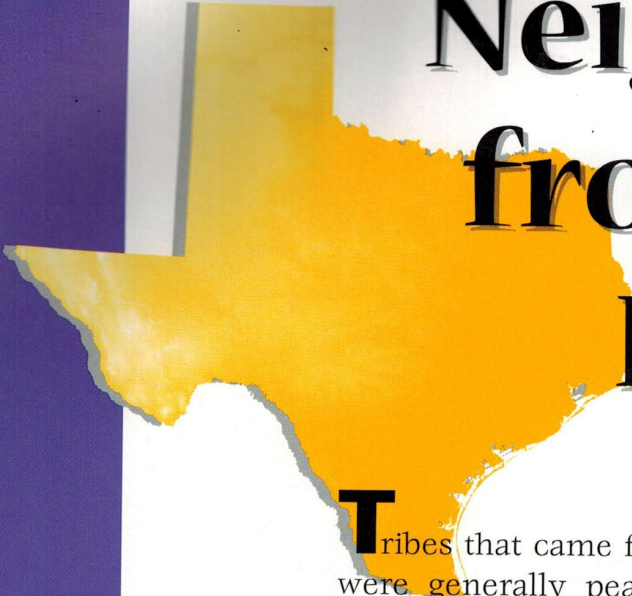




Neighbors from the East

Tribes that came from the southeastern United States were generally peaceful farmers. Many southeastern tribes adopted the ways of white settlers in order to survive. The Cherokee, Seminole, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Muscogee (Creek) became known as the "Five Civilized Tribes" of the United States.

CHEROKEE

Before the American Revolution (1775–1783), Cherokee land covered parts of North Carolina and surrounding states. After the Revolution, United States settlers and the U.S. government continued to push the Cherokee farther west off their lands. Some Cherokee eventually made their way into Texas. In 1816, Chief Bowles led 60 Cherokee families into Texas. They set up several villages north of Nacogdoches. On their farms along the Angelina, Neches, and Trinity Rivers they grew beans, squash, and corn.

The Cherokee readily adopted American **culture**, and some intermarried with whites. They still held onto some **traditions**, however. Cherokee society had seven **clans**, each associated with an animal. Marriage within a clan was forbidden. The Cherokee Green Corn Dance was a Thanksgiving celebration they held each year. They also played a game of stick ball similar to the modern game of lacrosse. A Cherokee named Sequoyah developed a written language for his people. Cherokee

children were educated at American schools. Women wore American-style dresses. Men had a **turban** and a cloth coat tied at the waist with a sash. Some Cherokee had large farms that were worked by slaves, similar to the white population of the southeastern United States.

The Cherokee asked Mexico for ownership of their land in Texas in the 1820s, but their claims were repeatedly denied or delayed. After Texas became independent, President Sam Houston arranged a treaty to grant them title to some of their land. But the Texas Senate never agreed to the treaty. The second president of the Republic of Texas, Mirabeau Lamar, ordered all tribes to leave Texas in 1839. The Cherokee, still without title to their land, decided to fight. In a battle near Tyler, Chief Bowles was killed. Many Cherokee fled to relatives in the Indian Territory in Oklahoma. Some went to Mexico. Others were **fugitives** in Texas. When Sam Houston returned as president of the Republic in 1841, he worked out a treaty with the Cherokee. However, the Cherokee never received payment for their land.



Sam Houston was an adopted Cherokee. He is shown here dressed as a Cherokee with the turban. Following Cherokee tradition, Houston never referred to himself as "I," but as "Houston."

Wilma Mankiller



In 1985, Wilma Mankiller became the first woman to be chief of the Cherokee Nation. She earned the respect and attention of many with her efforts to improve communities and provide jobs and homes for American Indians. Mankiller left her job as chief in 1995, because of poor health. In 1998, President Clinton awarded Mankiller the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest **civilian** honor.

A Good Start in Life

A newborn Choctaw child received gifts of a mare, colt, cow, calf, sow, and pigs. The animals could not be sold or given away. When the child was grown, he or she already owned a small herd.

CHOCTAW

Choctaw legend says that the Choctaw and Chickasaw are **descendants** from two brothers. After moving west of the Mississippi River, the Chickasaw went north and

the Choctaw went south. Over 700 Choctaw made their way into Texas in the 1830s.

The Choctaw tribe was divided into two groups. Besides the two large groups, the Choctaws were also divided into three districts. Each district had a *mingo*, or chief, elected by the men of the district. The three mingos met at a national council meeting to discuss issues concerning the tribe.

Choctaw marriage partners had to be from opposite groups, but young people were free to choose their mate. A young man made his affection known by throwing twigs at a girl. If she ran from the room, he was rejected. If she accepted, the groom brought presents to the bride's parents. On the day of the wedding, there was a feast. Then the bride and groom were led to separate houses. The bride was given a headstart to run to a pole on a distant hill. If the groom caught her before she reached the pole, her family showered her with gifts, and the couple were considered married. Children became members of the mother's group and were raised by their oldest uncle on their mother's side of the family. Adoption was common among the Choctaw.

The Choctaw in Texas built log cabins. **Cane** beds inside were raised off the floor and covered with deerskins. The beds also served as tables and chairs. The Choctaw raised corn, beans, melons, pumpkins, peas, sunflowers, and tobacco in their gardens. They kept herds of cattle

that they sold to neighbors. Extra corn was stored for feed for the cattle. Choctaw women worked in the fields, made clothing, and prepared and stored food. Men hunted, built houses, made tools, governed the tribe, and protected the tribe during wars.

By 1830, the Choctaw had signed a treaty to move to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma. A few families were still in Nacogdoches and Shelby Counties at the time of the **Texas Revolution**. Choctaw dealings with the settlers were friendly. They boasted that they had never made war on whites. That did not save them from being moved out with other tribes in 1839. Some went to Mexico, while others went to Indian Territory.

SHAWNEE

A Missouri band of Shawnee arrived in Texas in 1822, and settled on the Red River. They were **allies** of the Cherokee and had friendly relations with white settlers. They even took part in the defeat of a Comanche force at Bandera Pass. Before they were moved to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) in 1839, the Shawnee negotiated payment for their crops and abandoned property. The Texas Shawnee went to Indian Territory as the Absentee Shawnee.

The Shawnee were on the move hunting during the winter. During summer months, they had large villages where they farmed corn, squash, and beans. The Shawnee built round, domed

This is a Shawnee participant in the yearly Red Earth Festival, which takes place in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The festival celebrates the American Indians of Oklahoma, which is where many tribes were forced to move in the 1800s.



houses called wigwams. These were single-family homes made out of poles covered with bark. Shawnee men and women wore clothing made of animal skin, including leggings and moccasins. They often decorated their clothing with dyed porcupine **quills**, bright feathers, and paint. The Shawnee have been careful to pass down their **customs**. For that reason, they have better preserved their dances and religious **ceremonies** than other tribes.

SEMINOLES

The Seminoles did not permanently make their home in Texas, but they influenced it just by passing through. The

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This is a drawing of Chief John Horse, also known as Gopher John. He was a Seminole Black who led the group of Seminole slaves out of Texas and into Mexico from 1849 to 1850.



Seminole Blacks kept Africans called Seminole Blacks as slaves of the tribe. Most Seminole Blacks were runaway slaves who escaped from their American or British masters. The Seminoles allowed their slaves to live in separate communities. There they could work their own fields and have their own livestock. The Seminole slaves had to give some of their crop or livestock to their masters each year as their only requirement. The fact that the Seminoles allowed runaways to enter their community angered their white slaveholding neighbors. The Seminoles were pushed out of Florida in the early 1800s and made their way west.

Each Seminole town had a *mico*, or head chief. There was also a group of less-important chiefs and a *heniha*. The *heniha* organized dances and **rituals** and made sure town buildings and fields were kept in good shape. The Seminoles farmed, and each family donated some of their crops to storage. Food kept in storage was used to help

poor families and feed visitors. Besides farming, the Seminoles hunted, fished, and raised cattle. Seminoles wore a mixture of **traditional** and European clothing and jewelry. Seminole families lived in two buildings made with wooden frames. One building had two rooms. One room was used for sleeping and the other for cooking. The other building had two levels for storing potatoes, grain, and other food. It also had a covered balcony on the second floor, where guests were greeted and the family could find shade on hot days.

The Seminoles made their way into Indian Territory in the 1830s. The Creek Indians there tried to claim authority over the Seminoles and their slaves. Once Texas became part of the United States in 1846, the Seminoles decided to move to Mexico. Chief Wildcat (Coacoochee) and Seminole Black Chief John Horse led about 200 Seminoles and their slaves through Texas and into Mexico. The last part of their journey through Texas was a mad dash for the Rio Grande to avoid U.S. soldiers, who were coming to take the Seminole slaves. They made it across the river before the army arrived, and settled near Eagle Pass in Mexico.

After Chief Wildcat died in 1857, the Seminoles returned to Oklahoma because they had finally received their own land separate from the Creek. Wewoka, Oklahoma, is now the capital of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma.

Seminole Blacks

Chief John Horse and the Seminole Blacks left Mexico in 1870. They moved to Fort Clark near Bracketville, Texas. Seminole Black scouts there helped the U.S. army in its actions against the Plains Indians of the area. A small cemetery near Bracketville contains the graves of four Seminole Black scouts who received the United States Congressional Medal of Honor for their service.

After years of service at Fort Clark, Seminole Blacks were still denied land in Oklahoma. Some of them stayed in Bracketville, and others returned to Mexico.