

SOUTHERN, JOE

SETTLEMENT OF CHOCTAWS & CHICKASAWS

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Joe Southern,
Field Worker,
Aug. 25, 1937.The Settlement of the Choctaw
And the Chickasaw Tribes.

When the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes left their homes in the East, Indian Territory was still unsettled, but the United States had promised in the treaties to give the Indians protection against any attack from the Plains tribes and had promised also that the white people should not settle in the country without the consent of the Indian people. Soldiers were kept stationed at Fort Gibson, Fort Smith, Fort Washita, and Fort Towson to carry out the promises of the Government.

These two tribes, the Choctaws and Chickasaws, with other tribes settled in the eastern part of the Indian Territory first and because of that they were a lot of help to each other. The land and timber was good and there was plenty of water, and when the Choctaws and Chickasaws first settled there, they were furnished with seeds and tools to farm with but soon the circumstances became hard as the game became scarce, and more people came in to settle. These circumstances made it impossible for the people to

depend entirely upon the wild game for food and soon the hardships began; supplies were short and disease began to rage; the greatest epidemics were cholera and malaria and many of these Indians died from these diseases.

In the face of these conditions the Indians were very unhappy and about 1854 the Tribal Governments were re-established and organized communities were set up.

The Choctaw Nation is located between the Canadian and Red Rivers. In earlier days the Chickasaw tribe lived in the Choctaw Nation. This Choctaw Nation was not under the laws of the United States, but had its own laws, elected its own officers, and had its own courts of justice. By 1838 eleven thousand Choctaws had arrived in the new

country. The first capitol of the Choctaw Nation in the Indian Territory was called Nunih waya and was located about two miles from the present town of Tuskahoma in Pushmataha County. The last Choctaw capitol was built in 1884 about one and a half miles from Nunih waya and it was called Tuskahoma.

In 1837 the Chickasaws, who were quite a few more in number than when they first settled in Indian Territory,

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-3-

paid quite a sum of money, about \$500,000.00, to the Choctaws for the right to settle in their country and to have equal voice in the tribal government. The Chickasaws lived in this way until 1855 when they became dissatisfied and felt that they had no influence in tribal affairs, as they were outnumbered by the Choctaws. The Chickasaws finally, after much complaint, had assigned to them a district embracing the western part of the Choctaw Nation to the ninety-eighth meridian which was called from that time the Chickasaw Nation. After that the Chickasaws adopted a constitution, and set up their own government, but any Choctaw or Chickasaw had the right to live in either nation and be recognized as a citizen.

In later years the Chickasaws established their capitol at Tishomingo, Indian Territory.