

Euchee Tribe of Indians

(Oklahoma Social Studies Standards, OSDE)

Tribe: Euchee (Yuchi) Tribe of Indians

Tribal website(s): <http://www.eucheetribe.com>

1. Migration/movement/forced removal

Oklahoma History C3 Standard 2.3 “Integrate visual and textual evidence to explain the reasons for and trace the migrations of Native American peoples including the Five Tribes into present-day Oklahoma, the Indian Removal Act of 1830, and tribal resistance to the forced relocations.”

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

Original Homeland –present-day southeastern United States including Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama

Location in Oklahoma – Northeastern Oklahoma, Tulsa and Creek Counties

The Yuchi (often also spelled Euchee) are an American Indian people of Oklahoma whose original homelands were in the present southeastern United States. At first contact with Europeans they resided in autonomous communities found in what is now eastern Tennessee, but during the colonial period they established settlements throughout the southeastern United States. The Spanish explorer, Hernando De Soto, and his expedition first encountered the Euchee (Yuchi) people in the mountainous areas of Tennessee around 1540. They were forced from that area by the Shawnee and Cherokee Indians where the Euchee fled into what is now Georgia and Alabama. They later joined a loosely organized confederacy already established in the Southeast prior to the arrival of the Muskogean tribes. In the late 1700s, some of the Euchee bands joined the Muscogee Confederacy, which was comprised of 48 other autonomous tribal towns that retained the right to govern their own people. Euchee people were considered as one town within the Confederacy.

In the early 1800s, the Southern states were calling for the removal of Tribes that lived within their borders. After Andrew Jackson became president, he engineered the whole-scale removal of all of the Tribes from the Southeast. The Euchee people, along

with other tribes, were forcibly removed from the Southeastern United States during the periods of 1820-1850 to the new Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) which was set aside for tribes displaced from their native homelands. Several Euchee bands moved farther into Florida and became incorporated within the Seminole Tribe. Other Euchee bands were allied with the Shawnees, and were incorporated within the tribe.

The Euchee who remained in the South are still there, but because they were Indian and not white, they were labeled “Colored” and thereby relegated to sub-marginal status in the dominant white society. Other Euchee who chose to stay in the Southeast Homelands were captured and sold into slavery. According to one of the old stories, one band of Euchee became angered over how traditional dances were being performed; packed up, traveled west and were never seen again. It is believed they went to Oregon and were subsumed with the Northwestern tribes of that region.

Of the nine bands of Euchee people who were removed to Indian Territory, only three currently identified have an active ceremonial ground. These are Duck Creek, situated in southern Tulsa County, Polecat Creek and Sand Creek. The last two are located in southern and western portions of Creek County. Membership to a ceremonial ground is based upon the mother’s home Ground membership. One usually attends the annual Green Corn ceremonies at their home ceremonial ground. Many Euchee people reside outside the area and return for Green Corn at their ceremonial grounds. Although there are three active ceremonial grounds, the Euchee are one people. Two Euchee bands predominantly settled in Creek County near the towns of Sapulpa, Kellyville, Bristow, Slick and Depew. Another Euchee band settled south of Glenpool and Bixby in Tulsa County and Hectorville located near the the Tulsa/Okmulgee County line.

The last official listing of Euchee people occurred over 100 years ago, on the 1890 and 1895 Rolls, prepared in conjunction with the Dawes Commission enrollment. The Euchee were estimated at 1,200 individuals at that time. The Dawes Commission politically devastated the Euchee (Yuchi) people as it legally classified them as Creeks for the purposes of land allotment.

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

The Library of Congress documents: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Indian.html>

Oklahoma Indian Country Guide, Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department
http://s3.amazonaws.com/content.newsok.com/newsok/images/NIE/nie_docs/Indian%20Country%20Tab,%2036%20page.pdf

2. Maps

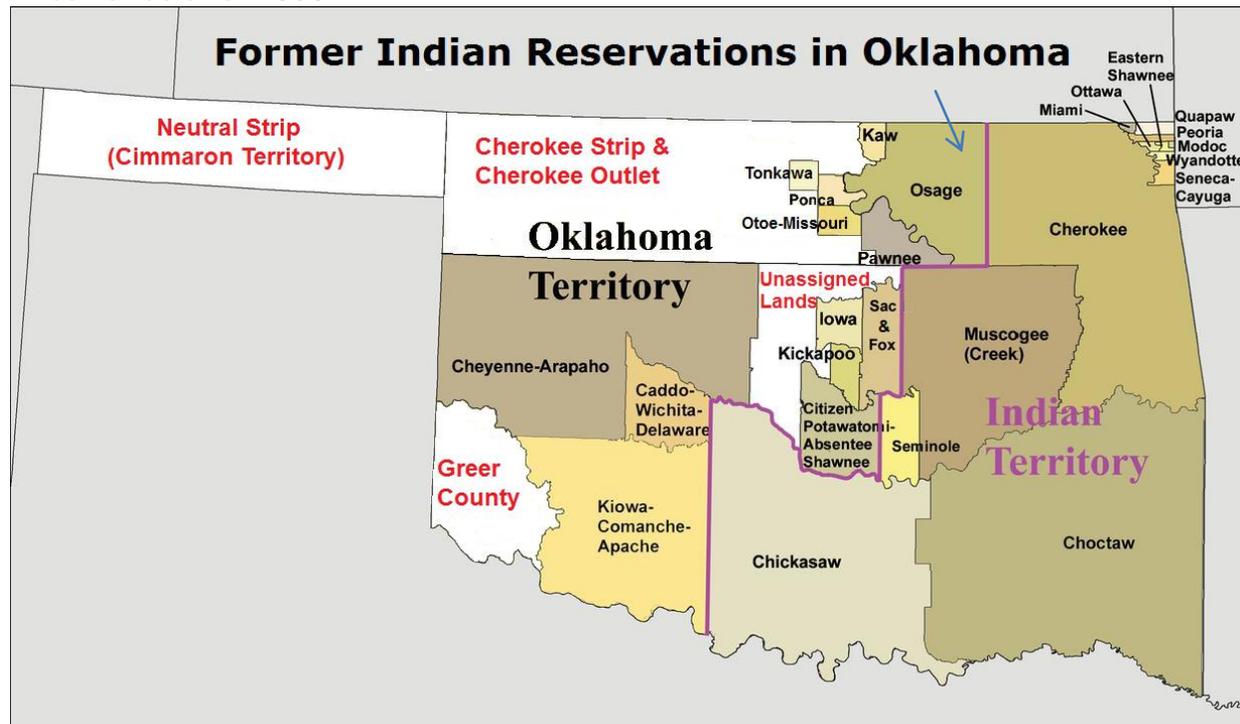
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Tribes into present-day Oklahoma, the Indian Removal Act of 1830, and tribal resistance to the forced relocations.”



Original territory of the Yuchi Tribe

Tribal lands after 1830



3. Population Past/Present

- Total tribal enrollment: 249

- Depending upon blood quantum, it is estimated that Euchee currently number over 2,000, though the majority are not enrolled with the tribe. This number is based on a list of over 1,100 names submitted to the Indian Claims Commission in the 1950s and estimated increases since then.
- Membership criteria: In 1997, the Euchee (Yuchi) Tribe started a formal enrollment of tribal members, resulting in 249 members enrolling. Euchee members are those who descend from individuals on the 1890, 1895, and 1950 tribal rolls.

4. Government; Chiefs vs Chairman; Elected or Paternal

US Government C3 Standard 3.4 *“Summarize and explain the relationships and the responsibilities between national and state governments including tribal and local governments.*

Oklahoma History C3 Standard *“The student will analyze the formation and development of constitutional government in Oklahoma. 1) Compare and contrast the development of governments among the Native American tribes, the movement for the state of Sequoyah. 2) Describe and summarize attempts to create a state constitution joining Indian and Oklahoma Territories including the impact of the Progressive and Labor Movements resulting in statehood on November 16, 1907.”*

Tribal Government leadership

The ceremonial grounds were historically the governing structure for most affairs of the Euchee (Yuchi) Community. Today, there are still (3) three remaining ceremonial grounds. The Euchee (Yuchi) Tribal Council is chosen from this historical structure.

Two council members are appointed from the three Euchee (Yuchi) Ceremonial Grounds: Polecat Creek, Duck Creek, and Sand Creek by the current Chiefs and/or Committees of each Ceremonial Ground, in accordance with each Ceremonial Grounds decision making process. There are two members from each ground authorized, who are Euchee (Yuchi) by blood, along with three at-large members who are selected by the representatives from the Euchee (Yuchi) ceremonial grounds. The three at-large are tribal members by blood of the Euchee tribal community.

*Please see #4

5. Language Group

Oklahoma History C3 Standard 4.1 *“Compare and contrast the successes and failures of the United States policy of assimilation of the Native Americans in Oklahoma*

including the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and the effects of the Indian Boarding Schools (1880s-1940s) upon Native Americans' identity, culture, traditions, and tribal government and sovereignty.”

Yuchi language

The Yuchi language is a linguistic isolate, not known to be related to any other language. In 2000 the estimated number of fluent Yuchi speakers was 15, but this number dwindled to 7 by 2006.

Current state of the Yuchi language

According to a 2011 documentary on the Yuchi language, the number of first-language speakers has been reduced to five, however, young and middle aged members of the Yuchi have learned the language in recent years and are continuing to do so. Yuchi language classes are being taught in [Sapulpa, Oklahoma](#), in an effort led by Richard Grounds and the Euchee Language Project.

The Euchee/Yuchi Language Project (ELP) is a grassroots, 501c3 non-profit organization that is working fervently to keep the Euchee language alive in the community. The Mission of the Euchee Language Project is to keep alive the rich heritage of the Yuchi people by creating new young speakers of their unique language through breath-to-breath immersion methods with fluent elders and children. Classes are held with fluent elders on a daily basis to pass on the language breath-to-breath. Euchee is a language isolate, meaning it is not related to any other language. Some of the effective language learning methods used include Master-Apprentice teams, children's immersion programs, and language camps.

Source: www.yuchilanguage.org

6. Cultural Identifiers – i.e. Mound Builders; Plains

Oklahoma History C3 Standard 4.1 *“Compare and contrast the successes and failures of the United States policy of assimilation of the Native Americans in Oklahoma including the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and the effects of the Indian Boarding Schools (1880s-2013) upon Native Americans' identity, culture, traditions, and tribal government and sovereignty.”*

The Euchee people attended numerous Indian boarding schools to include Haskell, Chilocco, Bacone, Riverside, and others. Even so there is one school in which the tribe takes great personal pride.

Plans to establish this school for the Euchee were begun by the Presbyterian Board in 1891. On November 1, 1893, the National Council of the Creek Nation passed an act appropriating \$7,000.00 to be used in the erection of a school building in Euchee Town

to be known as a boarding school and to be suited to educate Euchee children. The location of this school proved to be rather fortunate, as it was located near Sapulpa. As the city developed, the school was surrounded by a good residential section, and thereby the value of the property increased.

Much credit for the founding of the school is due Samuel Brown, Noah Gregory, Henry Land and William Sapulpa, whose work influenced the Creek Council to make an appropriation for the school from tribal funds. Buildings were then erected and the school opened in the fall of 1894. In the beginning the school had only three buildings, including two dormitories and a three-room school house, all located on 40 acres of tribal property about a mile east of Sapulpa. Other buildings were added later.

The school was primarily established by the Creek government for the education of full-blooded Euchee children, who while on the Creek tribal roll, did not associate or mix with the regular Creeks. It was agreed by the Council that the school would be educational and 50 Euchee and 30 Creek children would be accepted. In 1922, because of a readjustment, Euchee Boarding School became a school for boys with a capacity of 110. This arrangement was carried on until the Creek tribal funds were exhausted, then it became necessary to finance the school out of gratuitous funds. In 1928, the school was taken over and supported entirely by federal appropriations, under supervision of the United States Indian Office.

In 1929, the 9th grade was placed in Sapulpa Public Schools. This arrangement proved so successful that the 7th and 8th grades were sent to Sapulpa Junior High the next year. The following year the 5th and 6th were sent to Woodlawn School, leaving only the first four grades at the Mission.

In 1947 the school was closed and the land and buildings were sold to School District No. 33 for use by the Sapulpa Public Schools. To honor this former school, the Pride in Sapulpa Committee had bilingual street signs placed along the corridor where the school had been. The signs read: Yugeeha Ustina. In the Euchee language there was no word for mission and this translation means "Euchee Way".

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

7. Fine arts

Oklahoma History C3 Standard 4.1 *"Compare and contrast the successes and failures of the United States policy of assimilation of the Native Americans in Oklahoma including the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and the effects of the Indian Boarding Schools (1880s-1940s) upon Native Americans' identity, culture, traditions, and tribal government and sovereignty."*

- Music –
- Art -

*Please see #6

8. Significant events (ie. Massacres, Battles, Supreme Court cases...)

Oklahoma History C3 Standard 2.4C *“Summarize the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction Treaties on Native American peoples, territories, and tribal sovereignty including the a) Required enrollment of the Freedmen, b) Second Indian Removal and the role of the Buffalo Soldiers, c) Significance of the Massacre at the Washita, d) Reasons for the reservation system, and e) Establishment of the western military posts of Fort Sill, Fort Supply, and Fort Reno.”*

The Euchee (Yuchi) were denied federal recognition by the federal government in 2000, despite the reality that they continue to have traditional ceremonial grounds, traditional Indian churches, fluent speakers, identifiable tribal members, multiple generations of federal and mission Indian boarding school attending families who are listed as Euchee (Yuchi) in all historical documents, and are clearly defined as a tribal community by most tribal nations in the United States. A series of lobbying efforts by area federally-recognized tribes who did not want perceived gaming competition in their geographic area and who did not want another tribe to have a share of federal services provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs insured the denial of their petition. The tribe continues to seek justice on this issue to the present day.

Oklahoma Historical Society source to consider:

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

9. Current Information on tribe

The Eucheas have lived primarily in the area south and west of Tulsa, Oklahoma, since Removal in the 1830s. They often see their name spelled "Yuchi" in academic literature but frequently refer to themselves as the Tsoyaha, a word in their own language that means "Children of the Sun." When the Euchee (Yuchi) Tribe of Indians polled its membership in 2008, it found that 88.4 percent of respondents agreed that knowledge of the tribe's history was very important. Although anthropologists and linguists from Albert Gallatin in the 1830s to Jason Baird Jackson and Mary S. Linn in the 2000s have studied and published works about the Eucheas, no historian has ever addressed Euchee history in a comprehensive manner. The survey results also indicated tribal members felt a need to bolster pride in Euchee identity, which a more thorough knowledge of the tribe's rich history could help promote. With the survey results in hand, Chairman Andrew Skeeter and tribal member Cynthia Tiger began work on an

application for a Social Economic Development Grant from the Administration for Native Americans (ANA), part of the US Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families. In October 2009 the tribe launched the Euchee History Project, with two years of funding from the grant, the ultimate goal of which was to craft the first comprehensive written work of history focusing exclusively on the Eucheers.

The Euchee (Yuchi) Tribe of Indians was incorporated in 1992 by the tribe's ceremonial ground leaders, the traditional leadership for hundreds of years, in order to be eligible to apply for certain federal grants to assist in community development. The Eucheers maintain three ceremonial grounds, where ceremonies such as the annual Green Corn rite are performed. Considered one of the constituent peoples making up the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Eucheers are not recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs outside of their affiliation with the Creeks. However, the Eucheers insist they are a separate people who, although drawn into the Creek political orbit and a part of the Creek Confederacy since the 1700s, have always maintained their own language, customs, and culture. The Euchee language is an isolate, thus unlike any other known Native American tongue. Even its very structure, which uses different noun classes to divide Euchee people from non-Eucheers, emphasizes distinctness.

Federal recognition independent of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation has long been a goal of the Eucheers, and the material being compiled for inclusion in the Euchee (Yuchi) History Project may one day help to bolster the tribe's case with federal and state governments. In the meantime, as Chairman Skeeter wrote in the ANA grant application, the project "will enhance the preservation of our history and stimulate greater interest and involvement by our tribal members."

In FY 2008, the Euchee Tribe of Indians received an Administration for Native Americans' grant to develop a Comprehensive Community Survey and Community Plan. This plan led to the development of the proposed Tribal History Project which was conducted in October 2010.

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

Abley, Mark: *Spoken Here: Travels Among Threatened Languages*, Houghton Mifflin, 2003.

Elliott, [Daniel](#): [Ye Pleasant Mount: 1989&1990 Excavations](#). The LAMAR Institute, University of Georgia, 1991.

Jackson, Jason Baird: "Yuchi." *Handbook of North American Indians: Southeast*. Eds. William C. Sturtevant and Raymond D. Fogelson. Volume 14. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2004. ISBN 0-16-072300-0.

Jackson, Jaso: *Yuchi Ceremonial Life: Performance, Meaning, and Tradition in a Contemporary American Indian Community*, University of Nebraska Press, 2003.

Martin, Stephen A., Recvlohe, Adam : [The Euchee \(Yuchi\) History Project](#); From: [Native South Volume 4, 2011](#) pp. 121-135 | 10.1353/nso.2011.0003. If needed, search: The Euchee (Yuchi) History Project.

Speck, Frank, [Ethnology of the Yuchi Indians](#) (reprint), University of Nebraska Press, 2004.

[Memoirs of Jeremiah Curtin in the Indian Territory](#), pp. 327, 333-335. 19th century ethnographer's account of learning Yuchi language in 1883 in a Yuchi settlement 55 miles from [Muskogee, Oklahoma](#). Electronic record maintained by [Library of Congress](#), accessed January 15, 2007

Famous tribal members:

Timpoochee Barnard, former Euchee Chief

Jackson Barnett, The "Richest Creek" Indian in the World, was part Yuchi or Euchee.

Samuel W. Brown, Jr., former Chief of the Eucheas

Andrew Skeeter- long time tribal chairperson

Tracie Revis (Attorney) – former Executive Director, Euchee (Yuchi) Tribe

[Richard Ray Witman](#) (b. 1949), artist, poet, actor



Euchee Ceremonial Grounds

Sources:

www.euchetribe.com

Oklahoma Indian Country Guide: One State, Many Nations; Travelok.com

EuChee History Project

EuChee Language Project; www.yuchilanguage.org

Oklahoma Historical Society

The Library of Congress

Oklahoma Indian Country Guide, Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department