

History of Covington County Alabama Part 1

Native Americans

The Choctaw are a Native American people originally from the Southeastern United States (Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana). They are of the Muskogean linguistic group. The word Choctaw (also known as Chahta, Chactas, Chato, Tchakta, and Chocktaw) may derive from the Castilian word "chato," meaning flat; however, noted anthropologist John Swanton suggests that the name belonged to a Choctaw leader.[2] They were a part of the Mississippian culture which was located throughout the Mississippi River valley. The early Spanish explorers, according to historian Walter Williams, encountered their antecedents.[3] In the 19th century, Choctaws were known as one of the "Five Civilized Tribes" because they had integrated numerous cultural and technological practices of their European American colonial neighbors. Although smaller Choctaw groups are located in the southern region, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians are the two primary Choctaw associations.

During the American Revolution most Choctaws supported the thirteen colonies' bid for independence from the British Crown. The Choctaws and the United States had agreed to nine treaties. The last three treaties (Treaty of Doak's Stand, Washington City, and Dancing Rabbit) were designed to deracinate most Choctaws west of the Mississippi River. U.S. President Andrew Jackson made the Choctaw exiles a model of Indian removal as the first to march the Trail of Tears. The Choctaws were exiled (to the area now called Oklahoma) because the U.S. desired to expand, desired to "save" them from extinction, and wanted to acquire their natural resources.

In 1831 when the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was ratified, Choctaws who chose to stay in the newly formed state of Mississippi were the first major non-European ethnic group to become U.S. citizens. The Choctaw also sought to be represented in the Congress of the United States.[4] They are also remembered for their generosity in providing humanitarian relief during the Great Irish Famine (1845–1849), twenty years prior to the founding of the Red Cross. During the American Civil War the Choctaw in both Oklahoma and Mississippi mostly sided with the Confederate States of America. In World War I, they served in the U.S. Army as codetalkers using the Choctaw language as a natural code.

The Creek are an American Indian people originally from the southeastern United States, also known by their original name Muscogee (or Muskogee), the name they use to identify themselves today.[1] Mvskoke is their name in traditional spelling. Modern Muscogees live primarily in Oklahoma, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. Their language, Mvskoke, is a member of the Creek branch of the Muskogean language family. The Seminole are close kin to the Muscogee and speak a Creek language as well. The Creeks are one of the Five Civilized Tribes.

The early historic Creeks were probably descendants of the mound builders of the Mississippian culture along the Tennessee River in modern Tennessee[2] and Alabama, and possibly related to the Utinahica of southern Georgia. More of a loose confederacy than a single tribe, the Muscogee lived in autonomous villages in river valleys throughout what are today the states of Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama and consisted of many ethnic groups speaking several distinct languages, such as the Hitchiti, Alabama, and Coushatta. Those who lived along the Ocmulgee River were called "Creek Indians" by British traders from South Carolina; eventually the name was applied to all of the various natives of Creek towns becoming increasingly divided between the Lower Towns of the Georgia frontier on the Chattahoochee River, Ocmulgee River, and Flint River and the Upper Towns of the Alabama River Valley.

The Lower Towns included Coweta, Cusseta (Kasihta, Cofitachiqui), Upper Chehaw (Chiaha), Hitchiti, Oconee, Ocmulgee, Okawagi, Apalachee, Yamasee (Altamaha), Ocfuskee, Sawokli, and Tamali. The Upper Towns included Tuckabatchee, Abhika, Coosa (Kusa; the dominant people of East Tennessee and North Georgia during the Spanish explorations), Itawa (original inhabitants of the Etowah Indian Mounds), Hothliwahi (Ullibahali), Hilibi, Eufaula, Wakokai, Atasi, Alibamu, Coushatta (Koasati; they had absorbed the Kaski/Casqui and the Tali), and Tuskegee ("Napochi" in the de Luna chronicles).

Cusseta (Kasihta) and Coweta are the two principal towns of the Creek Nation to this day. Traditionally the Cusseta and Coweta bands are considered the earliest members of the Creek Nation.[3]

Like many Native American groups east of the Mississippi and Louisiana Rivers, Creeks were divided over which side to take in the American Revolutionary War. The Lower Creeks remained neutral; the Upper Creeks allied with the British and fought the Americans.

After the war officially ended in 1783, the Creeks discovered Great Britain had ceded Creek lands to the new United States. The state of Georgia began to expand into Creek territory. Creek statesman Alexander McGillivray rose to prominence as he organized pan-Indian resistance to this encroachment and received arms from the Spanish in Florida to fight trespassing Georgians. McGillivray worked to create a sense of Creek nationalism and to centralize Creek authority, struggling against village leaders who individually sold land to the United States. With the Treaty of New York in 1790, McGillivray ceded a significant portion of Creek lands to the United States under the administration of George Washington in exchange for federal recognition of Creek sovereignty within the remaining territory. However, McGillivray died in 1793, and Georgia continued to expand into Creek territory.

English adventurer William Augustus Bowles was elected director general of the State of Muskogee by a congress of Creeks and Seminoles in 1799. With both Spain and the USA claiming the land Bowles hoped to be able to create their own independent nation, the State of Muskogee.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>