

**WYANDOTTE NATION**  
Tribal Headquarters: Wyandotte, OK



**A brief history**

The Wyandotte call themselves the “Keeper of the Council Fire,” and can place their origin to the year 1650 in present day Ontario, Canada. They were formed from the remnants of the Tionontati (Petun) and the Attignawantan nations, the largest and most powerful tribe of the Wendat Confederacy (Huron).

Early French explorers called them the Huron, either from *huron* (ruffian or rustic), or *hure* (Boar) possibly from their “roached” hair. Warfare between them and the Iroquois resulted in the Wyandotte being driven south to northern Michigan and Wisconsin. They fought against the French and sided with the British in the Revolutionary War.

Many years later they moved east and settled along Lake Erie. By 1842 the Wyandotte had sold all the lands east of the Mississippi to the U.S. and settled in Wyandotte County, KS. Most were later relocated to northeastern Oklahoma in the late 1860s and early 1870s. The tribe formed a new constitution in 1937 under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act and serves around 4,500 members. The Tribe has spread from Oklahoma to Kansas, to Ohio and back to Canada.

## **About the flag**

The Wyandotte flag is white with “WYANDOTTE TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA” arching across the top and bottom. In the center is a turtle, an earth symbol, which alludes to their creation story. The oval shell of the turtle is black and the tail, flippers and head are brown. The center of the turtle shell is a white oval with 12 triangle points representing the tribe’s 12 clans.

In red and white in the center of the white oval is a sacred council fire, the symbol of their traditional tribal government. These “council fires” burned continuously in the old villages. Arched and crossed above the turtle are four willow branches representing “Lasting life.” The turtle is holding a red sacred peace pipe and a red war club.

## **Educational Activity**

Learn more about the Wyandotte tribe’s creation story as reflected in their flag at the tribe’s website <http://www.wyandotte-nation.org/> under birth history. Why were they called the Wyandotte? What other groups of people in the news identify themselves by their beliefs?