

OTTAWA TRIBE
Tribal Headquarters: Miami, OK



A brief history

The Ottawa lived along the shore of Georgia Bay in Canada when French explorer Samuel de Champlain located them in 1615. A quarter-century later, pressured by the Iroquois, the Ottawa moved to Green Bay in present-day Wisconsin from where they spread into northwestern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Although they lived in villages and planted crops, the Ottawa were best known as traders, traversing the rivers of northeastern America and the Great Lakes in their canoes and following the “Moccasin Trail” well into Florida.

During the Revolutionary War the Ottawa sided with the British, but were able to control most of Ohio after the War. Increasing incursion by white settlers forced the tribe to move steadily west, first into Kansas and by 1867 onto a 12,000 acre tract of land purchased from the US in the northeastern corner of Indian Territory where they remain to this day.

About the flag

The flag of the Ottawa reflects their history. The evergreen tree and grass knoll recall their origins in the Northeast Woodlands while the prominent canoe alludes to their first-rank trading skills and Algonquian name. These images are contained in the colorful seal that is centered on the white background of the flag. Two black rings surround the seal, with the words “Ottawa Tribe” above and “Of Oklahoma” below. The central disk features the motto “United We Stand Divided We Fall” on either side of an evergreen tree – symbolic of the Tree

of Life. To the right of the evergreen is a war club – a typical weapon of the woodland Indians. A black and white eagle feather is attached to the club.

Since many Ottawa Indians belong to the Otter Clan, the animal is featured right of the Tree of Life. The water on the seal represents the source of all life and is an important sacrament in all Indian religions.

Educational Activity

The Ottawa flag features water to represent the source of all life and is an important sacrament in all Indian religions. What has water's role been in Ottawa tribal history?