

Tribes of Georgia

Tribes who have occupied Georgia at some time and their Tribal histories from "The Indian Tribes of North America" by John R. Swanton

Apalachee

After the English and Creeks destroyed the Apalachee towns in Florida in 1704, they established a part of the tribe in a village not far below present-day Augusta. In 1715, when the Yamasee War broke out, the Apalachee joined the hostile Indians and went to the Chattahoochee to live near that faction of the Lower Creeks which was favorable to Spain. Soon after, however, the English faction gained the ascendancy among the Creeks and the Apalachee returned to Florida.

Apalachicola

The earliest known home of the Apalachicola was near the river that bears their name in the center of the Lower Creek country. Later they lived for a considerable period at the point where it comes into existence through the juncture of the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers.

Chatot

Some of this tribe lived at times in the southwest corner of Georgia. The Chatot were first mentioned in a Spanish document of 1639 in which the governor of Florida congratulates himself for having consummated peace between the Chatot, Apalachicola and Yamasee on one side and the Apalachee on the other. This, he says, is an extraordinary thing as the Chacatos never maintained peace with anybody.

Cherokee

From early times the Cherokee occupied the northern and northeastern parts of Georgia, though from certain place names it seems probable that they were preceded by Creeks. A census taken in 1825 gave the number of eastern Cherokees as 13,563; 147 white men with Indian wives, 73 white women with Indian husbands, 1277 negro slaves.

In 1820 at New Echota or New Town in Gordon Co., GA, the Cherokee Congress was formed. It was modeled after that of the United States. John Ross, 1/8th (born in GA 3 Oct 1790 and died Washington, D.C. 1 Aug 1866) was made the first President of the National Council.

In 1821, Sequoya (George Gist of reputed Cherokee and German parentage) gave to his people an Indian alphabet of eighty-five characters.

On 26 July 1827, a Constitution was ordained and the Cherokee Nation declared "sovereign and independent having complete jurisdiction over its territory to the exclusion of the authority of any other state". Charles R. Hicks, a Moravian convert of mixed blood and the most influential man

of his tribe, was elected principle Chief and his assistant was John Ross. John Ross succeeded Hicks as Chief during the next year and held that position throughout life. Some of the Cherokees foresaw that their removal was coming and the Nation became divided into two parties. John Ross headed the National Party which was opposed to the removal and Major Ridge with his son John Ridge, and his nephew Elias Boudinot lead the Treaty party which favored the removal.

Chiaha

The Chiaha belonged to the Muskogean linguistic stock and in later times spoke the Muskogee tongue, but there is every reason to classify them in the Hitchiti group. At an early period, they seem to have been divided into two bands; one on Burns Island in the present state of Tennessee and the other in eastern Georgia near the coast. In later times, the Chiaha were on the middle course of the Chattahoochee River. The Mikasuki of northern Florida are said to have separated from these people.

Chickasaw

A band of Chickasaw lived near Augusta from about 1723 to the opening of the Revolutionary War. Later for some time they could be found among the Lower Creeks. Linguistically the Chickasaw were closely connected to the Choctaw and one of the principle tribes of the Muskogean group.

Creek

In the 16th Century, a part and possibly a large part of the Indians who later made up the Creek Confederacy were on the present-day Georgia coast. The Spaniards called this area the province of Guale. Due to difficulties with the whites, many moved inward. In the latter part of the 17th century most of these were referred to as Lower Creeks and lived on the Chattahoochee and Ocmulgee Rivers. At that time the Ocmulgee River was called the Ocheese Creek which came from the Hitchiti name for the Indians living on it. After the Yamassee War in 1715, the Creeks assembled on the Chattahoochee River, part on the Georgia side and part on the Alabama side. It was here that they stayed until they were removed to Oklahoma.

About 1832 many of the Creeks sold land to the whites for settlement. Many land deeds and wills can be found at the Russell Co., AL court house.

Creek Confederacy

The Creek Confederacy was built around a group of dominant tribes called Muskogee. The name Creek became attached to these people early on by the Carolina colonists. The Creeks were divided geographically into two parts, one called Upper Creeks, on the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers and the Lower Creeks, on the lower Chattahoochee and Ocmulgee. The dominant Muskogee gathered the Apalachicola, Hitchiti, Okmulgee, Sawokli, Chiaha, Osochi, Yuchi,

Alabama, Tawasa, Pawokti, Muklasa, Koasati, Tuskegee, a part of the Shawnee and for a time some Yamasee. There were also some broken bands and families from various quarters. The first seven of the above, for the most part, were Lower Creeks, the remainder with the Upper Creeks.

Guale

This tribe was located on the Georgia coast between St. Andrews Sound and Savannah River. When the French Huguenot colony was at Port Royal, SC in 1562, they heard of a chief called Ouade' and visited him several times for provisions. In 1569 the Jesuits did missionary work among the Guales and Cusabo and proved unsuccessful and abandoned their work. In 1573, the missionary work was resumed by the Franciscans. In 1597 there was a general insurrection in which all of the missionaries except one was killed. In retaliation, the Governor of Florida burned many of the Guale towns and grainaries, reducing the Indians into submission. By 1601 the rebellion was over. The grammar of the Guale language by missionary Domingo Augustin (c 1570) was the first of any language in that region to be compiled.

Hitchiti

The Hitchiti are identifiable with the Ocute of DeSoto's chroniclers, who were on or near the Ocmulgee River. Early English maps show their town on the present site of Macon, GA. After 1715 they moved to the Chattahoochee, settling first in Henry Co., AL, but later at the site above mentioned in Chattahoochee Co., GA. From this place, they moved to Oklahoma, where they gradually merged with the rest of the Indians of the Creek Confederacy.

Kasihta

This was one of the most important divisions of the Muskogee, possibly identical with the Cofitachequi of the De Soto narratives.

Oconee

Early documents reveal at least two bodies of Indians bearing the name Oconee and they were probably related. One was on or near the coast of GA. They later seemed to have moved to the Apalachee country and have merged with them before the end of the 17th century. The other about 1685 were on the Chattahoochee River and later appeared at Rock Landing on the Oconee River in GA. Part of another group may have been located more northerly. About 1716 they moved to the east bank of the Chattahoochee River in Stewart Co., GA. Later they went to the Alachua Plains in Alachua Co., FL. They became the nucleus of the Seminole Nation and furnished the chief to the Seminoles until the end of the Seminole war. Most of them were taken to Oklahoma, but they had already lost their identity.

Okmulgee

The Okmulgee probably separated from the Hitchiti or one of their towns when these towns were on the Ocmulgee River. They settled around Macon, GA and later in the great bend of the Chattahoochee River near Russell Co., AL. They went west with the other Creeks and reestablished themselves in the most northerly part of the allotted territory, where they gradually lost their identity. They gave the prominent Perryman family to the Creek Nation and its well-known head chief, Pleasant Porter. The capital of the Creek Nation in what is now Oklahoma, Okmulgee, comes from this tribe.

Osochi

Their best known location was in the great bend of the Chattahoochee River, Russell Co., AL near the Chiaha. This location is across the river from Muscogee Co., GA. They are a division of the Lower Creeks which lived for a time in Southwestern GA.

Sawokli

These were a division of the Creeks belonging to a group of towns that spoke the Hitchiti language. Their best known location was on the Chattahoochee River in the northeastern part of present-day Barbour Co., AL. Other villages were in Clay Co., GA not far from Ft. Gaines and Stewart Co., GA on the east bank of the Chattahoochee River.

Shawnee

The Shawnee band settled near Augusta, GA. Few tribes have moved as much as this one. Tradition has that this tribe migrated to the Cumberland River in TN. Shortly after 1674, they settled on the Savannah River. Later, some of these moved to PA and after the Yamasee War, some moved from the Savannah River area to live among the Creeks first on the Chattahoochee River and later on the Tallapoosa. Groups of this tribe merged with several other tribal nations in many locations including AL, GA, IL, IN, KS, KY, MD, D.C., MO, OH, OK, PA, SC, TX and VA.

Tamathli

The Tamathli were a part of the Atsik-hata group of the Creek Confederacy. They were located in the southwest Georgia and neighboring parts of Florida. When DeSoto was in Georgia in 1540, this tribe is believed to have been living at Pine Island in Daugherty County. They may have been connected with the Altamaha Yamasee living between Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers. In 1799, Benjamin Hawkins in his writings set them down as one of the tribes entering into the formation of the Florida Seminole.

Timucua

When the Spanish first encountered this tribe they occupied northern and central Florida and Cumberland Island. Pressure by the northern Indians caused them to withdraw from this area in the latter part of the seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

Yamassee or Yamacraw

The earliest location that we have of this tribe is on the Ocmulgee River not far from its junction with the Oconee. They seemed to have ranged northeastward of these rivers to or slightly beyond Savannah, but always inward. This spoke a Muskogean dialect and tradition affirms that it was connected most closely with Hitchiti. This tribe was first mentioned by the Spanish in 1521. They remained relatively unnoticed until about 1633 when they asked for missionaries and in 1639 when peace was said to have been made between the allied Chatot, Lower Creeks and Yamasee or their near relatives. Eighty seven of this tribe's warriors took part in Barnwell's expedition against the Tuscorora. In 1715 they rebelled against the English and killed two to three hundred settlers. They were defeated by Governor Craven and took refuge in Florida. The Oklawaha band of Seminole is said to have been descended from them. After the Seminole War it appears that groups dispersed, In 1730 a small band of this tribe settled in the site of what is now Savannah under the name of Yamacraw.

Yuchi

The Yuchi were of the Uchean linguistic stock which made it distinct from all others. The earliest location known was in eastern Tennessee, while some of them extended as far east as Muscle Shoals. There appear to have been three principal bands in historic times. One on the Tennessee River, one in west Florida and one on the Savannah River. The Yuchi were mentioned in DeSoto's chronicles under the name of Chisca in what is now Tennessee. In 1729 Captain Ellick, a Kasihta Chief married three Yuchi women. He was able to persuade several Yuchi to move over among the Lower Creeks. Governor Oglethorpe guaranteed them right to their old land until after 1740. The final removal took place in 1751. The main body of Yuchi shifted from Savannah to Uchee Creek in Russell Co., Alabama between 1729 and 1740. The Yuchi that remained with the Creeks accompanied them west and settled in Creek Co., Oklahoma.

Yufera

This is a division of the Muskogee tribe. They were located somewhere inland from Cumberland Island and perhaps in the present territory of Georgia. They may also be referred to as Eufaula.