

## **Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes**

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Descendants of the Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes have a distinctive history. While their histories in some ways parallel the history of other African American slaves, their particular history has resulted in their exclusion from some traditional record groups and their inclusion in others. This lecture will focus on records that were created in connection with the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), or Seminole tribes.

### **Timeline**

1803	Louisiana Purchase
1830	Indian Removal Act – removals begin shortly thereafter
1860	U.S. Federal Census taken in Arkansas, to include the Lands West of Arkansas. While Indians were not enumerated on the population schedules, those who owned slaves were likely to appear on the slave schedules.
1866	Renegotiated treaties resulted in changes to tribal lands in Indian Territory
1889	Opening of the Unassigned Lands in Oklahoma Territory
1898	Curtis Act abolishing tribal governments
1898-1906	Enrollment by the Dawes Commission to allot land in Indian Territory
1900	Federal Census taken in Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory; Special Schedule enumerating Indian Population
1907	Oklahoma Statehood
1910	Federal Census; Special Schedule enumerating Indian Population
1930's	Works Projects Administration – Indian Pioneer Collection
1937-1939	WPA Oklahoma Slave Narrative Project interviews conducted
1967-1972	Duke Collection of American Indian Oral History interviews conducted

Five Tribes: Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), Seminole

Steps to identifying which ancestor was enrolled as Freedmen

1. Interview relatives - descendants of your ancestor
2. Find family sources of information (like land records, headstones or obituaries)
3. Use family stories and tribal history information to determine the likely tribe
4. Locate potential ancestor on the US Federal Census for 1900
  - a. Taken during the enrollment period and can be tied to Dawes enrollment records
  - b. Make sure that you have evidence to link yourself to the person or family you find
5. Try to locate your ancestor or other relatives on the Dawes Rolls
6. Follow all leads from both the census and the Dawes enrollment file to gather relevant evidence, citing your sources as you work. Use the Genealogical Proof Standard to analyze the evidence and reach conclusions, and then make a research plan to continue.

## **The Dawes Rolls**

Final Rolls of the Five Civilized Tribes – Categories relating to Freedmen

Choctaw Freedmen

Minor Choctaw Freedmen

Chickasaw Freedmen

Cherokee Freedmen

Minor Cherokee Freedmen

Creek Freedmen

New Born Creek Freedmen

Minor Creek Freedmen

Seminole Freedmen

New Born Seminole Freedmen

## **Oral Histories**

Baker, T. Lindsay and Julie P. Baker, eds. *The WPA Slave Narratives*. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996.

*Doris Duke Oral History Collection*. Oklahoma Federation of Labor Collection, M452. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma. Index available online - <http://digital.libraries.ou.edu/WHC/duke/>

*Indian Pioneer Papers Collection*. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma. Available online – <http://digital.libraries.ou.edu/whc/pioneer/>.

## **Resources**

Carter, Kent. *The Dawes Commission and the Allotment of the Five Civilized Tribes, 1893-1914*. Orem, Utah: Ancestry.com, 1999.

*The Chronicles of Oklahoma*. A quarterly journal published by the Oklahoma Historical Society since 1921. Available online by Oklahoma State University and the Oklahoma Historical Society. <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/Chronicles/index.html>

Forbes, Jack D. *Africans and Native Americans. The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples*, 2nd ed. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois, 1993.

Goins, Charles Robert and Danney Goble, *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma*. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006.

Lennon, Rachel Mills. *Tracing Ancestors Among the Five Civilized Tribes. Southeastern Indians Prior to Removal*. Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2002.

Littlefield, Daniel F, Jr. *Africans and Creeks: From the Colonial Period to the Civil War*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *The Chickasaw Freedmen: a People Without a Country*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980.

\_\_\_\_\_ and James W. Parins, eds. *Encyclopedia of American Indian Removal*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood, c2011.

Miles, Tiya and Sharon P. Holland. *Crossing Waters, Crossing Worlds. The African Diaspora in Indian Country*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

Mulroy, Kevin. *The Seminole Freedmen. A History*. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007.

Reese, Linda, "Freedmen," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/F/FR016.html> (accessed May 1, 2012).

Oklahoma Historical Society. *Finding Your American Indian Ancestors Research Guide* (aiancestor.pdf) available online at [www.okhistory.org/research/genealogy?full](http://www.okhistory.org/research/genealogy?full).

Perdue, Theda. *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears*. New York: Viking, c2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Mixed Blood Indians. Racial Construction in the Early South*. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society 1540-1866*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, c1979.

Walton-Raji, Angela Y. *Black Indian Genealogy Research*. Westminster, Md.: Heritage Books, 2007.

Witcher, Curt B. and George J. Nixon. "Native American Research", Chapter 19 in *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy*. 3d. ed. (Szucs, Loretto Dennis and Sandra Hargreaves Luebking, eds. Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 2006.

Yarbrough, Fay A. *Race and the Cherokee Nation. Sovereignty in the Nineteenth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

### **The Dawes Rolls**

United States. Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes. The Final Rolls of Citizens and Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes in Indian Territory

Index to the Final Rolls and the Final Rolls

Census Cards

Applications for Enrollment

Applications for Allotment

(See syllabus for F-301 "American Indian Genealogy Research Using FamilySearch")

## Related Web Sites

AccessGenealogy

<http://www.accessgenealogy.com>

FamilySearch

<https://familysearch.org>

National Archives

[www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)

Oklahoma Historical Society

[www.okhistory.org](http://www.okhistory.org)

Oklahoma State University. Edmon Low Library. Map Collection.

<http://luna.library.okstate.edu:8180/luna/servlet>

University of Oklahoma – Western History Collections

<http://digital.libraries.ou.edu/whc/pioneer/>

## Learning Center –

Search by title at <https://www.familysearch.org/learningcenter/home.html>.

“Cherokee Genealogy. A Primer for Genealogists,” video/slideshow presentation by Janice Schultz, MLS, of the Mid-Continent Public Library’s Midwest Genealogy Center in Independence, Missouri.

“Research African-Native American Ancestors of Indian Territory,” an online lesson presented by Angela Walton-Raji, at the AAHGS 2006 Conference.

“Using the Dawes Rolls,” video/slideshow presentation by Kathy Huber, MLS, of the Tulsa City-County Library’s Genealogy Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

## Repositories

National Archives Southwest Region in Fort Worth, Texas

Address for Textual Research

(and mailing address):

1400 John Burgess Drive

Fort Worth, TX 76140

Phone: 817-551-2051; Fax: 817-551-2034

Email: [ftworth.archives@nara.gov](mailto:ftworth.archives@nara.gov)

Address for Microfilm Research:

2600 West 7th Street, Suite 162

Fort Worth, TX 76107

Phone: 817-831-5620; Fax: 817-551-2034

<http://www.archives.gov/southwest/>