

# CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES

Tribal Headquarters: Concho, OK



## A brief history

The Cheyenne and Arapaho represent the western most groups of Algonquian that prehistorically spread over the northern and eastern woodlands of the U.S. By the middle of the 1800's, the hunting and farming tribes occupied much of the same territory. Along with many other plains tribes, they defended their land and livelihood from other tribes and the U.S. Since 1835 both the Cheyenne and Arapaho were parties to the same treaties with the U.S. Today, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes share common territory in western Oklahoma which they reserved for themselves in the Treaty of Medicine Lodge in 1867. In 1937 the tribes organized a single government for their common welfare. Both tribes retained their traditional peace chiefs who are looked to for direction concerning spiritual and cultural matters, including peace making.

## About the flag

The flag of the Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes is on a white background. In the center is a darker blue outline of the State of Oklahoma. Across the outline is a wooden lance draped with two sets of fourteen eagle feathers (the number of traditional tribal council members) in black and white. In the center of the lance is the round seal or "shield" of the two tribes consisting of a white tepee on a tan background recalling the rawhide used in both Cheyenne and Arapaho shields. Three white Christian crosses appear at the sides and over the tipi. Surrounding the "shield" is a white circular band with 14 black stars representing the councilmen.

Behind the shield are two traditional objects crossing each other—an arrow and a pipe—and making an “X”. Both objects symbolize “peace”, for the arrow is pointed down and the pipe is traditionally smoked at times of peacemaking in addition to its important role in many other ceremonies. Across the top of the outline of Oklahoma eight black stars were added to signify the modern number council members.

### **Educational Activity**

The Cheyenne Arapaho Tribes recently removed the phrase “of Oklahoma” from their flag and Seal. Use the internet to find out more about the tribe. Why would they have made this change?