

# Oklahoma Indian Education Tribal Guide: The Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma

## Tribal Seal/Flag/Website

Tribal Seal:



Tribal Flag:



Tribal Website: <https://fortsillapache-nsn.gov/>



## Migration/Movement/Forced Removal

Original Homeland-

- Arizona, New Mexico, West Texas; Map, *Oklahoma Indian Country Guide*
- Forced removal - Florida, Alabama, to Southwest Oklahoma,
- Location In Oklahoma- Apache, OK

The Fort Sill Apache Tribe was moved to Oklahoma in 1894 after nearly a decade of imprisonment and exile at U.S. Army installations in Florida and Alabama. Today's tribal members are survivors and descendants of the Chiricahua Apache tribe, whose original territory covered much of what is now the American Southwest including eastern Arizona and western New Mexico, along the United States border with Mexico. The Tribe's current location is the result of direct action by the United States Congress, which passed a special provision enabling the federal government to relocate the Chiricahua prisoners of war to southwestern Oklahoma. The Chiricahua were the last American Indian group to be relocated to Indian Territory.

Upon their arrival at Fort Sill the Apache prisoners of war were told that the fort would become their permanent home and the military reservation was enlarged to accommodate that purpose. Following the allotment of surrounding Indian lands, local non-Indian politicians, business leaders, and U.S. Army officials agitated to continue the presence of the military near Lawton. By 1910 these individuals began the final orchestration to remove the Apache prisoners of war from the military reservation. The Chiricahua were pressured to leave Fort Sill as a condition for their freedom, but many held out for return to their homeland or allotment at Fort Sill. Eventually, leaders of the

Mescalero Apache Reservation (in New Mexico), urged by government agents, invited the Chiricahua to relocate to their reservation (a move that strengthened their own efforts to preserve their reservation lands from non-Indian encroachment).

Despite the efforts of government and military officials, about one-third of the Tribe continued to demand the lands they had been promised. A compromise between the Indian Bureau and the War Department led to the settling of those Fort Sill Apache who had declined joining the Mescaleros in 1913 on unused (dead) allotments from the old Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation lands near Fort Sill. These prisoners of war, numbering approximately eighty-one individuals in about twenty families, were eventually released in 1914 and resettled on small allotments of farmland scattered around Apache and Fletcher, Oklahoma.



The Tribe, seeking reparations and justice, remained organized with no written constitution. They opposed organizing under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1937. In the aftermath of a multimillion dollar land and resource claim settlement from the Indian Claims Commission in 1973; the Fort Sill Apache Tribe adopted a Bureau of Indian Affairs constitution in 1976. Funds reserved from the land claim settlement have been used to provide a land base for the Tribe and to provide services for the tribal members.

Sources:

Fort Sill Apache Tribal website: <http://www.fortsillapache-nsn.gov> Student handbook “*Oklahoma Indian Country*” booklet page 36

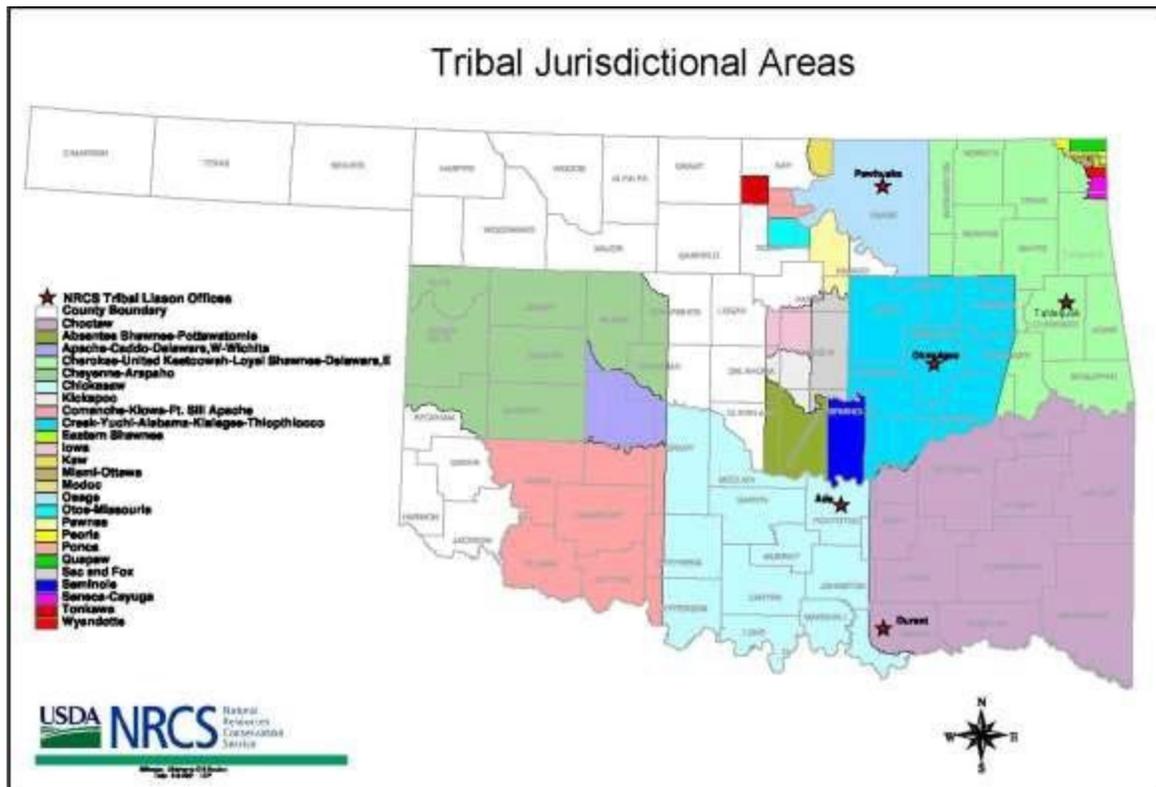
Oklahoma Historical Society source to consider for Indian Removal information: <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/i/in015.html>

The Library of Congress documents: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Indian.html>

Oklahoma Indian Country Guide, Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department [http://s3.amazonaws.com/content.newsok.com/newsok/images/NIE/nie\\_docs/Indian%20Country%20Tab,%2036%20page.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/content.newsok.com/newsok/images/NIE/nie_docs/Indian%20Country%20Tab,%2036%20page.pdf)



## Maps



Present day location in Oklahoma

## Population Past/Present

Total tribal enrollment – 667 as of February, 2011

Tribal enrollment in Oklahoma – N/A

Membership criteria- 1/16 minimum blood quantum (this is equivalent to one great-great grandparent)

Source: Fort Sill Apache Tribal website

## Government: Chiefs vs Chairman, Elected or Paternal

The supreme governing body of the Fort Sill Apache Tribe of Oklahoma is the General Council which consists of all members of the Tribe eighteen years of age or older.

The General Council acts through elections, which are cast via absentee ballot. Elections may be proposed by resolution through a majority vote at a General Council meeting, a petition signed by ten percent (10%) of the Fort Sill Apache General Council, or by action of the Business Committee or the Tribal Chairman.



The General Council votes annually to approve the tribal operations budget and to elect members of the Business Committee. The General Council meets as needed and on the first Saturday of October, which coincides with Business Committee elections.

The Business Committee consists of six members, a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary—Treasurer and three (3) additional Committeemen. Members of the Business Committee hold office for two (2) years and its officers also act as officers of the General Council.

## Language Group

(There are several standards that mention Indian Code Talkers which would be a use of language).

Language family: Southern Athapaskan

## Traditional Lifeways

Southwestern

[History](#); [Foods](#); [Ceremonies](#);

Oklahoma Historical Society source to consider for Boarding Schools:

<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/a/am012.html>

## Fine Arts

## Significant Events

“Fort Sill was staked out Jan. 8, 1869 by Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan during a massive winter campaign against the Indians. An earlier fort in the area, Fort Cobb, was in a poor location, whereas all the tribes considered the Medicine Bluffs a religious and cultural attraction. Camp Wichita was established near those bluffs (which lie near the center of Fort Sill today). At the time, Sheridan and the War Department wanted to force the Indians onto reservations in Indian Territory (modern day Oklahoma). Sheridan’s campaign involved six cavalry regiments. The units that originally camped at Camp Wichita included the 7th Cavalry (under the command of brevet Brig. Gen. George A. Custer), the 19th Kansas Volunteers and the 10th Cavalry (a unit of African-Americans who would become known as the famous “buffalo soldiers” commanded by Brevet Maj. Gen. Benjamin H. Grierson). The first post commander was Grierson and the first Indian agent was Col. Albert Gallatin Boone.”



## Treaties

Source(s):

Oklahoma Historical Society: <http://www.okhistory.org/research/indianrecs>

Oklahoma Historical Society's Chronicles

of Oklahoma; <http://sill-www.army.mil/HISTORY/>

## Current Tribal Information

Fort Sill Apache Receive U.S. Reservation proclamation

<http://ndnnews.com/2011/11/fort-sill-apache-tribe-receives-u-s-reservation-proclamation-following-a-125-year-wait/>

**Akela, New Mexico (September 29, 2011)** – The results are in and the message is loud and clear. New Mexico residents want jobs; they want the Fort Sill Chiricahua Warm Springs Apache Tribe (Fort Sill Apache) and believe that the Apache Homelands Casino will deliver much needed economic growth in Southwest New Mexico.

Nationally renowned pollster and President of Luntz Global, LLC Dr.

Frank Luntz said, "Legislators should listen to the people they represent, because these results show they are screaming loud and clear. New Mexicans are telling their leaders they want jobs, and that they believe Ft. Still Apache Tribe has a plan to create them."

Famous Fort Sill Apache Leaders

Mahko; Mangus Coloradas; Cochise; Victorio; Loco; Taza, Chihuahua;

Gil-lee; Naiche; Mangus

Sources: <http://www.fortsillapache->

Traditional Foods

As a general rule, Apaches would not eat bugs, scaly things, slimy things, or things which lived in water. Nor would Apaches eat anything which they believed ate those things. They would not eat bears, pigs, dogs, or fish because these animals ate nasty things. Mules, woodrats and in emergencies even field mice could be used for food because these animals ate only plants or fruit or seeds. The key to survival was the ability to find sustenance. Knowledge of the relationships between the plants, the animals, the terrain, and the seasons allowed the Chiricahuas to be in the right places at the right times to harvest the products of their land. Ndebitah, the land of the Chiricahua. The Chiricahua Apaches in the 1800's had a great variety of foods available to them. Most of these foods were gathered with much effort and traveling. Apaches learned to prepare these foods by methods passed on through generations without



written recipes. These two recipes, boiled meat and chigustei, were selected because they don't require wild foods like many Apache recipes, they are easy to prepare, and they are typical of Chiricahua Apache food. Writing these recipes required measuring ingredients and observing procedures which are usually done through long familiarity by the Apache cook.

**Source:** [www.fortsillapache-nsn.gov](http://www.fortsillapache-nsn.gov) Oklahoma Historical Society  
Oklahoma Indian Country Guide, Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation  
Department The Library of Congress  
University of Oklahoma Western History Collection: Doris Duke  
Collection; Indian Pioneer Papers; Native American Manuscripts;  
<http://digital.libraries.ou.edu/homehistory.php>

