

# OKLAHOMA

## HISTORY

Native nations, soldiers, cowboys and settlers each helped make Oklahoma. It was two territories before it became one state.

### The First Peoples

People have lived in Oklahoma for more than 10,000 years. The Wichita and Caddo grew corn along the rivers and lived in grass houses. Later, the Comanche and Kiowa rode horses across the western plains and hunted bison. In 1541, the Spanish explorer Coronado crossed the plains looking for gold.

### Traders and Forts

The United States bought most of this land from France in 1803. Fur traders from the Chouteau family set up a trading post at Salina. In 1824, the army built Fort Gibson.

### Five Nations Move West

In the 1830s, the United States moved five nations here from the Southeast. They were the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole. **Treaties** traded their old land for land in Indian Territory. Many did not want to go, and the Seminole fought a long war in Florida. Thousands died on the journey, which the Cherokee call the Trail of Tears. Here the nations built farms, towns, schools and capitals such as Tahlequah. The Cherokee printed a newspaper in their own language. Some families held enslaved Black people, who worked in the fields.

### War in the Territory

In the Civil War, the five nations signed treaties with the Confederacy, but their men fought on both sides. Union soldiers won the Battle of Honey Springs in

1863. New treaties in 1866 ended slavery in the nations. The nations also gave up their western land, and other tribes were moved onto it. Cheyenne, Kiowa and Comanche warriors raided ranches and wagon trains in Kansas and Texas. In 1868, the army attacked a Cheyenne village on the Washita River and won. The Red River War ended in 1875, and those tribes then lived on reservations.

### Land Runs and Statehood

Cowboys drove Texas cattle north across the territory, and railroads followed. In 1889, the United States opened land in the middle to settlers in the first **land run**. Congress made the western half Oklahoma **Territory** in 1890. In the east, the nations' shared land was divided into a farm for each member. In 1905, Native leaders asked Congress for a state named Sequoyah. Congress said no. On November 16, 1907, the two territories joined as Oklahoma, the 46th state. Guthrie was the first capital. Oklahoma City took its place in 1910.



### Building Oklahoma

Oil brought workers and money, and towns grew fast. Farmers plowed the plains for wheat. In the 1930s, a long **drought** dried the plowed soil, and wind blew it away in dust storms. Farmers who stayed planted rows of trees and learned new ways to plow. Nearly 40 Native nations have their governments in Oklahoma today.

## OKLAHOMA THROUGH TIME



### PEOPLE TO KNOW

|                 |                                 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Sequoyah        | Made a way to write Cherokee.   |
| Will Rogers     | Cherokee cowboy and movie star. |
| Jim Thorpe      | Sac and Fox Olympic champion.   |
| Maria Tallchief | Osage ballet star from Fairfax. |
| Woody Guthrie   | Folk singer born in Okemah.     |

### WORDS TO KNOW

|           |                                     |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| treaty    | a written agreement between nations |
| land run  | a race to claim free land           |
| territory | U.S. land that is not yet a state   |
| drought   | a long time with very little rain   |