

GLOSSARY

Federal Recognition A significant distinction for any tribe, federal recognition has enormous emotional, historical, and economic importance to Native tribes. It opens a wide range of benefits and protection under federal legislation, exemption from state statutes, and status as a sovereign domestic nation. Federally-recognized Native entities have a direct government-to-government relationship with the United States, have their own jurisdiction separate from the surrounding territory, and are entitled to share in benefits under Acts of Congress specifically designated for Indian tribes, bands, communities, and Native Alaskan villages and corporations.

Once the federal government formally acknowledges the existence of an Indian community—historically by treaty or Act of Congress, more recently through a rigorous administrative process in the Bureau of Indian Affairs—it enjoys the formal privileges of a sovereign “nation within a nation”. Federal recognition requires that a group of people document not only their descent from a particular tribe or alliance of tribes, but also their continuous existence as a community in which some form of governmental organization had political authority over its members.

Indian Territory Originally defined as all territory of the United States west of the Mississippi River but not within the states of Missouri, Louisiana, and Arkansas—it soon became restricted to the present state of Oklahoma. Many Native peoples from throughout the United States, but especially the south-east, were forcibly moved to this area during the 1800s. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 allowed the government to grant unsettled western prairie lands to Indians in exchange for their ancestral homelands.

Trail of Tears When in the 1830s the Five Civilized Tribes (Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole, Cherokee, and Creek) refused to trade their cultivated farms in exchange for strange lands in Indian Territory, some 100,000 of them, many in manacles, were forced to march westward under military coercion. Up to a quarter of them died on what became known as the “Trail of Tears”. Even more reluctant to leave their native lands were the Florida Indians, who fought resettlement for seven years (1835-42) in the second of the Seminole Wars.

Units of Measure The text of this volume expresses measurements in the English system as used in the United States: One acre is 0.405 hectares. One foot is 30.38 centimeters. One mile is 1.61 kilometers.

Vexillology The study of flags, a branch of the social sciences drawing on heraldry, semiotics, history, graphic arts, and political science, derives its name from the Latin *vexillum*—a Roman cavalry flag. Related terms include *vexilloid*—a flag-like object, *vexilliferous*—having a flag, and *vexillography*—the description of flags.