

Cherokee Genealogy

A Primer for Genealogists

Today we will learn

- Some basic steps for doing Indian genealogy
- Who are the Cherokee?
- The removal – Trail of Tears
- Records existing as a result of the removal
- The Dawes Rolls
- Other Cherokee records

Start at the beginning!

- Begin the search process starting with yourself and work backwards. Write down all names, birth dates, and death dates of all possible Native American ancestors.
- Keep going until you find the Native American ancestors.
- You **must** know the name of your ancestor before you can explore his or her Indian affiliation!

Where did your ancestors live?

Use maps to determine where the tribal lands were when you ancestor lived there.

Census records can identify someone as Indian

- Race column on 1870+ federal census.
- 1900 federal census – states with reservations had additional Indian schedules. Asked for Indian name, nativity, blood, marital status, citizenship, and dwelling.
- 1930 census – place of birth of father and mother columns given tribe and degree of blood.
- Indian Census Records – 1885-1940 (M595) [Also on Ancestry.com and Ancestry Library Edition]

Name	Age	Sex	Color	Race	...
John	21	M	W	Indian	...
Mary	18	F	W	Indian	...
...

1870 Census

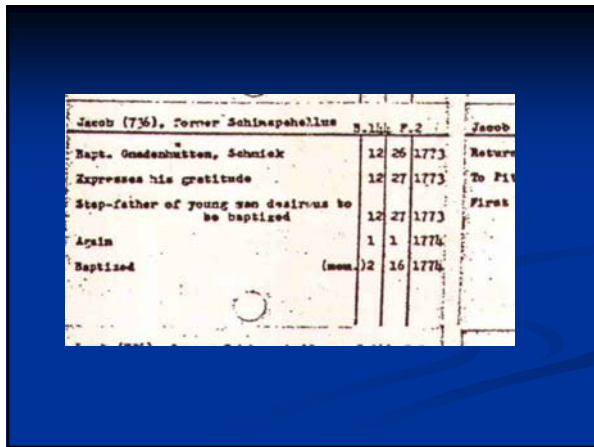
The top image shows a census form titled 'THIRTIETH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES 1910 - POPULATION'. It contains columns for name, sex, age, race, marital status, occupation, and education. The bottom image shows a similar form with columns for name, sex, age, race, marital status, occupation, education, and place of birth. Both forms have handwritten entries in various columns.

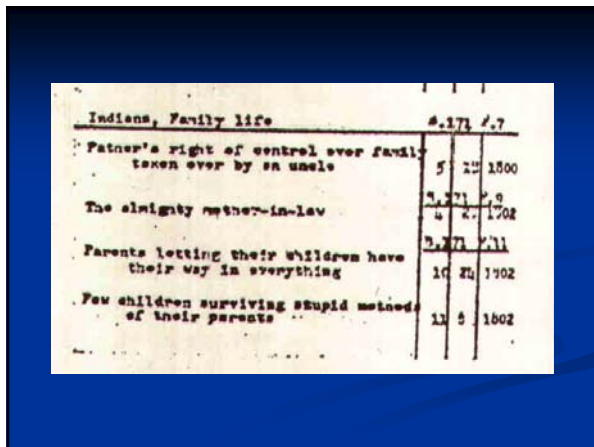
This image shows a census form with columns for name, sex, age, race, marital status, occupation, education, and place of birth. It contains handwritten entries for several individuals, including names like 'Albion' and 'Bertha'.

This image shows a census form with columns for name, sex, age, race, marital status, occupation, education, and place of birth. It contains handwritten entries for several individuals. A red stamp at the bottom center reads '1930 Census'.

The index categories of the Moravian Church records are:

- Indian Individuals
- White Persons
- Geographic Names
- Non-Indian Nations
- The Land
- Everyday Life
- The Mission
- Mission Places
- The Indians.





Government Documents

- Treaties
- Enrollments
- Annuity payments – results of treaties
- Citizenship rolls
- Land allotment records – Dawes Act
- Indian School records

Some history

- During Colonial times, the British regarded Native tribes as foreign governments.
- After the French and Indian War, two superintendencies were created: One in the northern colonies and one in the southern colonies. Superintendents were ambassadors to the tribes.
- The Continental Congress created three geographic departments with several commissioners each.

More history

- The Confederation Congress (1786) established northern and southern Indian departments divided by the Ohio River.
- Look in papers of the Continental and Confederation Congresses and the Constitutional Convention. Most have been filmed by the National Archives.
- See *Guide to Records in the National Archives of the United States Relating to American Indians*.

A Fight for Land

Nashville, Tennessee, was settled while still Indian land in 1779. A man plowing his field always had his gun at his side in case of Indian attack. One person was killed about every ten days.
[Andrew Jackson, His Life and Times]

Andrew Jackson's First Message to Congress, 1829

- Regarding Native Tribes in the east: "It has long been the policy of Government to introduce among them the arts of civilization in the hope of gradually reclaiming them from a wandering life."
- He mentions those tribes attempting to "erect an independent government" within the states of Alabama and Georgia, which would not be tolerated.

Jackson further states:

- "I informed the Indians inhabiting parts of Georgia and Alabama that their attempt to establish an independent government would not be countenanced by the Executive of the United States, and advised them to emigrate beyond the Mississippi, or submit to the laws of those states. . ."
- "This emigration should be voluntary, for it would as cruel as unjust to compel the aborigines to abandon the graves of their fathers and seek a home in a distant land."

Jackson's second message to Congress, 1830

- "It gives me great pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly thirty years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond white settlements is approaching a happy consummation."
- On 28 May 1830, President Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act.

Indian Removal Act of 1830

- Authorized the president to grant unsettled lands west of the Mississippi in exchange for Indian lands within the existing state borders.
- Each tribe was asked to sign the removal treaty.

Tribes involved:

- Chickasaw: Agreed to remove in 1832 but delayed their move until 1837. They settled in Oklahoma on land leased from the Choctaw.
- Choctaw: First to sign a removal treaty which was the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek.
- Creek: They refused to emigrate but were forcibly removed in 1836. They never signed a removal treaty.
- Seminole: They signed the Treaty of Payne's Landing but later called it "illegitimate." They fled to the Florida Everglades. After two subsequent Seminole Wars, they were forcibly removed in 1842.

Cherokee

- Originally called Ani-Yun-wiya – The Principal People.
- Largest southeastern tribe in 1540 with 29,000 members.
- They owned 135,000 square miles of land.
- Skilled hunters and fearsome warriors.

Cherokee (cont.)

- 1794 – a small group moved to Arkansas. They became known as the Western Cherokee.
- The Eastern Cherokee became highly advanced.
- They were agriculturally oriented.
- They established schools and newspapers
- They had a government with a constitution.
- They had a written language.

Cherokee (cont.)

- The Eastern Cherokee also adopted American names.
- They built houses and plantations.
- They owned slaves.
- They adopted Christianity as their religion – largely through the work of the Moravians.

Cherokee Removal

- The majority refused to leave their homes in Georgia. They sued the state of Georgia in the Supreme Court.
- The Supreme Court decided in favor of the Cherokee, allowing them title to their land.
- In 1835 some of the Cherokee felt the cause for their land was hopeless, in spite of the Court's decision. They signed the Treaty of New Echota.

The Treaty of New Echota

- Signed by Major Ridge, his son John Ridge, and his nephews Elias Boudinot and Stand Watie.
- In return they were to receive \$5 million, land in Oklahoma, tools, livestock, and general supplies.
- It was not signed by the principal chief, John Ross, nor by the majority of the tribe.
- The Cherokee National Council protested the treaty, but it was ratified by Congress in 1836.

"Mr. Martin, a Cherokee, was a man of wealth, had an extensive farm; large fields of wheat growing; and was turned out of house and home, and compelled, in the month of February, to seek a new residence within the limits of Tennessee. . .

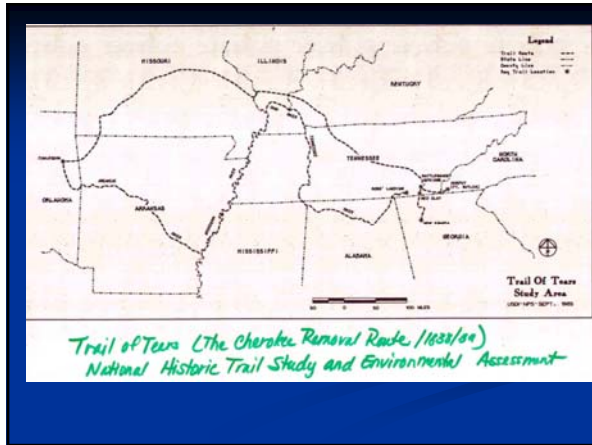
"Mr. John Ross, the principal chief of the Cherokee nation . . . was at Washington city, on the business of his nation. When he returned, he traveled till about 10 o'clock at night, to reach his family; rode up to the gate; saw a servant, believed to be his own; dismounted, ordered his horse taken; went in, and to his utter astonishment, found himself a stranger within his own house, his family having been, some days before, driven out to seek a new home. . .

"On the next morning he arose early, and went out into the yard, and saw some straggling herds of his cattle and sheep browsing about the place. His crop of corn undisposed of."

"Memorial and Protest of the Cherokee Nation." 24th Congress, 1st session. Doc. No. 256. [House of Representatives] June 22, 1836
U.S. Serial Set

What happened next?

- Major Ridge and his group left for Oklahoma.
- Chief Ross and the remaining Cherokee continued to resist the move.
- In May 1838, the War Department sent General Winfield Scott to Georgia to round up and remove the remaining Cherokee.
- This migration was known as the Trail of Tears. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Cherokee died enroute to Oklahoma.



Retaliation

In June the following year, John Ridge, Elias Boudinot, and Major Ridge were killed by Cherokee assailants.

Later Cherokee Events

- In 1870, Congress allowed railroads to extend their lines into Indian Territory.
- Already experiencing “intruders,” this further enhanced white settlement into Indian land.
- White settlers complained to Congress because they had no schools for their children, no courts, and no voice in government. – But they were living on Indian lands.

The Dawes Commission

- Congress appointed the Dawes Commission to evaluate the situation.
- Congress was told that the wealthy members of the tribe were exploiting the common members of the tribe.
- The Dawes Commission said that crime was rampant in Indian Territory.
- The Commission suggested that land holdings be taken away from the tribes and given to the tribal members.

A “Better” Life

- The Dawes Commission felt that education was imperative for the Indians and their new way of life.
- The needed:
 - Training in farming
 - Christianizing
 - To be taught English
 - Training in morals
 - Training in citizenship

“Indian Emancipation Day”

- The Dawes Act was passed in 1887. It was called “Indian Emancipation Day” by members of Congress.
- It applied to all Indian tribes.
- It provided an allotment of lands “on the various reservations and to extend protection of the laws of the United States and the Territories over the Indians . . .”

The Allotment

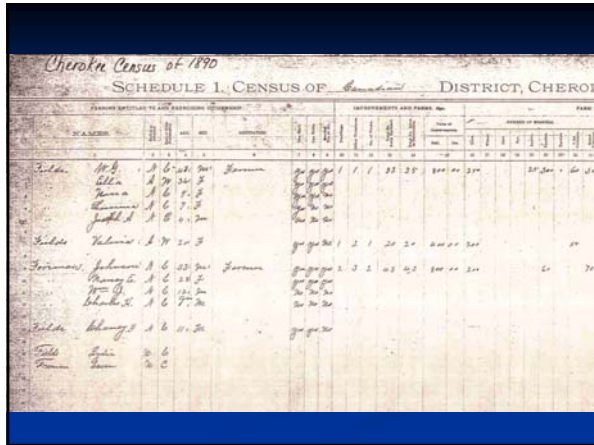
- Heads of families – 160 acres
- Single persons over 18 – 80 acres
- Orphans under 18 – 80 acres
- Other single persons – 40 acres
- Heads of families to select land for themselves and minor children
- Indian agents to select land for orphans

More on the allotment:

- Land was to be held in trust by the U.S. for 25 years. At that time it would be conveyed to the allottee or his heirs for a simple fee.
- If deemed necessary by the President, the trust might be extended another 25 years.
- Citizenship would be granted to all allottees and Indians adopting civilized ways of life.
- Indians would renounce allegiance to their tribe.

The Records: Cherokee Census of 1890

Includes native Cherokee, adopted Delaware, Shawnee, White, colored, orphans under 16, rejected claimants, persons whose citizenship claims were pending, intruders, persons living in the Cherokee Nation under permit.



Cherokee Freedmen Roll (Wallace Roll) 1890-1893

Census of Cherokee Freedmen eligible to receive a per capita payment as authorized by Congress in 1888. It includes authenticated freedmen who appear on the 1883 roll, individuals who died between 1883 and 1890, individuals admitted by Wallace, and "free Negroes." This roll was set aside as "fraudulent" by a decree of May 8, 1895 of the U.S. Court of Claims. It was never recognized by the Cherokee Nation.

Starr Roll, 1894

An authorization, approved by the Cherokee National Council in 1893, for purchase of 6,574,487 acres in the Cherokee Outlet (aka The Cherokee Strip) by the U.S. for a price of \$8,595,736.12. Each tribal member would receive a per capita payment of \$265.70.

Old Settler Payment Roll, 1896

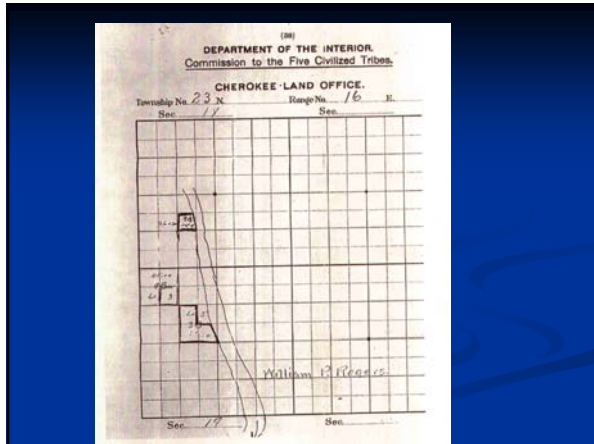
Payment resulted from a decision of the U.S. Court of Claims, June 6, 1893. This is a receipt roll for per capita payment of \$159.10.

The "Old Settlers" were those Cherokee that removed voluntarily.

Dawes Roll

This is the enrollment of the Five Civilized Tribes [Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole] for land allotment. The records contain:

- Enrollment cards, 1899-1907
- Enrollment packets, 1899-1907
- Index to the Final Rolls, 1902-1906
- Applications for allotment, 1899-1907



Other Documents in the File:

- Power of Attorney [Will Rogers was in Port Elizabeth, Cape of Good Hope]
- Statement from the Clerk in charge of the Cherokee Land Office that he had received the above power of attorney.
- Family Group Sheet – Clement V. Rogers, names of children – only William P. Rogers shown.
- Testimony of Clement Rogers regarding his application.
- Entry in the tract book.

Guion Miller Roll

This was the result of a lawsuit by the Cherokee for a monetary settlement relating to the unlawful removal of the Cherokee. Cherokee from any location could apply for the settlement. Those Cherokee who removed voluntarily with the Treaty of New Echota were ineligible.

Other Records (cont.)

- Mullay Roll, 1848 – Lists Cherokees remaining in North Carolina after the removal.
- Siler Roll, 1851 – [7RA-06, index M685] Census made by William Siler of those Cherokee eligible for a per capita payment authorized by Acts of Congress of September 1850 and February 1851.

Old Settlers Roll, 1851

- Cherokees who emigrated to northwestern Arkansas in the early 1800s were required to exchange that land for lands in northeastern Oklahoma. [M685]
- This was a result of an economic settlement by those who removed voluntarily and those who were forcefully removed.
- Treaty of 1846 concluded that the Old Settlers comprised 1/3 of the tribe in 1835 and were entitled to 1/3 of the 1835 removal payment.

Drennon Roll, 1852

- The first roll take of Cherokees who came west as a result of the removal. This is a receipt roll for per capita payment of \$92.83. [M685]
- Chapman Roll, 1852 [M685] Receipt roll for a payment made to the Eastern Cherokee based on the census taken by Siler.
- Tompkins Roll, 1867 [7RA-04] Article 12 of the Treaty of July 19, 1866 provided that a census roll of the Cherokee in the Cherokee Nation be made.

Enrollment Information by Tribe

<http://www.nativeculturelinks.com/nations.html>

Contains enrollment information for Native American Tribes.

<http://native.brokenclaw.net>

Contains shared information and experience.

What's on the Web?

www.cyndislist.com

Ancestry.com

Footnote.com

What have we learned?

- Some basics for finding Native American ancestors
- The Trail of Tears
- The numerous government documents that exist for the Cherokee tribe

Questions?

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