

2) Economy, Business :

The majority of tribes' economies rely on Casinos. There are a huge amount of Casinos in Oklahoma, more than in any other state in the USA. But they also rely on the soil resources, there are tribes who are very rich thanks to their oil resources.

⑩ Natural resources

After 1905 deposits of lead and zinc in the Tri-State Mining District made the Quapaws of Ottawa County some of the richest Indians of the USA. Zinc mines also left hazardous waste that still poisons parts of their lands.

The Osages became known as the world's richest Indians because their “head right” system distributed the royalties from their “underground reservation” equally to the original allottees.

The Osage's territory was full of oil.



⑩ Gaming revenues

The Chickasaw are today the richest tribe in Oklahoma thanks to their Casinos they make a lot of profit. On their website you can read : “From Bank2, Bedre Chocolates, KADA and KYKC radio stations and the McSwain Theatre to the 13 gaming centers, travel plazas and tobacco stores, the variety and prosperity of the Chickasaw Nation's businesses exemplifies the epitome of economic success!”.



The Comanche Tribe derives revenue from four casinos. The Comanche Nation Casino in Lawton features a convention center and hotel and has a surface of 45,000 square feet. The others are the Red River Casino at Devol north of the Red River, and two small casinos : Comanche star casino east of Walters and Comanche Spur Casino near Elgin. Enlargements of the casinos are planned . There are smoke shops and convenience stores in the casinos. They also own a funeral home in Lawton and the Clean Sweep company. Individual tribal members have 201,000 allotted acres. The tribe owns about 7,500 acres of trust land dotted throughout six counties of southwestern Oklahoma. The lands are jointly held with the Kiowas and the plains Apaches and yield lease income from farming, ranching and oil and gas production. Some tribal revenue is used to aid tribal small business ventures. The tribe also has buffalo and horse herds.

Each year the members receive money, the majority of the people keep this money for their children, and a minority spend it immediately.

The white American people are not for the money games because of their conservatism and religious beliefs.

⑩ Smoking shops

The agreements are that the United States Government and local state governments do not have the right to tax Native American products. So, when the tribes decide to sell cigarettes, they are not subjected to state and federal taxes --- so they are cheaper and everyone wants to buy cigarettes from the Native American sellers.

⑩ How do they use their money?

Tribal members do not receive any money from the federal governments. Some tribal members receive distributions of money that derive from land claims settlements or income generated from the sale, development...Per capita distributions from tribal enterprises represent the tribe's decision to redistribute tribal wealth (ordinarily generated from a tribal business) with individual payments to every tribal member. However, tribes generally redistribute tribal income to the community through services made available to all, rather than through individual disbursements.

The Citizen Potawatomi nation gives out about \$2,000,000 in scholarships and housing a year to Indian college students. They focus on helping their tribe but also help other tribes (such as the absentee Shawnee) if members of tribes do not have money to go to college.

- **Do tribal governments pay federal taxes?**

Like state governments, tribal governments are considered sovereign governments not subject to taxation by the federal government. This is a long-standing federal policy with Constitutional support that prevents interference with the ability to raise revenue for government functions. Like state and local governments, tribal governments use their revenues to provide essential services for their citizens. Unlike state governments, tribal governments are generally not in a position to levy property or income taxes because of the unique nature of land tenure in Indian Country, fragile economies, and jurisdictional restraints. Income from tribal businesses is the only non-federal revenue source for most tribes.

⑩ **Car licence plates**

The American citizens pay taxes to the government for their car. The tribal citizens don't pay taxes to the federal government so their plates are different :



Chickasaw



Potawatomi



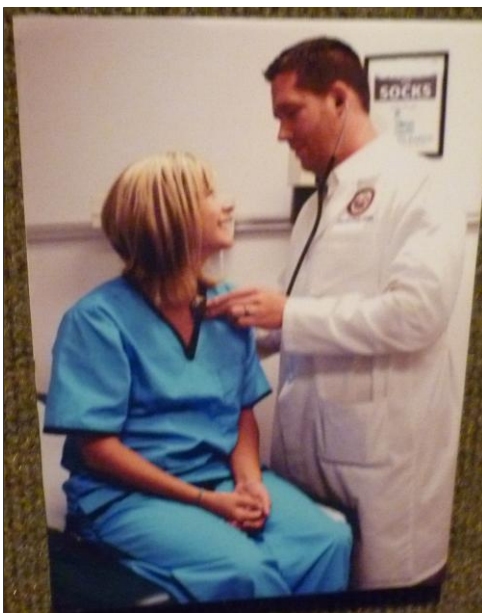
Cherokee



Seminole

3) *Services*

⑩ **Health services**



For the Potawatomi tribe:

The Citizen Potawatomi Tribe (CPN) offers a wide variety of services to its members and other Native Americans in its service delivery area. These services include the Housing Authority, which operates with funding from Housing & Urban Development (HUD) in order to provide members with affordable housing and rental units.

The CPN health clinic provides services to CPN members and other Native Americans who live in and around Shawnee. The staff is not only composed of members of the Potawatomi tribe.

Its pharmacy provides prescription drugs to eligible Native Americans in the service area and to tribal elders who live anywhere in the USA.

The new FireLake Wellness Center provides a place to work out, develop a wellness-based nutrition plan, and receive diabetes treatment and information for tribal members and others who are eligible.

The CPN Health Aids Foundation helps tribal members purchase needed medical aids, such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, mobility devices, sleep apnea CPAP machines, and other devices.

The Title VI program provides a place for tribal elders to socialize and enjoy a mid-day meal. It recently moved to new quarters at the Wellness Center, which is located adjacent to the health clinic on South Gordon Cooper Drive.

The Child Care Development Center has achieved Two Star status. It is the largest child care facility in Pottawatomie County. A new facility, being built as an addition to the tribal administration building, will double the center's capacity.

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program provides nutrition information and food purchase assistance to clients in the Shawnee area and in Oklahoma City. The WIC office is in the FireLake Discount Foods building.

10 Seniors services

The Chickasaw senior sites are important community gathering places for elders. The Chickasaw nation has senior sites in every one of the four Chickasaw voting districts. At the senior sites the senior citizens can socialize, act, play games, and plan outings.



⑩ Employment

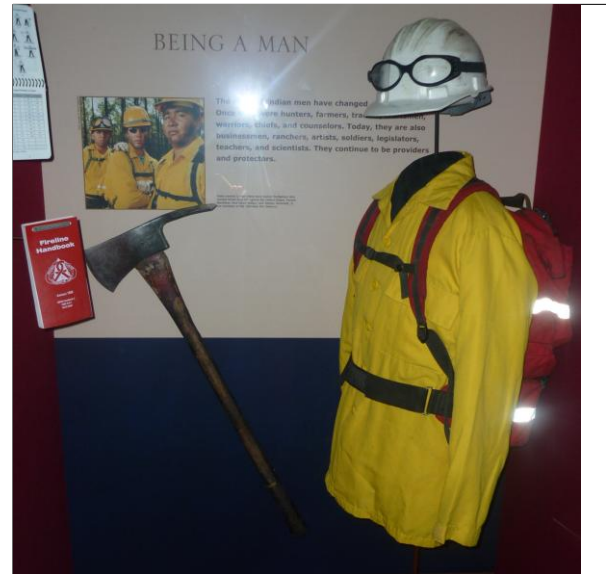
⑩ For the men

The roles of Indian men have changed over time. Once they were hunters, farmers, traders, craftsmen, warriors, chiefs, and counselors. Today they are also business man, ranchers, artists, soldiers, legislators teachers, and scientists. They continue to be providers and protector.

Today several indian tribes have trained firefighters who combat forest fires throughout the United States.

⑩ For the women

Indian woman have always played important roles in their homes and commnuities revered as the creator oof life, the woman raised children, made and decorated clothes and other items maintained her household. Communally she planted and harvested crops, butchered meat, and cooked at feasts. As the twentieth century approached indian Women ventured into professions, activities and accomplishments.



Forrest Blackbear, Paul David Sallars, and Georges Grimmet, Jr. Are members of the Cherokee fire dancers.

More and more Indians purchase college studies thus they can reach achieve high ranking jobs such as doctors, scientists...

Jerry Elliott or High Eagle, worked at the National Aeronautics and space administration for thirty years in the Gemini, Apollo, Skylab, Apollo/Soyuz, and the space Shuttle program.

Elliott received the Presidential Medal of freedom Certificate for his service as Retrofire officer during Apollo 13. A writer professional musician and Indian activist, Elliott helped found the American Indian science and engineering society.



The New Trails Club at NASA included (seated l to r) Lee Linson, Gordon House (Oneida), Jerry Elliott, Joe Doak (Cherokee), and Jack May (Cherokee). Standing are Loretta Burgess (Cherokee), Wauhilau "Mike" McKenzie (Cherokee), and Glenda Warren (Cherokee).

4) Culture

There has been a revival of interest in Native American culture (by Indians and non-Indians alike) since the Freedom of Religion Act was passed in the late 1970s. Before that time, Indians had a tremendous mistrust of the American government.

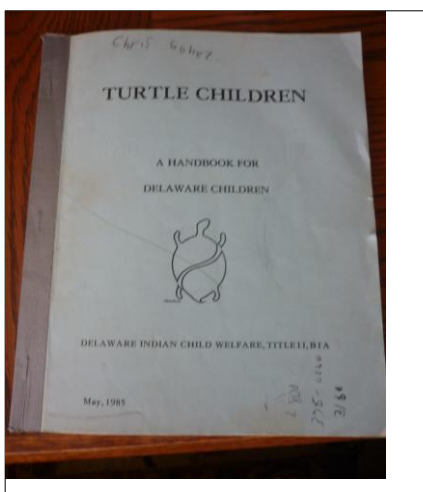
⑩ Teaching the young generation

⑩ In families

I met Mrs Sharon Gomez , she is a member of the western Delaware tribe (2000 members) , she is from the turtle clan, their symbol is the turtle. Indeed there are turtles everywhere at her home. She retains this element of her Indian origins. Sharon knows a lot about the history of her tribe, about removals, dates, territories. When she was younger, she was an Indian Princess. She has written many of the stories of her people to share with her children and grandchildren and to pass through the generations. Her favorite story



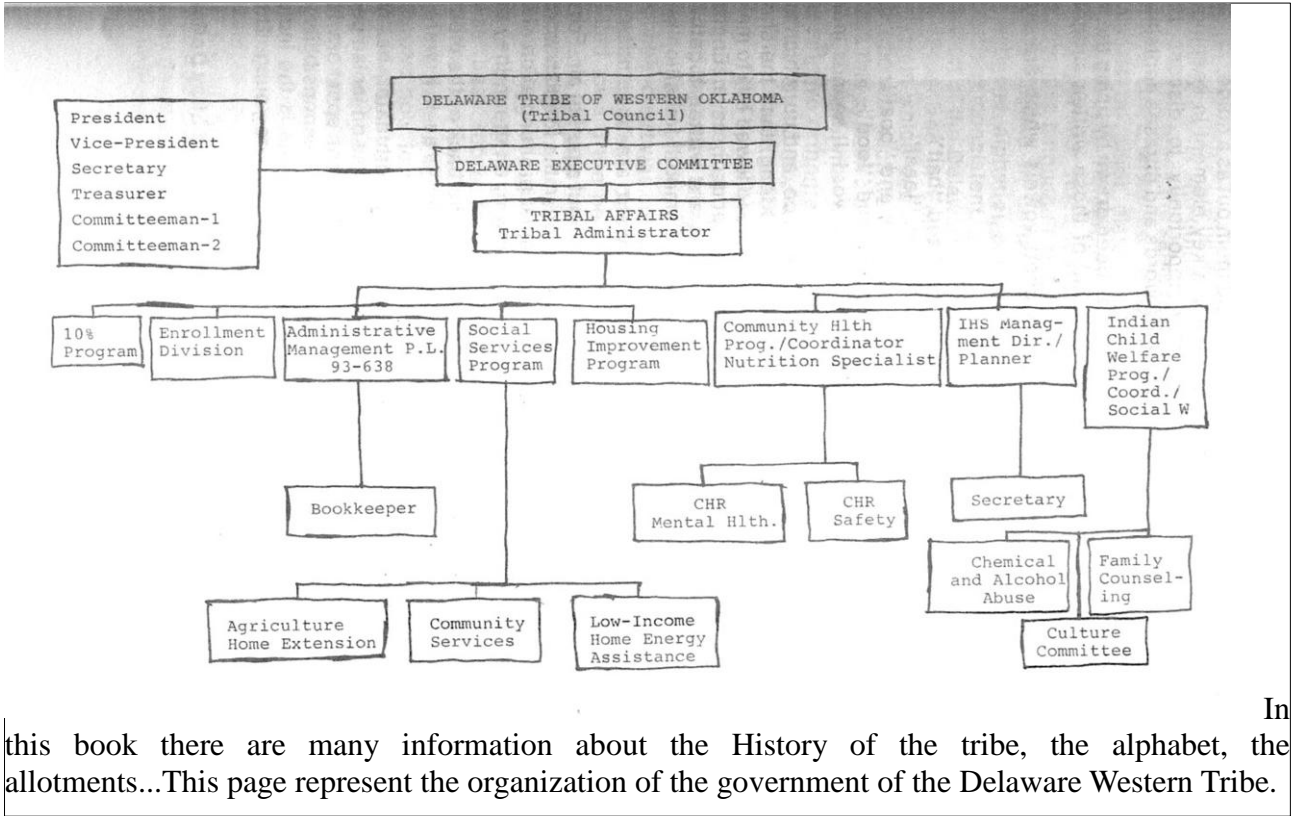
is the story of the turtle (!) and the disobedient boy who wouldn't listen to his mother when she said to leave the turtle alone and the turtle walked to the sea and dove in with the boy on his back.



She has also used a handbook called “the turtle children handbook” to teach her children about their tribe. It is important for her to teach her children about their origins because she owns 40 acres that she inherited from her great-grandmother, she described this land as peaceful : there are trees, a river where you can fish, hills... She would like her children to be interested in their Delaware History but she knows that they are too busy with work. Sharon believes that her family has already lost enough from its Indian heritage, for example, her mother knew how to make traditional clothes but this stopped with her.

The tribal government installed Summer programs for the kids but there are problems with the current president. Sharon's sister will likely become president of their tribe in the next few years and together, the two sisters will work to educate the younger

generations about their tribe and heritage. They will do this through classes and books and pow wows.



□ Tribal Colleges and Universities

Tribal colleges and universities are a category of higher education, minority-serving institutions in the United States. The educational institutions are distinguished by being controlled and operated by Native American tribes; they have become part of American Indians' institution-building in order to pass on their own cultures. The first was founded by the Navajo Nation in 1968 in Arizona, and several others were established in the 1970s.

□ Native American Studies

Colleges and universities offer a training course called “American Indian Studies” for students who are interested in earning a college degree with an emphasis on Native language, culture or history. It contains Anthropology; Art; English; History; Management; Politics; Psychology; Religion and Sociology. I had the opportunity of meeting a girl who followed these courses, here is the story and the interview:

Life is made of surprises, of meetings, life is amazing!! On the afternoon of Saturday, October 22 I was at the OU Football Game. We were waiting for the beginning of the game and I had an unexpected encounter!

Here is the story : I wanted to change my clothes, so I went in the camping car and someone said: “I would like to introduce Solène to you, she's from France, and she is working on The American Indians' heritage in Oklahoma today!” When I saw Mr Barrett I couldn't imagine that he was an Indian chief, the chief of the Potawatomi tribe! But, if you look at him a little bit more, you can notice this man is different...I'm not quite sure to be able to explain why but this man inspires RESPECT! He talked to me but I didn't understand because he has a pronounced accent, I understood the most important : he gave me his phone number and said “You have met two Indian women? It's not enough, you must come to see me at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation (CPN)”. I talked with Debra about my fabulous encounter and she said “Okay, I will call him and find an appointment!” She is fabulous!

Thus I went to The CPN on Friday, October 28. The Chairman was busy so I met Kelli Mosteller, she is the Director of the Citizen Potawatomi Cultural Heritage Center and PhD Candidate at the University of Texas at Austin. She is studying 19th and 20th-century U.S. history with a focus on Native American history.

Kelli knows her tribe's history perfectly, and she was fascinating. This interview shows how some Native Americans have got involved in their tribe's inheritance. She was very happy to receive us, here is an extract from an e-mail she send to Debra : *“It was wonderful to have you and Solène here for a visit, I'm thrilled you enjoyed it. I love talking about our history, so I could have gone on all day.”*

I noticed that when Kelli talks about her ancestors, she says “we”!

She was happy to share her knowledge about relations between Potawatomi Indians and the French people

The Potawatomi have an extensive history with the French. In fact, of the 49 families that were in existence at the time the Citizen Potawatomi signed the treaty with the U.S. Government, most of the 49 families had French blood and names such as : Bourbonais, Tesier, Peltier, La Framboise, Bertrand, Vieux...The first Potawatomi contact with the French white man was in 1634. It was with Jesuit missionaries and the Potawatomi were exposed to Catholicism. They did a lot of trading with the French, including fur trading. Overall, the Potawatomi's relationship with the French was warm and congenial.

→ About the tribe

Kelli's graduate research is focused on the Potawatomi tribal history from 1861 (when the treaty was signed with the American Government) to 1891 (when the lands were opened up to the Oklahoma Land Runs). The Citizen Potawatomi Indian lands (designated by the American Government) in what is now Oklahoma were originally 900 square miles (30 x 30). Each family in the tribe was allotted acreage from that. The tribe itself still owns 5,000 acres.

Some of the land was taken by the whites during the Oklahoma Land Runs. Sometimes, the Indians sold land out of necessity for making money to take care of their families.

There are 9 different Potawatomi tribes in existence in the United States, including the Citizen Potawatomi (CPN). The CPN were removed from their lands four times by the American Government. In 1861, the CPN separated from the Prairie Band when they signed a treaty with the American government. They became the Citizen Band because they signed the treaty.

There are currently 30,000 people in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. 1/3 of the CPN members live in Oklahoma.

→ Indian Name

Kelli Mosteller's Indian name is Peaceful Wolf. In their tradition, wolf was the first companion of man. Her story:

"As far as my Potawatomi name, Dokme Moewe, the dreams of wolves started when I was in 4th grade. My father works in the oil field and was sent over to Kuwait after the first gulf war. Once they had put the oil fires out they needed trained field hands to get the wells working again as well as to train local oil field workers on the latest technology. He was over there for a year working on the Kuwaiti border near Iraq. It was pretty dangerous since Americans were occasionally kidnapped and used as leverage."

Justin's Tribal name is ZAGNENIBI ou ZAGNENIDI Which means "on the outside but in the flow of things."

→ Different ways...

If Kelli and her mother are so involved in their tribe, it's not the case for Kelli's sister who is a student in chemistry and biology and who doesn't interest herself with her tribe. Even within the same family there are many ways of feeling Indian...

⑩ Cultural Centers and museums

A cultural center is a place made for visitors, it tells the story by-way of several means, including informative panels, interactive displays and historical artifacts. Their mission is to preserve and expand the knowledge of communities concerning Indian Arts and Culture with an emphasis on tribal History and Culture. Such places are good examples of the willingness that the tribes have to ensure the history, heritage, and culture, in order to preserve it for the future. There is a difference between museums and cultural centers. I visited both. A cultural center is focused on one tribe, owned by this tribe and led by its members. Whereas a museum is not focused only on one tribe or only on Indian History, guides are not Amerindians themselves.

Cultural center's first aim is to share the heritage with the members of the tribe, and the second aim is to educate the larger community.

The tribes have rights to their lands, so they can build Cultural Centers!

"It perpetuates our traditions for generations to come..."

I visited the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center (Shawnee)

This heritage center is composed of reconstructions of their ancestors way of life. There are clothes, family histories, a chronological frieze, videos and a gift shop where you can buy Native American jewelry... “ We maintain, protect, and nurture our culture, our spiritual beliefs, and our historic values, through the celebration of our unique traditions, language, and sovereignty. Promoting education is a corner stone of our mission. We



provide opportunity to, and support for the academic endeavors of, our youth. We acknowledge, respect, and utilize the wisdom of our tribal elders who provide guidance for our future generations. We protect and maintain our tribal lands, its architectural features, and other natural resources.”

There is also a special tribal heritage project : "The citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal project", addressed to the tribal members, it helps preserve the families' legacy. Since its inception in 2004, the tribal heritage project has been working to research and document the individuals family histories of the tribe's members and to capture tribal history as it happens. Here is the slogan to incite Potawatomi citizens to share their own knowledge about their family history: “ Have you ever wondered what your great-grandfather was like? Or what your great-grandmother would have wanted to share with you about your Potawatomi Heritage?”

The Comanche National museum and cultural heritage center

Its purpose is to allow visitors the opportunity to gain better understanding of the Comanche People. The CNMCC provides historical and cultural information that is often overlooked in books and modern day media. The facility serves as a teaching tool for the public and offers visitors a chance to learn about the largest American Indian tribe in the Lawton-Fort Sill area. The concept for the CNMCC was first introduced in the 70's by a group of tribal members who longed for a place to preserve their history, language and culture. “This dream” became reality in 2007 which is quite recent. The CNMCC is funded completely by the tribe's casino revenue, the museum is an example of positive distribution of gaming monies.

Language

For most Indian tribes language is now recognized as a very important part of their culture. Indeed, there was a long period during which there was a loss of language, thus today, the few fluent speakers who are left, are old.

“The Chikashshanompa' (Chickasaw language) is the most fundamental part of our culture. Our language makes us as unique. Our language was given by Aba' Binni'li, our Creator, and it is our obligation to care for it -to learn it, speak it and teach it to our children. The chipota Chikashsnompoli (children speaking Chickasaw) Language Club learns Chickasaw through hands-on, real world experiences such as sports, fishing and performing skits.”

→ The Potawatomi language



Only 20 people in the world still speak the Potawatomi language fluently. One of them is Justin Nelly who is in his early 20s and works with the Citizen Potawatomi Cultural Center and Nation as the language director. I have a record of him talking in the Potawatomi language. He obtained grants from universities such as Yale to go and meet with the few remaining Potawatomi fluent language speakers (who are between 70 and 80 years old) and to absorb and document as much of the language as possible. He provides language lessons online and teaches classes to young Potawatomi Indians. These lessons began 12 years ago.



Justin during a lesson for young Citizens Potawatomi.

Source : <http://www.potawatomi.org>

⑩ Ceremonies and Pow Wows

⑩ The different ceremonies in the Potawatomi tribe:

There is the naming ceremony. As a young person, you choose someone within the tribe to name you and they think about it and pray before performing the official naming ceremony. Kelly was named Peaceful Wolf during her naming ceremony.

There is the water ceremony. Only women can speak for the water. Water is the lifeblood of the world and women are the lifeblood of humans.

Indians have a strong positive relationship with animals. They believe that you do not kill animals without thanking the animal for its life. We must exercise appreciation for what the animal has given us. This is called stewardship.

There are seasonal ceremonies which include celebration and feasts for the four seasons. For example, there are winter stories that are only told in the winter.

There is the Pipe ceremony. A high quality of tobacco is given as a gift during the pipe ceremony and it is smoked in a pipe but only taken into the mouth and then blown out of the mouth.

There are sweat lodge ceremonies which you use to get the impurities out of your body and spirit. When you go to a sweat lodge ceremony, you get what you were meant to get and you leave behind what you were meant to leave behind.

⑩ What is a Pow wow?

A pow-wow is a gathering of North America's Native people. A modern pow-wow is a specific type of event where both Native American and non-Native American people meet to dance, sing, socialize, and honor American Indian culture. Moreover people are traditionally dressed. There is generally a dancing competition, often with significant prize money awarded. Pow-wows vary in length from one day session of 5 to 6 hours to three days. Major pow-wows or pow-wows called for a special occasion can be up to one week long.

The Red Earth Festival takes place every year in June in Oklahoma City, it is the most important pow-wow in Oklahoma. During three days more than 1200 American Indian artists and dancers from throughout North America gather to celebrate the richness and diversity of their heritage with the world. For three exciting days Oklahoma City is at the center of Native American art and culture in America!

At Red Earth, guests can sample the work of some of the nation's most celebrated artists, with opportunities to purchase contemporary and traditional examples of beadwork, basketry, jewelry, pottery, sculpture, paintings, graphics and cultural attire during the juried art show and market.

The dance competition and demonstrations at Red Earth are one of the rare occasions when dancers from America's Northern and Southern tribes can be seen together in one venue.

A grand parade, opens the Red Earth Festival on Friday morning. The streets of downtown Oklahoma City are vibrate in Native American tribal spirit as representatives of more than 100 tribes, in full tribal regalia.

Red Earth is a non-profit organization.

This video shows the Red Earth Festival dancing with some explanations:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oL7imuhywKU>

⑩ Princesses

Modern Indian Princesses are young women who are selected to represent their communities, tribes, and organizations.

The term princess is a European title. Most Indian tribes traditionally did not have hereditary positions equivalent to family royalty. Some Indian societies awarded women a place of honor among chiefs and warriors. Modern Indian pageants are not beauty pageants. They are a forum to allow young women to



Sharon's princess jewels.

compete as a role models for all Indian women. Emphasis for the competition is placed on public speaking, talent, knowledge or tribal traditions, and culture.

I met an former Indian Princess, Sharon Gomez! She said that you are treated like royalty and that when you are a princess, you represent your tribe at pow wows and various public events.

Sharon's daughter was a princess too and Sharon hopes that her granddaughter will be as well.

As a tribal princess you have to wear a lot of jewels, Sharon has got a impressive bag full of jewelry, decorated with colorful Indian beaded and turquoise stones. It has immense value.



On the first picture there is Sharon when she has been elected as Delaware Tribal Princess.

On the second picture there is her daughter when she was elected and (and her niece), Sharon is in the middle. There are dressed in modern traditional clothes.

10 Sports

Jim Thorpe was born in 1887 and died in 1953. His Indian name was : Wa-tho-huck, which means Bright Path, he was apart of the Thunder Clan in the Sac and Fox Tribe. The Sac and Fox Indian acclaimed by his peers and a King as the world's greatest athlete of his time. An Olympic champion and professional football legend . He won gold medals in the decathlon and pentathlon in the 1912 Olympics, played professional baseball and in 1920, was elected the first president of what became the National Football League. Today there are the *Jim Thorpe Native American Games* which encourage athletes representing Indian Nations thus to be eligible to compete in the Games you must have a CDIB card. It has been officially announced that Oklahoma City will be the site of the 2012 Jim Thorpe Native American Games. The games will take place June 10-17, 2012 . The Games, which will feature more than 4,000 Native American athletes, will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Jim Thorpe's record-setting Olympic performance in Sweden. The Games will be comprised of 11 competitive sports, sporting exhibitions, an art show and traditional entertainment. The competitive sports include: baseball,



softball, basketball, tennis, stickball, golf, track and field, cross country, wrestling, beach volleyball and martial arts. Remington Park will be the host site for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the Native American Art Exhibition, and traditional cultural exhibitions throughout the week. Athletes representing Indian Nations, bands and tribes from across the United States and Canada will gather to share their talents in the spirit of the “World’s Greatest Athlete” and Native American Legend...Jim Thorpe.

The Jim Thorpe Association is a non-profit charitable organization that encourages excellence in sports, academics, health and fitness; preserves our sports heritage and build pride and positive lifestyles in the spirit of Jim Thorpe. Proceeds from the Games will benefit the Jim

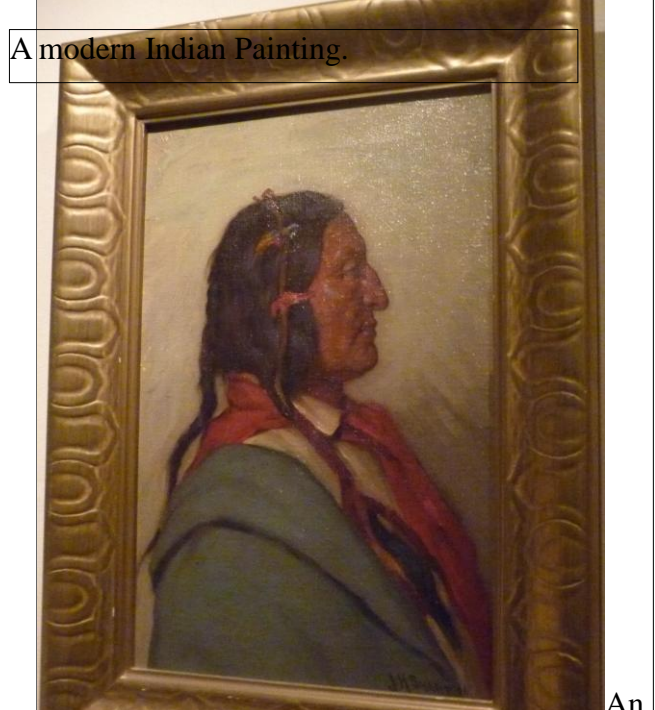
Thorpe Bright Path Youth programs and Native American Diabetes Research.

10 Arts

In every Museum we visited during the stay, there were always either Indian artifacts, paintings or sculptures.



Traditional clothes, artifacts.



A modern Indian Painting.

An portrait of an Indian Chief.



The Oklahoma State Capitol, a sculpture of an Indian Woman.

IV) Native American and White American live together

1) The Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission

The Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission is charged with the mission of serving as the liaison between Oklahoma's tribal population and governments and the Oklahoma State government. The Commission carries out its duty with the guidance of four statutorily determined goals: the creation of state and federal legislation; the creation of an advisory committee; the development and implementation of research projects and reports; and the development of cooperative programs between tribes and state, federal, local, private entities, health organizations, educational agencies, tourism, and economic development entities.

2) American Indian Education

Mr Dwight Pickering is from three different tribes : *Caddo*, his mother was full Caddo blood, *Otoe*, his father was half *Otoe* blood, and *Kaw* . Mrs Robillard explained to me that he has an Indian accent when he speaks, for instance he doesn't pronounce consonants, and so his speech became a series of different tones! That's why I had a lot of difficulty in understanding him, and that's why I'm very grateful to Mrs Robillard for her help.



When I met him, this man had been the director of the American Indian Education for only three weeks.

Serving as an ambassador for Indian Education providing guidance and leadership to the Native American tribes recognized as sovereign nations. Services include technical assistance information and appropriate professional development, as well as, collaborative efforts to bridge the gap between the state, tribal nations and schools. It provides educators with continued access to culturally appropriate resource/information and in-service that reflects teaching strategies and learning styles which ensure full inclusion of the Native American child in a positive learning environment and furthers the educational opportunities of the Native American students enrolled in Oklahoma's public schools. There are over 130,000 Native American students attending Oklahoma public schools.

What is the main difference between a Native American pupil and a Non Native pupil?

“As for Native American children learning different from Non Native children, is that Native Children are cultural taught to listen when you are spoken to, and when Ask a question to always listen, evaluate, and then to give the correct answer. That's why native children take a long time to answer question, if a teacher is not aware of their cultural learning style, they might think either the native student does not know the answer, or they are a slow learner and they might not call on them, or even have them evaluated for a learning disability. It's not that they can't answer the question, they are using their cultural side to answer.”

Here are the video-recordings that Mrs Robillard took during the interview:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvrEGjE-JQA&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pe6QmQPY01k&feature=youtu.be>

Note : The woman who was director of the American Indian Education before Mr Pickering is Seminole, her clan reveres the wind, indeed, when the tornado alarm rang she used to stay in her office to pray for, if she left and went to a secure place, she would not be showing the wind respect.

3) Interview with Blue Clark

Debra offered me the book “Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, a guide” by Blue Clark. This man is from the Muscogee (Creek) tribe and he is an author, Professor at Oklahoma City University School of Law, consultant to the Smithsonian Institution and Cultural Adviser to the The Red Earth Festival. Debra, with her willingness to help me, tried to have an appointment with him for me. In spite of my schedule and also of his own, we managed to find a moment thus I met him on Thursday, October 27th . I believe it is an amazing piece of luck that I was able to meet him! He is very knowledgeable about Native Americans, he is a very modest person, I found him very friendly.



He talked about different points about the Indians in Oklahoma today.

⑩ **Assimilation**

The official policy in the United States of America is assimilation or the belief that Native Americans/Indians need to become like the white man. The pressure is to assimilate to the white, Protestant man’s world. (Indians are not included in the Constitution of the United States). As a result there has been a loss of the various Indian cultures and languages and the tribes have gone underground, meaning they do not show their “Indian identity or practices” in public.

To Indians, there is no racism. You are not treated differently or poorly because of your skin color or ethnic identity. In other words, you either participate in the culture or you don’t.

There is racism against Indians in America today. For example, when I went to speak to a group of individuals in Fairview, Oklahoma, I was told that even today, Indians aren’t allowed there after dark.

⑩ Preservation of culture linked with religion

One of the most important things Indians do to preserve their culture today is to practice ceremonies; most of those ceremonies are practiced out of sight of the white man.

There are two major cultural Indian gatherings that are authentically Indian and done in public view. They are the "Gathering of Nations" in Albuquerque, New Mexico and the "Red Earth Festival" in Oklahoma City.

Otherwise, if you are specifically invited, you may attend another Indian Ceremony. For example, every year, in late June, there is the Sun Dance of the Cheyenne in Western Oklahoma. It is four days long. And much of it is conducted in or around a lodge they build with upright poles placed in a circle. If you attended the Sun Dance of the Cheyenne, you would see a preservation of their Indian Culture. For example, their clothing and beadwork and blankets would be done in the Cheyenne Indian tradition. **You would also see how Indians have intertwined their Indian customs and beliefs with the Christian culture.** They sing Christian hymns in the Cheyenne language. They preach Christian beliefs in the Cheyenne language. The Cheyenne Christian service borrows from the Cheyenne tradition.

Blue's people, the Muscogee Creek Indians, hold a "stomp dance" that begins at midnight and ends at 7 or 8 in the morning. It is done out of sight and they don't want evangelical Christians to know about it.

The Stomp Dance is a ceremony that contains both religious and social meaning. To the Muscogee Creeks, Cherokees, and other Southeastern Indians the Stomp Dance is affiliated with the Green Corn Ceremony.

The term "Stomp Dance" is an English term, which refers to the "shuffle and stomp" movements of the dance. In the native Muskogee language the dance is called Opvkv Haco, which can mean "drunken," "crazy," or "inspired" dance. This usually refers to the exciting, yet meditative effect the dance and the medicine have on the participants.

Among Muscogee Creeks and Four Mothers Society members, the Stomp Dance Grounds contain an elevated square platform with the flat edges of the square facing the cardinal directions. Arbors are constructed upon the flat edges of the square in which the men sit facing one of the four directions. This is formally referred to as the Square Ground, which is encircled by a ring-mound of earth. In the center of this is the ceremonial fire, which is referred to by many names including "Mother" fire. Ceremonially, this fire is the focus of the songs and prayers of the people and is considered to be a living sacred being.

Outside of the circle of earth, surrounding the Square Ground are the community's clan-houses. These houses are casually referred to as 'camps' and depending on the traditional level and financial situation of the community may be relatively nice cottages, shanties or in between. Prior to the dance dinner is prepared in these family camps. Throughout the night guests that arrive are welcomed to help eat up the leftovers. The foods eaten at Stomp Dances are typical southern delicacies such as corn bread, mashed potatoes as well as certain specialized Indian dishes such as sofkee, dumplings, hominy, frybread, and numerous traditional dishes.

⑩ Tourism approach ?

The state of Oklahoma talks about Indians a lot in their tourism brochures and advertisements. This is part of the age-old exploitation of the Indian's land, water, energy and culture.

4) *Between Indian heritage and Mormon religion : the Navajo Family*

I met a Navajo Family, there were Evaline Vallo, Jani White, and Brooklyn who is three years old (mother, daughter, granddaughter). Evaline was born off the reservation but moved onto the reservation at 5 to live with her grandparents who spoke no English, only Navajo, and who believed strongly in the Indian traditions. Her grandmother wore tradition dress which was long skirts and her great-grandfather was a medicine man. Navajo people have a childhood name, an adolescent name, an then an adult name. One thing she remembers strongly is the celebration at the age of puberty. Evaline went to an American government boarding school. She lived in the Indian Community of Kayenta in Arizona. Her mother and grandmother taught her to weave and cook and how to dress in the Navajo tradition, she was raised to work very hard.



As far as language is concerned, her great-grandparents spoke Navajo only, her mother spoke a lot of Navajo, she speaks some, her daughter Jani speaks very little Navajo, thus Brooklyn will probably not speak Navajo. We can see the loss of language through the generations...

Today she has great appreciation for her Indian heritage and has shared it with her children. I asked her how she transmitted her culture to Jani, she said :

- I teach them the traditional dress. My granddaughter (Brooklyn who is on the picture) has a traditional outfit with the blouse and skirt and the belt/wrap around the waist. Brooklyn is wearing the same turquoise bracelet that her mother wore when she was a little girl.
- traveling to the reservation together
- the food that we eat : my family loves Navajo tacos
- Telling my family stories about their ancestors and heritage
- participating in Native American clubs and pow wows.



Brooklyn dressed in her traditional Navajo clothes.

Jani stayed mute during the interview, her mother explained that this calm is a form of respect, it is very important for them, when someone speaks nobody else speaks, we listen to each other. This peaceful nature is due to her education. When she is with her husband's family every one speaks at the same time and she feels lost, it makes her crazy!

Jani confided that sometimes she feels caught between two worlds – the Indian world and the White man's world. **She also confided that today her religion (she is Mormon) is more important than her Indian Culture, her religion is everything for her.**

The Navajo greet each other by touching hands, palm to palm, instead of shaking hands.

She says that many Indians still live in the Navajo reservation. Many are very poor, some live in the traditional Navajo Hogans and some live in moderns homes.

5) War

At one time the American flag was associated with invasion, removal, death, and destruction. Gradually the army recruited individuals from many tribes, and perceptions of the flag changed. This powerful symbol was incorporated into native art and clothing. During WWI, modern warriors of all tribes voluntarily enlisted to fight against enemies of the US. Since then, the American flag has been in high esteem by all tribes. Through Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, and Operation Enduring Freedom, Indian men and women continue to serve honorably in all branches of the US military.

“The native American has always fought and defended this country. Our ancestors were the first veterans to fight for this country; We served in all the wars. There are no convictions of a Native American convicted of cowardice in battle. Many of us made a career of the military of which we were proud to serve our country – right or wrong”
Gordon Roy Ponca, Air Force, Vietnam War.



6) White people are oblivious with native American culture?

It seems that YES! Except for the Natives themselves, history teachers or professionals in the artistic or historical domains, the people in Oklahoma live everyday with Native American Indians but are not aware of it. I believe there is lack of education for the larger community. They see Casinos everywhere, advertising, tribal names, tribal territories, plenty of cultural heritage centers and museums etc... but they seem to take them for granted.. When at school I ask, “Do you know someone from a tribe?” They answer “no” naturally. Samantha doesn't have any knowledge of the history of the Native Americans. I was quite surprised! Here is my host mother's testimony, I asked her to write me something about the experience we had together learning about the Indians people during my stay, she has done it so perfectly that I find it's very moving and very interesting for my report:

« My name is Debra Woods. I am writing to tell Solène Guillot about my experiences with the American Indian culture.

I am 46 years old and have lived in Oklahoma City for more than 9 years. I have always been aware that there is a relatively large Indian population in Oklahoma but do not see or interact with many Indians as not many of them live in the area I live in or I have not known that they were Indians.

I have had some close friends through my church who are Indian, including friends from the Kiowa, Apache, Navajo and Delaware tribes. I find that generally, they do not talk much about their Indian Culture unless I ask them about it. Mostly, we talk about things that are church-related and about

our children. When I recently asked my Navajo and Delaware Indian friends to tell me about their Indian Culture, they enthusiastically told me in detail about their customs and language and dress. I learned a lot in a short amount of time.

However, overall, my exposure to the American Indian Culture has been minimal which seems odd to me when I think about the fact that so many Indians live in Oklahoma. When I recently spoke to a Muscogee Creek Indian who actively practices his traditions but also participates in the larger American culture, he said that it is no mistake that I do not know much about the Indian culture. He basically cited two reasons: First, because the official policy of the American Government and people has been for Indians to assimilate or become like the white man rather than embracing their own culture. And, for a time, Indians felt like they needed to assimilate to survive. Second, because, to a great extent, the Indians have wanted to practice their customs and traditions in private so as not to be observed by the white man so there are some pow wows and ceremonies that I as a white person can attend but, for the most part, I have to be invited to attend.

Over the years, most of the exposure I have had to American Indian culture has been through things such as movies which, to a great extent have included stereotypical, inaccurate and likely insulting portrayals of Indians (with one notable exception being "Dances with Wolves" which came out in 1990), and television (short news clips mostly).

Also, there are lots of advertisements on television and billboards in Oklahoma that promote Oklahoma as a state of various Indian Tribes. An Indian friend recently told me that these advertisements are not interested in educating people about Indians. Rather, they are interested in exploiting Indians for tourism to make money.

Throughout my schooling, from kindergarten through university, I do not recall ever receiving much education about the American Indian experience, especially not from the viewpoint of the Indians themselves. To my knowledge, it is still the same for my children. They do not receive a school education that teaches them about the Indian experience. From what I understand, this is unlikely to change. I wonder if it is because there is some real shame over the way the white man treated Indians and it would be hard to read what we did to them.

Another way I was exposed to the Indian culture was through the New Age Movement. This has been a cultural movement in the United States for sometime which sometimes borrows Indian music, ideas or sayings and such for the movement to sell records, books, etc. But, what I have learned through this movement (as I have enjoyed some of the music and ideas) is a very much watered-down idea of Indian culture.

So, before Solène and I visited with Indians from the various tribes in Oklahoma, I knew very little about their culture and confess that I was not much interested which shouldn't be surprising given how little I knew about them and the suspect sources of information for what I knew about Indians.

However, as soon as Solène and I visited with the first Native American for her research project, and Solène started the interviewing process, asking individual Indians about their culture and what they do to retain their heritage, I found what we heard to be immediately fascinating.

I loved hearing stories about the traditions that are passed down through the generations, from parent to child for generation after generation. I loved hearing about their various ceremonies and seeing the traditional dress and jewelry. I was sad to learn of the history of their people and how they were chased from their lands again and again by the American Government and peoples. I was heartened to learn their stories of resilience in the midst of the severe hardship and adversity they experienced as they were pushed further and further west.

I was compelled by the stories we heard about how individual Indians are working against the clock to preserve the heritage and language of their people as a whole. I can tell, from what they said,

that they are making strides and yet are involved in an uphill battle as Americans Indians have felt forced to assimilate for so long to survive.

I am now completely fascinated with the American Indian culture and want to learn more. I want my children to learn more as well and will make this happen by taking them to the various Tribal Cultural Centers, pow wows and the Red Earth Festival which, from what I've been told is one of the two best festivals in the nation to create an authentic experience with various Indian Tribes. What's terrific is the Festival is right here in Oklahoma City in June.

Previous to the experience I had of traveling with Solène and meeting the various Indians, I wasn't much interested in Indians because what I knew of them was inaccurate and inauthentic. But because of my recent direct exposure to the authentic Indian experience, I am now very interested.

In the past, I have been very Eurocentric, always seeking to learn about my own ancestral heritage from Europe and yet, I now understand that there is tremendous value in learning about cultures and customs that are unlike mine. For starters, what I have learned about the Native American ceremonies and gatherings is that they are genuinely beautiful, peaceful and joyful as well as artful and spiritual. Learning about their relationship to animals and the earth made me want to be more mindful of my stewardship as a human on this planet, my obligation to take better care of the earth and to have more appreciation for the animals that are on the earth.

During the interviews, I also learned that there is probably a better way to live than as an always-rushing white American, striving to get more done faster. The ceremonies and traditions I learned about seem to make space for us to slow down enough to enjoy this present moment.

I have also come to understand better than ever before that people do not have to be like me or my people to have tremendous value and beauty. I think most exploitation and attempts to dominate other peoples comes from ignorance or perhaps a societal inferiority complex.

The experience I had of meeting and talking with members of various American Indian tribes has taken me from being an American who was almost completely ignorant about the Indian experience to one who is looking forward to learning as much as I can about a people I now love simply because I took the time to learn about them from talking and listening to them."

V) Conclusion

To conclude, we've seen that the Indian Heritage is very important in Oklahoma today. I can't believe that it is a tourism attraction because the tribes themselves want to protect their heritage for generations to come and want to share it with the large community because they are proud to be Indian. The native American have their own identity which is different from the white American people identity. Although it is not only a tourism attraction, the Indian Heritage is used to attract tourists : the tourist brochures present museums and shops where you can buy Native products, they also present pow wows...

I felt welcomed by the Indians I met, they were very happy to share their knowledge with a foreign person, indeed they gave me gifts, wanted to see me again, and wanted a copy of this report. I definitely enjoyed to spend time with them in spite of our comprehension problems!

I love my subject and I want to continue to learn about Native Americans, I am going to read the books I received from Debra and the tribal Chairman.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Rectorat D'Amiens for this program which allows us, pupils, to go to Oklahoma.
Thank you to my former English teacher who helped me to be selected.
Thank you to my dear American Family for her hospitality. I am very grateful to Debra for her help.
We are now friends!
Thank you to Mrs Bouichou for her calm in every circumstance!
Thank you to Westmoore High School and especially to Mrs Robillard for her organization and her willingness to make us discover AMERICA!
Thank you to Winnie, Coline, Jeanette, Bruce, Sonia, Alix, Colette for their cheerfulness.
Thank you to my new American Friends : Samantha, Uy, David, Dereck... for every moment we spent together.

I definitely love the state of Oklahoma!