This is the reason a child might cry when a stranger approaches him.
- The *Mvskokvlke* (moss-go-gull-key) anciently considered the younger of twins more likely to make an efficient *Kerrv* (kith-tha), prophet. Sometimes the child was kept from nursing for four days and was made to swallow certain small roots to make him live longer. The same effect was produced by keeping him indoors for four months so no one would see him.
- The number four is a sacred number among the Muscogee people; not considered a "lucky" number. Everything is done according to this number whether a domestic activity, events, or dwellings. Ceremonies last four days, house posts are used in multiples of fours and burials are conducted on the fourth day.
- The Mvskokvlke (moss-go-gull-key) came from the earth, the soil, and hence the earth is man's mother and therefore sacred, and man cannot sell his own mother.

The Cosmos

- The old ones believed that the stars were stuck upon the underside of the sky, some of them, along with the sun and moon, revolving around the earth.
- Master of Breath created Brother Moon and Sister Sun, as well as the four directions to hold up the world.
- Comets were thought to portend war.

- When the sun or moon was eclipsed, it is said that a great toad, *sapaktv* (sah-bach-duh), was about to swallow it. In order to help drive it away, they discharged their guns at it and shot at with arrows until they "hit" it.
- The constellation of the Great Dipper was called *Perro Hake* (bith-tho haw-key), "the image of a canoe".
- The North Star was known as *Kolas-Nekeyeko* (go-las knee-key-yee-go), "the stationary star".
- The Morning Star as called *Hiyayvkecicv* (high-ya-yuh-key-jack-guh), "the bringer of daylight".
- The Milky Way was known as *Poyvfekcv en nene* (boy-yuh-fek-juh in-knee-knee), "spirit's path or road".

Supernatural Beings

- The *Mvskokvlke* (moss-go-gull-key) also venerated the Horned Serpent, *Sint Holo*, who appeared to suitably wise young men. The shaman was called *Vlekcv* (uh-leak-juh).
- *Hacko-cvpko* (hodge-go jump-go), "long ears" is supposed to be an animal that is about the size of a mule, has immense ears and a very hideous appearance generally. It has a disagreeable odor and causes a dangerous disease, but fortunately it is rarely seen.
- *Nokos-oma* (no-gos oh-mah), "like a bear", a creature that is the size of a black bear but carries its head near the earth. It has immense tusks which cross each other and when seen, it is going along a trail with the gait of a pacer. The males make a noise that sounds something like "Ka kap kap kap".
- *Hacko-fuske* (hodge-go fuss-key), "Sharp Ears" are creatures that seem to go in pairs and never travel east or west but always north or south. They are observed especially near the sources of small streams. They have sharp noses, bushy tails, and globular feet.
- *Sutvcvkvla* (sue-tah jah-kah-la), "Sky Woodpecker", is a bird that always look straight up into the sky, never looks toward the earth.

Weather

- *Tenetke* (dee-neat-key), Thunder, was a person who possessed missiles and would dart them out toward earth with great noise.
- *Vtokyehatte* (ah-dok-ye-hot-de), Lightning, was a little man that rides a yellow horse, and when he shoots his arrows, it thunders. Sometimes he shoots at trees.
- *Hotvle-rakko* (hoe-duh-lee thock-go), Tornado or strong wind, was either male or female; the female being very destructive and the male not so.

Nature

All Southeastern tribes possess a rich and complex tradition of looking to nature for guidance and inspiration. The Creek have long been recognized as astute observers of the natural world. Every aspect of their environment, from basic botany to astronomy, was at some point studied and explained. All of creation was in some way inter-related with other creations.

Like other living beings, animals were viewed as having unique abilities and characteristics, which determined their purposes in life. Some animals, such as wolves and owls, were believed to possess extraordinary powers which could be used to benefit or punish human

beings depending on how they had been treated. Other animals, such as the turtle, were used as ceremonial symbols because of their special abilities.

The cycle of life could also be observed in all plants and animals. By noticing changes in their environments, the Creek learned when to hunt, when to plant, and when to begin building shelters for the winter. By studying the world around them, they learned where to find water, how to forecast the weather, and what plants were good to eat. Nature was, and still is, a great teacher. Traditionalists say that most people have simply forgotten how to observe nature.

The ability to forecast the weather was a great asset to the Creek people, as they lived so closely with the land. Only by preparing for inclement weather could they ensure the community's food supply, shelter and safety. Creek men and women observed many signs and omens, which they believed could help them in predicting the coming weather. Some examples of their observations are:

- Geese flying southward indicated the coming of winter, while geese flying northward indicated the return of spring.
- The budding of plants and trees signaled the proper time for planting.
- A flock of sparrows eating off the ground was a sign of cold weather.
- Water could be found near trees whose branches grew toward the ground.
- Rain was most likely to occur when the moon was only ¼ full.

Time

The Muscogee people did not traditionally recognize a week of seven days. Time was measured according to natural phenomena, with each "day" meaning the time from one sunrise to another. The next unit of time, similar to a week but not exactly like it, was measured by phases of the moon. Approximately 7-8 days pass between each of the four moon phases.

In studying the Muscogee terms for months and seasons, we are reminded that long before there were words to describe the cycles of nature, such cycles were constantly observed. Among the Muscogee, changes in climate influenced many aspects of life including what they wore, what foods were available to eat, which animals could be hunted, and what types of community activities should take place. The appearance and movements of stellar objects generally determined the scheduling of ceremonies.

Months were designated by the completion of the moon phases, each complete cycle lasting 28-30 days. The Muscogee term for each of these months describes a natural event that occurs during that time of the year. During *Ke Hvse* (key-huh-see), May, the mulberries ripen while the first frost is usually during *Ehole* (e-hole-lee), November.

Sometimes, only two seasons were acknowledged: the cold season and the warm season. More often however, a reference is made to four seasons generally corresponding to Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. There are two primary differences between the Muscogee and European concepts. Traditionally, the Muscogee year begins with *Hiyuce* (hay-u-gee), July, the completion of the harvest, and is marked by the Green Corn Ceremony. Seasons did not begin and end on specific calendar days. For example, *Tash'ce* (dah-such-gee), Spring, began when the days became warmer, the birds began to sing, flowers started growing, and trees

became green again. It ended when days became even hotter and berries and fruit began to ripe. (Compare this to current calendars, which designate March 20 to June 21 as “spring.”)

Ceremonial Grounds and Dances

The dance is a ceremony that contains both religious and social meaning to the *Mvskokvlke* (moss-go-gull-key), the Muscogee people. It is a demonstrative way of worshiping the Creator. The songs, chants and dance around the fire is of prayer and worship. This dance expresses emotions of joy, happiness and gratitude thus soothing all ill-feelings or animosity toward others. The dance begins before or at midnight and lasts until the light of day.

A traditional ceremonial ground is often headed by the *Mekko* or "chief". The *Mekko* is assisted by his second in charge called a “*Hennehv”* (Heniha), the chief medicine man is called a “*Heles hayv*” (Hillis Hiya) and the speaker is called “Mekko’s *Tvlvswv*”, or *Mekko's* tongue/speaker. It is important to note that *Mekko* is not supposed to publicly address the entire ground. His speaker or *tvlvswv* (dah-las-wah) speaks for him. A traditional *Mvskoke* ground also has four *Tvstvnvkes* (dust-duh-nah-key), warriors, four head ladies and four alternate head ladies. These are the traditional headmen of the ancient tribal towns of the *Mvskokvlke* (moss-go-gull-key).

The term "Stomp Dance" is an English term which refers to the 'shuffle and stomp' movements of the dance. In the *Mvskoke* language, one of the dances is called *Opvnkv Haco* (oh-bun-guh ha-jo), which can mean 'drunken,' 'crazy,' or 'inspirited' dance. This usually refers to the exciting, yet meditative affect the dance and the medicine have on the participants.

While the men sing, the women set the rhythm by shaking turtle shells worn on their legs. The shakers are made of turtle shells or small milk cans. Shakers develop their own style of shaking in speed and rhythm which coincides with the leader or singer. Young girls are taught to shake turtle shells or milk cans at an early age by the older women in their clan.

Green Corn Ceremony

The name of the ceremony refers to its connection with the annual harvest of the New (Green) Corn. The harvest usually occurs during July or August and no new corn is eaten before this time. Such thanksgiving and celebration of a single crop is not unusual considering its traditional importance. Corn was by far the most dependable food source as it produced even when other crops failed or hunting was unsuccessful.

The ceremony is also referred to as the *Posketv* (bush-key-duh) or “Busk” which means “to fast” which takes place mostly in the month of July. Fasting occurs in two ways; first as the people abstain from eating new corn until the harvest celebrations marked by the Green Corn and second as the participants abstain from all food and consume only a traditional herbal drink on the day of the fast. The drink is a powerful emetic that serves to cleanse the body both physically and spiritually. The men are mainly the participants of the drink but women are allowed only to

wash with it. According to traditionalists, the purpose of this medicine is to purify the people, so that they will be in an acceptable mental and physical state to receive the blessing of the New Year. Each ground will have at least four dances throughout the season, one of them being the Green Corn ceremony. Although all of the five tribes from the southeastern United States performed these dances before the removal, the Muscogee people continue to dance as their ancestors danced for thousands of years.

Today, the tribal towns that have an active fire are known as ceremonial grounds. The dances take place at 16 different ceremonial (stomp) grounds beginning in late April to mid-October. Each ceremonial ground maintains a sacred fire, which was brought from the east during "Removal" and each ground is set up structurally as the ancient towns in Alabama and Georgia before the removal except for the mound or *cukofv rakko* (jo-go-fuh thock-go). The only exception now is tribal members only come to the ground, camping for two or three days preparing for the feast and dance. Each of the traditional grounds areas are located on private land or allotment of their ancestor. Few are still on the same area of land as the time of arrival from the trail of removal. The location is known only to the dancers but not to the public or non-natives.

Before the removal, the stickball game was the traditional game for all of the tribes in the southeastern United States. Although, the game was played by all, the Muscogee people continue to play the game every fall as the last event before closing out the ceremonial dances. It was once called "Little Brother of War" by the Choctaws because the game was played to end a feud between the tribes.

It was a game with no rules; the player being a good 'sport' even when he was beaten. The game consisted of male players who only used sticks (dō-gōn-hee) made from hickory wood. Participants of the game were not allowed to use their hands to pick up the ball. A player had to be a swift runner and have the ability to move with such quickness to avoid being hit by his opponent.

The stick was carved out and curved on the end to form a netted scoop in which to catch the ball. The scoop was drilled with small holes. A thin string of leather was stringed through the holes to form a net. Ball sticks were made only by the men to play in a social game with the women or the dee-guh-bau-kee (*stick ball game with the men*). These sticks were the men's personal possession and only the men were allowed to touch them.

The ball was made by an elder man or the medicine man of the town using animal hair rolled up tightly and wrapped in deerskin and sewn onto the ball. A short string of leather was left hanging which was the "huh-chee', tail. The average size of the ball was smaller than a tennis ball which made it very difficult to see when it landed on the ground.

The game was scored by points. A score counted one point. Points were kept account by sticking pegs in the ground: the first team to reach a certain number of scored points was declared the winner. But here enters another original arrangement. The exact number of points needed to win, the exact size of the playing field, number of players involved, and whether betting and/or wrestling was to be permitted depended entirely upon the importance of the game.

Creek Stick Ball players at Thlopthlocco Tribal Town near Okemah, OK in 1924

Traditional Foods

The Muscogee people as a community were responsible for providing food for their families in such ways as hunting, fishing, farming and gathering of berries, nuts and other native vegetables or fruit. This way, food belonged to the entire community and everyone was fed. If for some reason a family did not have sufficient food, the clan members would share a portion of their food or provide for them in some way.

By 200 AD, the Creek were cultivating a variety of wild seed crops. After 800 AD, "modern" domesticated corn and beans were common throughout the Southeast. Wild gourds, sunflowers, and corn, or maize arrived from Mexico around 200 AD. It quickly became the most important vegetable food in the Creek diet, as they learned to prepare it in many ways and utilize it in dozens of unique dishes.

Safke

Safke or *osafke*, is a hominy dish which can be cooked as soup or drink and enjoyed by the Muscogulge, Muscogee people. The drink is more watery and sweetened or seasoned to taste. It is best when fresh and still warm. The soup is cooked thicker with meat, pork or beef and seasoned to taste. As a drink, some of the elders in years past preferred it fermented before drinking it. Whichever way, it is considered an acquired taste. Safke is made by cooking white cracked corn in a large supply of water, flavored with lye made from wood ash. No other seasoning is used. The mixture is cooked over moderate heat for three to four hours.

A Muscogee Creek woman using a kecvpe (key-cha-be) to pound safke.

Wild Onion Dinners

From February to April, wild onions are gathered for a major spring event of all of the Five Civilized Tribes of eastern Oklahoma. Wild onion dinners are held privately in homes and publicly, often in churches, to raise funds. Prayer and singing in the native language sometimes accompanies dinners held in churches. The onions are usually, but not always, fried with scrambled eggs. Poke salad might be added to the onions, or it could be served alone. Corn breads of various kinds are present; some are sour, prepared with fermented meal (dug-lake dōk-see) and some are flavored with parched purple pea hulls, (catto-haga or blue bread). Both sweet (unfermented) and sour hominy is common and often contains pork. In recent times, fry bread made from wheat flour, has become popular. Red beans are a part of every dinner served. Common meats are fried pork (salt meat) and stewed beef. Hickory nut soup is sometimes added to various dishes. Other foods might include fried chicken, rice, potatoes, cabbage, and crayfish. Grape dumplings are the preferred "dessert".

Songs/Hymns

Muscogee (Creek) people today still sing the Muscogee hymns in the traditional churches which the elders believe their ancestors sung on the "Trail of Tears". Most of the hymns speak of encouragement and perseverance. The hymns are sung in the Muscogee language with its own style and tune, sounding sad and lonesome while other hymns have a joyful tune.

Today, some hymns are converted from the English version into the Muscogee language (ex: Amazing Grace) for the younger generation. This makes it easier for them to sing the hymns with the tune already in place. Although, the tune is the same, the words are not translated in the exact context as the English version but in similar words.

The songs for the ceremonial dances were quite different from the hymns. The men composed their own songs and only the men sing the songs during the dances. The songs were of joyful tunes and others were lonely tunes. Sometimes, it was a story of life's experience; a lover who has left, being away too long and longing to be back or just enjoying the fellowship of being around his clan members of his tribal town. Today, chants are heard and not the stories but the rhythm of the shell shakers brings back memories of the old songs or stories.

Traditional Churches

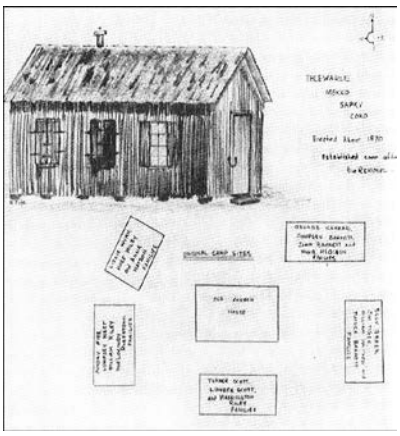


Illustration of Thewarle Indian Baptist Church, built around 1870.

Muscogee (Creek) churches have ties that link back to the creation story. The direction east is considered sacred in the Christian setting. *Hesaketvmese* (he-saw-key-duh-me-see) came or blew from the east in the Muscogee (Creek) creation. Muscogee (Creek) churches face the east, meaning that the entrance of the church faces the east. A deacon of the church will blow a horn four times "calling the spirit into the church" and signaling the beginning of the time of worship. This is similar to respecting the four elements of the creation story and calling upon them for help in the time of darkness. All night services and sunrise services are not uncommon for the dedicated Muscogee (Creek) Christians.

The traditional ceremonies have been a part of the Muscogee (Creek) culture for centuries. The Muscogee (Creek) Christian values have been a part of the culture for decades. Both ways of life are a testimony to the endurance and adaptability of the people of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Christianity was introduced to the Muscogee (Creek) people at the arrival of the first Europeans, but missionaries targeted them heavily after their removal to Indian Territory in Oklahoma. Missionaries looked upon the Muscogee (Creek) people as hostile and uncivilized. It was thought that they could be tamed and civilized through conversion to Christianity. Most Muscogee (Creek) traditional churches share some practices with the ceremonial grounds. In traditional churches the number four is noticeable; for example, the call to worship involves ringing the bell or blowing a horn four times. Also, as in the ceremonial grounds, all things are done facing east, and almost all older traditional churches face east. This traditional practice is done because the sun rises in the east; bringing in a new day. This concept of east as the spiritual direction goes back to the creation story of the Muscogee (Creek) people. The transition to Christianity was facilitated by the original beliefs of the Muscogee (Creek) people. The Christian religious concepts brought were not altogether different from the Indian people's traditional belief system. Some strikingly similar concepts occur between both of the belief systems.

The leaders in the traditional churches hold responsibilities similar to the leaders at the ceremonial grounds. The Pastor of the traditional church is equal in position to the *Mekko*, or chief, of the ceremonial ground. The Deacon has many of the same responsibilities and duties as at the ceremonial grounds. Women leaders are found in the traditional churches just as they are at the ceremonial grounds. The Pastor and the *Mekko* both direct the people in their respected communities in matters of prayers and rededication of their lives to the Creator and to the people of the communities. The Deacons and the Stickmen uphold the order of the communities and also both positions choose song leaders during their respected ceremonies. The women leaders in both communities contribute to the well-being of the people in the community when they feel it is necessary or when called upon.

Traditional church members and ceremonial grounds members also have similar views about their worship. Members of both churches and ceremonial grounds believe in one God or Creator.

In both communities, it is God or the Creator that gives the blessing of life. Without God or the Creator, there would be nothing. Along with the similarities of worship between the ceremonial grounds and the traditional churches, there was also the overwhelming presence of the Muscogee (Creek) spiritualism in these two domains. The Muscogee (Creek) people have a distinct creation story which tells about the Creator, the people and how they came to be on this earth and how we are to maintain ourselves as told in the Muscogee (Creek) language and possessed in the culture.

Muscogee (Creek) traditional churches today have ties that link back to the creation story through language and culture. *Hesaketvmese* (he-saw-key-duh-me-see), the master of breath, is the name for God, and is the one being prayed to by the Muscogee (Creek) Christians. Church hymns are predominately sung in the Muscogee (Creek) language, but occasionally English hymns are sung during the service.

Thewarle Indian Baptist Church today.

Branches of Government

BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has (3) three branches of Government:

- Executive Branch
- Judicial Branch
- Legislative Branch

The Executive Branch consists of:

- Principal Chief – James Floyd
- Second Chief – Louis Hicks
- The Cabinet

- The term of office for the Principal Chief is four (4) years. The term of office for the Second Chief is four (4) years.
- Cabinet members are appointed by the Principal Chief and confirmed by the National Council.

The Judicial Branch consists of:

- Two (2) District Court Judge
- Six (6) Supreme Court Judges

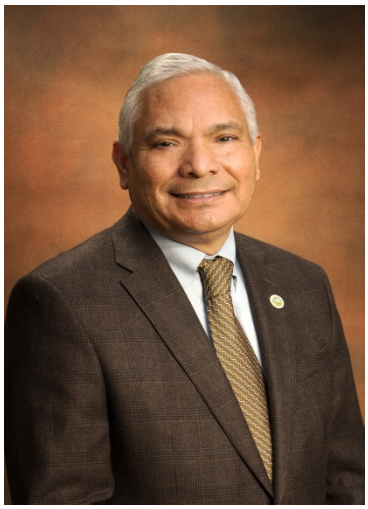
- The term of office for the Supreme Court Judges are six (6) years. The term of office for the District Court Judges are four (4) years.
- The District Court Judges and Supreme Court Judges are nominated by the Principal Chief and confirmed by the National Council.
- The court is vested with exclusive jurisdiction over all civil and criminal matters that are under Muscogee jurisdiction and serves as the final authority on Muscogee law.

The Legislative Branch consists of:

- Sixteen (16) members of the National Council – The current National Council is in their Twentieth session (Pale-Svlhokkolat)
- Speaker – Lucian Tiger III
- Second Speaker – David Hill
- Sergeant at Arms – Darrell Proctor

- The National Council representatives currently serve four (4) year terms.
- The National Council is elected by Muscogee citizens in an open election.
- The National Council representatives are elected by districts within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

PRINCIPAL CHIEF JAMES FLOYD



Personal:
Clan: Wind
Tribal Town: Koweta
Ceremonial Ground: Tvlahasse Wvkokaye
Church: Tuskegee Indian Baptist
Family: Married to Carol (Tustison) Floyd for 36 years
Children: son, Jacob, daughter, Erin, son-in-law, Lloyd

Education:
Eufaula High School graduate (1970)
Associate of Science Civil Engineering Technology
(Oklahoma State University)
Bachelor of Science Allied Health Care
(Northeastern State University)
Masters of Public Administration/Health Administration
(Portland State University)

Experience:
Muscogee (Creek) Nation: Environmental Health Specialist; Supervisor, Health Services Administration; Manager, Health Services Administration; Director, Community Services
U.S.P.H.S. Indian Health Service, Portland OR: Health System Specialist; Associate Director; Area Director
U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs: Medical Center Director; Salt Lake City, UT; Network Director, VA heartland Network, Kansas City, MO; Director, VA Eastern Oklahoma Health Care System, Muskogee, OK
Certification: Fellow, American College of Health Care Executives since 2007

Chief James Floyd was born in Oklahoma City in 1952; the fourth of nine children. His father, the late Joe Floyd, was Bear Clan from Hanna. His mother, Margaret Vickery Floyd, is Wind Clan, Creek/Cherokee, and is known by the kids at Hanna and Stidham schools as “Granny.” When his family moved to Eufaula, he helped his Dad with his floor covering business and installed carpet in many homes throughout the area. During high school he also worked at Piggly-Wiggly and played Ironhead football, graduating in 1970. He remains active in church and traditional ceremonies.

He started his professional career at Muscogee (Creek) Nation, but left home to progress in his education and training. He retired as a senior executive for the Veterans Health Administration, where he had been the highest ranking Native American in the country. Before that, he was an Area Director for the Indian Health Service. While his career has taken him across the country, he has been blessed to gain more knowledge and experience by serving other tribes and veterans.

SECOND CHIEF LOUIS HICKS

Personal:
Tribal Town – Atvse (inactive)/Arbeka (active)
Clan – Fuswvlke (Bird)
Church – Silver Springs Indian Baptist Church
Place of Birth – Eram, Oklahoma
Father – Houston Hicks (WWII veteran)
Mother – Eliza (Freeman) Hicks
Home – Okmulgee, OK

Military Career (1969-1972):
Enlisted – 1969
Served in Vietnam with the 134th Assault Helicopter Company, 1st Aviation Brigade
Door Gunner/Crew Chief on UH1H Huey Helipcopter
Awarded – Air Crewman Badge, Air Medal (14 times), Army Commendation Medal

Affiliations:
All Indian Rodeo Association of Oklahoma
Oklahoma School Board Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 539
American Legion Post 213

Second Chief Louis Hicks was born January 7, 1951. He graduated from Choctaw High School in 1969. He received his Associates Degree in Elementary Education in 1977 from Rose State College and his Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Northeastern State University in 1979. In 1992, he received his Master of Science in Education (School Administration) from Northeastern State University.

Mr. Hicks worked for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation from 2007 to December 2011 as the Director of the Human Development. He supervised seven major programs: Mvskoke Revitalization Language Program, Higher Education, Johnson-O'Malley, Head Start, Eufaula Dorms, Reintegration Program and Employment & Training.

He has been married to Mrs. Gloria Hicks for 40 years. He is the father of seven children and grandfather to 16 grandchildren.

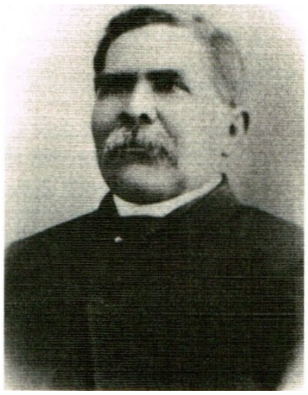
FORMER CHIEFS

Roley McIntosh
1828 to 1859

Samuel Checote
1867 to 1875
1879 to 1883

Locher Harjo
1875 to 1876

Ward Coachman
1876 to 1879



Joseph M. Perryman
1883 to 1887

Legus C. Perryman
1887 to 1895

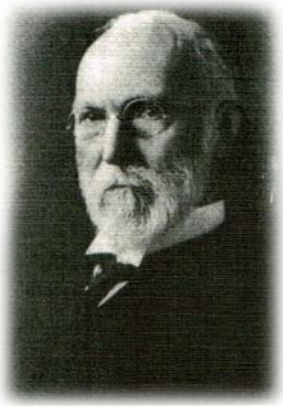
Edward Bullett
1895

Isparhecher
1895 to 1899

Pleasant Porter
1899 to 1907

FORMER CHIEFS

Motey Tiger
1907 to 1917



G. W. Grayson
1917 to 1920

Washington Grayson
1921 to 1923

George Hill
1923 to 1928

Peter Ewing
1931

Alex Noon
1939 to 1943

Roley Canard
1935 to 1939
1942 to 1950

John F. Davis
1951 to 1955

Roley Buck
1955 to 1957

FORMER CHIEFS

Turner Bear
1957 to 1961

W.E. 'Dode' McIntosh
1961 to 1971

Claude A. Cox
1971 to 1991

Bill S. Fife
1992 to 1996

R. Perry Beaver
1996 to 2004

A.D. Ellis
2004 to 2012

George Tiger
2012 to 2016

Photographs are not available for:
Motey Canard – 1859 to 1863
Echo Harjo – 1859 to 1867
Henry Harjo - 1930

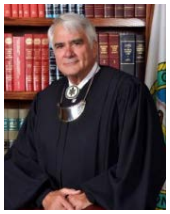
SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

Chief Justice Andrew Adams III is a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma and is a member of the Tallahassee Wvkokaye Ceremonial Grounds. He earned a law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School and is a founding member of law firm in St. Paul, Minnesota that specializes in Indian Law.

Vice-Chief Justice George Thompson Jr. lives in Henryetta, Oklahoma. He attended Haskell Institute; the University of Tulsa; and Oklahoma State University. He is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and retired after serving for twenty-eight years with the City of Tulsa Engineering Services. He was raised in Mvskoke tradition all his life and is the Mekko of Hickory Ceremonial Ground and is of the Bird Clan.

Justice Leah Harjo-Ware was raised on her Mvskoke grandmother's allotment in southern Muscogee (Creek) Nation. She is Deer clan and a member of New Tulsa Ceremonial Grounds. She attended Holdenville High School, the University of Oklahoma, and Creighton University School of Law. She was admitted to practice law for the U.S. Supreme Court and the Oklahoma State Supreme Court and has committed her legal career to the practice of Federal Indian and Tribal Law.

Justice Kathleen Supernaw graduated from the University of Oklahoma College of Law. While attending University of Oklahoma, she was Editor-in-Chief of the AMERICAN INDIAN LAW REVIEW, on the Dean's Honor Roll, and a Research Assistant for the HANDBOOK OF FEDERAL INDIAN LAW. She has appeared in over 30 counties on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior in Oklahoma Districts Courts to protect the restricted interests of members of the Five Tribes.

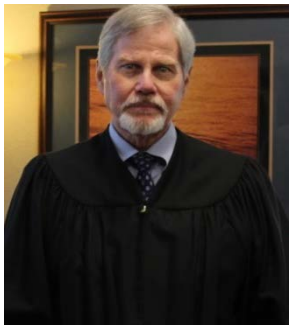


Justice Montie Deer graduated from high school in Kansas. He earned a law degree at Washburn University School of Law and served as chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission where he was responsible for the protection of Indian gaming as a means of revenue for tribal communities. He also served as Attorney General for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and as Associate Professor of Law at the University of Tulsa Law School.

Justice Richard Lerblance, from Hartshorne, OK, earned his law degree from Oklahoma City University School of Law. He served as a member of the Oklahoma State Senate and the House of Representatives. He was admitted to practice before the Oklahoma State Supreme Court, U.S. District Court for Eastern Oklahoma and the Supreme Courts for Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Choctaw Nation and Chickasaw Nation.

DISTRICT COURT JUDGES

Honorable Gregory H. Bigler is a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and a member of Polecat Euchee stomp ground. He attended Harvard and Wisconsin Law schools and worked for several tribes as Attorney General, Supreme Court Judge and District Court Judge. In 1993, he argued and won the U.S. Supreme Court case of Oklahoma Tax Commission v. Sac & Fox Nation. Currently, he has a private practise in Sapulpa, OK and serves as Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court Judge for the civil and criminal divisions.



Honorable John T. Cripps served in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Vietnam, Germany and United States. He graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a law degree in 1975. He currently serves as judge for numerous towns within Oklahoma, chairman of Sequoyah Memorial Hospital and has his own private practise in Sallisaw, OK. He serves as the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court Judge for the family division.

NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

DEL BEAVER
Okmulgee District-Seat A

PETE BEAVER
Muskogee District-Seat A

JOYCE C. DEERE
Muskogee District-Seat B

PATRICK FREEMAN, JR.
Creek District-Seat B

JOHNNIE L. GREENE
Wagoner/Rogers/Mayes District-Seat A

RANDALL HICKS
Okfuskee District-Seat A

DAVID HILL
Creek District-Seat A

ROBERT HUFFT
Tulsa District-Seat A

TRAVIS SCOTT
Okfuskee District-Seat B

NATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

JAMES JENNINGS
Okmulgee District-Seat B

ADAM JONES III
McIntosh District-Seat B

DARRELL PROCTOR
McIntosh District-Seat A

MARK RANDOLPH
Wagoner/Rogers/Mayes District-Seat B

RUFUS SCOTT
Tukvpvtce District-Seat A

LUCIAN TIGER III
Tulsa District-Seat B

THOMASENE YAHOLA-OSBORN
Tukvpvtce District-Seat B

NATIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Health, Education & Welfare

Meeting: 2nd Monday at 2:00 PM

1. Johnnie Greene, Chairperson
2. Joyce Deere, Vice-Chair
3. Randall Hicks
4. James Jennings
5. Rufus Scott

Land, Natural Resources & Cultural Preservation

Meeting: 2nd Tuesday at 6:30 PM

1. Darrell Proctor, Chairperson
2. Mark Randolph, Vice-Chair
3. Del Beaver
4. Patrick Freeman Jr.
5. Thomasene Yahola-Osborn

Business, Finance & Justice

Meeting: Thursday prior to Planning Session at 6:30 PM

1. Robert Hufft, Chairperson
2. Adam Jones III, Vice-Chair
3. Travis Scott
4. Pete Beaver
5. David Hill

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

STEP ONE

- Proposed bill is given to Speaker

STEP TWO

- Speaker assigns bill to appropriate committee

STEP THREE

- Committee writes report on bill and forwards to National Council
- If bill has budget items, it must be considered by the Business and Government Committee

STEP FOUR

- National Council approves bill
- National Council forwards proposed bill to Principal Chief

STEP FIVE

- Principal Chief approves bill
- Proposed bill becomes law

HOW A BILL MAY BE VETOED

STEP ONE

- **Principal Chief sends veto message on proposed bill to the National Council**

STEP TWO

- **At next official meeting, a motion must be made and a majority approval to read veto message aloud**

STEP THREE

- **Any Representative, except the Speaker, may make a motion to override a veto (2/3 vote required) and adopt the legislation as law**

STEP FOUR

- **If a motion is not made to override a veto, the vetoed legislation may not be reconsidered**

STEP FIVE

- **Vetoed legislation may be amended and the amended legislation resent to the Principal Chief**

Muscogee Royalty

Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Nina D'laine Fox

Clan: Beaver
Tribal Town: Tuskegee
Church: Life Church
School: Bixby High School
Parents: Justin and Peggy Fox

Nina enjoys beading and sewing traditional Mvskoke clothing and accessories, playing guitar, bass drum and various percussion instruments. She will be attending the University of Central Oklahoma to study nursing. Upon completing her basic nursing coursework, she plans to continue with more specific coursework aimed at nurse practioning.

Nina is a member of the Pride of Bixby Marching Band, which has been state champions 2014-2017. She was also nominated for academic recognition as a delegate for the Congress of Future Medical Leaders and a member of the Mvskoke Nation Youth Council as well.

Nina's platform is diabetes awareness among young adults. She plans to address this issue in several economic ways and prevent the growth of Type 2 Diabetes among young adults. She continues to learn the Mvskoke language through books, songs and conversations with elders.

Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation serves as a Goodwill Ambassador by promoting the Nation through educational, social, cultural and public appearances as well as speaking engagements. Contestants are judged on an introduction letter, essay, interview, self-introduction, traditional dress, social interaction, cultural talent/presentation and the ability to answer an impromptu question. Prizes include $2500 cash and a $2500 Scholarship.

Jr. Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Louisa Mya Harjo

Clan: Ecovlke (Deer)
Tribal Town: Rvro Kvlkvt (Fish Pond)
Church: Springfield United Methodist
School: Okemah High School
Parents: Pahose Harjo and Cassandra Thompson

Louisa enjoys knitting, crocheting, sewing, painting and drawing. She also loves attending stomp dances in the Spring and Summer. She hopes to attend the Institute of American Indian Arts or Clary Sage College.

Louisa was named 2017 Mvskoke Women's Leadership Middle School Student of the Year. She is also a member of the Mvskoke Nation Youth Council and the program's Cultural and Language Committee, as well as Mvskoke Nation Youth Choir.

Louisa's platform is 'Art is Medicine'. She would like to share how art has been a part of the Mvskoke culture and discuss how art has helped her. She believes art can be used to reach youth and help them experience it as therapy while getting connected to the Mvskoke culture.

Through the MCN Scholarship Pageant, the Jr. Miss Muscogee (Creek) Nation will develop her sense of self confidence, poise, public speaking skills, socials skills, and further her cultural knowledge of Mvskoke history, customs and traditions. Prizes include $1500, a beaded crown, cedar crown box, woven basket purse, Mvskoke traditional clothing, plaque, Pendleton blanket, two matching sashes, personalized luggage, flower bouquet, professional photo shoot and traveling opportunities. Jr. Miss contestants must be between the ages of 14-17 years of age and enrolled in school.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Seal

The Muscogee Nation is a confederacy of Muscogean towns originally from the southeastern region of the United States. “Muscogee” refers to the predominant language spoken among these towns. The initials “I.T.” on the circular border stand for Indian Territory, the land that was promised to the Muscogee Nation and other tribal nations for “as long as the grass grows and the rivers flow”. On that promise the Muscogee Nation was forced to leave the southeast in the early 1800’s on what has come to be known as the “Trail of Tears”.

The Muscogee people had been agriculturists since 900 A.D. Using tools hand-made from natural resources, they grew corn, beans and squash. After arriving in I.T., they resumed this practice. The center of the seal signifies the Muscogee’s agricultural background and the influence of Christianity. The sheaf of wheat refers to Joseph’s dream (Genesis 37:7), “For behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright…” The plow depicts a prophecy (Amos 9:13), “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper…”

The Muscogee Nation National Council adopted this seal following the Civil War.

Belvin Hill Scholarship

Belvin Hill
1952-2006

Belvin Hill was born and raised in the Eufaula, Oklahoma area. He was the son of Belvin Jesse Hill and Medella Hill and of the Deer Clan. He graduated from Eufaula high school in 1970 and went on to receive his bachelor degree in education from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, OK. He received his Masters in Divinity/Religious Education from Mid-Western Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

In 2000, Belvin became the Muscogee (Creek) Nation JOM Program's Field Specialist and one of the original founding members of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Challenge Bowl. He gave workshop presentations at the Statewide JOM Conferences and National JOM Conferences. It was not unusual for him to assist a JOM program from a different tribe in a different state. He shared his knowledge and his training materials with all who were in need.

He was part of establishing the MCN JOM reputation of excellence in technical training for JOM programs on a national level. His love for children showed through each and every day. He was in charge of the meals for Challenge Bowl, making sure that each child was ready for the competition. At times you could find him serving breakfast and lunch out under a tent pitched behind the Mound building at the Creek Complex in Okmulgee. He went out of his way and made sure that the students and sponsors felt welcomed to the Challenge Bowl competition. He always had a smile and a handshake for all. He was a loving man who always took the time to talk to the students and throw in a life lesson while he was at it.

In 2006, the Challenge Bowl Committee honored Belvin by setting up a scholarship in his name in the amount of $1000 to a graduating senior, one female and one male, who participants in the Challenge Bowl their senior year. This scholarship is based on the students' participation and their essay on "Why the Challenge Bowl is important to me". Our hope is it to keep Belvin's spirit of learning alive by providing this small scholarship to students who understand the true meaning behind the Muscogee Nation's Challenge Bowl.

Wilbur Chebon Gouge Honors Team

Wilbur Chebon Gouge
1951-2008

Wilbur Gouge was born and raised in Hanna, Oklahoma and the son of the late Albert and Sally (Spaniard) Gouge. He graduated from Capitol Hill high school in 1969 and went on to Haskell Indian Junior College. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps and received an Honorable Discharge in 1974. He is a member of the Deer Clan and a member of the Weogufkee (Muddy Waters) Ceremonial Ground and attended Arbeka Ceremonial Ground.

Wilbur Gouge served on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's National Council for five sessions, serving in the offices of Speaker and Second Speaker along with chairing the Human Development Committee.

While on the National Council, he would greet everyone in the Muscogee language and interpret for the elders what actions were being taken. He also became a founding member of the MCN Challenge Bowl committee. He was the traditional advisor for the games and made sure that the competition didn't over-ride the true spirit of the games – the spirit of learning. His love for the games showed in his commitment to teach the volunteers and students that if you know where you come from, you will know where you are going.

In 2007, the Challenge Bowl committee officially named the sportsmanship award the "Wilbur Chebon Gouge Honors Team Award" to honor him for his contribution to the betterment of this Nation. For generations to come, children will know his name, benefit from his knowledge and credit him for teaching them what it truly means to be a noble Creek citizen.

In 2008, the Muscogee Nation honored him as a Living Legend to acknowledge his years of work and dedication to the Muscogee people. Chebon has been recognized as one of the leading forces behind making Creek Nation more accessible to our youth, parents, community members and employees. On every committee that Mr. Gouge participated in, he kept them grounded by making the Creek culture the focal point of the program or events.

The true meaning of the Challenge Bowl games is to teach our children the Creek culture, history, government and language using traditional values of brotherhood as the foundation. The Challenge Bowl was never set up to teach our children how to win in competitions but how to learn, share and be grateful to those willing to teach them. The Challenge Bowl committee made a commitment to set by example positive role models in good citizenship and tribal pride that would carry on throughout the years.

The "Wilbur Gouge Honors Team Award" is given in each of the three divisions. This award is presented to the one team who best exemplifies the true spirit of the games; knowing how to greet their tribal leadership, acknowledge their elders, show respect to their peers, showing honor in defeat, playing for the love of learning and not just to win a trophy or medal.

Chronicles of Oklahoma

Chronicles of Oklahoma
Volume 4, No. 4
December, 1926
SAPULPA

William A. Sapulpa

The life of Sapulpa, for whom the City of Sapulpa was named, reads much like the lives of other active, virile men, whose lives have merited the confidence, honor and respect of their fellowmen. He was born in Alabama. Both his parents were full-blood Creeks. His father was O-M-I-Y-A, but his mother's name and the date of his birth are unknown to his posterity. Both his parents died in Alabama when he was but two or three years old and he and his three sisters were raised by his two uncles, brothers of his father. His boyhood and early youth were spent on the hunting grounds of their then Indian country, which extended from Florida to Mississippi and the encroachment of white settlers into that country brought him into conflict with the governmental authorities and the soldiers, so he was, for a time, what may be termed a wild Indian. It seems that the white settlers of those days (very much like some of the white settlers of later days), would not recognize the rights of Indians to any property whatsoever and proceeded to help themselves to stock belonging to the Indians. The Indians proceeded to retake as much of their stock as they could find and, perhaps, taking other stock in place of the stock not found. The white settlers, of course, chose to treat the Indians as cattle thieves and shot some of them. This conduct on the part of the white settlers so aroused the manly and racial instincts of young Sapulpa to action that brought the soldiers in pursuit of him; but he was too wily and fleet of foot for the soldier boys, so they never caught him. One incident of his experience with the soldiers that he often told to his children was this: While out hunting with some other men, in Florida, they saw the soldiers with blood hounds—and the pursuit was on. Young Sapulpa ran into a swamp, with the blood hounds and soldiers on his trail. Coming to a creek that ran into a lake, he saw a big alligator in the creek. If he stopped or turned back, the hounds and soldiers would get him, so he made a desperate jump over both the alligator and the creek. But the hounds and soldiers were not so fortunate—for when they arrived at the creek, the alligator put up such a hard fight that they gave up the chase. And so the native of the swamps saved the native of the woods from his enemies.

The Creek Indians of those days often visited St. Augustine, Florida, where they did most of their trading. Here did also young Sapulpa go quite frequently and met and made many friends among the white people. His last trip to Ste. Augustine was his last trip from the old hunting grounds; for at Ste. Augustine some of his white friends induced him to go with them to Charleston, S. C. The trip was made by boat, and Mr. Sapulpa was treated to the sights of whales, etc., to be seen in the briny deep. Leaving Charleston, he continued by boat to New Orleans and then continued on to what later became the eastern part of the Creek Nation in what is now Oklahoma—thus becoming one of its pioneers and one of the leaders of his people. Soon after his arrival in the new country, he assumed the duties of a husband by marrying NaKitty, an Indian maiden, and, moving to what is now Creek County, he built his home and commenced

farming on Rock Creek, about one mile southeast of Sapulpa. Sometime later, in about 1850, he started a store at his home, where he sold coffee, sugar, tobacco, dry goods, flour, spices and other articles too numerous to mention and hauling his goods in by team and pack horses from Ft. Smith and the old agency about 7 or 8 miles northwest of Muskogee. At the end of about two years he gave up merchandising on account of the difficulties of getting in his goods. There were no other stores in the neighborhood—the nearest stores being at the old agency, near Muskogee and at Council Hill. There may be some old timers who remember when we had no railroads, no automobiles, no trucks, no interurban lines, no bridges over our streams —and no wagon roads fit to travel, but I think that the most of you would consider the traffic in merchandise, under such conditions, as unthinkable.

Three children were born of his marriage to NaKitty—James, Hanna and Sarah. Of these three, James and Sarah are still living. James Sapulpa lives about one mile south of Sapulpa, and Sarah is now the wife of Timmie Fife and lives within the city.

Sapulpa was married again to Cho-pok-sa, a sister of his first wife and by whom he had seven children—Moses, Yarna, Samuel, William, Rhoda, Becca and Nicey. All of these children are now dead, excepting William, who now is a farmer, and lives about two miles west of Sapulpa.

When the Civil War broke out, Sapulpa loaned $1,000.00 in gold to the Confederate cause, receiving a note as evidence thereof, which note is still in existence and held for safe keeping. He joined the Creek Regiment of the Confederate Army, in which he served for three years and rose to the rank of first lieutenant, and was wounded in the battle of Elk Creek, near what is now Checotah, Oklahoma.

During the years 1871-73, about two or three hundred Osages used to come down here and camp, staying about two weeks at a time and traded with the Creeks, buying corn, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, peanuts, bacon, hogs and so forth. They put up their tepees on the land where the court house now stands and extending in a southeasterly direction about one-half mile.

In 1872, Mr. Sapulpa opened another store at his home on the hill southeast of what is now Sapulpa, buying and hauling his merchandise this time from Coffeyville, Kansas. But about a year later he closed out the business again, because of the difficulties of transportation. However, he had taken a deep interest in farming and stock raising and devoted his time, energy and talents to those industries with such success that, in due time, all the land within ten miles of his home was embraced in his ranch, and for several years he shipped cattle and hogs to the St. Louis market.

In about 1875, Mr. Sapulpa joined the Methodist Church South, and was an active member thereof from then until the time of his death and donated liberally with cattle, flour, coffee and sugar to feed the people at Camp Meetings, which always lasted several days.

In the early days, big game, consisting of antelopes, panthers, deer, buffalo, elk and bear was plentiful, and Mr. Sapulpa indulged his passionate fondness for hunting and exercised his great skill in the hunting of such game.

In about 1884 or 1885, the Frisco railroad completed the extension from Tulsa to Sapulpa and Mr. Sapulpa was invited by the Frisco officials to ride to Sapulpa on the first passenger train from Tulsa to Sapulpa.

I am pretty reliably informed that there was one store and one blacksmith shop at the end of what is now South Maple Street for several years before the Civil War, and that business was kept up there until the war broke out and that during the war all the buildings were burned.

The Okmulgee District Court of the Creek Nation was held about the year 1890 on or near the place where J. E. Rice now has his business at Park Street and Lee Avenue, and was presided over by William Anderson, as Judge, with Stand Watie as Prosecuting Attorney and myself, William Sapulpa, as Clerk of the Court.

Mr. Sapulpa was a member of the Coon Clan and his wives were members of the Fox Clan. He was a member of Osocheetown and in 1868 was elected by his town as a member of the House of Kings, which position of honor and trust he held until the date of his death, March 17, 1887.

Mr. Sapulpa was fond of the Indian ball game and was considered the best all round ball player on the Arkansas River.

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THE CREEK INDIAN COUNCIL IN SESSION

By Alice Robertson

Although the Capitol of the Creek Nation was established at Okmulgee in the year 1868, I had never been there when the Council was in session in the log Council House. In 1878 I was in Indian Territory on leave of absence from the Indian Department in Washington, where at that time I was employed as a clerk, and was visiting my parents at Tullahassee Mission when I had an opportunity to see the council in session.

Early one beautiful October morning my father and I left Tullahassee with the hack and a pair of Indian ponies,—in the vernacular of that time a hack was a strong, light spring wagon without cover. We crossed the Arkansas River at Henry Texas' ferry, superseded in recent years by what is known as Spaulding Bridge. The drive was one of great charm. We did not mind the open vehicle and our ponies made six miles an hour.

The tall prairie grass waved its russet sprays above golden rod and white and purple asters. At noon we stopped for dinner and to feed our ponies on Cane Creek, where Isaac Smith an enterprising Creek Freedman had built a cluster of log cabins which were the rooms of his hotel. He catered only to white and Indian travelers and patrons usually had a whole cabin to

themselves. The cabins were fairly clean though sometimes the small pests, colloquially known as "chinches", were annoying. Father and I spread blankets on the grass out under the trees, and while our noon day meal was prepared we indulged in a siesta in the warm October sunshine. Isaac's was notable for fried chicken with cream gravy, butter milk biscuits, fresh butter, preserves and of course plenty of coffee. After the ponies had finished their eight ears of corn apiece and all the hay they could eat, we paid two bits each for our dinner and two bits each for the ponies' dinner and went happily on our way, leaving Cane Creek bottom and driving west across the big prairie.

The first evidence that we were coming to Okmulgee as the sun began to drop toward the horizon, was the sight of Severs' pasture. This pasture was three miles square, with a split rail fence, nine rails high. In trading with the Indians Fred B. Severs bought small bunches of their surplus stock for which they took exchange in "store goods." These cattle then had the Severs' brand placed upon them and were turned into the pasture until a sufficiently large herd was ready for market. We forded Okmulgee Creek and went up the road past camps and camp houses to, Smiths' Hotel.

Smiths' Hotel was a rather large frame building a block from the Council house. A front room upstairs was assigned to me. It looked out on an upper porch and its windows were curtainless. Its furnishings comprised a low springless bedstead with a feather bed and pillows, one sheet, and a clean patchwork quilt; no mirror, no chair nor wash basin. Guests of the hotel were expected to perform their ablutions on the front porch, below, where there was a long shelf with buckets of water, gourd dippers, tin wash basins with one roller towel. I had prepared for such an emergency with a plentiful supply of soap and towels, so neither father nor I had to patronize the roller towel and I borrowed a basin so I got along very well. Out in front of the hotel, swinging from its iron frame on a high post was an iron plantation bell. A vigorous pulling of the attached rope was the signal to the town that it was meal time.

Meals at Smiths' Hotel were two bits but there were boarding places at which meals could be had for fifteen and twenty cents and not bad meals either. Each breakfast and supper at Smiths' was a replica of the others, everything that could be fried was fried, bacon, eggs, ham, potatoes, corn, etc. At dinner most foods were boiled but there was often barbecued pork or beef, and chicken appeared with dumplings and gravy. For anyone who asked there were Indian dishes, sofkey, tuklike, tooksey, ahpuskey etc. There was always coffee to drink and water if you asked for it, but it was customary to patronize the dippers in the water buckets on the front porch after each meal.

At early candlelight the Council House bell rang and in the dimly lighted hall I went with my father up the steps of the new Council House, recently completed, and used for the first time at this meeting of the Council. Hymns in their own language were being sung as a congregation gathered in the Hall of the lower house of the Warriors, the "Tustenukkulkee". Men, women and children drifted in during the singing, then a man began to pray and everybody knelt down. The service was entirely in Creek, and the Preacher was the President of the House of Kings, The "Mekkulkee", always addressed as “Liketuh Ohliketuh". The Reverend James McHenry, a notably outstanding character, was the son of a Scotch father and Indian mother. During the bloody Creek war which led to the conquering of the Creek people and their exile to Indian

Territory, McHenry was a fearless fighter. He foiled all attempts to entrap him and even a standing reward of $1500.00 for him, dead or alive, failed to bring results. Finally taken however he was carried with his exiled brethren to Indian Territory where he began a new life. He was converted and went into the Methodist Church and was duly licensed and ordained as a minister. He had received a rudimentary education in English. No longer an outlaw, he was a leader of his people, a zealous Christian soldier. The service he conducted was not long, for the village kept early hours.

At six the next morning when Smiths' bell told that breakfast was ready; I got up and joined my father downstairs in time for bacon and eggs, hot biscuit, fried chicken and all the rest. Then we walked around awhile exchanging greetings with our Indian friends. At a quarter of nine the Council House bell rang. We had gone a little earlier to pay our respects to the Principal Chief, the "Mekko Hlakko", in the executive office. Ward Coachman was a man of much ability who was born in the "Old Nation" in Alabama and educated there before following his people west. He was a member of the Alabama Creeks and spoke English, Creek and Alabaman with equal fluency and our interview was a pleasant one. From the executive office we went across the hall to the office of the committee on schools where father placed on file his reports of Tullahassee Mission and left his books for financial audit and approval that the treasurer might issue a warrant for funds. The Contract under which Tullahassee was operated provided a division of expense between the Mission Board and the Creek Nation.

Then we went upstairs to the House of Kings. The "Light Horse" who acted as doorkeeper admitted us and gave us seats to the left of the dais, on which was the desk of Mekko McHenry. We watched the routine business of the morning hour. Then Mekko McHenry with great dignity and eloquence of voice and gesture made a personal address which brought a smile of gratification to father's face and embarrassed blushes to mine. With the musical style of Creek oratory he was describing to the Mekkulkee the good works of the Robertson family and their accomplishments for the welfare of the Creek people. The young woman present with her father, he said, was a great friend to the Muskogee people in Washington where she worked for Wuhins Mokko, the Government, and had done many things helping them. Especially he enlarged upon the recent contest among themselves in the election for chief where the papers seemed to have been laid aside and forgotten.

All the public life was at a standstill. Their treasury was empty, their Courts and schools were without funds; even the community blacksmiths had no funds till there should be legal recognition of their government and officials through whom the funds should be paid. Though as they saw she was just a girl, she had interceded, and had been allowed, upon examination of their papers, to write a report which had been adopted, the rightful government had been recognized, and peace came to their people. Then his gavel called all to their feet and as father and daughter stood he led the stately stepping band of Indian Kings through their ceremony of presentation and hand shaking, all returning to their places and remaining standing until the fall of the gavel permitted them to be seated. This was an honor never bestowed upon a woman before.

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Thomas Gilcrease

By: Martin Wenger

Thomas Gilcrease, a well-known oilman of Creek Indian, descent and the founder of the Gilcrease Museum at Tulsa keenly appreciated his American heritage. Early in life he commenced to assemble the remarkable collection of paintings, sculpture, books, manuscripts and artifacts pertaining to the American Indian and the American frontier which has come to be recognized as the Nation's most outstanding collection of its kind. Thomas Gilcrease was born in Robilene, Louisiana, on February 8, 1890, one of the large family of children of William and Elizabeth (Nee Vowel1) Gilcrease. When Thomas was a few months old, the family moved to Eufaula, Indian Territory, for Mrs. Gilcrease was of Creek Indian descent which gave her and her children land rights in the Creek Nation. A year later, they settled on a farm just south of Ball Mountain where they were neighbors to the Posey family. Thomas Gilcrease attended his first school in this community, taught by Alexander Posey, later the noted Creek poet in Oklahoma history. In about 1898, the Gilcrease family moved farther west to the Twin Mounds, in present Creek County, where they took their allotments of land the time the tribal rolls and allotments in severalty were made in the Creek Nation. William Gilcrease opened a little grocery store at the Twin Mounds, and later owned two cotton gins and a grist mill in the vicinity. In 1904, he moved his family to Wealaka, an old post office in the Creek Nation where he laid out a townsite and became postmaster and opened a general merchandise store. His son Thomas as a boy picked cotton and drove a wagon and team on the farms; later he worked in the cotton gins and in the store and post office at Wealaka. Oil was struck four miles from the 160 acre allotment of Thomas Gilcrease in 1905, and his land was soon in the famous Glen Pool of the great Mid-Continent Oil Field that pushed Tulsa on its way to become the "Oil Capital of the World." Young Gilcrease had thirty-two producing oil wells on his 160 acre allotment by 1917. He attended Bacone College at Muskogee, Indian Territory in 1907-08, soon after oil was struck on his land. A few years later, he attended the State Teachers College at Emporia, Kansas. He moved to Tulsa in 1908, which was really his home throughout his lifetime though he lived in California a short time; he also lived in San Antonio for a period of years, and traveled abroad for many years. Thomas Gilcrease carried on his own business interests at an early age-fanning, ranching and dealing in real estate. He purchased land two and one half miles northwest of Tulsa in Blackdog Township, of Osage County in 1912, where he built a large home and bought his first oil painting, Rural Courtship by Ridgway Knight.

Young Gilcrease had started his own oil business and entered the field of banking at the age of twenty-one. He soon owned a large interest in the bank now known as the Fourth National Bank at Tulsa, also owned outright the Bank of Bixby, the State Bank of Wagoner, the State Bank of Coweta and also, at one time, the largest bank in Stillwater.

Mr. Gilcrease formed the Gilcrease Oil Company at Tulsa in 1922. The Company brought in the first oil producer in South Central Oklahoma soon afterward, and it was during these oil omrations that Mr. Gilcrease discovered a new oil producing strata which is known today as the Gilcrease sand. This spurred the development of the oil pools in this art of Oklahoma such as the Papoose, Sasakwa, Wewoka and others. The Gilcrease Oil Concave established an office in San Antonio in 1936, and operated in the East Texas Field. South to the Rio Grande River, west to New Mexico as well as in North Texas, Southern Oklahoma and Kansas. Later, Mr. Gilcrease also established an office in Europe. He started his extensive traveling abroad in 1925. It was in this that his interest in American culture intensified, and he accelerated his activities in collecting rare objects of art, paintings, books and manuscripts. His visits in Europe taught him that knowledge of civilizations is established by the things that remain from them. It was in Paris that he determined to assemble a record of the American Indian including the pre-historic period which could be obtained only by archaeological explorations. Much of his time during the last years of his life was spent personally excavating remains of ancient Indian cultures.

The Thomas Gilcrease Foundation was established in 1942, "to maintain an art gallery, museum and library devoted to the permanent preservation for free and public use and enjoyment of the artistic, cultural and historical records of the American Indian." A building was constructed of native sandstone by Indian artisans on land near the Gilcrease home, and the museum was opened by a formal dedication ceremony May 3, 1949. Mr. Gilcrease presented the museum collections to the City of Tulsa in 1955. He also deeded the building and thirteen acres of land surrounding it to the city three years later. Since then, the fame of the Gilcrease Collection has grown rapidly. Visitors have come from all parts of the world to see this great museum, now officially known as the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art of Tulsa. Thomas Gilcrease passed away in the morning of Sunday, May 6, 1962, from the effects of a stroke suffered a few hours earlier. Memorial services were held on the lawn in front of his home overlooking the skyline of Tulsa on the following Wednesday. The Reverend Guy Tetrick of the Methodist Church officiated at the services which were highlighted by a eulogy written and delivered by David R. Milsten. Indian burial rites were conducted by Chief Dode McIntosh of the Creeks, Wolfrobe Hunt and other Indian friends. Burial will be in a mausoleum to be constructed nearby. Mr. Gilcrease was married twice, and is **s**urvived by two sons**,** Thomas, Jr., and Barton of San Antonio, Texas; and a daughter, Des Cygne Gilcrease Denney of Palos Verdes Estates, California. A friend tells that Mr. Gilcrease once said that of all the things he had ever done, the most useful to the most people something that will bring pleasure and knowledge-had been the founding of the library and art gallery of the museum. "It is my aim always to leave something more beautiful than I found it," he remarked. Thomas Gilcrease enjoyed a rich and happy life that started from humble beginnings. He gave to Oklahoma and America a gift of immeasurable value. He appreciated the ideals and the spirit of the American tradition. He appreciated them so much that he has left for posterity a marvelous and vital presentation of our American heritage that will continue to instill a greater understanding and respect for these ideals in all time to come**.**

Legends & Stories

HOW DAY AND NIGHT WERE DIVIDED

After the world was made, some of the animals wanted the day to last all the time. Others preferred that it be night all the time. They quarreled about this and could come to no agreement. After a while they decided to hold a meeting, and they asked Nokosi the Bear to preside. Nokosi proposed that they vote to have night all the time, but Chew-thlock-chew, the Ground Squirrel, said: “I see that Wotko the Raccoon has rings on his tail divided equally, first a dark color then a light color, I think day and night ought to be divided like the rings on Wotko’s tail.”

The animals were surprised at the wisdom of Chew-thlock-chew. They voted for his plan and divided day and night like the dark and light rings on Wotko the Raccoon’s tail, succeeding each other in regular order. But Nokosi the Bear was so angry at Chew-thlock-chew for rejecting his advice that he thrust out a paw and scratched the Squirrel’s back with his sharp claws. This is what caused the thirteen stripes on the backs of all his descendants, the Ground Squirrels.

THE LANGUAGE OF ANIMALS

It is said long time ago, men and animals talked to one another and later they lost the ability to do so, but the great medicine men had the gift. One time an old woman was much frightened at the sight of a yearling Bull coming toward her bellowing and she tried to escape. The Bull reassured her, however, in language she could understand, saying "Don't be afraid of me. I am just enjoying myself singing." He added that she must not tell of her experience or she would die.

After that the old woman knew the language of the animals and listened to them as they talked together. She was blind in one eye, and once when she was shelling corn she heard the Chickens say to one another,

"Get around on her blind side and steal some of the corn." She was so much tickled at this that she laughed out loud. Just then her husband, who was a very jealous man, came in and believed she must be thinking of some other man, so he said, "Why do you get so happy all by yourself?" Then she related her adventure with the Bull and told him what the Chickens had just been saying, but the moment she finished her story she fell over dead.

STORY OF THE BAT

The birds challenged the four-footed animals to a great ball play. It was agreed that all creatures which had teeth should be on one side and all those which had feathers should go on the other side with the birds. The day was fixed and all the arrangements were made; the ground was prepared, the poles erected, and the balls conjured by the medicine men. When the animals came, all that had teeth went on one side and the birds on the other. At last, the Bat came. He went with the animals having teeth, but they said, “No, you have wings, you must go with the birds.” He went to the birds and they said, “No, you have teeth, you must go with the animals.” So they drove him away, saying “You are so little you could do no good.”

He went to the animals and begged that they would permit him to play with them. They finally said, “You are too small to help us, but as you have teeth we will let you remain on our side.”
The play began and it soon appeared that the birds were winning, as they could catch the ball in the air, where the four-footed animals could not reach it. The Crane was the best player. The

animals were in despair, as none of them could fly. The little Bat now flew into the air and caught the ball as the Crane was flapping slowly along. Again and again, the Bat caught the ball, and he won the game for the four-footed animals. They agreed that though he was so small, he should always be classed with the animals having teeth.

THE WATER PEOPLE

A boy carrying his bow and arrows was walking about near the water, when two women standing close to the shore said, "Follow us." Then he leaned his bow up against a tree and followed them, and presently those women said, "We are going down into the water. Go down in with us." So saying, they started on, and just as they had said, they presently went down into the water, that boy with them.

When all got in, the bottom was as if there were no water there, and before they had gone far they came to where there were some old water people. Those old men said, "There is a chair. Sit down." The chair they thus indicated to him was a very big water turtle. "They spoke to me," the youth said "and I sat down and they said 'Do you want to lie down? There is a bed. You must lie down. The tree-tyer [i. e., tie-snake] there is the bed,' they said to me.

Later they said, 'You can go hunting if you want to.' 'I cannot go hunting because I have no gun.' But the old men said, 'Go about hunting, and when you fall down somewhere come back.' After they had said this to me I set out, and while I was walking around, there was a rumbling noise and I fell down. I lay there for a while, and then came to my senses and returned to them.

When I got back the old men said, 'What did you kill?' 'I killed nothing' I answered, 'but I fell down and was unconscious. After I had lain there for a while I came back, but I did not kill anything.' 'Let us go and look at the place where you fell,' said those old men. Immediately we started, and when we got there, a very big thing of some sort was lying there dead. 'It is just as we said,' said they, and they brought it back, then they ate.

After I had been there for a while those old men said, 'If you want to go, you may,' and I said, 'I will go.' 'You take him back,' they said to someone, and just as I thought, 'They are going to take me along' I lost consciousness.

Next I came to my senses standing close to the water, exactly where I had been when they took me off. 'My bow is standing up against a tree,' I thought, and when I got to the place, there it was just as I had thought, and I took it and started off. When I got to the place where my people lived, they were there. Then they said, 'The one who has been lost for such a long time is back.' The old men compounded medicine for me and after a while I got well," said the boy. They used to tell it so.

LITTLE JACK

During the journey of the removal from Alabama to Indian Territory, family members have written stories about a little boy who they say was marked by special powers. Little Jack and his family along with several families traveled many days before they came to the Mississippi river. There at the crossing, he almost lost his life.

Little Jack had walked along with his family for many days. His shoes were worn out and he suffered from the cold and hunger. Someone offered him a pony to ride.

When they came to the Mississippi crossing, the current of the river was very strong but everyone had to cross somehow. Some of the people went across in boats; others had to cross on their horses. Little Jack wanted to go on the boat but he didn't want to leave his pony.

Little Jack stood on the bank with his pony. He watched the elders at the water's edge praying for the safety of their people. The leader's horses plunged into the water. Other riders followed. Huge logs ere careening down the river. Before his very eyes, men and horses were being disastrously carried downstream, pulled under and dragged to the bottom.

"Let's go!" the lieutenant shouted. Soon it was little Jack's turn to cross the river. Riders reaching the far bank turned to watch the little boy and his pony. Jack nudged his pony into the water. Soon everyone was watching little Jack cross the river. Midway, something knocked him off the horse. He was swallowing water and gulping for air. Though concerned for the boy, the water raged so violently that no one could help the boy now. Somehow he was able to grab the pony's tail. The pony struggled through the heavy current until he was able to stand and walk to shore. Jack! Men lifted the boy in their arms. He had made it! Those who watched the boy crossing the raging river remarked about seeing a tiny man sitting on the head of that pony. That was strange but the little man was also directing the pony across the raging river with little Jack in tow.

It took a while for the ones swept the farthest to return upstream. In gratitude, everyone gathered that evening on the west bank. The tradition was to change the name of a child or man when something important happened in his life. Names were never given for a lifetime, but earned by deeds. Jack's new name was "Jock-o-gee". Their mind says "Jack" but their tongue says "Jock", "Gee" means "little". This modest name would mark a small boy who overcame a mighty river. The name had a second unspoken but more powerful meaning. All knew of the 'little people' but no one had seen them for at least four generations. Yet, it was clear that the mark of the Great Spirit and the 'little people' were on Jock-O-Gee. No one dare to speak the river's name. "Gee" was as close as they dared to speak the full name of the 'little people.' The Knowledge and protection by the 'little people' reside with peace-makers. From the day the river was crossed, "they" were with Jock-O-Gee, teaching him how to heal the sick people in the new land with new herbs and plants.

HOW THE TERRAPIN'S BACK CAME TO BE IN CHECKS

A woman was beating sofkey in a mortar out in her yard when she heard someone calling to her and making fun of her. She stopped and looked around, but saw no one. She began beating the corn again, and again heard the voice ridiculing her. She stopped and searched but in vain. Again she heard the voice, which seemed to come from under the wooden mortar, so she lifted the mortar and there found a Terrapin. As he was the guilty one, she took the pestle and beat him on the back until she broke his shell into little pieces and left him as dead. After she left, the Terrapin began to sing in a faint voice, "I come together. I come together. I come together. I come together." The pieces came together as he sang, but his back always looked scarred, and terrapins have ever since then had checkered backs.

THE MONSTER TURTLE

One summer, seven men set out on a hunting expedition. It was hot and they became very thirsty before they reached their camping place. While they were traveling along, longing more and more for water all the time, they came upon a monster bull turtle. They said to one another, "This is a creature certain to make for water," so they followed him. After a while one of the hunters said, "Let us get on his back," and he proceeded to do so. Five of the others followed him, but the seventh said, "It might not be good to do that," so he walked along behind.

Presently, they came in sight of a big lake and when the turtle reached its shore the men on his back wanted to get off, but they found that they had stuck to him and could not get away. So they remained standing on the turtle with their guns by their sides and were carried into the lake. The man on foot watched the turtle until it got out into the middle of the lake, but there, it disappeared, leaving only numerous bubbles. He remained looking at the lake for some time and then returned home.

When the man who had escaped reached town, he told the people that in spite of his warning his companions had climbed upon the back of a turtle and had been carried by him straight into the water, so that he had to return to town without them. The men who had been carried away had numerous relatives, who quickly assembled at the square ground. There, they sang a song to the accompaniment of a kettle drum and a gourd rattle and then made one step toward the lake. They did the same thing that night and made another step toward the lake. In this way, they approached the lake a step at a time until they reached it, and on the edge of the water they continued their song with the same accompaniment. Finally there was a disturbance in the middle of the waters and a snake came out. He approached them and laid his head very humbly in front of them, but they told him he was not the one they wanted and he went back. They continued their singing, and presently another snake came out. "You are not the one," they said, and he went back. By and by, a third snake came out, which they also sent back under water.

The fourth time, however, there was a great swashing of the water and out came the monster turtle, which also laid his head humbly before them. Then they debated what he might be good for. "He might be good for some purpose," they said, and they divided him up, entrails and all, leaving only the shell. The other parts they took to use as medicine and all returned with them to the town rejoicing. The medicine they got was used with the song of the waters as a kind of revenge.

STRONGEST MAN IN THE WORLD

It had rained most of the night. The big thunder would shake the house, and then lightening flashed. Sleep came in fits to the Indian man and his wife. Finally, the storm ended and both slept again. As the sun raised its face the next morning, the skies were clear. The man was awakened by the birds' wake-up songs. He put on his clothes and went outdoors. Ah, there was an early morning rainbow in the sky. Yes, today would be a good day!

His wife was still asleep. Maybe there was time to take a little walk. As he walked along, it was easy to imagine some of the good things that she would cook for his breakfast, ham and biscuits and coffee. While distracted, he heard a small voice, "Ho, man, you want to come see our place?" He was startled by three tiny men standing in his path. "They are too small to hurt me,"

he thought. His curiosity overcame the thoughts of food. He followed the little men, walking through the underbrush in a south and westerly direction.

Soon, the little men reached a small stream. The leader gathered them near the water. Their little voices sounded like many bumble bees. He gestured and talked, then turned and looked directly at the man. The leader spoke to him, "The rains last night have made the river too wide and deep for us to cross. We need your help to go home." The water may have been chest deep to the man. He didn't want to wade cold water, much less carry three little men. Instead, the man began the search for a felled tree. He returned with a sapling chewed to the ground by a beaver. It was just the right size, about six inches across. He dragged it to the edge of the stream, walked his hands up the trunk to make it stand erect. It toppled over, crashing down across the stream. The little men jumped up and down and shouted and cheered, "You are the strongest man in the World!" The man smiled. Their encouragement made him feel good. Next, the little men took up the line formation and led him safely across the "bridge". They looked like ants crossing the log. Reaching the other side of the stream, they again cried, "You are the strongest man in the World!"

This procession reached a big hill covered with trees. The leader stopped. He pointed to a hole in the side of the hill. "Ho, man, you want to go inside our house?" Even before an answer came, the men popped through the hole. Dropping to his knees, the man squeezed his head and shoulders through then struggled in. Once inside, he sat up. A good hunter learns to use his nose, especially when it's dark. What he smelled was danger! There was a heavy pungent, musky odor in the room.

In the rear of the dark hole, he could see light shining through another opening. Slowly his eyes began to adjust to the darkness. Snake! Big snake! His eyes locked on the snake, coiled, with its head in the air. Its tongue was flicking in and out as it peered into the man's eyes! Then he was aware of hissing. He didn't dare to move his head, but looked sideways. The room was filled with hundreds of snakes of all sizes. There were red and yellow and green and black snakes. Most of the big snakes were coiled and hissing at the man. Smaller snakes were entwined about others like little children playing.

The man was so frightened at the terrible sight of the snakes. He regretted following these little people. Maybe he could escape. Then his eye was attracted by the leader of the little men, waving his hand, "Stop, don't be afraid. We keep them here so that people won't bother us. You can see the guard snakes with rattle tails are quiet." Then, he gestured across the room to the second hole. He turned and walked with others following. "Come with us," they cried out. The little men walked through the hissing snakes as if they were nothing but a field of daisies waving in the breeze.

The man backed against the wall of the cave to keep his eye on the snakes in front of him. With his fingers touching the cold damp wall, he inched his way. Reaching the opening, he turned and leaped headfirst through the hole. He fell to the floor of the second cave. The little men were standing near, looking him in the eye. One at a time, they would stick out their tongue at the big man and hiss—like one of the snakes. All laughed. They were making fun of him. After watching them walk through the snakes, he admired their courage. Lying on the floor, he no

longer felt like the "Strongest man in the World". His heart was still pounding. He had much to learn about courage.

As he was prostrate on the floor, they turned to talk to themselves in their little voices. The leader walked up close to his face, "Ho, man, you hungry? Have you eaten today?" He answered, "Well, yes, I would eat. What do you eat, acorns and berries?" They were talking again to themselves. The leader turned to a little warrior. The underling drew himself to full attention as if to salute, then picked his bow and arrows and left the room. The other two sat cross-legged on the floor and started a small fire. The flames danced and the smoke wisped from the room. "They" seemed to waiting for the hunter to return.

It wasn't long until the hunter came back with the "kill" slung over his tiny shoulder. He entered the cave and threw it to the floor before the cooks. It was big yellow grasshopper with a small arrow sticking from its side. He said, "Man, I have killed a big turkey for you to eat. It will taste so good." The cooks began to roast the grasshopper. When it was done "just right", the head cook tore off a leg and passed it to the man, "Have you ever eaten grasshopper, even *roasted* grasshopper?" It took great courage for the man to take a small bite from the roasted leg. He was quite surprised to learn its taste *was* like wild turkey. He was hungry. It surprised him that his stomach was so full even though this grasshopper was so small—to him. The little men patiently waited and watched the man eat his fill. Then, each one ate small portions. When finished, they wiped the last trace of turkey grease from their little hands on their little bare legs. They smacked their little lips and clapped their little hands, and smiled. Once the meal was done the chattering began again. The leader stepped forward, "Man, you stay with us for a few day. We want to show you more of our ways." The man was captivated with their courage and skills and rather disappointed with his own. Leaving meant to cross that snake pit. He was pleased to stay with them.

Three days later, he returned home. His wife remembered the rainbow she saw the morning that he had left home. He left before breakfast and returned days later, happy and so peaceful. Not hungry and not talking about where he had been. She would not have questioned the children and she wouldn't question him either. Breakfast was served and good luck seemed to follow them. The man was right. This had turned into a good day.

THE STORY OF THE BIRDS

Now the young man had made a pact with the plants, and he was well satisfied, but he thought about this for a long time. He thought about the voices that he had heard. He said: "They are alive just as I am. They too get tired, just like I get tired. I was given the responsibility to take care of these plants. They too will need a rest. How do I give these plants a rest?" He thought about it a long time and he remembered the birds in the sky. "All animals that fly, that has wings will be the carriers. They will have the chore of bringing the changing weather."

So he called them all together. They were gathered, and he gave them a choice. He didn't say certain ones would migrate south; they had the choice. "You will bring in the changing of weather in order that these plants may rest. As you begin to migrate south you will sing and let the trees and other plants throughout the land know that you are bringing a change of weather and to be prepared." Then the plants' leaves begin to fall. (So that's why when you hear these geese, these birds go by, they sing. They sing as they go to let the plants know that they are

bringing in the changing weather.) The birds bring in the cold weather so that the trees will go dormant, giving the plants a chance to rest. All the sap, life-sustaining minerals and substances that they have inside them will have a chance to go back to the ground, to Mother Nature, to purify itself again and come back again come spring. Just like the medicine men who always clean themselves to keep strong, the plants are no different. The young man told the birds: "You will sing as you come back and the plants will hear you. They will awaken."

The migrating birds will be responsible for bringing in the cold, and they will bring back the warmth for the plants to grow again when it is time. (You notice that it is almost four month, November, December, January, February, that the plants are dormant.)

Then, he went a little further. He told the birds that didn't leave that they were being given a choice again, which birds will stay up at night. "I need the birds of the night to watch over the people throughout the night. You will be up all night." Then he gave the other birds the chore of being the ones to relieve these birds of the night. They would rise early in order that the others can rest and they will take over from there the rest of that day. That is why they are already up before the suns up; the birds are already doing their work. So the birds are up twenty-four hours. You've got some during the day, then, the night birds take over. Everything that we do is built around plants and animals. Everything that we do, the medicine way, it's all built around Mother Nature.

HOW THE MVSKOKE GOT THEIR MAIN MEDICINES

Long ago, there was a great Holy Man who lived some distance from a tribal town of our people, it is said that the people did not know where he came from, nor did they inquire. This Holy Man, they say, was very powerful for he could make people well by touching them with his hands.

It was the custom of the Mvskoke people to meet the needs of their holy men. They would bring food, till or care for his garden, repair or build his house. Whatever he needed to be done, it was the duty of the people to take care of the Holy Man. This was done out of love and great respect.

One day as he was passing through the village he noticed a young boy. The Holy Man had seen that this boy was mistreated and was kind of an outcast. He also knew that this boy was the kind of person that could learn the sacred ways that the Holy Man must pass on. So the Old Man took the boy to teach him the medicine ways and the sacred ways.

The Holy Man said: "I have seen the purity of your heart and know you will keep the sacred ways of healing and not misuse the power which I have given you. For every healing chant shown to the chosen one, he is also shown a destructive word. There will be others selected just as I have selected you. The time is coming when you too will select a sole replacement to carry on the sacred way for your people."

The boy said: "Will the sole replacement be a boy or a girl?"

The Holy Man responded: "You know not if it is going to be a boy or girl, but the medicine people will know by a sign if the child can be selected."

The Young Man asked: "Why do I have to look for a sign to select my replacement?"

The Holy Man said: “So you will know the future of that child, what that person will be like until he dies. You will be shown what you need to use so the child will learn and not forget.”

The boy made a comment: “With all the power that you have, will I have the same kind of power that enabled you to heal?”

The Holy Man said: “You will be able to do the things that are provided for you. In your dreams, you will be told the type of medicine and the chants and how to use them.”

The boy had in his mind that he would have the power the Holy Man had. That is why the Holy Man had to keep telling him, bringing him back to nature. The boy was not going to have his power. He would need the help of the plants and animals.

The Holy Man just slowly turned to him and answered him: “Be patient. All things the chosen people will ever need to know to carry on after I’m gone have been laid out for all the medicine people to follow. The chosen people will have a choice of selecting their helpers (carriers), but the helpers will be limited to what the chosen ones will be willing to give and share with them. Carriers will not be given the origin of the medicine way, will not see new cures in visions but must maintain a strict disciplined way of life for the good of their people.”

The Holy Man continued: “The medicine people will not have the power to heal by touch. Only I have been given that power. The medicine people will use what is shown in their dreams and visions and what has been put on this Mother Earth for them to use. All of their words will be built around three things which will always be here: human beings, animals, and plants. The sacred words are to have a sound of nature such as the sound of the wind or the cry of an animal.”

And he said: “I have shown and taught you all the things you will need to help your people now and I will show you the new cures of the future in time. Be prepared to receive my instructions at all times, just as all medicine people must follow more instructions in the future.”

The Holy Man noticed that the young man was curious why they always went to that certain place. The Holy Man said: “You have been wondering about this place for some time so I’ll tell you why we meet here. This is a sacred ground and negative energies cannot come within the boundary of the four sacred poles in the ground. All selected medicine people will also have a sacred ground. All negative things are blocked out within that square. Within this square you will be able to communicate with me. This is where you will purify the sacred words and strengthen them. This is where you will strengthen your body and your mind in order to be prepared to receive any instruction which I might give at any time.

“There will be a time when medicine people will find their mate and this is where they will unite. All the negative things will be left out. Within this square, there will be a circle, enough space for the two to step in and once both step in, they put their medicine down and close the circle. When they close the circle, everything they have done, good or bad, is locked in the circle. Everything else is locked out. Each has the power to remove the past from the other, just these two. Each one of them will have a feather. The woman will put one in the man’s hair and she will remove all the things of yesterday. The man does the same thing. In case there’s a time when

this woman cannot bear a child for him to carry on, he would have the right to choose another mate, but once they have been in that circle that woman will live with him the rest of their lives."

The Holy Man showed and taught him about the sacred ground. The young man was told to make one. So the Holy Man told the young man he was to go fast four days at his sacred ground and then come back to him and he would tell him more things. The boy told him: "I will get sacred words that you keep holy will take care of you. When you are sleepy, the words are your sleep. Whenever you are hungry, that is your bread. Whenever you are thirsty, that is your water. This is why you keep these words sacred and they will take care of you in time of need."

The Holy Man said to the young man: "You know the purpose of a sacred ground. You purify the sacred word, strengthen your body and mind. Keep in mind, when problems arise and there seem to be no answers, come and communicate with me and get some of your answers to your problems. There is one more thing I must ask you to do. You must go and build you a sweat house as near as possible to running water. This will be a place only chosen medicine person will be able to use. You will be shown the things that are to be used and the sacred words to use in preparing for sweat. In this sweat house you will expel impurity from within in form of water. As you sit and sweat you must also sing the sacred song you have learned. As you sing, these sacred words will be washed and purified. When you have finished what you have been instructed to do, you will quickly go to the running water and wash off the impurity that has been expelled from within in form of water. I asked you to build a sweat as near as possible to running water for an important reason. You must never let the sweat on your body dry on you. The water will carry away all your impurity of your body."

The time came when the Old Man said that he had to go away. And so, the time came when one last time they would sit and talk like they had done many times before. The Old Man recounted many things to the boy and what he must do. The Old Man was sitting where he always sat when he would tell the boy of good things, even funny things, but most of all, very serious sacred teachings. He said that if the boy was troubled at any time, he should remember that the Old Man would always be with him and to come back to where they sat and talked, and he would find the answer there and everything would be all right. This was very sad for the Old Man, but he was happy also for he had taught the boy and had someone to take his place.

Now it was necessary for him to leave, for his work was done. As their day together came to an end, the birds and the little things that make noises seemed to sound very lonesome. The Old Man bowed his head and began to cry and as he shed great tears, they fell to the ground and became a pool of tears. The Old Man held up his hand to the east and said: "This is the Blood of Life." The blood fell to the ground and made a small pool. His life was on the ground in tears and blood; only a great love and sadness would make this happen. Now he must leave. They said goodbye and the Holy Man left. The boy wanted to go with him so he ran after him, but could not find him. He tried to find his tracks but the Old Man left none. He disappeared.

Days went by and the boy helped the people with his powers and shared many sacred ways with them. One day the people became ill with a very bad illness. The boy tried to heal them by touching them with his hands. This did not work. The people became increasingly ill. The boy became very troubled and remembered what the Holy Man had told him, so he returned to the place where the Old Man had lived and to the place where they had sat when the Old Man went

away. The old place was still familiar, recalling old times. The boy felt the Old Man was still there. But there was something different about the place where they had sat, for there were two bushes in front of the place where the Old Man had sat. The boy immediately knew that these plants were sacred medicines, for one bush grew from the place where his blood had fallen to the ground.

When placed in water, the roots of the bush that grew from the blood made the water red in color. Water remained clear or white when the roots of the bush that grew from the tears were placed in it. The boy knew that the Old Man was with him as he had said, for in his spirit he knew he was to use these sacred plants. He prepared himself and the medicines. He then took the medicines and cured the people of the great illness. To this very day these medicines remain sacred and are used by the Mvskoke people.

The name by which the Holy Man was called was because he was a great Holy Man and passed through the tribal towns of the people and lived a distance from them. His name was Mekko-hoyvnecv or "King passing through." The bush or the roots that grew from his blood is called by the same name today and is commonly known to the Mvskoke people as "red root."

The sacred bush and its roots that grew from the Holy Man's tears is called Heles-hvtke or "white medicine." This medicine is known to non-Indians as American ginseng.

THE STORY OF THE GATHERING

This young man had a dream. In this dream he was told that there would be a big gathering, that he would be surrounded by many, and he was told that he would be given instructions that he would follow. The dream did not mention whether the many would be men. The young man thought it would be people.

When he woke up the next morning, he thought it was very strange dream that he had had. And he said: "Where will all these people come from? Where will the gathering take place and why are they going to gather?" Those are things that he was thinking about at that time. It was just a dream.

The time came for him to do his annual fast and sweat. When he got to his sacred ground, there was something that wasn't just right. He sensed that there was something strange about that day. He sat down and he was hearing all the little night creatures, the birds and crickets. He was hearing these little night creatures during the day. That's why he said: "This is strange, very strange." Then he looked up and he saw the birds flying over, circling. That was unusual for some of the birds were too far from the water. And he thought about that a while. He said: "That's very strange, the birds circling and these little night creatures chirping and singing during the day."

Then it hit him. "This is the day that I had the dream about that there would be a gathering." Then he looked up to the sky and told the Creator: "Now I know that this is the day that the gathering is to take place. I am ready for the instructions and I will obey." When the sun was getting high, he was looking for the people but he didn't see anybody. Then the sun was getting low and he was still thinking of people because he looked around and said: "Where are all these people? They should be getting here." He didn't know where they were to come from. Then he

thought maybe he was wrong. Maybe it was not the day of the gathering. Then the breeze in his face and breeze that was coming through the trees; it was almost as if it were singing. There was almost a song in the wind, in the breeze. Then he said: “It’s not people the dream was talking about.” He said: “All of these things that are around me, the plants and all, these are the things the dream was telling me when it said that I would be surrounded by many.” And then he repeated: “Whatever instruction is to be given, I am ready.”

All the medicine people that go to a sacred ground, they use medicine there and then they settle down. He had already used his medicine so he was ready for anything; he was ready for any instructions to be given and he would obey. Well, that’s when he heard the voice. He knew the voice was the trees, the plants, whispering to him. “You can go to a place a lot faster than we can. We are permanent. But in time, when you need us, you will also find us there. We’ll also be there.” (That is why the plants that were here before, next time you see the plants they’re in another place. If you ever need them the plants will begin to grow there too.) And there was a pact made then.

The whisper he heard said: “You have the power. You were given the power to heal with sacred words. We also have been given the power to heal. We are equal; we have the same power you have. The medicine people and the plants working together, we will be able to cure people. We will make a pact with you.” The young man answered that he would accept the pact. The voice gave him the words to a chant. “These words you will use and we will listen to you. These words will be used before you remove us from this mother Earth. You meet us halfway and we will meet you halfway. These are the sacred words you will say to us and when you use them, we will listen to what you say and then you have the power to remove us from this Mother Earth.” With that permission, the plant was saying that we will meet you halfway and we will listen.

And the young man answered; “I will follow your instructions. I will use these sacred words before I ever remove you from this Mother Earth. I too will meet you halfway and we will work together to cure our people.” And so the plants answered back and said: “From this day on, all the medicine people will be known as the keepers of the plants.”

So this is how it is going to be. All the medicine people will be keepers of the plants. The actual words of the chant that they use before removing plants were given to that man. Most of the time medicine people are shown what to do through vision, but this time the plants said this. This is the only time a plant gave instructions to a human being.

It started when that Holy Man made a selection. He taught the boy about the plants. He was really prophesying about a lot of things. The prophecy was that the plants were going to be used: You will be shown what plants to use in your visions. You will watch the tree from seeding to maturity and then it will get old and die right before your eyes. You will also be shown the sickness, the symptoms of particular sicknesses. These will be the plants that you will use. Then you will be given the sacred words to use for each sickness. In other words, you will be shown the plants, the symptoms, and the chants at the last.

In books, it always says this was learned by trial and error. There was no trial and error for the old people. They already knew exactly what they were going to use.

Muscogee
Authors & Artisans

Section 1 - Authors

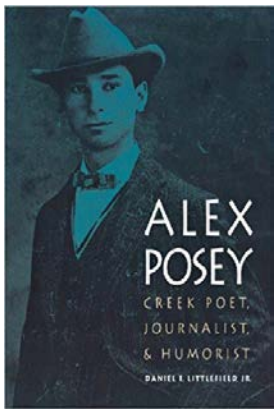
ALEXANDER POSEY (1873-1908)

Early Life – Alexander Posey was born on August 3, 1873, near Eufaula, Oklahoma. He was the oldest of twelve children. His parents were Lewis H. Posey, who was Scots-Irish, and Nancy Phillips Posey (Creek name Pohas Harjo), who was full-blood Creek. Posey and his siblings were born into his mother's Wind clan of the tribal town of Tuskegee. They took their status from her, and property and hereditary positions were passed through her line. Although Posey's father was born to European-American parents, he called himself Creek. Lewis H. Posey was orphaned at an early age and raised in the Creek Nation, he spoke the Muscogee language fluently. He was made a member of the Broken Arrow tribal town. Young Alexander and his siblings spoke Muscogee as their first language. When Alexander Posey was fourteen, his father only let him speak English and punished him if he spoke in his native language. From that time, Posey received a formal education, he had a private tutor and attended public school.

Career – Posey went to college at age sixteen, including three years at Bacone Indian University in Muskogee where he studied writing. He read books by John Burroughs and Henry David Thoreau, who inspired him to write about his childhood. Posey worked at the *Indian Journal*, where he published poems. In 1895, he became a member of the Creek National Council. He was also the director of the Okmulgee Creek Orphanage, superintendent of the school at Wetumka Mission and served as interpreter for the Dawes Commission. In 1902, Posey bought the *Eufaula Indian Journal* and served as editor, he received national recognition for founding the first Indian-published daily newspaper.

Posey created a fictional person by the name of Fus Fixico, Muscogee Creek for "Heartless Bird". The Fus Fixico letters were published in the *Eufaula Indian Journal.* Fus Fixico was a full blood Muscogee traditionalist. He wrote letters about his everyday life or detailed accounts that he had heard from the fictional Muscogee medicine man Hotgun. These stories are written in the Creek language. The Fus Fixico letters talked about Muscogee Nation, Indian Territory and United States politics. This was a time of big political change. The Curtis Act of 1898 destroyed tribes, paving the way for Indian Territory to become the state of Oklahoma. His Fus Fixico letters poked fun of the statehood debate. Various U.S. newspapers proposed printing the Fus Fixico letters nationwide, but Posey refused. His readers were in Indian Territory, and he didn't believe a non-Native audience would understand the humor.

Alexander Posey and a friend tried to cross the North Canadian River on April 28, 1908. He drowned in the flooded river at the age of 34. He is buried at the Greenhill Cemetery in Muskogee, OK.



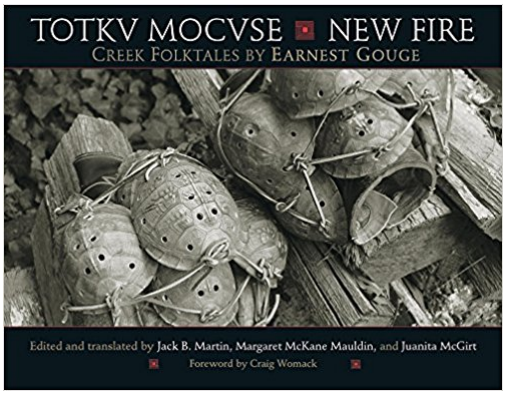
EARNEST GOUGE (ca. 1865-1955)

Earnest Gouge and his younger brother Jack (more commonly known as Cake Rakko [jaw-key thock-go] or Big Jack) were full-blood Muscogees born in Indian Territory around the close of the U.S. Civil War. According to Felix Gouge, Earnest and Jack were abandoned or orphaned as children and taken to Arbeka tribal town in the Creek Nation, Indian Territory. Thomas Red, a preacher at Hillabee Baptist Church, adopted the boys and raised them as his own. Though the boys were raised in the church, they began going to ceremonial grounds as soon as they were old enough.

Earnest and Jack married two sisters named Nicey and Lucinda who were residents of Hanna and members of Hillabee Canadian tribal town. Earnest and Nicey had four sons. According to family history, Earnest and Jack were nephews of the famous Opothleyahola [o-bith-lee-yah-ho-la] ("Old Gouge"), leader of the northern faction of Creeks during the Civil War.

Earnest and Jack were interested in seeing that the United States lived up to the treaty signed by their uncle. This interest led them to become involved in a group known as the Four Mothers (Ecke Ostat [itch-key os-dod]), an early intertribal organization of Creeks, Cherokees, Choctaws, and Chickasaws that continued into the 1940s. Through collections raised by the Four Mothers, Earnest, Jack, and an interpreter traveled to Washington, D.C. The Creek representatives were given medallions, while the Cherokee representatives were given beaded belts. The medallions and belts had images of clasped hands on them and were thought to serve as keys to the capital.

In 1915, Earnest Gouge was living on his allotment near Hanna, with a small house and barn close to his church (Hillabee Baptist) and tribal town (Hillabee Canadian). Felix Gouge remembers that his grandfather would tell stories while driving or after dinner. In the winters, he would fill his stone fireplace with green wood to last the night and sit with his back to the heat while others gathered before him. As an older man he turned to preaching, though he continued to take medicine at his ceremonial ground. A favorite activity was fish-kills, in which fish were drugged and shot with arrows. Earnest Gouge died at about the age of ninety, after his younger brother Jack. He was hit by a car while riding a horse, finally succumbing to his injuries on September 4, 1955. To the best of our knowledge, these are the only writings he left, though he also dictated three Creek texts about ball-games and his tribal town for Mary R. Haas in 1939. He is buried facing his ceremonial ground.



MARCELLUS "BEAR HEART" WILLIAMS (1918-2008)

Muscogee Creek citizen Marcellus Williams was born in Okemah, OK, his father was of the Bear Clan and his mother of the Wind Clan. His great grandmother died on the Trail of Tears. One of the last traditionally trained "medicine persons", Bear Heart, spoke in 13 native languages, Sun Danced with both the Northern and Southern Cheyenne people, was also an American Baptist Minister and held an honorary PhD in humanities. In 1938, Bear Heart won the title of World Fancy Dance Champion at Anadarko, OK, later he performed at Madison Square Garden. After college and theology school, he went into the Army, where he served as an aerial map maker. He served for 7 years as a member of the advisory board for the Institute of Public Health - Native American and Alaskan Natives at Johns Hopkin's School of Medicine. Significant to Bear Heart are the lives he has touched. He prayed with the firefighters at Ground Zero in New York City in November 2001, gave advice to rescue workers and their families after the Oklahoma City tragedy and once met with President Truman. He is the author of *'The Wind Is My Mother'*, which is now published in 14 languages.

"Traditionally the chief was the poorest man in the tribe. If he went on a hunt and brought back a lot of game, he gave it to widows who could not hunt for themselves. He was there to serve the people and he did it without resentment, with a sense of duty. When people lined up to eat, the chief stayed in the back and let others eat first. You don't see that today-the leadership is always the first to eat. I'm not saying we must return to the old way, but it was a way of life that supported the beliefs and respect of the people."

CYNTHIA LEITICH SMITH

Cynthia Leitich (lie-tick) Smith is the New York Times best-selling author of the award-winning Feral series and Tantalize series of adventure-fantasies books for young readers. She also authored several children's book, including *Jingle Dancer*, *Rain Is Not My Indian Name*, and *Indian Shoes*. In addition, she has published short stories, nonfiction essays and poetry for young readers.

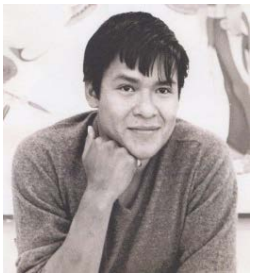
She grew up an only child in the Kansas City area and regularly visited her family in Oklahoma. She is a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation through her great-grandfather's family. He was in the U.S. Air Force and passed away the year she was born, but she came to know him through stories. She began writing poetry in elementary school and entered many school competitions but never won or placed. She didn't give up. In sixth grade, she had a column called *Dear Gabby*, offering advice and encouragement to her classmates. Cynthia went on to become editor of her junior high and high school newspapers.

While in college and law school, Cynthia completed internships at small-town newspapers, *The Dallas Morning News*, *The Detroit Legal News*. Her initial career goal was to become a newspaper reporter, a professor at journalism school or law school. However, after the Oklahoma City bombing, she resigned from her job in Chicago to write full-time for kids and teens.

Muscogee
Authors & Artisans

Section 2 - Artists

JEROME TIGER (1941-1967)



A full-blood Creek-Seminole painter born at Tahlequah on July 8, 1941, Jerome Tiger grew up near Eufaula, Oklahoma, and attended public schools in Eufaula and Muskogee. He dropped out of high school at sixteen and joined the U.S. Navy from 1958 to 1960. Finding employment as a laborer and sometime prizefighter, he continued to draw and paint in his spare time. Encouraged by a friend, Tiger submitted several paintings in 1962 to the American Indian Artists Annual at Philbrook Art Museum in Tulsa. Recognition of his talent was immediate. Over the next five years he produced a large body of work that brought critical acclaim and a number of honors, including the All American Indian Days Grand Award in Sheridan, Wyoming and first prize in the National Exhibition of American Indian Art held in Oakland, California. In 1966, Tiger mounted a solo exhibition at Philbrook, a show that proved to be a sell-out with the public. The museum curator asked the artist to replace items that had been sold on opening night. He is said to have replaced many of them twice before the show closed.

Tiger was twenty-six years old when on August 13, 1967 he died as the result of an accident with a handgun. Much of Jerome Tiger's work was sold as quickly as he produced it and remains in private hands. Publicly he is represented in the collections of the Philbrook and Gilcrease museums in Tulsa, the Five Civilized Tribes Museum in Muskogee, Woolaroc Museum near Bartlesville, the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe, and the Museum of the American Indian and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, in Washington, D.C.

DANA TIGER

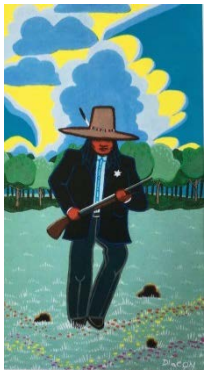
Dana Tiger is an award winning, nationally acclaimed artist. She is a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and is of Creek/Seminole/Cherokee descent. Dana was just five years old when her father, legendary artist Jerome Tiger, passed away. She turned to his art as a way to know him and that engagement, coupled with the tutelage of her uncle, renowned painter Johnny Tiger Jr., exposed Dana both to the richness of her Native American culture and to the bounty of her family's artistic tradition.

Best known for her watercolors and acrylic paintings depicting the strength and determination of Native American women, Dana's paintings now hang in galleries, universities, Native American institutions and state buildings nationwide. She has won numerous awards and art competitions including the Five Tribes Masters Art Show, the Cherokee National Holiday Art Competition and the Creek Nation Artist of the Year Award. In recognition of her accomplishments as an artist as well as an activist and community leader, Dana was inducted into the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame in 2001.

Dana and her husband, Donnie Blair, run the Tiger Art Gallery in Muskogee, Oklahoma. In 2002, Dana founded the non-profit Legacy Cultural Learning Community, dedicated to nurturing Native youth via the celebration and sharing of tribal languages and culture through the arts.

CHEBON DACON

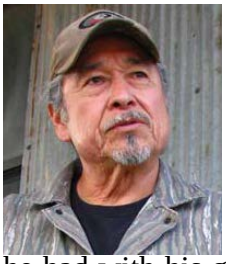
Chebon Dacon (chee-bon day-cun), an American Indian of Creek descent was born in Oklahoma City in 1946. He is a self-taught artist specializing in contemporary Western and Indian art, now living in Estes Park, Colorado. Chebon spent his earlier years as an outstanding athlete, quarterbacking has way to fame and a scholarship to the University of Oklahoma. However, serious injuries halted his promising athletic career and he began to pursue a future in art. Chebon traveled the country, showing his artwork, bareback riding on the rodeo circuit, and participating in competitive Indian dancing. High awards and recognition for ceremonial dancing, as well as his talent for art, brought an invitation from the United States Department of Commerce to act as Goodwill Ambassador to Australia. His art has been shown in several European countries and is exhibited in museums, galleries, and a number of private collections throughout the United States.



JOAN HILL

Joan Hill is one of the United States' foremost Native American artists and is a Muscogee Creek tribal member with Cherokee ancestry. She was born in Muskogee, OK in 1930. She is the descendant of a family prominent in the history of Indian Territory. She was named Che-se-quah, Muscogee for "Redbird", after her great-grandfather, Redbird Harris, who was a full brother to C.J. Harris, Chief of the Cherokee tribe from 1891 to 1895. Her paternal grandfather, G.W. Hill, was Chief of the Muscogee Creek tribe from 1922 to 1928, when he died in office. In 1952, she received her degree in education from Northeastern State University. She was a public art teacher for four years before becoming a full-time artist. She has received more than 290 awards from countries including Great Britain and Italy. In 1974, Hill was given the title "Master Artist" by the Five Civilized Tribes Museum in Muskogee. Over 110 of her works are in permanent collections, including the Sequoyah National Research Center in Little Rock, Arkansas, the United States Department of Interior Museums of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board, Washington, D.C. and the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian, New York City. In 2000, Hill was the "Honored One" of the Red Earth Festival in Oklahoma City.

MIKE BERRYHILL (1942-2014)



Mike Berryhill grew up hearing the old stories from his grandpa about the old ways. Berryhill was about 8 years old when his grandpa first took him to a creek on the family property. He showed the boy a tall Osage Orange tree. His grandpa climbed the tree, and when he found two limbs ideal for carving bows, he cut them – one for Berryhill and one for his brother. His grandpa stripped away the bark and smoothed the surface. Two small bows emerged from the care and attention. The young Berryhill was grateful then for the time he had with his grandpa, who shared with him many other traditions and stories passed down to him by those who'd gone before.

Berryhill is a member of the Muscogee Creek tribe, he is of the Alligator Clan and the Cussetah Tribal Town. He attended school at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, KS and later became a paratrooper in the U.S. Army. He worked for nearly 30 years in a machine shop and after retiring he found more time to put into his bow making craft. One day he had seen some Osage Orange trees growing on property of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. He was referred to the district judge of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation District Court about the legalities of taking wood from tribal land. He was showed the tribe's constitution, which gave Berryhill the right as a citizen of the nation to use it. From that meeting came a full-length documentary on Muscogee bow making and soon afterward, the Creek Bow Shooters Society was formed. The society grew from Berryhill's first efforts to teach bow making in a work shop. Those bow makers now spend a few hours a month together to shoot targets made of cornstalks.

DAN BROOK

Muscogee Creek artist Dan Brook was born into ranch life in the Creek Nation of Oklahoma. Memories of his father, a second-generation rancher and Indian cowboy, are preserved in Brook's mind and have provided a rich tapestry of images, culture and history for the artist to draw upon. The isolation of rural ranch life provided long hours of sketching, which continues to this day, in sessions in his studio. The artist attended Baylor University on a football scholarship. Upon graduation, Brook studied art in the old-world tradition of apprenticeship, with renowned portrait sculptor, Dr. B.N. Walker. It was then that the artist's God-given talents were combined with the techniques of the old masters. It seems only fitting that one of Brook's early commissions was a portrait of the Creek Nations' great chief, Claude A. Cox, now placed in the tribal capitol. He has since done several busts of famous native leaders. Twenty five years later, Brook continues his exploration of sculpture, recently completing the Trail of Tears monument in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His work has been collected in public and private sectors in the United States. His reputation has now crossed the ocean, as he has been commissioned to create works in the Middle East and Europe. Dan Brook has successfully completed 18 large scale relief sculptures for Texas Christian University's new football stadium. The artist lives and works in Dallas, Texas.

MARY SMITH

Mary Edwards Smith was born in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. She has a rich family history of Muscogee Creek leaders with roots in Tuckabatchee (Alabama). She is known for her beautiful river cane weaving. In addition to basketry, Mary's talent lie in pottery, beading, leather work, feather work, textiles (finger weaving and twinning), and stained glass. She graciously shares her knowledge with others through demonstrations and teaching. Mary was the artist-in-residence at Moundville Archaeological Park during the Jones Museum renovation in 2009. She has received numerous awards and recognition in these art forms. Her most recent accomplishments are; 2016 *Mvskoke Women's Leadership Award – Artist of the Year* and the 2016 *Council House Art Market – Best Mvskoke Artist.* In 2005, she revived the double false braid rim technique. This rimming method is unique to Creek baskets and had not been done for 100-150 years. In 2009, Mary was elected to the Creek Council House Board of Trustees. She was chosen by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to exhibit her art at the National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C., in 2012 and 2014.

JON TIGER

Jon Mark Tiger resides with his wife Laverne in Eufaula, Oklahoma. He is 4/4 Muscogee Creek from Eufaula-Canadian tribal town and is of the Wotko (Raccoon) clan. He was raised by his grandparents, the late Bennie Buckskin and Susie Cosar Scott in the rural community of Artusse, where he was introduced to many stories of his family history. His maternal great-great grandfather is the renowned Jackson Lewis of historic Creek history and informant to Swanton ethnology studies (1890-1924). Jon was encouraged by his grandmother after seeing him draw on the cardboard cover walls of the house. His grandfather urged him to attend the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1971. After a short stint at the school, Jon returned home after his grandfather Bennie fell ill to cancer. Tiger entered the Five Civilized Tribes Student Art Competition, winning the 1972 'Best in Show' award. The award winning piece entitled 'Creek Homestead' is in the museum's collection. He enrolled in Sequoyah Indian High School with Riley White as his instructor in 1972-73. Upon graduation, Jon returned to IAIA in 1973-74. International renowned Apache artist Allen Houser was his instructor in the clay/sculptor class. He has since competed in national art competitions, winning numerous awards. He traveled to Celle, Germany, in 2003 and exhibited in a 13th century castle. Tiger's artwork has also been exhibited at the Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC on 2012, as well as Santa Fe Art Market and the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.

KENNETH JOHNSON

Kenneth Johnson is a contemporary Native American designer and accomplished metalsmith working in copper, silver, gold, platinum and palladium. His career spans over two decades and is recognized for bold combinations of stampwork and engraving often incorporating coins and bead set gemstones. Signature techniques include original dates of coins visible in the designs, Seminole patchwork patterns, rocker arm engraving and Southeast style concentric line designs.

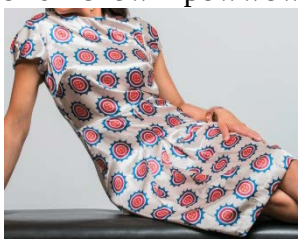
Johnson was raised in Oklahoma and currently resides with his wife and 2 children in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He is the son of Rowena Johnson and grandson of the late Lucinda Walking stick/Bruner of Oakhurst, Oklahoma. He attended Seneca Indian School, Sequoyah High School and the University of Oklahoma, were he studied mechanical engineering.

He begin creating jewelry in 1988, when he apprenticed with Choctaw metalsmith Johnson Bobb, and has independently refined his skills to the level of expertise that he is known for today. He teamed up with Cochiti Pueblo designer Virgil Ortiz to create the unisex jewelry design RAIN. He has worked with designer Tom Ford, and he has done commissioned pieces for chiefs of several tribes as well as people like actress Jennifer Tilly and Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. He also designed the silver crowns for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation royalty.

LESLIE DEER

The first thing people notice about Leslie Deer's designer garments is the influences of her Mvskoke people and their ancestors, the Mound builders. Leslie's designs reflect classic southeastern tribal iconography infused with her 12-year career as an international professional dancer with the American Indian Dance Theatre Company. She utilizes intricate applique, bright color combinations, curvilinear lines, and traditional iconography–foundational to southeastern tribal and Mound builder motifs. Leslie describes her garments as story tellers and envisions each garment being handed down from generation to generation. She prefers to use natural fibers and strives to be as sustainable as possible by producing very limited editions of her garments and maximizing use of fabric scraps.

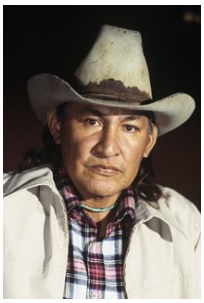
LA Deer Apparel pieces have been acquired by a wide range of collectors, ranging from the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC to world renown powwow singers, Northern Wind. Leslie has been incorporating applique ribbon work art in her own dance regalia for over 20 years – ever since she learned this technique from two Sac & Fox women in her East-Central Oklahoma community. She furthered her design education at Oklahoma State University, from which she received her Bachelor of Science degree in Apparel Design and Production in May 2015.



Muscogee
Authors & Artisans

Section 3 – Musicians & Actors

WILL SAMPSON (1933-1987)



Will Sampson was an American actor and artist. Sampson, a Muscogee (Creek), was born in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. He was given the Muscogee name Kvs-Kvna, meaning left-handed. He was known to his family as Sonny Sampson. He began painting as a child and then met large success in the art world as an adult. His paintings and sketches of Western and traditional Native themes are distributed across the United States in the Smithsonian Institute, the Denver Art Gallery, the Gilcrease Institute, the Philbrook Art Museum in Tulsa, the Creek Council House in Okmulgee and in private collections. Art was his first love, he became an actor by happenstance while in Yakima, Washington, painting and sketching the local scenery.

He was cast in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* in 1975, as the mute Indian. The film won five Academy Awards and earned Sampson critical praise. Sampson's other notable roles were as "Taylor the Medicine Man" in the horror film *Poltergeist II*. He had a recurring role on the TV series *Vega$*, as Harlon Two Leaf and starred in the movies *Fish Hawk*, *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, and *Orca*. Sampson is largely credited with becoming the first Native American actor to break out of demeaning and stereotypical Indian roles. He was nominated for "Best Performance by a Foreign Actor" Genie award for *Fish Hawk* in 1980. Sampson appeared in the production of *Black Elk Speaks* with the American Indian Theater Company in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In 1983, Sampson became a founding member of the American Indian Registry for the Performing Arts, which helped American Indian performers and technicians get work. Will Sampson died on June 3, 1987 after a heart and lung transplant. He was 53 years old. He is buried at Grave Creek Cemetery in Hitchita, Oklahoma.

JOY HARJO

Joy Harjo was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma and is a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. She has released 5 award-winning CD's of original music and won a Native American Music Award (*NAMMY*) for *Best Female Artist of the Year*. She performs nationally and internationally, solo and with her band, The Arrow Dynamics.

She has appeared on HBO's *Def Poetry Jam*, in venues in every major U.S. city and internationally. Most recently she performed *We Were There When Jazz Was Invented* in Canada and appeared at the San Miguel Writer's Conference in Mexico. Her one-woman show, *Wings of Night Sky, Wings of Morning Light*, premiered in Los Angeles in 2009, with recent performances in New York City, LaJolla Playhouse and the University of British Columbia.

Her seven books of poetry have earned her many awards, included are the New Mexico Governor's *Award for Excellence in the Arts*, the *Lifetime Achievement Award* from the Native Writers Circle of the Americas, and the *William Carlos Williams Award* from the Poetry Society of America. She was recently awarded *2011 Artist of the Year* from the Mvskoke Women's Leadership Initiative, and a Rasmuson *US Artists Fellowship*.

She is a founding board member of the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation. *Crazy Brave*, a memoir, is her newest publication, and a new album of music is being produced. She is at work on a new show, commissioned by the Public Theater: *We Were There When Jazz Was Invented*, a musical story that proves southeastern indigenous tribes are part of the origins of American music. She lives in Albuquerque, NM.

TIMOTHY LONG

Timothy Long is a conductor and pianist with an active performing career in the United States and abroad. He is a member of the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma. Long's family were members of the Holdenville community for a number of years. His father worked at the Holdenville post office and the family were members of the Salt Creek Methodist Church and the Barnard Memorial United Methodist Church. Tim's talent was quite apparent when at the age of five he was playing for his kindergarten programs. His love for classical music was passed down to him from his mother, who preferred to listen to a classical music station over country music stations as a youth. When his mother had children, the only music she would listen to was Beethoven.

Long studied piano and violin at Oklahoma City University while playing in the violin section of the Oklahoma City Philharmonic. He completed his graduate work in piano performance and literature at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. He is the founding conductor of The Coast Orchestra, an all-Native American orchestra of classically trained musicians. He has conducted the ensemble in performances at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian, the American Museum of Natural History, and Rutgers University. Long is a member of the faculty at the Stony Brook University. He is music director of Stony Brook Opera, and assistant to the music director of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. For three years, Long served as assistant conductor the Brooklyn Philharmonic and was an associate conductor at New York City Opera for two years. Tim is one half Muscogee Creek and one half Choctaw and he is from the Wolf clan.

NELSON HARJO

Nelson Harjo was born in Weleetka, Oklahoma. He now lives in the Wilson community just north of Henryetta, Oklahoma. He is of the Muscogee (Creek) people and belongs to the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town, where he is the Chief. He is also a headman at a sweat lodge. Mr. Nelson currently serves as Chairman of the Citizenship Board for the Creek Tribe and has taught at the College of the Muscogee Nation for three years and served as a Methodist minister. Mr. Harjo specializes in making Native American flutes and has taught others how to make them at several camps throughout the United States for the past fifteen years. He made his first traditional flute in 1995 and it took him five years to perfect the process. His ancestors used Alabama river cane, but he uses bamboo because Oklahoma has plenty of it. It can take him only one hour to complete a flute. His flutes have been sold around the world. Harjo now has two recordings that are available on CD.

Veterans Affairs

Funding for the Muscogee Veteran's Affairs department and construction of the special building was approved in early 2006 with firm support from Chief A.D. Ellis and, now director, Mr. Ken Davis (Marine Veteran). The construction of the building was completed in 2007 and the Veterans Affairs Administration moved in September 14, 2007. Housed within the center of the Veterans Affairs building is the Memorial Courtyard. Inside the courtyard there are the memorial plaques honoring Muscogee warriors Killed in Action from WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam. In front of the building are five statues: Muscogee Soldiers Statue, Prisoners of War Statue, Ernest Childers Statue, Muscogee Women Soldiers Statue and Fallen Soldiers Statue.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Veterans vests are issued to citizens of the tribe who are retired from the military or left with an honorable discharge. Started in 2006 the Veterans Affairs office has issued more than 800 vests to date. These are the vest colors for each branch of the military:

U.S. Coast Guard – White
U.S. Navy – Gray
U.S. Army – Green
U.S. Air Force – Blue
U.S. Marine Corps – Red

VETERANS AFFAIRS SEAL

The Words on the seal: "MVSKOKE SULETAWVLKE ESTOFIS EKVNV HOMVN SAPAKLEARES" meaning "Muscogee Soldiers- Always have been – Always will be." The words represent our soldiers who have always been there to fight, not only for America but for our Native people and our lands.

The 10 stars: Represent the different wars our veterans have fought in and continue to fight in today. Starting with the War of 1812 (also known as the Redstick War), Civil War, where many Creeks fought on both sides, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam War, Panama, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Red Eagle and the Pentagon: In the Center of the seal there is a red eagle that symbolizes our Native people, and behind the red eagle there is a pentagon that represents the Veterans Affairs building, a monument of the Muscogee Veterans and the only pentagon shaped building west of the Mississippi River.

The Crossed Weapons, the Cross and the Fire: In honor of our ancestral warriors, there is the Crossed Weapons at the top center of the seal. To the left and right of the eagle is a Cross and Fire, the Cross represents the Native people who follow the Christian faith and the Fire represents the Native people who follow the traditional ways or the ceremonial way of life.

Note The four traditional war colors are blue, white, black and red (note the colors are on the top of the Veterans building). These colors represent the lifestyle of a warrior. They are as follows:

Blue: Back to the Creator
White: Peace
Black: Death
Red: War

MVSKOKE NATION HONOR GUARD

MVSKOKE NATION HONOR GUARD

The Mvskoke Nation Honor Guard is made up of honarably discharged veterans from all branches of the armed services, whose past or present members have served in times of peace and war, including World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Operation Desert Storm. The group was organized for one reason, which they consider their primary duty and that is to provide final military honors (firing of a 21 gun rifle salute, playing of taps and folding and presentation of the flag to the next of kin) for Creek veterans. Since their inception, they have been requested to post colors, march in parades, powwows, speak at schools on Veteran's Day and provide numuerous other services which honor our veterans. These are duties which the group is proud to perform but they remain resolutely committed to their fellow veterans upon their passing and have presented honors under extreme conditions, year-round, without complaint and with integrity. The Mvskoke Nation Honor Guard was designated the Official Honor Guard of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation by the National Council in 1999.

Pictured left to right:
Commander Thomas Yahola and
Vice Commander Loy Thomas

Notable Muscogee Veterans

ERNEST CHILDERS (1918-2005)

Ernest Childers passed away on Thursday, March 17 at the age of 87. Childers was the only member of the tribe to ever receive the Congressional Medal of Honor and only one of five Native Americans to be recognized with such distinction. Childers' heroic actions came as a young soldier in World War II. "Oklahoma has lost a genuine hero with the passing of Lt. Col. Ernest Childers," said Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry. "His life was and is a true inspiration."

Ernest Childers was born on February 1, 1918 in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. He grew up on a farm that was part of his father's original Creek allotment. Childers grew up in a Christian home, attending church at Springtown Indian Church about ten miles north of Coweta. In high school, he attended Chilocco Indian School.

Childers, as well as other Indian students, sought ways to better themselves financially and saw joining the Oklahoma National Guard as that opportunity. The Indian boys at Chilocco had their own group, Company C, or Charlie Company of the 45th Infantry division. 'The Fighting Thunderbirds' was the division's nickname. These Indian boys would become part of a unique fighting group. Upon the liberation of Sicily in WW II, General George S. Patton would pay them the ultimate honor. "Born at sea, baptized in blood, your fame will never die. You are one of the best, if not the best division in the history of American arms."

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action, Second Lieutenant Ernest Childers was awarded the Medal of Honor on April 8, 1944. The young Creek boy from Oklahoma would have his life changed forever. He was sent to Washington, D.C. to meet President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Childers described the Commander-In-Chief as pleasant and a very capable leader.

As the years passed, Childers would obtain the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He would train young recruits for future events such as the Korean and Vietnam Wars. In 1965, Ernest Childers would retire from the military. A remarkable career had come to an end. "The American Indian has only one country, and when you're picked on, the American Indian never turns his back," Childers proudly proclaimed.

PHILLIP COON (1919-2014)

Phillip W. Coon, a full-blooded Creek, was born on May 28, 1919, in Okemah, Oklahoma. He graduated from Haskell Institution in Lawrence, Kansas on May 14, 1941. On September 19, 1941, he volunteered for overseas assignment with the U.S. Army and spent the following month traveling to his first duty station. Mr. Coon arrived in Manila on October 23, 1941 where he went through rigorous Basic Training and Jungle Warfare training. Upon completion of training, he was assigned to 4th Squad, H Company, 31st Infantry Regiment as a machine gunner.

On April 11, 1942, Mr. Coon was captured by the Japanese Army and forced on the "Bataan Death March." He initially stayed at O'Donell Prison Camp at Capas Tarlac for two months and went to Camp Cabantuan for nine months. In January 1943, he was transferred to Camp Lipa and then in September 1944 was transferred to Camp Murphy. His is final journey as a POW was from September 1944 to January 1945 when the Japanese began a movement to take him and his unit out of the Philippines to Tokyo, Japan.

Mr. Coon was discharged as a Corporal from Fort Sam Houston, TX on June 24, 1946. After being discharged he entered the Job Training Corps where he earned a two year apprenticeship in welding, painting, and decorating. He graduated in 1949 from the apprenticeship program and became a union worker.

Mr. Coon retired in 1981 from the local Painters and Decorators of America Union #1895. He is active in and is a life member of the national Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc. (Korea, Pacific, and Vietnam), the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, Inc., and the 31st Infantry Association. Mr. Coon is a member of the Oklahoma Haskell Alumni Association and a member of the Little Cussetah Baptist Church in Sapulpa. He attends the annual conventions of these organizations and has served as Secretary-Treasurer and Vice-Commander of the 31st Association.

Mr. Coon's awards and decorations include the American Defense Service Ribbon with one Bronze Star, an Asiatic Pacific Campaign Ribbon with two Bronze Star, the Philippine Defense Ribbon, with one Bronze Star, and a Distinguished Unit Award with two Oak Leaf Clusters. In 1979, he received the Cross of Valor from Oklahoma Veterans Commission, which is the highest award that the State gave to its war veterans.

Mr. Coon passed away Monday, June 23, 2014. He is buried at Fort Gibson National Cemetery, he was 95 years old.

OTHER NOTABLE VETERANS

Dick B. Breeding, WWI, US Army, received Distinguished Service Cross (posthumously) for killing enemy while searching for missing Army member during combat in France, May 1918.

Anna King, Korea, US Army, served as surgical nurse who landed with the invasion force at Inchon, South Korea to help and heal the wounded.

Jorene Coker (left) saw active duty at Pearl Harbor during WWII in the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services (WAVES).

Riley R. Bruner, Korea and Vietnam, US Army, was a Prisoner Of War in Korea and Wounded In Action in Korea and Vietnam.

Vernon Wright, Korea, US Air Force, was shot down over North Korea and became a Prisoner Of War.

John Sloan, Vietnam, US Army is a recipient of 4 Purple Hearts.

Joe R. Taylor, US Marine Corps, was awarded the Bronze Star with V (for valor).

Bennie M. Gooden, US Marine Corps, was Wounded in Action and awarded the Silver Star.

Stephanie M. Jefferson, US Army, was awarded the Combat Medical Badge. She is the first Muscogee woman to be awarded a signifier for actions in combat.

Notable Muscogee Citizens

(past & present)

VALERIA LITTLECREEK

Valeria Littlecreek has been dedicated to Indian Education for five decades. Her name and reputation has given her a quality endorsement, even from other tribes throughout the country. When she was considering an educational position in New Mexico a few years ago, then State Superintendent Sandy Garrett phoned her personally and asked her to stay. Ms. Littlecreek soon worked at the Oklahoma Department of Education. Because of ill health, she had to resign from that position in 2011. Ms. Littlecreek, who grew up in Okemah and went to school at Mason, has slowed down in her activities, but she continues to make her voice known when it comes to ensuring Native American kids are well represented in education. She began teaching at Holdenville schools in 1976 where she worked as a tutor and curriculum specialist and also taught American Indian studies. She later went to work for East Central University in Ada for the Seminole Bilingual program. At East Central University, she found herself hearing from the Native American community about Indian kids needing help in the educational system. She realized she wanted to dedicate her life to help Indian students.

JOYCE BEAR

Joyce Bear is a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and belongs to the Lochapoka (Tulsa) Tribal Town and Sweet Potato Clan. She has worked in various forms of education for 11 years and was the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Cultural Preservation office manager 13 years. Joyce was instrumental in collecting and creating the “Old Creek Series” collection for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation library. She has served as Chairperson for the Intertribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes Cultural Preservation Committee and has served as a cultural advisor for the Birmingham Art Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian and the National Park Services at Horseshoe Bend Military Park. In 2007, Joyce was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Greater Tulsa Area Indian Affairs Commission, as well as the Guardian of Languages Memory and Life Ways Award from the National Conference of Indian Archives, Libraries and Museums.

MARGARET MCKANE MAULDIN

Muscogee (Creek) citizen Margaret Mauldin is best known for creating a 10,000 word dictionary of the Creek language that was published by the University of Nebraska. She also co-authored several children’s books and recorded Creek hymns. Ms. Mauldin worked to preserve the Mvskoke language through teaching, recording hymns and creating the Mvskoke to English dictionary “A Dictionary of Creek/Muskogee”.

She worked extensively with Jack Martin, Professor of Linguistics at the College of William and Mary, to translate and edit a collection of stories written by Creek citizens, Ernest Gouge and James Hill. The stories were written in 1915 and the 1930’s. She also served as an instructor of the Creek language at the University of Oklahoma.

PEGGY BERRYHILL

Peggy Berryhill is a producer of public radio about contemporary Native America for national audiences. Peggy has been providing a native voice to public broadcasting and support for native radio for over 38 years. She is known as the "First Lady of Native Radio". Ms. Berryhill began her career in broadcasting in 1973. She is the only native person to work as a full-time producer at National Public Radio (NPR) in the Specialized Audience Programs Department (1978-1979).

She was instrumental in forming the 2001 Native Radio Summit, where discussions were held forming a group to promote and facilitate American Indian radio programming content. This summit led to the creation of The Center for Native American Public Radio. Ms. Berryhill serves on the board of the Native American Resource Center, the Native Media Resource center and the National Federation of Community Broadcasters. She has received numerous awards for her work, including the American Indian Local Heroes Award in 2005 and the Bader Award, a Native Radio Honor, in 2011. Peggy is general manager of public radio station KGUA 88.3 FM in Gualala, CA, where she is host of 'Peggy's Place', a weekday morning show featuring interviews with local, regional and national personalities.

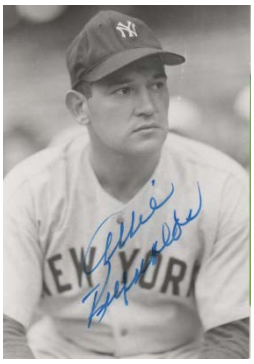
JACK JACOBS (1919-1974)

The former Sooner quarterback and kicker resides in the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and still holds passing and punting records at the University of Oklahoma set nearly 80 years ago.

Jacobs, a member of the Creek Nation, was born in Holdenville, OK, in 1919. He did not speak a word of English until he was nine years old when his father decided it was time he went to school. Before he turned 14, Central High School in Muskogee, 90 miles north of Holdenville, began recruiting him. With mixed emotions, Jacobs moved away from his mother and in 1935 helped Muskogee win the state title. In 1937, Jacobs was named outstanding high school player on Oklahoma's All-State football team. After high school, he chose to attend the University of Oklahoma, partly because coach Tom Stidham was one-sixteenth Creek and could speak their shared native language with Jack's dad. After graduating from OU, Jacobs was drafted by the Cleveland Rams in 1942. As the U.S. involvement in World War II grew, he joined another organization — the U.S. Army Air Forces. Stationed in Santa Ana, Calif., Jacobs found himself serving on the same base with Yankee slugger Joe DiMaggio. The two loaned their athletic skills to the Seventh Army Air Forces baseball team to boost morale of American troops. The team went 20-0.

After the war Jacobs was traded to the Washington Redskins and then to the Green Bay Packers. In 1950, he joined the Canadian Football League's Winnipeg Blue Bombers. Jacobs's fierce desire, competitiveness and brilliant quarterbacking helped popularize professional football in Canada. He finally left pro football for a sales job with the world's leading manufacturer of glass container products, where — not surprisingly — he won sales awards and was loved by his clients.

ALLIE REYNOLDS (1917-1994)



Allie Reynolds was born in Bethany, OK, in 1917. Allie was three-sixteenths Creek Indian, descending from his three-quarters-Creek grandmother. He grew tired of explaining the three-sixteenths and often told reporters he was one-fourth Creek. Allie's father was a Nazarene preacher and his parents lived strictly by Nazarene doctrine, staying away from movies and dances. One religious rule that affected their athletic young son was the ban of playing sports on Sunday. From an early age, Allie loved baseball. Because most games were played on Sunday afternoon, he did not play baseball on a team until after high school, but turned to other sports, including softball, track, and football. Except for football in the sixth grade, Allie did not play any school sports until he entered Oklahoma City's Capitol Hill High School in the fall of 1933 for his senior year.

Because of his father's meager income, Allie would have to earn his own way if he wanted to go to college. In January of 1935, he accepted a track scholarship from Oklahoma A&M (now OSU) that paid $20 a month toward his tuition and room and board. Also, because of his Creek heritage, he was granted a $400 loan by a foundation. He majored in education and graduated with a lifetime certification to teach public school in Oklahoma.

One afternoon Oklahoma A&M's athletic director, Henry Iba, saw Reynolds throwing a javelin next to the baseball field. Iba asked the track and football star if he could help the baseball team by throwing batting practice. Allie agreed, and without any warm-ups, he started striking out batters, throwing as hard as he could. After a few batters, Iba called him in and told him to go to the equipment room and get a uniform. In 1939, Allie was elected team captain. Coach Iba advised Reynolds to consider a career in professional baseball and set up a meeting for him with Cleveland Indians. The Indians signed Reynolds. At the end of the 1946 season, Reynolds was the subject of trade discussions between the Indians and the Yankees. During a World Series game at Fenway Park, the president of the Yankees, asked Joe DiMaggio which Cleveland pitcher would be best for the New Yorkers, Red Embree or Reynolds. DiMaggio said he could hit Embree but had never been successful against Reynolds. The trade was made for Reynolds.

In 1947, the Yankees easily won the American League pennant and defeated the Brooklyn Dodgers in the World Series. Allie became the first pitcher in the American League to pitch two no-hitters in a season. After winning his seventh World Series game, it was Allie's last World Series game. He went home to Oklahoma to trade his baseball glove for oilfield gloves. A successful winter in the oil business and an aging right arm combined to convince him that 1954 would be his last baseball season. In 1991, Allie was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. Reynolds did everything he could to promote his Native American heritage. He served as president of the National Hall of Fame for Famous American Indians at Anadarko, Oklahoma. He died in 1994, at the age of seventy-seven. He was buried at Oklahoma City's Memorial Park Cemetery after American Indian services celebrating his Creek heritage.

Living Legends

THOMAS YAHOLA retired from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and received Honorable Discharge from the U.S. Army. He is also the Mekko of Tallahasse Ceremonial Ground. Mr. Yahola served 11 terms on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council and 4 terms as the Speaker, as well as one term as Second Speaker. He is the Commander of the Mvskoke Nation Honor Guard, which he established.

RICHARD LARNEY served on a number of boards across the Muscogee (Creek) Nation jurisdiction including CREOKS Mental Health Board, Lions Club, Masonic Lodge, Okmulgee County Jail Board and many others. He also served as Henryetta Mayor for eight years and as city councilman for six years and retired as Chief of Police after 27 years of service. Mr. Larney was a Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council member from 1978-1980 and 1982-1984, as well as Lighthorse Chief during Chief Claude Cox's administration.

EDNA BELCHER is being inducted for her service to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Eufaula community throughout her lifetime. She began her career as a cook at the Fountainhead Lodge for 20 years and then worked with Eufaula Bingo. In 1987, she was approached by the Superintendent of the Eufaula Indian Boarding School to work in the kitchen. Ms. Belcher worked 27 years there before retirement and left a nurturing legacy to hundreds of children. She was a charter member of the Eufaula Indian Community and served as the first chairperson, as well as 19 years as their treasurer. On Oct. 27, 2016 the community honored Ms. Belcher by naming her the community center the Edna Belcher Elder Nutrition Center for her service to the citizens, community and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

SCOTT ROBERTS is being honored for his traditional Mvskoke pottery of the Late Woodland and Mississippian period. He is the last living Muscogee (Creek) who knows how to replicate this traditional artwork. He will be starting an apprenticeship mentoring other Muscogee Creek citizens this summer in a two to three month training program. Roberts has received numerous awards for his work in art shows throughout the United States.

Dr. KELLY MOORE has spent her medical profession contributing to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Native Americans to improve physical, mental and spiritual health. She began her career as a pediatrician working at several Indian Health Service facilities across the country serving 20 years. Dr. Moore served as Captain in the United States Public Health Service and received a number of awards and recognitions including Association of American Indian Physician's American Indian Physician of the Year Award, Public Health Service's Crisis Response Service Award and their Achievement Medal, as well as many others. She has continued her advocacy for Native American children and adults with diabetes and has helped bring national attention to the concern of Type 2 diabetes in childhood obesity through a number of publications.

The Living Legends induction was created in 2005 by former MCN Principal Chief A.D. Ellis.

Living Legends Eligibility Requirements

- Must be an enrolled Muscogee (Creek) Citizen
- Must be at least 55 years of age
- Must have brought recognition to and/or made outstanding contributions to the quality of life and development of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation on a local, national, or international level. All industries considered including, but not limited to: ceremonial/religious leaders, arts, public affairs, business/professional, education, voluntary service

Living Legends Past Honorees:

2005 – Hepsey (Randall) Gilroy, Rev. Harry Long. R. Perry Beaver, Amos McNac
2006 – Bob Arrington, Helen Coon, Phillip Coon, Edwin Moore
2007 – Lizzie Bruner, Jimmy Anderson
2008 – Wilber Gouge, Johnnie Brasuell
2009 – Dr. James King, Michael Berrryhill
2010 – Patrick Moore, Dr. Pete Cosar
2011 – Jimmy Alexander, Monte Deer
2016 – Lillian Thomas, Stephen (Wotko) Long, Perry Anderson, Josephine Wildcat Bigler
2017 – A.D. Ellis, Ramona Mason, Jorene Coker, Fredo “Chubby” Anderson

Hall of Fame inductees:

2012 – Joy Harjo, Simon Harry, Elsie Mae Martin, Allie P. Reynolds
2013 – Dr. Phyllis Fife, Jack Jacobs, George Thompson
2014 – Peggy Berryhill, Eli Grayson, William Sampson
2015 – Chebon Dacon, Sarah Deer, Jerome Tiger

Muscogee Language

English	Mvskoke	Phonetics
1. Hello	Hesci	(his-jay)
2. Teacher	Mvhayv	(muh-hi-yuh)
3. Good	Here	(he-thee)
4. Thank you	Mvto	(muh-doe)
5. Sit	Likvs	(lay-gus)
6. Quit	Wikvs	(way-gus)
7. Yes	Ehe	(e-he)
8. Okay	Enka	(in-gah)
9. Girl	Hokte	(hok-dee)
10. Boy	Cepane	(gee-bonnie)
11. Grandpa	Puca	(bo-jaw)
12. Uncle	Pvwv	(buh-wuh)
13. Mother	Ecke	(itch-key)
14. You	Ceme	(gee-me)
15. Red	Cate	(jaw-dee)
16. Yellow	Lane	(la-knee)
17. Black	Lvste	(lust-dee)
18. White	Hvtke	(hut-key)
19. Blue	Holatte	(hoe-lot-dee)
20. Nose	Yupo	(yo-boh)
21. Teeth	Nute	(no-dee)
22. Feet	Ele	(e-lee)
23. Heart	Feke	(fee-key)
24. Hand	Enke	(in-kee)
25. Ear	Hvcko	(hutch-go)
26. Arms	Sakpv	(sock-buh)
27. Eyes	Torwv	(doth-wuh)
28. Mouth	Cokwv	(johk-wuh)
29. Dog	Efv	(e-fuh)
30. Cat	Pose	(boh-see)
31. Mouse	Cesse	(jiss-see)
32. Cow	Wakv	(wah-guh)
33. Horse	Rakko	(thock-go)
34. Pig	Sukhv	(sok-huh)
35. Duck	Fuco	(foh-joh)
36. Turkey	Penwv	(ben-wuh)
37. Turtle	Locv	(loh-juh)

38. Tiger	**Kaccv**	**(got-cha)**
39. Snake	**Cetto**	**(jit-doe)**
40. Frog	**Kute**	**(goh-dee)**
41. Raccoon	**Wotko**	**(woat-go)**
42. Eagle	**Lvmhe**	**(lum-he)**
43. Wolf	**Yvhv**	**(yuh-huh)**
44. Squirrel	**Ero**	**(e-tho)**
45. Owl	**Opv**	**(oh-buh)**
46. Deer	**Eco**	**(e-joh)**
47. Fly	**Canv**	**(jaw-nuh)**
48. Bird	**Fuswv**	**(foosh-wuh)**
49. Skunk	**Kono**	**(goh-noh)**
50. Fish	**Rvro**	**(tha-tho)**
51. Bear	**Nokose**	**(no-go-see)**
52. Rabbit	**Cufe**	**(jo-fee)**
53. Hawk	**Ayo**	**(i-yo)**
54. Honey bee	**Fo**	**(foh)**
55. Butterfly	**Tvffolopv**	**(duff-fuh-low-buh)**
56. Worm	**Cuntv**	**(join-duh)**
57. Head	**Ekv**	**(e-guh)**
58. One	**Hvmken**	**(hum-ken)**
59. Four	**Osten**	**(oh-sten)**
60. Ten	**Palen**	**(ball-in)**
61. Corn	**Vce**	**(uh-gee)**
62. Water	**Owv**	**(oh-wuh)**
63. Sun	**Hvse**	**(huh-see)**
64. Rain	**Oske**	**(oh-skee)**
65. Hot	**Hiye**	**(hay-yee)**
66. Tree	**Eto**	**(e-doh)**
67. Grass	**Pvhe**	**(buh-he)**
68. Rock	**Cvto**	**(juh-doe)**
69. Day	**Nettv**	**(knit-duh)**
70. Paper	**Cokv**	**(joh-guh)**
71. Tea	**Vsse**	**(us-see)**
72. Car	**Atvme**	**(ah-duh-me)**
73. Bed	**Topv**	**(doh-buh)**
74. Tin can	**Halo**	**(haw-low)**
75. Chigger	**Wasko**	**(wask-go)**
76. Blackberry	**Kvco**	**(kuh-joh)**

77. Orange (fruit)	**Yvlahv**	**(yuh-law-huh)**
78. Sweet	**Cvmpe**	**(jum-be)**
79. Summer	**Meske**	**(miss-key)**
80. Tall	**Mahe**	**(maw-he)**
81. Night	**Nere**	**(knee-thee)**
82. Sleep	**Nuce**	**(noh-gee)**
83. Inside	**Ofv**	**(oh-fuh)**
84. Neck	**Nokwv**	**(nok-wuh)**
85. Gasoline	**Neha**	**(knee-ha)**
86. Side	**Nvce**	**(nuh-gee)**
87. Stomach	**Nvrke**	**(nuth-key)**
88. Road	**Nene**	**(knee-nee)**
89. Fast	**Pvfne**	**(buff-knee)**
90. Flea	**Kvfko**	**(guff-go)**
91. Winter	**Rvfo**	**(tha-foh)**
92. Bone	**Fone**	**(foe-knee)**
93. Boat	**Perro**	**(bith-tho)**
94. Lamp	**Kulke**	**(ghoul-key)**
95. Basket	**Svmpv**	**(sum-buh)**
96. Coat	**Kapv**	**(gaw-buh)**
97. Strong	**Yekce**	**(yek-gee)**
98. Tail	**Hvce**	**(huh-gee)**
99. Us	**Pume**	**(bo-me)**
100. Wet	**Lvcpe**	**(lutch-be)**
101. Mole	**Tvko**	**(duh-go)**
102. Jump	**Taskvs**	**(dask-gus)**
103. Big	**Rakke**	**(thock-key)**
104. Fire	**Totkv**	**(doht-guh)**