

DELAWARE TRIBE OF INDIANS
Tribal Headquarters: Bartlesville, OK



A brief history

The name DELAWARE was given to the people who lived along the Delaware River. They were among the first Indians to encounter the Europeans in the early 1600s. Their name for themselves in the Algonquian language is LENNI LENAPE (len-NAH-pay) which means "the real people."

These tenacious warriors had a reputation as peacemakers among many tribes. They signed the first Indian treaty with the newly formed United States in 1778. In the 1700s they were pushed west to Ohio, Indiana and eventually to Arkansas and Missouri. One small group went to Texas and eventually to western Oklahoma. Like many tribes now in Oklahoma, the larger group was removed to lands in Kansas and eventually to Indian Territory. In 1867 this group became affiliated with the Cherokee.

About the flag

The flag of the Delaware Tribe features the tribal seal on a white field. The colors used are red, white and black - the colors used in aboriginal times (red for berries, white from chalk, and black from coal). At the center is a ceremonial mask of *Mesing* used in Big House ceremonies to represent the spirit of all living things. Diagonally across the mask is a peace pipe and to the right a fire starter. The peace pipe is used on many Tribal flags since it was the ultimate greeting and bonding mechanism of tribal life in most northern cultures.

The four symbols, one each at a prime direction of the compass are a cross, representing their more recent religious tradition and the symbols of their three clans, Turtle, Wolf and Turkey. Twelve prayer sticks used on the ninth night of the Big House ceremony surround the symbols. Across the top are the words "SEAL OF THE DELAWARE TRIBE" with "LENNI LENAPE" written across the bottom.

Educational Activity

The Delaware Tribe came from the region of the Delaware River. Where is this river? What other Oklahoma tribes have origins in this region?