

ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA

Tribal Headquarters: Shawnee, OK



A brief history

The Shawnee were the southern most branch of Algonquian with a loose confederacy of four divisions. During the 17th and 18th centuries their territory covered portions of Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and as far south as Georgia, the Gulf Coast and parts of Michigan and Illinois. Because of their diversity, expansiveness and willingness to work with other tribes, their history is especially difficult to summarize.

For 40 years, beginning with the French and Indian Wars in 1756, they were almost constantly at war with the English or Americans. In 1793, a large body of Shawnee accepted a Spanish land grant at Cape Girardeau, MO. In 1795, the Treaty of Greenville put an end to the long war in the north and the Shawnee were moved to their territory on the Ohio, Miami, and Auglaize rivers. One part of this group joined the Shawnee at Cape Girardeau. Shawnee warrior and diplomat, Tecumseh, began a movement to unite the eastern tribes against European and American encroachment. During the War of 1812, this "Pan-Indian" movement supported the British.

Tecumseh's death is said to have broken the spirit of the Indian tribes who accepted peace terms that limited them to small reservation areas. In 1831 two groups of Ohio Shawnee removed to Kansas and soon thereafter a mixed group of Shawnee and Seneca also moved there. A group of Shawnee that had settled in Texas were forced out and settled around the Canadian River in Indian Territory (Oklahoma). In 1845, a large part of the Shawnee on the Kansas Reservation left and settled along the Canadian River in I.T. In 1854 the Shawnees

signed a treaty with the U.S. to sell some lands in Kansas, retaining a much smaller reservation, with the provision that the "Absentee" Shawnee in Oklahoma could occupy these lands if they wished to return. Most of them did not.

In 1936, The Absentee Shawnee organized a modern government under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act. Today the Tribe operates several businesses and provides services to over 3,000 members.

About the flag

The Absentee Shawnee flag features the tribal Seal centered on a red field. It was adopted in 1974. Above and under the Seal in yellow are the words "Absentee Shawnee Tribe" (top) and "Of Oklahoma" (bottom). The center of the Seal features a profile of the great Shawnee leader, Tecumseh, wearing a red headdress against a bright yellow field. Two stylized black and white eagle feathers extending beyond the edges of the Seal cross behind him and on a diagonal. Circling the center image on the red field are the tribe's Shawnee and English names written in black, "*Li-Si-Wi-Nwi*" around the top, and "Absentee Shawnee" around the bottom. Two stars separate the two names on each side.

Educational Activity

The Shawnee have had a rich part in American history beyond Oklahoma. Look at a U.S. geographical map and retrace the Shawnee's journey to Oklahoma.