



Continuing publication
of recorded interviews of
Choctaw elders from 2007

This month – Edith McMinn
and Doecha Harris
Pages 13



Harvest
Carnival
Costume
Contest

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The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

November 2011 Issue

Serving 210,258 Choctaws Worldwide

Choctaws ... growing with pride, hope and success

Past Outstanding Elders

- 1999**
Randle Durant, District 6
- 2000**
Rev. Bertram Bobb, District 7
Judith Perry, District 8
- 2001**
William “Bill” Amos, District 1
Juanita Jefferson, District 3
- 2002**
Moses Williams, District 2
Lois Burton, District 4
- 2003**
Franch Johnico, District 3
Rena Caffey, District 9
- 2004**
Shirley Montgomery, District 7
Ernest Hooser, District 9
- 2005**
Julia McKinney, District 2
Truman Heron, District 9
- 2006**
Carrie Bohanon, District 2
John Hooser, District 7
- 2007**
Juanita Futrell, District 3
Benny Anderson, District 3
- 2008**
Lorene Blaine, District 9
Walker Davis, District 1
- 2009**
Leo Smallwood, District 7
Norma Price, District 9
- 2010**
Mary Watson, District 7
Melvin Tom, District 2

Tribal Council meets in regular October session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met on Oct. 8 in regular session at Tushka Homma. Tribal Council Speaker Delton Cox called the meeting to order, welcomed guests and then asked for committee reports. After committee reports were given the Tribal Council addressed new business.

- Approval of several budgets including Upward Bound Math/ Science Program FY 2012, Injury Prevention Program, Project Safe and Legal Assistance for Victims Grant.
- Budget modifications to WIC FY 2011 and Capitol Projects Budget FY 2012.
- Disposal of surplus equipment by Fixed Assets Department.
- Approval of oil and gas lease with Stephens Production Company.

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council meets in regular session at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month in the Council Chambers at Tushka Homma.

◆ What’s inside

Columns	2
Notes to the Nation.....	3
Nursery News.....	4
Food Distribution	4
People You Know	6
Education.....	7
Obituaries.....	14
Iti Fabvssa.....	18

The Mission of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

To enhance the lives of all members through opportunities designed to develop healthy, successful and productive lifestyles.

Outstanding Choctaw Elders named for 2011

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma held a banquet Oct. 20 to honor outstanding elder nominees from each of its community centers. Chosen as the tribe’s Outstanding Elders for 2011 are Herbert Jessie, District 1 – Idabel, and Rebecca Nahwoosky, District 7 – Wright City.

“The annual recognition of our elders is a special event,” Chief Gregory E. Pyle said. “They represent the strength of our resilient nation.”

Herbert Jessie, 1st Sgt. (ret.), is a member of the Choctaw Nation Color Guard. He joined the group in 1998, served as assistant coordinator and is now the coordinator. He also serves as commander of the American Legion Post #8 in Idabel and is on the Board of Commission of the Choctaw Nation Housing Authority.

He was born in Talihina to a family of migratory farm workers who moved from West Texas to East Central Texas, then Western Oklahoma and settled in Frederick. Herbert attended rural Weaver School in Frederick. While growing up, he worked on farm lands that had wheat, cotton, maize and alfalfa, driving combines and wheat-loaded tractors. After graduation, he went to work for a skilled-craft leatherworks facility until he was drafted into the U.S. Army.

Herbert’s military career spanned 22 years – 1967-1989 – and he re-

More photos on Pages 10-11

tired at the rank of E-8. His MOS was 52B, power generation equipment repairman, with his first duty station at Fort Hood with the 11th Data Processing Detachment 2nd Armored Division. His next duty station was in Karsrube, West Germany, with the 72nd Signal Battalion in charge of the power generation repair shop. He has also been stationed at Ramstein Airbase, West Germany, with the 92nd Ordinance Detachment where he was in charge of direct support repairing power generation equipment that included the chapparal missiles and Vulcan machine guns for low-flying aircraft for protecting the airbase. Herbert returned to the states to Fort Belvoir where he became an AIT instructor for the power generation repair school for five years. He was sent next to South Korea where he was the battalion motor sergeant for the 44th Combat Heavy Equipment Battalion while also acting as the first sergeant and a platoon sergeant. This unit, close to the DMZ line, maintained combat readiness for track and wheel vehicles.

After returning to Fort Belvoir, Herbert was sent to Garistedt, West Germany, near Bremmerhaven, where he was assigned as the 1st Sgt. of the 199th Combat Service Battalion 2nd Armored Division.



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

Councilman Thomas Williston, Outstanding Choctaw Elders Herbert Jessie and Rebecca Nahwoosky, Chief Gregory E. Pyle and Councilman Jack Austin.

His last duty station was at Fort Sill with the Polar Bear BN, 4th-31st Infantry Regiment. This battalion was the only American unit that fought in China during the 1930s. Herbert was the battalion motor sergeant, training young officers on the combat readiness of track and wheel vehicles.

He spent a total of eight and one-half years overseas during his military career. He retired from the U.S. Army in 1989.

After his retirement, Herbert and wife Lillie moved to Kvlituklo to be near his mother. The couple raised three children, Cheryl, Robert and Douglas. Herbert lost his wife in 2010 and his son, Douglas, this year.

He began working for Little Dixie Community Action Agency soon after retirement as a van driver and

later became the center coordinator for the Idabel and Broken Bow offices. He remained with the agency from 1990 to 1998. He then began his career with the Housing Authority in Hugo as a modernization coordinator, retiring in 2005.

This year’s female Outstanding Elder winner, Rebecca Hattie Nahwoosky, has taught Choctaw language classes in Wright City for four years. She has been a member of the Choctaw Language Dictionary committee for six years.

Hattie is married to Frank Nahwoosky and enjoys reading her Bible, studying and praying. She is a Sunday School teacher at her church.

She graduated from Grey High

See ELDERS Page 5

Choctaws among AARP Oklahoma Indian Elder honorees

Each year AARP Oklahoma celebrates 50 of the state’s Indian Elders by recognizing their achievements and contributions in cultural preservation, community service, arts or leadership in their respective tribe, community or state. This year, Indian elders from 37 of the state’s tribes were recognized at the AARP Oklahoma Indian Elder Honors ceremony, an event held Oct. 4 at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City. Included among the honorees were three Choctaws, the Rev. Donald Eugene “Gene” Wilson, Thomas J. Dry and Betty Cooper War.

The event, which drew several hundred people, opened with a buffet dinner and a performance by the Oklahoma Fancy Dancers. Following a keynote address by John Penn, a member of the AARP National Board of Directors, the honorees were presented with large medallions of appreciation as a brief history of their accomplishments was read to the crowd.

The Rev. Gene Wilson

The Rev. Gene Wilson, a resident of Indianola but originally from



Choctaw Nation: LARISSA COPELAND

Thomas J. Dry and the Rev. Gene Wilson proudly display their medallions at the Indian Elder Honors ceremony on Oct. 4

Eagletown, is credited with helping to stimulate the tribal culture in the 1970s by “kick starting” a traditional Choctaw dance revival among the youth of the Presbyterian church in Southeastern Oklahoma. As a

young, new pastor in the late 1960s, he addressed the cultural situation of the tribe at the time, he says, leading to him and a small group making a trip to their “homeland” in Mississippi. The trip was the first of many made over the few decades, with the group growing in size every year.

“Many of the older Choctaws never talked about the homeland or much about the history,” he says.

Through forced integration, much of the cultural identifiers were lost over time following the Trail of Tears. It became, sadly, “a muted heritage and tradition,” he says. Regaining the dance was a vital piece in reconnecting to their tribal roots.

Countless young people who were part of his Choctaw dance group during the 1970s credit his lasting influence on their lives, many continuing the tradition of Choctaw social dancing today.

Thomas J. Dry

Indian heritage has always been important to Thomas J. Dry of Edmond. Realizing he needed more skills to help the Indian cause, he earned a Master’s degree in social work at the age of 54 and spent sig-

nificant time researching self-determination. He was employed by the Absentee-Shawnee and Sac and Fox tribes as a child welfare director and served on boards of other Indian and state agencies. Mr. Dry promoted legislation and worked closely with other tribal members to create the Oklahoma Indian Child Welfare Act. He is a founding member of the Oklahoma Indian Child Welfare Association and continues to work closely with state and tribal leaders.

Betty War

Also honored but not in attendance was Betty War of Hartshorne, a Choctaw who worked with Indian children for over 35 years at Jones Academy in Hartshorne, according to AARP. She first served as a matron in the little girls’ dorm where many had wounded spirits, low or no self-esteem. She made them feel proud to be Indian and was involved in every aspect of their lives from school to church. Today, many former students still come to see, visit and help “Miss War.” A generation of men and women love her for her kindness, as a wise counselor and mentor and as their “spirit mother.”

Passing of former chief

Former Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Hollis E. Roberts passed away Oct. 19, 2011, in Hugo, at the age of 68.

Hollis was born on May 9, 1943, in Hochatown, the son of Laura Roberts. He attended Holly Creek Elementary School his first eight years and graduated from Idabel High School in 1961, and attended Southern Methodist University.

Hollis married Helen R. Rodriguez, April 19, 1963, in McKinney, Texas. He was known as a true entrepreneur, gaining business experience while working with Weyerhaeuser, Campbell Soup, Great State Packing, Swink Grocery, Hollywood Vassarette, and Wiley Jenks Paint Store. Hollis was very active in civic service through the Jaycees, served as a volunteer baseball coach, and served as a mentor for boys with the Goodland Presbyterian Boy’s Home. He became involved in tribal and Choctaw County

See ROBERTS Page 5

For tribe and country, three generations deep in tradition

By LARISSA COPELAND
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

“In Indian ways, as grandparents, you’re the teachers,” says Harry James of Talihina. “If you don’t teach them (the grandchildren), who will?”

A man of few words, Harry and his wife, Carol, of 54 years, have tried to pass on what they know of the tribal ways to their 12 children, 26 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren. This was done through their actions.

Harry Clyde James was born in 1927 near Talihina, the oldest child of Cleo Patrick

Johnson James and Aaron James, both full-blooded Choctaws. Along with his seven brothers and sisters, he was raised on a farm in Talihina and attended school there.

“We were mostly self-sufficient on our farm, raising almost everything we ate,” he says.

During his school days, Harry was very active in sports. “I really like sports. We didn’t have a lot of students so we all had to play to have enough for the team. That’s what you do in a small school,” he says. “I played all the sports offered, football, See JAMES Page 17

Dry summer once again shows dry river bottoms

From the Desk of
Chief Gregory E. Pyle

Our Choctaw elders are very wise. They share our history through stories – and as I was a youth, those stories were fun to listen to and I would ask that they be told again and again. Now, I realize the importance of the “lessons” and “culture” of our families and our tribe as these verbal treasures pass down from generation to generation. Some of the stories and legends are known throughout the tribe and others are simply in families, but I encourage all of you to share your father’s and your mother’s stories with children and grandchildren.

My dad told me that during the Great Depression the Kiamichi stopped flowing down by Antlers where his family had a dairy. The men and boys would take pics and shovels to dig trenches in the riverbed to get the pooled water to flow to the pump stations. History has repeated itself with the drought this year, stopping the flow in places on the beautiful Kiamichi. I walked down across part of the riverbed this month on stones washed smooth from many years of the rushing stream, now bone-dry, reminding me of my father’s long ago story.

I asked some of the staff in the tribal land management offices to do some research on how often the riverbed



had went dry. Our state hasn’t had a great deal of data-based information available for water in the southeastern part of Oklahoma for them to glean from, but what they found was fascinating, and I thought it was worth sharing.

The Kiamichi River Basin is unfortunately susceptible to drought. The recorded data for stream flow is accurate; however the gauging stations have only been placed in relatively recent years.

Stream Gages on Kiamichi and installation dates:

- Big Cedar – 1965
- Clayton – 1980
- Antlers – 1972
- Belzoni (lower Kiamichi) – 1925-1971 (no longer monitoring)

A feature of the Kiamichi River is its very low stream flow in late summer into winter. This is due to the obvious lack of precipitation but also to its geomorphology or the shape, contours, gravel bars, bank height, and elevation changes of the river. It may retain pools or pockets of water but have no recorded flow. This may even occur in relatively ‘wet’ years to some degree.

A more intriguing tale may be to examine the duration of drought or zero flow levels. It is important to remember that Hugo Lake and Sardis Lake were completed in 1974 and 1982 respectively. This is significant because the USACE can release water and affect

stream flow.

Big Cedar, on the upper basin of the river.

Recorded No Flow – 35 times for a duration longer than 20 days since 1965 and 50+ consecutive days in 2011

Clayton – Gage station is below mouth of Jackfork Creek (USACE is currently discharging 12 cfs from Sardis)

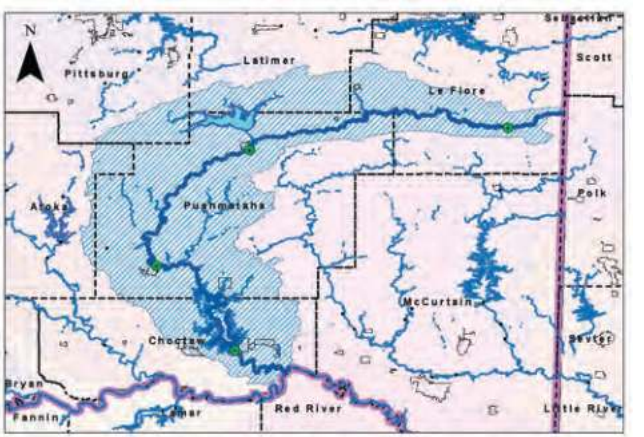
Recorded No Flow – 5 times for a duration longer than 20 days since 1983 and 0 days in 2011.

Antlers – Recorded No Flow – 8 times for a duration longer than 20 days since 1972 and 43 days in 2011

Belzoni – Not operational since 1972 (Hugo Lake)

Recorded No Flow – 11 times for a duration longer than 20 days since 1925

Given this data that the Kiamichi River experiences almost regular no flow periods; it is important to keep in mind the climate forecast for the upcoming seasons. *Illustrated here:* <http://www.swt-wc.usace.army.mil/SARD.lakepage.html>.



Kiamichi River Basin

lakepage.html.

This depicts a trend leading toward less steady rainfall and intensifying drought.

Statistics of note – The Belzoni Gage, the only gage on the river until 1965 prior to any impoundment, recorded a period of 55 days in 1954 and 89 days in 1956 with zero flow occurring in that duration.

In conclusion, it is difficult to determine whether the Kiamichi River has ever dried up. Through gage data there is evidence of periods that the river ceased to run. Through

regulation by the Corps of Engineers and conservation efforts of other agencies we still experience years of drought. The Jackfork Creek and other feeder streams into Sardis Lake have had little to no flow for some time now. No monitoring systems are available for these streams at this time.

As the process of establishing a water plan progress’s our knowledge and information such as this will improve and become more readily available.

Data obtained from usgs.gov

Chaplain’s Corner

A Thanksgiving challenge

This is my Thanksgiving greeting and challenge to you in the Chahta language:

“Yakni moma kut yakoki achi nitak ai ulphihjsa tok a il afamah mak osh e hiel hokut, Chihowa ut pi hullo, micha pi nukhaklo na nan ulhpesa bieke ho ai itunohowat afumi achuffa moma ka il afama hokut, Yakoki! il ima hachi pul-lashke.”

Interpreted:

“Thanksgiving Day is a day set aside as a national holiday. A day when we can pause and thank God for the blessings He has bestowed upon us during the past year.”

That was Paul’s attitude when he wrote in First Thessalonians 5:18: “In everything we give thanks:...”

Paul thanked God for the faith of believers in Romans 1:8: “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world...”

Paul thanked God for his personal relationship with Jesus Christ saying Corinthians 9:15: “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.”

Many of us know that we have learned the most through the rough experiences of life. God’s way is to bring about the best of us under the pressure of tough times. God usually gets our attention when we feel our inability to cope with these circumstances. Our weakness gives God an opportunity to show his strength.

When we learn to thank God for everything, He turns what seems like a calamity into a blessing. During these times, the Lord brings us closer to Himself.

The Psalmist recalled the mighty acts of God, saying, “Come and see the works of God:...He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice Him.” (Psalms 66:5-6)

As Christians we can thank God for past events that brought hope for this life and for eternity. We can thank Him for the first coming of Jesus Christ and the hope of the second coming, the cross and the resurrection. We are thankful for the writings of Paul, for example:

“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” (II Corinthians 5:19)

Jesus said “...thy Word is truth.” (John 17-17). Because the Bible is true, we know the promise of Christ’s return and all other prophecies in God’s Word will be fulfilled.

We can be grateful for the signs of realization of God’s great program for the earth. We are grateful for these signs that point to God’s ultimate triumph. God is in charge of our world, and His glorious plans will be realized.

Today’s message is on WORKS. You may hear many commendations on work here on earth. But if you never hear those words which will ring forever in the ears of those who hear them. “Well done, thou good and faithful ser-



REV. BERTRAM BOBB
Tribal Chaplain

vant;...enter thou into the joy of the Lord.” (Matthew 25:21). Sad will be your lot.

I believe these are the words that everyone should want to hear: “...enter thou into the joy of the Lord.” Well, how can we do this? How can we enter into God’s presence, into His joy?

Jesus said: “Not every on that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

What is God the Father’s will? To do His will is to do things His way.

First, to come into His presence is to come by the way He has planned, and that is by Jesus way of the cross. The cross on which Jesus Christ paid the penalty for sin, which is death. You cannot come into God’s presence any other way. Jesus said while He was still on earth: “...I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6).

Peter said this concerning God’s promises and His will for you in II Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as come men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

God’s will is for us to come to Jesus and He is not willing that any should perish.

Jesus said this concerning man’s works. And it was a message of comfort: The message of Christ to the laboring man is one of comforting too, in Matthew 11:28: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

This is God’s plan of salvation, through His Son, and it is one of Joy, Peace and Satisfaction.

I mention also that there will be rewards for the Christians. I don’t have time to go into details on this subject but will you read this passage from First Corinthians 3:11-15?

Remember, salvation is not by works. It is by faith. Faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

The work of Christians shall determine their rewards in Heaven. After one has accepted Jesus Christ as Savior his life is one that is building. God has a will and a purpose for our life and as we study His Word, the Bible, we learn His will for us. And as we labor according to His will then we are building upon the foundation of Christ with Gold, Silver and Precious Stones.

So many times we try to do God’s will our way. Our way is to satisfy our fleshly desires. When a Christian is our of God’s Will then he is building with hay, wood and stubble.

Continue to pray for Native American people for their spiritual and physical welfar. Pray for America and for our tribal leaders for wisdom, encouragement and strength to lead our Nations.

Family values includes providing best education for our youth

From the Desk of
Assistant Chief Gary Batton

Remaining true to our Choctaw culture is very important, even though it can sometimes be challenging when a tribe continues to grow and progress at such a remarkable degree. I think it is honorable that education has been important to this tribe throughout our history. Choctaw leaders and warriors have long been recorded as intelligent, tactical thinkers, both in times of war and for the purposes of setting up villages and planning for the future.

As non-natives came more and more frequently to the home territories of the Choctaws, the elders realized the value of formalized education and cross-socialization of the youth of the tribe.

Today, Choctaw Nation scholarships, career development opportunities and many possibilities for training, growth and development are offered by the tribe. These are all investments in the sustainability of the Choctaw Nation, investments in the future of our tribe.



One such “investment” is the Scholarship Advisement Program (SAP) which has helped the tribe build a stellar relationship with Ivy League facilities such as Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Johns Hopkins and Notre Dame. These, and many others, including Stanford, Berkeley, Rice and Perdue, spend the first weekend in November each year at the Choctaw Nation recruiting Choctaws as prospective undergraduate and graduate students. This was the fourth year for this tremendous event, with about 500 in attendance!

What a privilege for our tribe to be able to continue our culture of providing an education for our members at such prestigious institutions of learning. This is a blessed Nation!

Merry Christmas

in the Choctaw Nation
– Senior Citizen Dinners & Kids Christmas Parties –

Antlers Seniors	December 14, 12 noon
Antlers Kids	December 5, 6 p.m., up to age 10
Atoka Kids	November up to age 12, at the Atoka Community Center on Liberty Road
Bethel Seniors & Kids	December 16, 5 p.m., kids up to age 10
Broken Bow Seniors & Kids	December 14, 6 p.m., kids up to age 10
Buffalo Valley Kids	December 6, 6 p.m. at the cafeteria
Burkhart Kids	December 15, 7 p.m.
Coalgate Seniors	December 14, 12 noon
Coalgate Kids	December 9, 6 p.m., up to age 12
Crowder Seniors	December 7, 11 a.m.
Crowder Kids	December 10, 1 p.m.
Durant Kids	December 2, 6 p.m.
Heavener Kids	December 12, 7 p.m.
Hugo Seniors	December 14, 11:30 a.m.
Hugo Kids	December 9, 6 p.m., Housing Culture Center
Idabel Kids	December 14, 6 p.m., up to age 12
Idabel Seniors	December 21, 6 p.m.
McAlester Kids	December 10, 1 p.m., under 10 years of age
McAlester Seniors	December 14, 11:30 a.m.
Poteau Seniors	December 21, 11:30 a.m.
Poteau Kids	December 17, 4 p.m., up to age 10
Quinton Kids	December 8, 6 p.m.
Smithville Kids	December 13, 7 p.m.
Spiro Kids	December 19, 4 p.m.
Spiro Seniors	December 20, 11:15 a.m.
Stigler Kids	December 9, 4-6 p.m., 10 and under
Stigler Seniors	December 7, 11:30 a.m.
Summerfield Kids	December 18, 2 p.m.
Talihina Kids	December 16, 7 p.m.
Tuskahoma Kids	November 29, 6 p.m., up to age 10
Wilburton Kids	December 10, 2 p.m.
Wilburton Seniors	December 14, 11:30 a.m.
Wright City Kids	December 6, 6 p.m., up to age 10
Wright City Seniors	December 15, 12 noon

NOTES TO THE NATION

Seeking photos

I am looking for photos of my grandparents and great-grandparents. I am willing to pay for copying and postage. William Pusley, born 1884, died 1880, married Elizabeth Hampton; I have a photo of her. Other photos I'm seeking are of Joshua Thomas Ryan, born Sept. 1845, died Sept. 1878, and married Lela Eugenia McCarty, of whom I also have a photo; Lenora Eugenia Ryan, born Dec. 25, 1877, died Oct. 6, 1899, and married William Wiley Pusley, of whom I have a photo as well as his second wife, Lelan, and their three children. I am the granddaughter of Lenora, William's first wife.

I am willing to share any photos if you are interested in helping me. My name is Betty J. Pusley Simmons. Contact me at 32526 Ruth Hill Road, Squaw Valley, CA 93675 or call at 599-332-2342. Thank you.



Langston Upton of Wister FFA says thanks to the Choctaw Nation for support at the 2011 Premium Sale.

Thankful for Emergency Services

I wanted to send everyone at Choctaw Nation and the Emergency Services Department my deepest and most sincere appreciation and gratitude. You have come through for me when I was in such despair, and for so many others, too. Emergency Services is a blessing for many of us. You help give us hope and help us get through our hardships. With God's will and His blessing, you may continue to give much needed help to many.

Linda S., Oklahoma City

Thanks to Housing Authority

I want to thank the Housing Authority and the MMR Department of the Choctaw Nation for my rental assistance, refrigerator and the electric stove. I want to personally thank the staff and for your support and courteous service. I truly thank you!

Marion Carr, Durant

Seeking father, brother

My name is Naomi Sue Nelson (Show). I am looking for my father, John Henry Nelson. I had been in contact with him, but I moved and lost his phone number. I know he lives by the Choctaw Casino, where I last saw him. I would really like to get back in touch with him and I have a brother by him who I've never met, named John Anthony Nelson.

If you have any information on either my father or brother, please contact me at 305 S. High St. Fairfax, MO 64446 or at 660-686-9442.

Jones reunion, thank you

To former Jones students, Mr. Choate and I missed you at the reunion on Oct. 15. We want to thank Choctaw Nation for the banner that was made. It was beautiful. Also, thank you to all employees of the Choctaw Nation who had a hand in the reunion and all the Jones staff who went all out to help in any way possible. We want to say thank you! Hope to see you next year!

Bobby Coley

Gregory E. Pyle
Chief

Gary Batton
Assistant Chief

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If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK at your home or if your address needs changed, we would appreciate hearing from you.

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

Circulation is monthly. Article deadline is the 10th of the month for the following month's edition.



BISKINIK' 2011

Thank you from Kodie

Thank you so much for both care packages you sent. They were definitely a morale booster. I will definitely eat everything and put everything to good use. Thank you so much for these packages. Leaving home for a year is hard. I am a single mom of three little girls and these were the first packages I received. It helped me out a lot just to know someone cares who doesn't even know me. Thank you just doesn't seem like it's enough for how these packages made me feel, but I can't come up with better words. I really do appreciate all your support. I can't wait to come home and be with my family. Please keep us in your prayers. Thank you again, and I know I am praying for everyone back home who stands behind all the soldiers here.

PFC Kodie R. Bowman

Thank you for scholarship funds

I recently graduated from the University of Central Arkansas and received my Doctor of Physical Therapy degree. I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for the past six years of scholarship money provided to help me further my education. The support is greatly appreciated.



Angela Sawyer



Seeking Phillips daughters

We are looking for the daughters of Anthony W. Phillips, born in Oklahoma on Sept. 14, 1940, died on Sept. 28, 2001. His last known residence was Carson, Calif. The picture above features Anthony in the center with his daughters. On the left is Cindi and the right is Laresha. We are looking for his daughters to complete the probate of Alma J. Phillips, his mother. Please contact Janet Phillips at 580-326-8344 if you have any information.

Thank you from Durant ISD

It is with tremendous gratitude that I write this letter on behalf of the Durant Independent School District to express my deepest appreciation to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for the generous donation to our students. During these times of budget constraints and cuts, these funds will allow our students to access many activities and events that would have been otherwise unavailable to them.

The Durant ISD is proud to partner with the Choctaw Nation through the STAR Program and we very much appreciate its untiring efforts on behalf of our students. This program is indicative of the important role the Choctaw Nation plays as a supportive partner of the Durant ISD.

W. Jason Simeroth, Ph.D., Superintendent

Thankful for financial support

I recently graduated from Clackamas Community College, and it was in no small part thanks to Chief Gregory E. Pyle and the generosity of the Choctaw Nation. I have been shown more financial kindness than I could have hoped for. Thank you for allowing me to experience that. It means a lot to me.

James Gillette

Thank you for caring for troops

My son, Sgt. Douglas Ray Carpenter Jr., will be redeploying next month from Afghanistan. Thank you to the Choctaw Nation for care packages sent to him.

As a Blue Star mother, our chapter sends care packages to the addresses that are submitted to us and send them out once a month. Something from home means so much to our troops.

Thanks to the Choctaw for all you do for our troops. I have been to your hotel and casino for a Vietnam Veterans State Council meeting and everything was beautiful.

Thank you again, and I hope to visit Durant and the Choctaw facilities again.

Karen Vollman

Thank you from Spiro Fire Department

Thank you to Councilmen Delton Cox and Ron Perry and the Choctaw Nation on behalf of the town of Spiro and the Spiro Fire Department for the nation's donation to the fire department for pagers. We appreciate your generosity and support.

Ronnie Parent, Mayor of the town of Spiro

Thank you for support

We are proud to announce the recent graduation of Breanna Heck from Houston College, Houston, Texas, as a Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant, COTA. Breanna is the proud mother of a beautiful 3 year old daughter, Alexandra Cade. She has overcome untold obstacles to reach her goal. She is the daughter of Chris and Sherri Cade Sholar, granddaughter of Thomas and Melissa Sapp, and great-great granddaughter of Tommie Cade Grimes of Ardmore, Indian Territory.

Thanks to the Choctaw Nation providing financial support, She will have a rewarding career and be able to support herself and her child, and help many people in her chosen field. God Bless Chief Pyle and the Choctaw Nation.



6th Annual Native American Awareness Expo

December 6, 2011
Expo: 3 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Evening program: 6 p.m.

Southfork Ranch
3700 Hogge Rd.
Parker, Texas 75002
FREE ADMISSION

This event is hosted by the DFW Native American Chamber of Commerce, who is partnering with the Choctaw Nation and other tribal nations to bring better access to tribal resources and information to tribal members living in your area. Some of the resources and information you will be able to access include tribal heritage and corporate booths. We plan to have booths on stickball, ancient weaponry, artwork, storytelling and bead work. Choctaw Social Dancers will perform at the evening program as well as participation from Bear Claw Drum Group. The Choctaw Color Guard will post the flags at 6 p.m. Dinner will be served. Chief Gregory E. Pyle will be one of the event speakers.

For more information: dfwnacc.org

Seeking information on Guthries

I am looking for information on Joe Thomas Guthrie, the brother of the late William Terrell "Woody" Guthrie of the Maysville area, who passed away in January 2005. I am also seeking information on Troy Guthrie, the son of Woody. If you have any information, contact Robert Guthrie at P.O. Box 6195 Norman, OK 73070 or by email at rdguthrie@sbcglobal.net.

Thank you from Shirley

I would like to thank Chief Gregory E. Pyle and the Choctaw Nation for their assistance for my granddaughter in pursuing her degree in nursing as well as financial aid in my grandson's burial expenses. Thank you to the Choctaw Nation Color Guard for honoring my brother, Tillman Hokett, at his burial services. It was beautiful and such a tribute. May the Lord continue to bless each of you. Thanks again.

Shirley Bushong

Choctaw Nation to aid with loans

The Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association offers small business, home, home improvement and agriculture loans.

To be eligible to apply, a person must reside within the 10-1/2 county service area of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and must possess a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) from a federally recognized tribe.

For more information, please contact Susan Edwards at 580-924-8280 or toll-free 800-522-6170.

If you are interested in applying for a loan from the SOICA or the Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund, there will be a representative from the Choctaw Nation Credit Department at the Poteau Family Investment Center for assistance on...

Nov. 29 from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Project Falvmmichi

The Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board's "Project Falvmmichi" conducted its annual training of the adult volunteers and students in September, which started the eighth year of the project.

Project Falvmmichi is a domestic violence prevention program funded by the Choctaw Nation Youth Empowerment Program and Choctaw Nation Project Safe and continues through their leadership and partnership with the Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board along with schools and adult volunteers in the 10 1/2 counties of Choctaw Nation.

The Choctaw word, "falvmmichi," means to reclaim. The project carries out the spirit of the word. It began in 2004 and has grown from six to 34 schools and 60 classrooms.

Teen mentors work in the second grade classrooms with the goal to raise awareness in youngsters that hitting is not right and resources are available to help if they experience or know of such abuse. The mentors raise awareness through this program by entering the second grade class each month during the school year, where they perform a puppet skit and do an activity with the students. Both the skit and the lesson identify conflict resolution.

Kid-friendly fruits and veggies

10 tips for making healthy foods more fun for children

Encourage children to eat vegetables and fruits by making it fun. Provide healthy ingredients and let kids help with preparation, based on their age and skills. Kids may try foods they avoided in the past if they helped make them.

1. *Smoothie creations*
Blend fat-free or low-fat yogurt or milk with fruit pieces and crushed ice. Use fresh, frozen, canned and even overripe fruits. Try bananas, berries, peaches and/or pineapple. If you freeze the fruit first, you can even skip the ice!
2. *Delicious dippers*
Kids love to dip their foods. Whip up a quick dip for veggies with yogurt and seasonings such as herbs or garlic. Serve with raw vegetables like broccoli, carrots or cauli-

WIC

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN


- flower. Fruit chunks go great with a yogurt and cinnamon or vanilla dip.
3. *Caterpillar kabobs*
Assemble chunks of melon, apple, orange, and pear on skewers for a fruity kabob. For a raw veggie version, use vegetables like zucchini, cucumber, squash, sweet peppers or tomatoes.
4. *Personalized pizzas*
Set up a pizza-making station in the kitchen. Use whole-wheat English muffins, bagels or pita bread as the crust. Have tomato sauce, low-fat cheese and cut-up vegetables or fruits for toppings. Let kids choose their

- own favorites. Then pop the pizzas into the oven to warm.
5. *Fruity peanut butterfly*
Start with carrot sticks or celery for the body. Attach wings made of thinly sliced apples with peanut butter and decorate with halved grapes or dried fruit.
6. *Frosty fruits*
Frozen treats are bound to be popular in the warm months. Just put fresh fruits such as melon chunks in the freezer (rinse first). Make “popsicles” by inserting sticks into peeled bananas and freezing.
7. *Bugs on a log*
Use celery, cucumber or carrot sticks as the log and add peanut butter. Top with dried fruit such as raisins, cranberries or cherries, depending on what bugs you want!

8. *Homemade trail mix*
Skip the pre-made trail mix and make your own. Use your favorite nuts and dried fruits, such as unsalted peanuts, cashews, walnuts or sunflower seeds mixed with dried apples, pineapple, cherries, apricots or raisins. Add whole-grain cereals to the mix, too.
9. *Potato person*
Decorate half a baked potato. Use sliced cherry tomatoes, peas and low-fat cheese on the potato to make a funny face.
10. *Put kids in charge*
Ask your child to name new veggie or fruit creations. Let them arrange raw veggies or fruits into a fun shape or design.
- Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.


NURSERY NEWS

Grace Shallenberger



Grace Lynn Whisenand Shallenberger was born on March 4, 2011 at St. Mary’s Hospital in Reno, Nev., to Mathew and Jolene Shallenberger (Irmer) and big brother, William of Washoe Valley, Nev. She was 6 pounds 13.5 ounces and measured 20.5 inches long. Grandparents include E. Nena Dilbeck of Stagecoach, Nev.; Bruno Irmer of Bladen, Nev.; and Frank and Judy Shallenberger of Genoa, Nev. Her great-grandmother is Earline Bullard of Carson City, Nev.

Lucas Hill



Lucas “Minko” Hill was born on July 21, 2010. He is the son of Stephanie Hill; grandson of Steven Anthony and Barbara Hill of McAlester; and great-nephew of Wilda Taliaferro of Lone Grove, and Dennis Hill of Sapulpa.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

ANTLERS

Market open weekdays Dec. 1-22 , except for:
Dec. 7 : Idabel 9-11 a.m.; Broken Bow 12-2 p.m. (market open)
Dec. 14: Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market open)
Closed Dec. 23-30 for inventory
Cooking with Carmen: Dec. 6 & 16, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

DURANT

Market open weekdays: Dec. 1-22, except for:
Closed Dec. 23-30 for inventory
Cooking with Carmen: Dec. 14 & 22, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

McALESTER

Market open weekdays Dec. 1-22, except for:
Closed Dec. 23-30 for inventory
Cooking with Carmen: Dec. 8 & 20, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

POTEAU

Market open weekdays Dec. 1-22, except for:
Closed Dec. 23-30 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: Dec. 2 & 12, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Open 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Staff will take lunch from 11:30 to 12 noon.

WAREHOUSES & MARKETS

Antlers: 306 S.W. “O” St., 580-298-6443
Durant: 100 1/2 Waldron Dr., 580-924-7773
McAlester: 1212 S. Main St., 918-420-5716
Poteau: 100 Kerr, 918-649-0431

FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITES

Bethel: Choctaw Community Building
Broken Bow: Choctaw Family Investment Center
Idabel: Choctaw Community Center
Smithville: Choctaw Community Center
Stigler: Choctaw Community Center

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Recipe of the Month

Green Beans with Glazed Onions

Ingredients:

32 oz. frozen white pearl onions, thawed (2 bags)
½ cup. balsamic vinegar, divided
2 tbsp. butter, unsalted
2 tbsp. canola oil
1 tsp. ground thyme
1 tsp. black pepper, ground
1 tsp. salt, divided
3 lb. fresh green beans, cleaned and trimmed
3 tbsp. olive oil
1 tbsp. ground mustard
1 ½ tsp. sugar or Splenda

Directions:

1. In a medium saucepan, combine onions, 4 tbsp. vinegar, butter, canola oil, thyme, pepper, and ½ tsp. salt.
2. Heat over low heat until butter is melted; stirring to coat onions.
3. Place mixture on a baking sheet and roast in a 400 degree oven for 35-40 minutes stirring occasionally until onions are browned nicely. Remove from oven and set aside.
4. Blanch green beans in large saucepan of boiling water just until tender, about five minutes.
5. Drain and rinse with cold water; set aside. In small bowl, whisk together olive oil, mustard, sugar, the remaining 4 tbsp. of the vinegar, and the remaining ½ tsp. of salt.
6. In a large bowl, toss the dressing together with the onions and the green beans. Place the mixture in a large casserole dish and cover.
7. Bake for 20 minutes in a 350 degree oven.

Nutrition facts:

Amount per serving: Calories - 191.6, Total Carbs - 22.2g, Total fat - 10.3g, Unsaturated fat - 7.6mg, Fiber - 6.9g, Protein - 3.1g, Sat fat - 2.7g, Potassium - 190.9mg, Sodium - 305.2mg.

For further information you may contact: Erin Adams, RD, LD, Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center 800-349-7026 ex: 6959

Diabetes Awareness Month

- November is a very special time of year. It is American Diabetes Month and it is American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month. According to the American Diabetes Association nearly 26 million children and adults in American live with diabetes, and another 79 million at high risk for developing Type-2 diabetes, the disease is taking a devastating physical, emotional and financial toll on our country. Recent numbers by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention depict where our country is and where we are headed:
- Every 17 seconds, someone is diagnosed with diabetes.
- Diabetes kills more people each year than breast cancer and AIDS combined.
- Recent estimates project that as many as one in three American adults will have diabetes in 2050 unless we take steps to Stop Diabetes.
- With these facts hitting the table, let’s look at some numbers from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Indian Health Services:
- 2.2 times higher likelihood of American Indians and Alaska Natives to have diabetes compared with non-Hispanic whites.
- 68 Percent increase in diabetes from 1994 to 2004 in American Indian and Alaska Native youth aged 15-19 years.
- 95 Percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives with diabetes who have Type-2 diabetes (as opposed to Type 1 diabetes).
- Estimated 30 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives who have pre-diabetes
- American Indians and Alaska Natives are at a much greater risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. However, joining with the American Diabetes Association to take a pledge and raise your hand to Stop Diabetes, a difference can be made. This month we can do this by:
- Visiting www.stopdiabetes.com
- Calling 1-800-DIABETES
- Texting “join” to 69866 (Standard data rates and messages apply)
- Attending an American Diabetes Month event in your area

Green holiday tips to try this season

- During the holiday season, waste disposal increases 25 percent in the United States, causing an extra 5 billion pounds of waste in the landfills according to the Medical University of South Carolina. Plus, travelers will be logging tons of miles and creating tons of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Here are tips to help you plan ahead to reduce your waste and green your gift giving this year.
- Make Your Own Wrapping Paper
- Most mass-produced wrapping paper you find in stores is not recyclable and ends up in landfills. Instead, here’s a great chance to get creative! Wrap presents with old maps, the comics section of a newspaper, or children’s artwork. Or use a scarf, attractive dish towel, bandana, or some other useful cloth item. If every family wrapped just three gifts this way, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields.
- Buy Energy-Saving Holiday Lights
- Now you can decorate your house with LED lights that use 90 percent less energy than conventional holiday lights, and can save your family up to \$50 on your energy bills during the holiday season! LED lights are available at many major retailers, including Target, Wal-Mart, and Ace Hardware stores.
- Add Organic and Local Foods to Your Holiday Feasts
- Support local family farmers who grow sustainable

- meat and produce. Not only does it taste better, you’ll be doing your part for the planet too. Search www.localharvest.org for locations near you.
- Get a Pesticide-Free Tree
- Demand is on the rise for Christmas trees that are not covered in chemicals; some growers use 40 different pesticides, as well as chemical colorants. The good news is that there are now a number of tree-farms that sell pesticide-free trees, so ask your local Christmas tree seller, or www.localharvest.org for a location near you.
- Do a “Cool Home” Tour
- Take a pledge this New Years’ to reduce your home energy use by buying energy-efficient light bulbs. Replacing only six regular 60-watt bulbs with six 13-watt CFL bulbs will save the average American family \$60 per year. If there’s a fire in your fireplace this Christmas, turn down that thermostat! Lowering the temperature even five degrees can take 15 percent off your heating bill.
- Recycle Your Old Cell Phone
- Getting a new cell phone for Christmas? Not sure what to do with the old one? Now, you can drop off that old phone at any Choctaw Nation Community Center. Each year, 130 million cell phones are thrown out, weighing approximately 65,000 tons. Recycling your old phone prevents hazardous elements like mercury, cadmium and lead from ending up in our landfills. These phones

- then become part of the Cell Phones for Soldiers program.
- Send Tree-free Holiday Cards
- Search for cards made from kenapf, hemp, and other tree-free resources. Or, send e-cards and avoid the wait at the post office for stamps.
- Hold a Zero Waste Holiday Party
- Host a zero-waste party. Minimize the garbage by using reusable cups, plates and utensils if you don’t have enough of your own borrow some from friends or relatives. Use fabric tablecloths and napkins. Then be sure to recycle any post-party cans and bottles and compost food scraps.
- Consider the Lifecycle of Electronic Gifts
- Some of the most popular gift items for children and teens are electronics like computers, video games, and music devices. But the manufacturing and disposal of these items creates significant human health and environmental hazards. Remember the Choctaw Nation Recycling Center can recycle anything that runs on electricity so don’t just throw those old electronics into the trash.
- Give Gifts from the Heart
- Instead of spending money on commercial goods, give the gift of your time and talent to loved ones this year. Offer to make dinner, walk the dog, help with gardening or home repairs.
- Give the Gift of a Better World
- Make a donation in honor


- of a loved one. Choose a cause that addresses an issue that you and your friends and family members care about and support.
- Recycle Packaging From Gifts
- To reduce environmental impacts, it is important to recycle all cardboard packaging and peanuts or other Styrofoam packing that comes with gifts or purchases as these items will not de-compose in a landfill but can be used over and over again for packaging and shipping. Both of these items can also be recycled at the Choctaw Nation Recycling Center and any location where a recycling container is located.

New Location!!!









Choctaw Nation WIC

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN

SITE	PHONE	HOURS	DAYS
Antlers	580-298-3161	8:30-4:00	Every Tuesday
Atoka	580-889-5825	8:00-4:30	Every Mon., Wed., Thurs. & Fri.
Bethel	580-241-5458	8:30-4:00	1st Tuesday
Boswell	580-380-5264	8:30-4:00	Every Friday
Broken Bow	580-584-2746	8:00-4:30	Daily, except 1st Tues. & 2nd Thurs.
Coalgate	580-927-3641	8:00-4:30	Every Wednesday
Durant	580-924-8280 x 2257	8:00-4:30	Daily
Hugo	580-326-5404	8:00-4:30	Daily
Idabel	580-286-2510	8:00-4:30	Mon., Thurs. & Fri.
McAlester	918-423-6335	8:00-4:30	Daily
Poteau	918-647-4585	8:00-4:30	Daily
Smithville	580-244-3289	8:30-4:00	2nd Thursday
Spiro	918-962-3832	8:00-4:30	Every Wednesday - Friday
Stigler	918-967-4211	8:30-4:00	Every Monday - Wednesday
Talihina	918-567-7000 x 6792	8:00-4:30	Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri.
Wilburton	918-465-5641	8:30-4:00	Every Thursday

PEOPLE YOU KNOW

Happy 60th anniversary

Weldon (Bud) and Carolyn (Johnson) Brumley recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. They were married Sept. 2, 1951, in Ada.

Bud and Carolyn were born and raised in Ada. After they were married and a short term in the Army, Bud worked at the Pepsi Company, and Carolyn’s uncle’s family owned Ada Candy Company. Bud decided to go to college and Carolyn worked jobs in Ada to put him through school. Bud went to East Central and completed his B.A. They then decided to move to California. Bud finished his master’s and later they had three daughters, Jayna Eager, Beth Eggleston and Paula Evans.

Carolyn finished her degree at the age of 50. Carolyn and Bud were both teachers in the San Joaquin Valley of California (Visalia, Woodlake, Strathmore, Exeter and Seville). Bud retired as a superintendent and still substitutes today. He will be 80 in December. Carolyn retired three years ago at the age of 75. They have traveled back and forth to Oklahoma more times than can be counted, visiting very summer and some Christmases to see family, who live in Ada, Oklahoma City and Stratford.

They loved to travel over the years. Bud and Carolyn have gone to Russia, China, Mexico, the Philippines and many more places to spread the word of Jesus Christ. If you know these two and would like to wish them a happy anniversary or birthday wishes (Carolyn’s was Sept. 27), you can send them a card at 623 N Quince St. Exeter, Calif. 93221. They have had a wonderful life and have been blessed over the many years together, which they attribute to putting Jesus Christ first in their lives. They also have two son-in-laws, Jim Eager and Evan D. Evans, along with eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



Twins celebrate 94 years

Twins Ernest Hooser of Durant and Ernestine Hooser of Broken Bow celebrated their 94th birthday on Oct. 8. Family and friends joined the brother and sister in Idabel for a party in their honor. Happy birthday, Ernest and Ernestine!



Happy birthday, Anberlin

Anberlin Colbie turned two on Oct. 28. Her birthday was celebrated with her parents, Erin Burkhalter and Brett Crosby of Durant; grandparents, Willard and Betty Crosby of Durant, Brian and Tish Burkhalter of Calera, Angela Jackson of Durant, as well as many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. Happy birthday, Bug.



Happy birthday

Kenneth and Darlene Johnson wishes a happy birthday to their grandchildren, Nishozoñe Anna Marie Washee, who turned 16 on Oct. 18, and Tushka Kenneth Ray Johnson, who will be 12 on Nov. 4.

Don graduates drug court program

Don Gilbert was among a group of graduates of the most successful drug court program in the state during ceremonies held at First Christian Church in Durant. The community-based and operated program is in its seventh year and the recent graduation brought to 111 the number of those given a chance to begin a new life and avoid a lengthy prison sentence.

Don, who has spent much of his adult life in prison, told a moving story about his battle with alcohol and drugs. He said he has been sober for 638 days. He was given a seven-year prison sentence for his last offense, which was suspended with the successful completion of drug court.

Don pointed out to the audience to his wife and small son who were there supporting him and said he couldn’t imagine being in prison for the next seven years of his son’s life. He then received congratulations and a certificate from Judge Farrell Hatch and Julie Rorick during the ceremonies.

Don is the husband of Misty M. Ward, the stepfather of Dakota and Zachary Ward and the father of Kenneth L.N Gilbert II.



Damon appointed to Calif. Wheat Commission Board

Damon Sidles, plant manager from Miller Milling in Fresno, Calif., has been appointed by the California Secretary of Agriculture to serve as Alternate Public Member on the California Wheat Commission Board. In addition to working with the California Wheat Commission (CWC), he serves on the Technical Committee of the International Association of Operative Millers and is director of the Golden West District of that organization.

Damon is from Great Bend, Kan., and earned a bachelor’s degree in milling science and management from Kansas State University. His career began as head miller with ConAgra, working in several states, including Minnesota, Illinois, Oklahoma and Alabama. He joined Miller Milling in July 1997 in the capacity of shift miller and was promoted to plant manager in the summer of 2000. Damon is the son of June and Dick Sidles of Durant. His grandfather, Turner Silmon, was an original enrollee.



Kristianna turns 17

Happy birthday to Kristianna Holder, who turned 17 on Oct. 10. She is in the 11th grade and is proud to be a Choctaw.



Happy birthday, Courtney

Courtney Faye Barnard celebrated her 11th birthday on Sept. 8 with a surprise party with several friends and family members attending. She is the daughter of Lindsey and Jeremy Phillips of Huntsville, Ark., and Thomas Barnard of Ardmore. She is the granddaughter of Lloyd and Kathy Holt of Wesley, Ark., Kathy Phillips of Clinton, Steve and Stephanie Phillips of Springdale, Ark., the late Susie Eberhart and the late James Barnard, both of Ardmore. Her great-grandparents are Mary Holt of Fayetteville, Ark., Elva Doling of Springdale, Richard Doling of Clinton and Lavern and Gilbert Bates of California.



Happy birthday, Cody

Cody Tyler’s family would like to wish him a happy birthday. It doesn’t seem possible that he will be 10 years old, they said. God and angels gave them the best gift, they said, on Nov. 2, 2001. Happy birthday to a son, brother and the best grandson, Cody. From your family, mom, dad, brother and Grandma Louise and Bob.



Brian takes role on board of directors

Brian Ladner was appointed to the Love County Soil Conservation District Board of Directors. He will complete the term of office held by his father, Ott Ladner, who passed away Jan. 28, 2011. Brian is a farmer/rancher and certified contract welder in the Jintown community in Love County. He is the great-great-grandson of original enrollee Sis Stout, a full-blood Mississippi Choctaw.



Choates wed

Kristie Rose LeRoy and Jerold Lance Choate were united in marriage at 3 p.m. on Sept. 10 at the Pawnee Indian Baptist Church. The Rev. Jarvis LeRoy officiated the ceremony.

Kristie is the daughter of Rev. Jarvis and Linda LeRoy of Pawnee. She is the granddaughter of the late Henry and Evelyn Snake LeRoy of Ponca City and the late Phillip and Louise Kent Matthews of Pawnee.

Jerold is the son of Floyd and Kaye Choate of Pickens. He is the grandson of the late Cultertson and Ora Noah and the late Everett and Edna Choate.

The couple resides in Pawnee where Kristie is employed with the Pawnee Indian Health Center as the credential coordinator and Jerold is employed with the Pawnee Nation TDC and is attending school full-time at ITT Tech in Tulsa.



Brothers’ birthdays

Birthday wishes go out to Spencer Thomas Barnard, who will be seven years old on Oct. 20. He is the son of Lindsey and Jeremy Phillips of Huntsville, Ark., Thomas Barnard of Ardmore; the grandson of Lloyd and Kathy Holt, Kathy Phillips, Steve and Stephanie Phillips, the late Susie Eberhart and the late James Barnard. His great-grandparents are Mary Holt, Elva Doling, Richard Doling, Lavern and Gilbert Bates.

Spencer’s little brother, Korbin Foster, will be two on Oct. 23. He is the son of Lindsey and Jeremy Phillips and Kevin and April Foster; the grandson of Lloyd and Kathy Holt, Kathy Phillips, Steve and Stephanie Phillips, Jayne and Jeff Sablotne and Randel and Mari Foster. His great-grandparents are Mary Holt, Elva Doling, Richard Doling and the late Cecil Lovelace. Happy birthday, boys!



Kolton earns Reserve, Grand Champion with swine

Kolton Baber of Big Pasture 4-H won Reserve Breed Champion Cross at the 2011 Tulsa State Fair on Oct. 6. Kolton then went on to win Reserve Grand Champion Barrow of the entire show. Kolton is a sixth grade student at Big Pasture Elementary School in Randlett. He is the son of Steven and Shelley Baber and the grandson of Ray and Joyce Teakell of Duncan and Terry and Pam Baber of Burkburnett, Texas.

Happy birthday, Cadence

Happy second birthday from grandma and grandpa, Russel and Bonnie Horn, to Cadence Gray Wolf. Cadence is the daughter of Joseph and Valerie Wolf.



Heald family, birthday, anniversary

Happy birthday to Papa Hank, Hank Welch of Ripon, Calif., from the Heald family. They hope he has a great many more years.

To Jeff Heald, your wife, Jennifer, thanks you for a great, wonderful 20 years and hopes for many more to follow. She said being married to you has been and is such a blessing.

Happy 100th birthday, Pop!

James Harold Spring, born in Jumbo, Okla., turns 100 on Dec. 3. He is the son of James and Della Spring. “Pop” attended school at Goodland and Murray State College. He married Aldene Henegar in 1934 and they moved to California to get some sunshine in 1941. Happy birthday from Genie, Beverly, John and Susie.



Collins appointed to state Commission for Rehab Services

Choctaw member Lynda Collins has become the first woman and first Native American ever to serve on the Oklahoma Commission for Rehabilitation Services. She was appointed by Gov. Mary Fallin to the governing board for the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, which provides employment, vocational rehabilitation, education and disability benefits decisions for 85,000 Oklahomans with disabilities.

In the beginning, the Ada native was a teenager facing cancer treatment and barriers to employment because of a disability. With help from the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), she got career counseling, encouragement and her first job.

Collins eventually worked her way up through the ranks to become a Vocational Rehabilitation administrator, retiring after 33 years in 2005.

In August, Fallin asked her to return to DRS as a member of the Commission for Rehabilitation Services, a three-person governing board for the agency. Her three-year term began in August and was elected as commission vice chair at her first meeting on Sept. 12.

Collins currently works as a certified case manager with Daysprings of Tulsa, where she visits clients’ homes to provide mental health services two days each week.

She earned a bachelor’s of science in psychology and sociology from East Central University and a master’s degree in psychology with an emphasis in vocational rehabilitation from Oklahoma State University. She holds a national Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) license and is recognized by the state as a Certified Public Manager (CPM).

Collins has also been recognized with many professional awards, including the DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Lifetime Achievement Award, National Rehabilitation Association Southwest Region’s Voyle C. Scurlock Award and Oklahoma Rehabilitation Association Hubert E. Byrd Award. She was twice named DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Manager of the Year.

Collins is the daughter of Wib and Juanita Scroggins of Ada. She is the great-granddaughter of Susan Nail, a full-blood Choctaw. She and her husband, Jud, have two children, Blake and Breanna, and three grandchildren, Wilder, Gwyneth and Adalyn.

Good job, Megan!

Megan Hart, 12 years old, daughter of Jim and Ginger Hart of Gleenpool, harvested two deer the same morning during the youth hunt while hunting on her grandparents, Bill and Celia Scherman’s, land near Lake Eufala.



Henry turns 75

Family and friends gathered on Sept. 11 to help Henry C. Folsom Jr. celebrate his 75th birthday.

Henry was born Sept. 7, 1936, in his parents’ home seven miles southeast of Blanchard on the Henry C. Folsom Sr. and Edna Mae Howell-Folsom family farm, which was land that the United States government gave back to Indian families in 1905.

Henry Jr., his wife, Sarah Sue, and their two children, Lori Suzanne and Jeffrey Charles, built their home on the Folsom family farm in 1973.

The Folsom family members are descended from John Folsom, born about 1615 in or near Hingham, England.

Lengthy genealogy records of the Folsom family are recorded in the publication, *Genealogy of the Folsom Family*, a revised and extended edition including English records. Elizabeth Knowles Folsom compiled the two-volume publication in 1938.

The 75th birthday party for Henry Jr. was a great success and all who attended had a great time.



EDUCATION

Southeastern to assist Native American students

Enhancing the academic success of Native American students is the goal of a nearly \$2 million federal grant received by Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

The five-year, \$1,995,623 Title III grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. Chris Wesberry, Native American Center for Student Success coordinator, was principal investigator for the project, and Tim Boatmun, Associate Dean for Academic Services, was co-principal investigator.

Also assisting in writing the proposal was Paul Buntz, grant coordinator-writer.

The “Connect2Complete (C2C) Project” will strive to bolster the retention rates and graduation rates of Native American students at Southeastern. Currently, approximately 29 percent of Southeastern’s enrollment is comprised of Native Americans.

Southeastern president Larry Minks acknowledged the support of members of the U.S. Congressional delegation from Oklahoma, including Rep. Dan Boren, Rep. Tom Cole, Sen. James Inhofe, and Sen. Tom Coburn.

“Our Congressional delegation is to be commended for its support of higher education,” Minks said.

“This project will certainly complement the many existing programs we have in place through our Native

American Center for Student Success. We are very proud of the history and heritage that the Native American students have played throughout the course of the University’s existence.

“I also want to recognize Chief Gregory Pyle of The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Governor Bill Anoatubby of the Chickasaw Nation for their continued support of the University’s initiatives. For many years, they have partnered with Southeastern to ensure a better learning environment for all students.”

The C2C project will fund two new positions – retention specialists – with Wesberry serving as project director and Boatmun as co-director.

In addition to strengthening the retention and graduation rates through additional admissions and advising services, the project includes such components as enhancing the Native American collection in the Henry G. Bennett Memorial Library, professional development, mentorships, and office renovations.

“Having a significant percentage of Native American students enrolled at Southeastern allowed us the oppor-



Chris Wesberry



Tim Boatmun

tunity to apply for this unique grant,” Wesberry said. “With Native American student services at the heart of our proposal, we developed the Connect2Complete project. We are proud to have been the recipient of a grant that will have such a positive impact on so many students.”

“I feel honored and humbled to be part of such a transformative project at our University,” Boatmun said. “This grant award reflects the tremendous commitment of Dr. Minks and our tribal partners to student success. Under Chris Wesberry’s leadership, Southeastern will have the preeminent Native American student services program in the country.”

The university’s efforts have not gone unnoticed nationally. In its 2011-2012 special college issue, “Winds of Change” magazine rated Southeastern second in the nation in two categories: “Top 5 Colleges for American Indians by percent of Bachelor’s degrees” (4-year weighted average of 23.9%), and “Top 5 Colleges for American Indians by percent of full-time undergraduates” (27.1%).

Earlier this year, Southeastern earned high marks from

“Diverse Issues In Higher Education” magazine. Each year, the magazine publishes its top 100 rankings of minority graduates.

According to the latest rankings, Southeastern is sixth in the nation in awarding undergraduate degrees to Native American graduates in all disciplines combined. In addition, Southeastern is ranked 17th nationally in awarding master’s degrees in all disciplines.

In the undergraduate rankings, Southeastern was ranked in the top 10 in nine different majors; in the master’s category, Southeastern was ranked in the top 10 in two majors.

Southeastern held the top three rankings on the undergraduate list in Engineering Technologies and Engineering-related fields (Occupational Safety & Health), Education, and Psychology.

In the master’s degrees rankings, Southeastern was ranked first in Engineering Technologies and Engineering-related fields (Occupational Safety & Health), and second in Engineering (Aerospace Administration & Logistics).

Regarding the C2C grant, the total cost of the program will be financed with Federal money. It will provide services to students and facility improvements over a five-year period. The funding for the initial year is \$399,014.



Ward promoted

Lance Corporal Joshua P. Ward, USMC, was promoted to his current rank, effective Oct. 1. He completed basic training at Parris Island, S.C., in November 2010 and received further training at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Twentynine Palms, Calif., as Field Radio Operator and is now permanently stationed at Camp Lejeune. He is the grandson of Choctaw, Imogene Taylor, formerly of Broken Bow, and son of Bill and Salean Marolt, all of Grove City, Ohio.

His family says: We are proud of our Marine, who carries on tradition of his grandpa, Bob Rowe, and grandma, Imogene, as well as great-uncle, Leroy Tushka. Join us in supporting LCpl Ward and all of the military.



An educational adjoining: Choctaw and Pawnee

Contributed by: Prof. Thomas D. Watts, Ph.D.

This article is a tribute to a remarkable and accomplished member of the Choctaw tribe, Dr. Joseph P. Bohanon. Dr. Bohanon was appointed president of Pawnee Nation College in Pawnee in July 2011. This prestigious and honored appointment is a testimony to the many achievements and abilities of this modest but very accomplished son of the Choctaw Nation. The Choctaw and the Pawnee have different histories, cultures, traditions and languages, but they share much as well, including the fact that they are both residing on the Great Plains. Both the Choctaw and the Pawnee have their respective tribal headquarters in Oklahoma, where Pawnee Nation College is located.

Dr. Bohanon grew up in Oklahoma and had previously occupied a seminal position at historic Bacone College in Muskogee as the director of the American Indian Studies Program. Dr. Bohanon’s educational background and experiences place him in a good position to understand the many challenges facing tribal colleges today as well as general higher education today.

Dr. Bohanon received his Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from the University of Southern Mississippi, located in Hattiesburg, Miss. Incidentally, while at USM, he familiarized himself even more with the culture and traditions of the Mississippi Choctaw and other tribes in the area. His Ph.D. dissertation at USM was on field education in social work programs. Both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in social work are from the University of Texas at Arlington. I was the director of the Undergraduate Social Work (BSW) program at UTA from 1991-1998, so I witnessed his steady progression through both programs. He performed very well academically at UTA and also somehow found the time to be quite involved with the Native American community in the north Texas area. While at UTA, he founded the Native American Student Organization (NASA), a most needed and important student organization that is still thriving today, serving the needs of Native American students at UTA and more.

Bohanon’s graduate education in higher education and in social work could not be better training for his new position as president of a tribal college. He has also published various items over the years but has been so busy as a Native American leader in so many capacities that he has not had the time to devote to scholarship as he would like.

Bohanon knows that the Choctaw are social service-minded and education-minded, just as he has been throughout his life. As the new President of Pawnee Nation College, he is determined to “make a difference,” to bring his commitment, his talents, his own and his tribe’s illustrious history into play for an even better future at Pawnee Nation College.



Jones Academy Super Students

Jones Academy has named its Super Students. Pictured left to right are sixth grader McGavyne Lone Elk, sixth grader Daisica Rice, fifth grader Lena Goodbear, fifth grader Truvon Willis, fourth grader Odalys Lujano, third grader Lastenia Lainez-Ortiz, first grader Seneca Jones and second grader Jose Lainez-Ortiz. These first nine weeks super students were selected by their teachers on the basis of grades, citizenship and cooperation.

Emilia named Notable Student

Congratulations to Emilia Farmer, who was recently named a Notable Student at the Jones Academy Campus Alternative School. Emilia is a sophomore from Walnut Grove, Miss.



To the Youth of the Nation

By: Courtney Patterson
Chair of Choctaw Nation Youth Advisory Board
Hugo Chapter
“Chi Pisa La Chike (For Kristi)”

“Goodbye” isn’t my favorite word choice for a departing. The word is bitter when it sits on my tongue, waiting to see off a companion, hoping that it won’t be the last time we see each other physically in this world. “Goodbye” has a strong effect when it crosses my lips; I feel as if I am punched in the chest every time, a loss of breath, I struggle for air and my heart races uncontrollably. Once the word is past my mouth, it soars through the sky as question, soon splashing on the face of my departing companion. A wave of tears begins to flow, returning my question with an answer, they struggle to reply, moving their lips in a quivering fashion as they squeeze their eyes close as dams to back up the floods of tears the are trying to hold back. They finally answer with a silent, “good-bye,” confirming my last question. I know it is time for them to leave.

“Goodbye” is an absolute lie. There’s nothing good about “bye” in any way, shape or form. I know some people would disagree, and that’s fine. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion. In mine, “goodbye” says “I give up.” I give up to a cruel world filled with hate, despise and agony. “Goodbye” is the okay signal to a final launching sequence to your end. “Goodbye” is a monster, standing 12 feet tall with a twisted face, red eyes and a purple snake-like tongue. Reaching out, I know if he touches me, my skin will set ablaze, and that just by his touch, I don’t dare wonder what he’ll do if he is to whisper in my ear.

When I become friends with someone, I feel as if I’m giving pieces of my heart away. Those pieces of my heart are to remind them of my affection. What I’ve learned about these pieces of affection is that they have self-destruct modules. With every goodbye said, they blow. In so, I lose myself, piece by piece, never to return the same, always broken and tattered in terrible degrees.

A few weeks ago, I attended an annual YAB Teen Conference. At this conference, there was a certain speaker that stood out from the rest. This speaker’s message was so bold to me. It was of an Indian tale, of which all the details I cannot recall, but I do remember this: there is no word for goodbye in the Choctaw language. Instead, they say “chi pisa la chike,” meaning, “until we meet again.” This word has become very meaningful to me, reminding me there’s no goodbye, we will meet again.

This is truly a letter to myself, but I guess it could be a letter to someone else, too. When someone leaves, there’s always a reason for the departure. Maybe we’re leaving, maybe we’re watching someone else leave, it just all depends, but whatever the situation may be, don’t look at it as goodbye. Don’t give them back to a cruel world. Say “chi pisa la chike,” and set them off on a path to soon be intertwined again with your own.

Ryan signs with Houston Baptist

Ryan Lower of Cyrpress, Texas, has signed with Houston Baptist University, a Division 1 four-year college. He spent his first year of college at Galveston College with a scholarship as a competitive pitcher for the Division 1 JUCO and had a great season. Ryan has played competitive baseball since he was 5 years old. He played for his high school, Cy-Creek, lettered as a varsity pitcher and was nominated his senior year for first team All-District pitcher in a 5A district. He plans to play ball and major in international business.



Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Calendar

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
D E C E M B E R					1	2 Broken Bow 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Idabel by appt.	3
	4	5 Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	6 Antlers by appt.	7 Wilburton 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.	8	9 Crowder by appt.	10
	11	12 Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	13 Atoka 9 a.m.-11 a.m. Coalgate 12:30 p.m.- 2:30 p.m.	14 Talihina 9 a.m.-2 p.m.	15	16	17
	18	19 Durant 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	20 Poteau 10 a.m.-2 p.m.	21 McAlester 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Stigler by appt.	22 Winter (Winter Solstice)	23 Holiday	24 Christmas Eve
2 0 1 1	25 Christmas Day	26 Kwanzaa (12/26 - 1/1) Boxing Day (Canada)	27	28	29	30 Wright City by appt.	31 New Year's Eve

Durant - Mondays • Broken Bow - Mon., Wed. and Fri. • Idabel - By appointment
Phone: 580-326-8304; Fax: 580-326-2410 • Email: ddavenport@choctawnation.com

CHOCTAW DAY: COLORADO EDITION



Lana Sleeper pulls Palo Robles in for a good time during the Stealing Partners Dance.



Joey Tom gives Stacy Whitmire a spin during the Stealing Partners Dance.



Joyce and Allan Moran with Chief Greg Pyle.



Assistant Chief Gary Batton with Boone Spencer.



Julie Smith, Lillie Baird and Mayla Smith visit Les Williston to learn about Choctaw weapons.



Theresa Morris holds up her design.



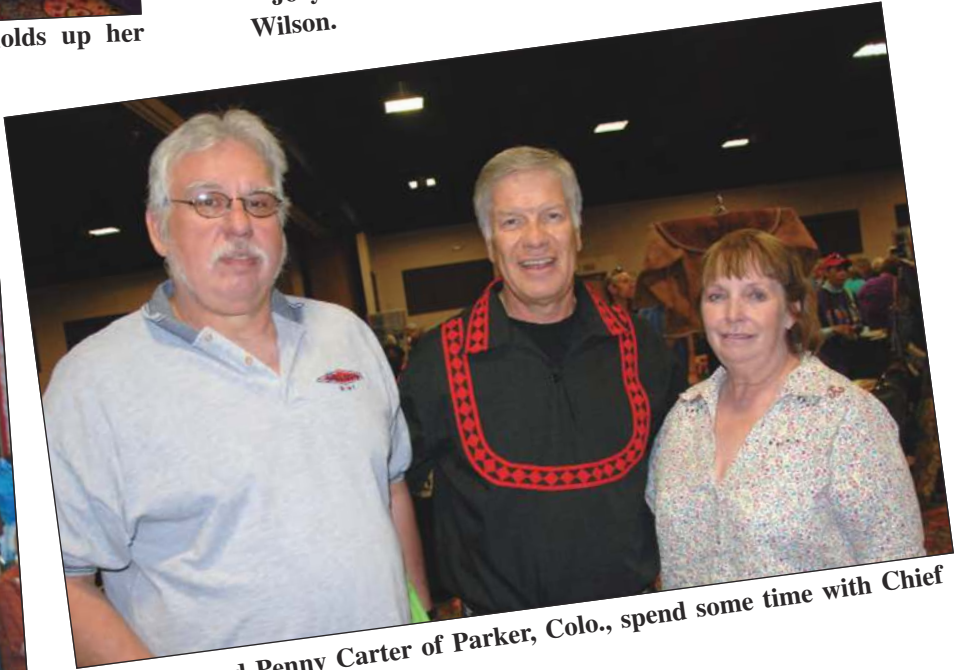
Joey Tom explains how to handle stickball sticks to Brendon Wilson.



Language Director Jim Parrish and Internet Language Instructor Lillie Roberts visit with one of Lillie's online students, Ronnie Funk, and his daughter, Sophia.



Two of the younger ones from an Irish dance group enchant the audience. The group was comprised of dancers from the Bennett School of Dance and the Heritage Irish Stepdancers.



Michael and Penny Carter of Parker, Colo., spend some time with Chief Pyle.



Assistant Chief Batton enjoys his visit with Bob and Paula Berry of Monte Vista, Colo.



Sam Rizzo and Tina Walker at the make-and-take booth making traditional Choctaw items.



Carolyn Cross brings several items from the Choctaw Nation Bookstore for visitors to see and purchase.



Jami and Katie Moseley at the make-and-take booth.

Photos by
LISA REED
and
BRET MOSS
Choctaw Nation
of Oklahoma



Mandy Lawson, left, and Brad Joe, right, meet Ronald Hickman, a former resident of Ardmore, and his daughter, Merylene Hickman.

Joe Watkins attributes Native American knowledge, archaeology to the campus of OU

By **CHRISSY DILL**
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Choctaw member Dr. Joe Watkins holds the title of Director of the Native American Studies Program at the University of Oklahoma. With this title, Watkins introduces and encourages many exceptional aspects of Native American culture to students at his university, and his history as an educator, writer and his close relations with the Choctaw Nation have contributed to his passion for spreading knowledge of the traditions of the American Indian.

According to his biography, Watkins was an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico from 2003-07. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology from the University of Oklahoma and his Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Anthropology from Southern Methodist University, where his doctorate examined archaeologists’ responses to questionnaire scenarios concerning their perceptions of American Indian issues.

One of Watkins’ family members held a special place in Choctaw history. “My great-uncle, Joseph Oklahombi, was a Code Talker,” he said. “It was always something we were proud of.”

Watkins recalled having Sunday lunches at his uncle Oklahombi’s house, before he passed away when Watkins was just 6 or 7 years old. “He was always this man who stayed in the background; always a quiet and confident man,” remembered Watkins. “He never talked about what he had done. The more I found out about him and his actions in World War I, the prouder I became to have known such a great man.”

Watkins has been involved in archaeology for more than

40 years, including work in Europe on an archaeological site more than 40,000 years old and sites in the United States that were at least 12,000 years old, he said. “I love archaeology because it gives us the time depth to think about humanity’s ways of dealing with things – environmental change, population pressure and resource shortages,” he stated.

“One of my greatest thrills was serving as an on-air talent for the Oregon Public Broadcasting Service series, ‘Time Team America,’ in 2009,” said Watkins, of his archaeological projects. “We’ll be shooting another series in 2012 with four archaeological sites. It will be great fun and a tremendous experience to be able to reach so many people.”

As a professor of anthropology, Watkins taught classes dealing with the archaeology of the Southern Great Plains, ethics in anthropology, archaeology of Eastern North America as well as basic introduction to anthropology.

According to Watkins, the Native American Studies Program at OU is always involved in Native American Heritage Month, and the organization doesn’t focus on advocating in just the month of November. “We are always involved with ensuring that the university and the local community are aware of Native American issues on a daily basis rather than once a year,” he said.

The program itself offers the opportunity of contribution to Native American culture and governance nationwide, Watkins said. “We teach students how to learn, how to write, how to think and how to critically evaluate the information out there about Native American issues.”

The program provides students with many opportunities, including meeting interesting people. “We tax their brains



Dr. Watkins participating in an excavation in Japan this year. This photo was taken by his wife, Carol J. Ellick.

and their stamina – without either one, they won’t be able to contribute to the future of Native America,” said Watkins.

Watkins said it is rare for an event related to Choctaw Indians to take place on OU’s campus, although “the university offers the Choctaw language for college credit, and the classes are often in demand,” he stated.

Watkins said the program focuses on the general situation of Native Americans on campus and tries to continually remind people that there are 38 federally recognized tribes in Oklahoma. “Their issues are a microcosm of the issues Indians face nationwide,” he explained. “We focus on creating classroom situations where Native Americans and non-Native Americans alike are exposed to those issues.”

An included responsibility as director, Watkins helps students through the educational process involved in completing their master’s degrees, “then moving on to tribal employment, a Ph.D. program, or further opportunities,” he said.

“Most of the time, my role as director of the NAS pro-

gram is administration,” said Watkins, who helps develop appropriate curriculum and classes to suit the needs of Native American students on campus as well. “I also get the opportunity to teach one class a semester on particular topics,” he added.

Watkins said he gains the greatest motivation when serving on a student’s master’s thesis committee. “I can help a student complete their research and contribute information on the state of Native American populations in the U.S. today,” he said.

“When students complete their degree and move on, it gives me the feeling that I’ve truly helped someone accomplish a dream,” said a proud Watkins.

In addition to his various roles as an educator, Watkins has published numerous articles and written books concerning anthropology. His first book, “Indigenous Anthropology: American Indian Values and Scientific Practice,” is in its second printing, and his latest book, “Reclaiming Physical Heritage: Repatriation and Sacred Sites,” is aimed toward

creating an awareness of Native American issues among high school students.

“My main goal in writing the books was to create something that would cause people to think,” said Watkins.

The Indigenous Archaeology book was written at a time when archaeology was just beginning to gain serious concerns of Native Americans, stated Watkins. “Repatriation was just happening and none of the archaeologists were aware of how long American Indians had been requesting the return of those objects covered under the laws.”

His second book, Watkins said, was written to help younger scholars, primarily high school students, become aware of the issues Native Americans have faced for hundreds of years concerning the disproportionate amount of American Indian materials in museums.

“I think both books have had impact on the discipline of archaeology,” said Watkins. “I do believe they have created some conversations, if nothing else beyond that.”

Watkins’ current study interest includes the ethical practice of anthropology and the study of anthropology’s relationships with descendant communities and Aboriginal populations.

Currently, Watkins said he is working on a book that examines the situation of the Ainu of Japan as they become more recognized as a global Indigenous people. “I have been to Japan six times and have been working with the Center for Ainu and Indigenous Studies of Hokkaido to help the Ainu understand how American Indian groups maintain membership, governance, relationships with the dominant government and so forth,” he explained, adding he is also involved with working on the archaeology of the northern

portion of Hokkaido Island as well as with traditional arts in the region.

“It is very fulfilling to be a part of helping a group develop policies that can have such a far-reaching impact,” said Watkins.

Dr. Ian Thompson, Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation employee and tribal archaeologist, met Watkins when he was attending school at the University of New Mexico and Watkins served as his advisor. “He is a close personal friend and mentor,” said Thompson. Watkins was also on Thompson’s doctoral committee.

“We have a good working relationship,” said Thompson, saying the great degree in which Watkins is involved with his students. “He is always there for his students.”

According to Thompson, Watkins is a generous and very helpful individual. “He is always doing things for other people and the native community,” he said.

Thompson showed great appreciation for the things Watkins has accomplished during his educational and professional career. “It’s pretty outstanding,” he said. “He is arguably the foremost native archaeologist in the country.”

Watkins has done more to promote indigenous archaeology than anyone else has in the country, said Thompson. “He works very hard with the tribal communities all over the world to help protect their ancestors and heritage.”

With his mediation between various academic disciplines, members of Indigenous groups and studies in anthropology and archaeology, Watkins hopes to continue developing the NASP at OU in order that students will serve as cultural liaisons to translate information back and forth between Native American tribes and the institutions that impact them.

Swink, Boswell students honor Code Talkers through project

Contributed by: **Bill Hankins, The Paris News**

Fourth grade students at Boswell Independent School District and Swink ISD selected Code Talkers Joseph Oklahombi and Walter Veach as their honorees. Boswell students raised \$300 to purchase a paver inscribed with information about Oklahombi, and Swink students collected 30,000 pennies for a paver honoring Veach. The pavers are placed at the Red River Valley Veterans Memorial being built in Paris.

Contrary to the Hollywood war movie, “Wind Talk-

ers,” the practice of securing battlefield communication by having Native Americans transmit messages in their own languages did not begin during World War II. The tactic was initiated amongst Choctaw National Guardsmen in the Battle for Blanc Mont Ridge in the Champagne Sector of France in October 1918.

Oklahombi was one of these Code Talkers, so his story is intertwined with theirs. But this particular Code Talker was also a mighty war-

rior, one of the greatest of the doughboys. He reportedly captured more men in the Champagne than Sgt. York did in a comparable and more famous event in the Argonne Forest (132 men captured) two days later. Oklahombi was also awarded the Croix de Guerre.

Veach was from Durant and helped organize Durant’s first National Guard unit and served as its commander. Before his enlistment as a Code Talker, he helped put down the Crazy Snake uprising near

Henryetta in the old Muskogee Creek Nation. He was later sent to patrol the border between the United States and Mexico and had a major hand in stopping the Pancho Villa invasion of Texas.

In 1917, the company merged with the 36th Division and was sent to France. Veach, a captain, with the all-Indian Company E, saw much activity during the war.

Pavers for the two Code Talkers were presented during ceremonies on Veterans Day in Paris.



Elementary students at Soper raised pennies for Code Talker Ben Carterby.



The Goodland Academy students at Grant learned about and collected pennies for Code Talker Tobias Frazier.

Photos provided.



Hugo Elementary fourth grade students raised money for Code Talker James Edwards.



Fort Towson fourth grade students raised funds for Code Talker Ben Carterby.



Goodland Academy students collected pennies for Code Talker Mitchell Bobb. They are pictured with Lila Swink at the Hugo Library.



Students at Swink Independent School District learned about Code Talker Walter Veach.



Boswell Independent School District fourth grade students raised pennies for Joseph Oklahombi.

Choctaw Nation’s Outstanding Elders

District 1 – Idabel

Florence McClure Spalding, not pictured, is the oldest of six children. She began her education at Wheelock Academy, graduated from Goodland High School and attended Drones Business Schools. After graduation, Florence joined the U.S. Women’s Army Corps, better known as the WACS, from 1943-1947. Her duty stations included Stark Hospital, Charlotte, S.C., and Yokohama, Japan. After receiving an honorable discharge in 1947, Florence had the opportunity to work at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and attended evening classes at the University of Maryland, earning an associate degree in business management in 1973. She retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1984 as a GS-11 working as a program analyst in the material Management Branch, Aerospace Support Division, Directorate of Supply and Services, Deputy Chief of Staff Systems and Logistics. Florence’s current project is working closely with the Choctaw Nation to ensure all Choctaw veterans are registered with the tribe.



Councilman Tony Messenger, Darlene Noahubi and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 2 – Bethel

Darlene Noahubi resides in Bethel with her husband, Alton. They have three children and eight great-grandchildren. Darlene attended Nanih Chito Elementary near Smithville and graduated from Smithville High School in 1972. She worked at the Talihina Hospital after she graduated from high school and then at the Broken Bow Clinic. For the past 13 years, Darlene has been employed as a Community Health Representative (CHR) with the Choctaw Nation. She is a member of the Kulli Chito Presbyterian Church of Bethel, has held many positions over the years and promotes Choctaw women to participate in Presbyterian women’s gatherings. Darlene is proud of her heritage, stating that, “It became her first language.”

Melvin Noahubi, not pictured, has resided in Bethel all of his life. He is the father of two sons, Tim and Darren Noahubi. He attended North Bethel and graduated from Battiest High School in 1971. After graduation he began working at Weyerhaeuser as a log cutter and has 40 years of service with the same company. Melvin is proud of his Choctaw heritage. He credits his parents for his knowledge of the Choctaw language which he speaks fluently. He volunteers his time to keeping the center clean and safe for the elders. He helps serve the elders at their meals every Wednesday and makes sure they are taken care of. Melvin is an active member of the Kulli Chito Presbyterian Church in Bethel. He volunteers at the church, renovates camp and assists with Vacation Bible School.

District 2 – Broken Bow

Priscilla Jones Coleman, not pictured, was raised with four siblings. She was blessed with five wonderful children and now has an extended family of 15 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. She attended Antlers Public School and graduated from Boswell High. After raising her children, Priscilla returned to Southeastern Oklahoma State University in 1982 to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education with emphasis on language, science and social studies. In 1988, she received her master’s degree in counseling. Her career included teaching within public schools, counseling at Jones Academy, and as executive director for Kiamichi Youth Services. She has shared her expertise as a consultant to schools and organizations, a representative to numerous organizations and has been honored as a nominee for bilingual Teacher of the Year as well as being named Eagletown Teacher of the Year. Priscilla enjoys being a caregiver to her 86-year-old mother. She is currently a part-time employee of the Senior Wellness Program at the Broken Bow Center and attends Tohwali United Methodist Church.



Councilman Tony Messenger, Henry Battiest Sr. and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

Henry Lee Battiest Sr. and his wife, Dinah, have two children and are blessed with grandchildren. The oldest of five children, Henry was born into a musical family whose legacy has spanned over four generations. He could “play by ear” and by the age of 6 he was singing with his parents, forming a trio known to many as the original “Battiest Family.” As a young man, he played and sang in a couple of different bands until his marriage and then he and his wife sang as a duet. He formed and played for a number years in the “Singing Tribesmen.” In 1975, Henry formed a family group, the Battiest Indian Family, that included his children. In 1982, the Battiest Indian Family began as a full-time singing ministry.



Councilman Kenny Bryant, Lowell Nichols and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 3 – Smithville

Lowell Nichols and wife Sherry have two children and two grandchildren. A resident of the Octavia area, Lowell attended Octavia Elementary School and graduated from Smithville High School. He served in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Alaska. After his term of duty, he was employed driving trucks and in 1977 became self-employed. In 1986, Lowell began working for the LeFlore County Highway Department and during his 25 years of service he was promoted to foreman and held that position until he retired this year.

Laura Marie Cusher Carney was born Dec. 26, 1912, in Beachton near Smithville. The oldest of nine children, she is the only one surviving of her siblings. Laura will soon be 99 years old. She was married to the late Edmond Carney and they have one son, Elton Carney of Smithville. She has eight grandchildren and several great- and great-great-grandchildren. Laura began school in Zafra, traveling there by horseback. She then attended Wheelock Academy and then in 1932, she graduated from Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kan. Transportation was a barrier in the early years, yet her father would take her by wagon to Peter Consur near Heavener and she would two to three days for the train. Peter Consur would put her on the train and she would return to Haskell. Laura was very active with the Choctaw Nation during the term of Chief David Gardner. She was one of the first members of the Choctaw Senior Program and is still active, enjoying her Wednesdays at the Smithville Senior Center having lunch, playing Bingo and visiting with friends. She still writes letters and continues sewing lap robes, donating them to nursing homes. Laura is of the Presbyterian faith and has served her church as an elder for several decades.



Councilman Kenny Bryant, Lodean Starr and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 3 – Talihina

Lodean Starr is retired from the United Services Automobile Association (USAA) in San Antonio, Texas, and remains an active board member with the United San Antonio Pow Wow. She returned to Talihina in October 2003 and is currently employed part-time as a switchboard operator at Choctaw Nation Health Care Services. Lodean was selected as a Choctaw Nation delegate at the 2006 National Indian Conference on Aging (NICOA) in Tulsa, a great honor for her and was honored May 30, 2007, on Senior Day in Durant. Lodean remains active in cultural activities with the Talihina Indian Club and Choctaw language classes. She is a member of the Choctaw Seniors’ choir, “The Joyful Choctaw Singers,” a group who has recorded Choctaw hymns. She also enjoys sewing Choctaw dresses for her nieces. She participates in Pine Grove Church activities.



Councilman Kenny Bryant, Cornelius Winship Jr. and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

Cornelius Winship Jr., known to his family as “Neely,” attended Honey Grove School in Honey Grove, Texas, and graduated from Fort Towson High School. He grew up with one sister and obtained an extended family of siblings over the years. After graduation, Neely served the U.S. Army with the 1st Cavalry during the Vietnam War. He was awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Air Medal, Army Commendation Heart and Parachutist Badge. He was employed as a maintenance personnel in apartment complexes in the Dallas and Fort Worth area. Neely is an active member of the Talihina VFW and was recently honored with the junior vice commander position. He has been an asset to the Talihina community by raising monies for different entities as the VFW and the Choctaw Senior Center. He attends and volunteers at the Talihina Senior Center.



Councilman Delton Cox, Edith Ward and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 4 – Poteau

Edith Sue Welch Ward is a retired educator serving the public school system with 38 ½ years of teaching. She worked at the Choctaw Travel Plaza in Poteau for six months, then returned to educating for one and a half years, then as a teacher’s assistant for five and one-half years where she is currently employed three days a week. She enjoys helping children to learn. Edith is proud to be 1/8 Choctaw. Her great-grandfather, Livingston “Buck” White, was a full-blood Choctaw. Edith is a trained volunteer disaster relief worker. She has previously served her church as a Sunday School teacher and church treasurer. She and her late husband, Johnny Ward, had three children.



Councilman Delton Cox, Hank Harris and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

William Henry “Hank” Harris and wife Barbara have been married for 31 years and raised two children. He is a graduate of Poteau High School, Carl Albert Junior College and Northeastern State College with a degree in education. Hank served 26 years as a teacher, counselor, assistant principal, principal, assis-

tant superintendent, and as of July 1, 2011, he became the superintendent of Poteau Public Schools. He serves on the Kiamichi Technology Center Advisory Committee, coordinating curriculum with vo-techs to enhance career development. He manages curriculum development, child nutrition programs, district testing and all programs relative to public school.



Councilmen Ronald Perry and Delton Cox, JoElla Clark and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 4.5 – Spiro

JoElla Wood Clark and husband Odell have three children and five grandchildren. JoElla attended Shady Point and Spiro Public Schools. She has been active in PTA and Booster Clubs in local schools supporting her children and their extra-curricular activities. She served as president of the Booster Club for numerous years. JoElla and Odell began working with the Child Welfare Department as foster parents and have helped approximately 30 children of all ages. After they stopped taking in children, JoElla went to work for the Child Welfare Department as a part-time case worker aid. She worked at the Spiro Senior Center. She reflects that, “It was great being there in the beginning.”



Councilmen Ronald Perry and Delton Cox, John Casey and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

John Fletcher Casey is a graduate of David Starr Jordan High School, Long Beach (Calif.) City College and Orange Coast University, Orange, Calif. John joined the U.S. Army and served his duty stationed in Fort Carson, Colo., and the Republic of South Vietnam from 1966-69. He is a member of the VFW of Spiro, the American Legion in Poteau, the Choctaw Veterans Association, Skullyville Association and Spiro DAV. John serves on the LeFlore County Veterans Day Parade Committee in Poteau. He is also affiliated with Murrow Masonic Lodge, Scottish Rite, Shriner and Order of Eastern Star. He was employed as a truck driver in Fort Smith, Ark., for OK Industries and FFE Transportation Inc. in Dallas, Texas, until his retirement. John attends the First Baptist Church of Spiro serving in the capacity as a pre-school teacher. He is also a worship leader for a local nursing home.



Councilman Ronald Perry, Amelia Steen and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 5 – Stigler

Amelia Christy Steen was the third child of eight siblings and resided for a number of years on her grandmother’s restricted land six miles from northeast Stigler. She and husband Jim are proud parents of two children. She attended Stigler schools and was an active member of the band and glee clubs. Amelia is a graduate of Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kan., majoring in commercial training. Her employment career began with the Census Bureau in Pittsburg, Kan., in the finance department of the City of Pittsburg, and then after working for 13 years in Johnson County government in the data processing department, she retired and returned to Stigler 13 years ago. She attends the Bethel Indian Baptist Church, is a member of the Ladies Auxiliary of VFW Post 4446, Stigler’s Elder Nutrition Site, Whitfield Sr. Citizens and past treasurer of the Choctaw Senior Citizens group.



Councilman Ronald Perry, Dixon Lewis Jr. and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

Dixon Lewis Jr. and wife Lorene have one daughter, Michele, and one grandson, Tobey. Jr. spent most of his life in Keota, attended Keota schools and graduated from Chillico Indian Boarding School and OSU Okmulgee Tech. He joined the Oklahoma National Guard in 1964. He was employed 21 years with the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, served his community as deputy sheriff, and is now self-employed, operating Lewis Printing Shop. He serves as minister for New Hope Indian Baptist Church and has served as the C-C Baptist Association clerk for 10 years. Jr. has served as the president of the Choctaw Senior Program of Stigler for 10 years and has been a valued volunteer driver for the Choctaw Senior bus for the past 10 years. A full-blood Choctaw, he is a Choctaw language teacher. His involvement in the community includes Haskell County Democratic delegate, member of 32nd degree Masons, Mason postmaster, and has been a member of the Cookson Hills Housing Authority for 14 years. He has also served as a committee member for the Fort Smith Indian Day celebration.

Choctaw Nation's Outstanding Elders



Councilman Joe Coley, Maggie Sue Anderson and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 6 – Wilburton

Maggie Sue Anderson was born in Yanush, the youngest of 10 children. She is a graduate of Buffalo Valley School, Haskell Institute and Southeastern Oklahoma State University. After receiving the blessing of a college education, Maggie wanted to give back and the best way she how to return this investment in her future was to work with and for the Indian people. Her career began in 1966 working for the BIA in Osage County. After receiving her degree she began employment with Indian Health Service at Talihina Indian Hospital, then at other HIS locations in McAlester and Tahlequah, Eagle Butte, S.D., back to Talihina and then Oklahoma City. She worked in hospital administration, management in the Office of Environmental Health and Engineering Services in the Oklahoma Area of Oklahoma and Kansas, and as the federal coordinator of the tribal Community Health Representative (CHR) and Emergency Management Service (EMS) programs of the Oklahoma Area consisting of Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas.



Councilman Jack Austin, Bettie Teal and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 7 – Antlers

Bettie Sue Tom Teal was raised in Antlers and graduated from Antlers High School. She received her LPN pin and certificate from Kiamichi Area Vo-Tech in 1979. She began her nursing career at the Choctaw Memorial Hospital in Hugo where she worked for 13 years, then went on to work at the Choctaw Nation Nursing Home for 19 years. She retired in February. Bettie is enjoying her retirement, spending time with her grandchildren, taking part in Choctaw Senior taco sales and the trips they take for their hard work. Bettie and her husband, Ronnie, attend and enjoy church at the Cowboy Roundup Church in Antlers.



Councilman Jack Austin, Troy McKee and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

Troy Jay McKee and his wife, Patsy, have one daughter and two grandsons. Troy lived south of Antlers, attended elementary school at Lively and graduated from Antlers High School. He traveled to Texas for employment opportunities and worked at various jobs until his employment with Ex-Cell Energy where he remained until his retirement. Troy moved back to Antlers after retiring. He stays very active in his community. He loves being part of the Hill Volunteer Fire Department. Troy spends his Wednesdays enjoying fellowship at the Antlers Senior Nutrition Center. He and Patsy attend Hill Baptist Church where they enjoy spending time with all those he grew up around.

District 7 – Wright City

Cecil Samuel Caldwell and his wife, Nettie, raised seven children and now enjoy 10 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Cecil was raised in the Sobal community and at the age of 13, his family relocated to Texas. At 19, he returned to Wright City and has lived there for 52 years. In 1960, Cecil was employed with Dierks and later with Weyerhaeuser at the Wright City plant with combined service of 40 years in the lumber industry. He retired in 2002 and now enjoys fishing and living life to the fullest with his family. He is considered the #1 fan of his grandchildren's sports events. Cecil is a member of the Goodwater United Methodist Church in Sobal. He fluently speaks the Choctaw language.



Councilman Perry Thompson, Betty Crain and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 8 – Hugo

Betty Fay Griffin Crain and husband T.A. have been married for 59 years. They have three sons, five grandchildren and one great-grandson. Betty attended Hugo High School and was accepted into the diversified education program learning a trade at the Hugo hospital as a lab technician for two years. She graduated from the Missouri Medical School at Gradwohl Laboratory and X-ray in St. Louis, Mo. She worked at the Danforth hospital in Texas City, Texas Laboratory medical supervisor and in Roswell, N.M., as the lab and X-ray tech for a cardiologist clinic. Her career in the medical field has been non-stop all these years.



Councilman Perry Thompson, Kenneth Armor and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

Kenneth Odell Armor was raised in the Bokchito area. He and wife Sharyn have one son and two grandsons. Kenneth has been employed as a mechanic for 31 years at Babcock Wilcox in Paris, Texas. He owns and operates a hydraulic hose business. He enjoys operating heavy machinery from backhoe to dozer. Kenneth's hobbies include hunting, fishing, riding ATVs and anything to do with the outdoors. He is an active volunteer at the Hugo Senior Center.



Councilman Ted Dosh, Gaylia Green and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 9 – Durant

Gaylia Seeley Green and her late husband had two children. She is currently married to Robert Green and they reside in Bokchito at her family's ancestral land east of Bokchito. She attended several small rural elementary schools in the Bennington and Bokchito area and graduated from Bennington High School. She earned a degree in music education from Southeastern Oklahoma State University and her master's from the University of Texas at Dallas. Galia was a stay-at-home mom for 11 years, volunteering at church as children's choir accompanist for vocal and instrumental soloists. She taught at Mohawk Elementary for 24 years. Although retired from teaching she was asked to fill in for the Bokchito music teacher and retired again after 3 ½ years of service. For nine years she has volunteered at her church, Old Bennington Presbyterian, as pianist for the worship services. Gaylia enjoys church work, Choctaw Senior activities, serving as song leader for Choctaw hymns, taking Choctaw language classes and loves to garden. She also loves spending time with her three grandchildren.



Councilman Ted Dosh, Willie Walley and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

Willie Walley and his late wife, Ella, celebrated 47 years of marriage and were blessed with two children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Willie was born and raised in Bennington, one of six children. Willie joined the Oklahoma National Guard while in high school. After graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and retired with 20 years of military service. He was part of the greatest technology advances in the history of aviation and aerospace power. He handled highly sensitive information in communications. Willie served during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. In addition to stateside duties, he served overseas tours in Germany, Italy, Pakistan, The Aleutians and Alaska. Honors include Army and Air Force Good Conduct, Army of Occupation, National Defense Bronze Star and Air Force Longevity Service medal. Willie has served the New Bennington Presbyterian as deacon, Sunday School teacher and treasurer. He is currently employed part-time as wellness leader for the Choctaw Nation Aging Services.

District 10 – Atoka

Susan Jim was born and raised in Bentley, attending school there. She married Emmitt Jim, now deceased, in 1948 at the age of 16 Susan never had to work a day out of her home. Her husband provided for her and the 10 children – six boys and four girls. Susan has 25 grandchildren and 36 great-grandchildren. She is a member of the Macedonia Baptist Church. Susan is an active participant of the Choctaw Singers Quartet. She is still in good health and loves to go out and spend time with her children and grandchildren. She enjoys the fellowship with elders at the Choctaw Community Center.



Councilman Anthony Dillard, C.H. Isom and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

C.H. Isom and his wife of 56 years, Nadine, were foster parents and adopted a daughter. They are the proud grandparents of two. He and Nadine worked side-by-side on various jobs from logging, peeling pine poles and working in the cotton fields. In 1969, he and his wife returned to Daisy. He found employment as a construction worker on the Indian Nation Turnpike and upon completion of that project, C.H. found employment at a local sawmill. His former boss encouraged him to complete an application with the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority and he retired from there with 22 years as a maintenance worker. C.H. began as a volunteer firefighter, served on the Board of Directors and then served as chief of the Daisy Fire Department. He was instrumental in fundraising for maintaining the building or upgrading equipment.



Councilman Bob Pate, Suzanne Heard and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 11 – McAlester

Suzanne Heard was born in Haileyville. Her mother, Irene Heard, a Choctaw original enrollee, instilled in her the pride she has for the Choctaw Nation and it's deepened through the years. Suzanne has become one of the tribe's ambassadors. She attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University, earning a B.S. in elementary education, history and art, then a master's degree in counseling at Oklahoma City University. Her career includes teaching in Oklahoma schools and working for the BIA. Suzanne is always one of the first to volunteer when she sees a need in the community at church, school and McAlester's Senior Citizens Center. Education, history and art have always been important to her. She currently serves as a member of Jones Academy's School Board.



Councilman Bob Pate, Jack Haynes and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

Jack Haynes has lived most of his life within the boundaries of Choctaw Nation. Jack is a veteran having served in the U.S. Navy. He did work with his hands as a carpenter, machinist, draftsman, firefighter, EMT, and as a forklift operator. During his years as a firefighter, he sustained a serious injury that ended his firefighter career so he then applied with the U.S. Army and retired as an explosives operator after 21 years. Retirement allows for Jack to devote more time for wood carving.



Councilman James Frazier, Maggie May Anderson and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 12 – Coalgate

Maggie May Hall Anderson was born at Centrahoma, one of eight children. Maggie has lived in Coal County all her life. She married Willie Anderson in Coalgate and they had seven children, five of whom are still living. A homemaker most of her life, Maggie worked briefly out of the home as a cook at a local café and as a cook at the Olney School for until her last child graduated. Her most enjoyable times are going to church and being with her family. She is an active member of the Coalgate Senior Center. Maggie attends the Gospel Lighthouse Church of Coalgate every Sunday, sings in the choir and is often asked to sing solo in her native Choctaw language which she speaks fluently.



Councilman James Frazier, Judy Wilder and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

District 12 – Crowder

Judy Wilder was born in Porterville, Calif., and had two younger brothers. Judy and her husband of 43 years, Ron, have two children and now have been blessed with five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Judy and Ron reside in Crowder. After graduation from high school in 1966, Judy attended business college and then worked at the Wells Fargo Bank while attending Bible college. She is an active church member serving in several ministries through the years – church, correction facilities, Sunday School teaching, missions, camps and women's ministries. She is also active with the Crowder Choctaw Seniors where she served as secretary and is currently vice president. She has worked at all the fundraising events the last four years and has headed the concession trailer at the Labor Day Festival.



Councilman James Frazier, Keith Holman and Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

Keith Holman and wife Pat have two children and five grandchildren. He graduated from McFarland High School in California. He resided in Bakersfield, Calif., and was co-founder of B&H Construction. Keith returned to the Canadian area in 2004. The Holmans own the Lakeview Landing, motel and RV park in Eufaula. They are active with the Life Church in McAlester. He works in the classroom with the one- to three-year-olds. He is also an usher at the church and is involved in Life Riding Motorcycle Ministry. Keith enjoys spending time with his family and friends fishing, camping and riding his motorcycle. He is very much involved with fundraisers that are held at the District 12 Crowder Community Center.

Digging up history with flint knapper James Briscoe

By **BRET MOSS**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

For many people, the Choctaw culture of past and present is an interesting subject to ponder and learn. One man who finds the age-old facts about the Choctaw people especially fascinating is semi-retired archeologist James Briscoe.

Briscoe, who many know as one of the men who teach flint knapping at the Labor Day Festival, has traveled all over the globe, seen amazing things that most will only see on television, and is still constantly amazed by what he learns about the Choctaw people.

Briscoe’s connection and interest with the Choctaw Nation goes back to before he was born. His grandmother’s grandmother, Sara Isom, was full-blood Choctaw and married a Frenchman who had bought a plantation on Choctaw land.

When the relocation of the Choctaw people began, Sara chose to stay with her French husband in Mississippi and adhere to the state laws. This act left Sara, along with Briscoe and her lineage, off the official Choctaw rolls. Her brothers and sisters remained with the tribe and were placed on the rolls.

Briscoe was born in Western Oklahoma and raised on a farm. He had close ties with Cheyenne and Arapaho and was eventually adopted into the Wilson Clan, a Cheyenne family, and learned their ways.



He was fascinated with the culture, and from a young age he was interested in history and archeology, particularly Oklahoma and western history.

Along with his close ties to Native American culture, many factors contributed to his interest in history. Archeological sites on his family farm, his grandfather collecting arrowheads and his parents being active in the Oklahoma Anthropological Society, were all influencing factors that led Briscoe to his field of work.

For his formal education on the subject of his interest, Briscoe attended the University of Oklahoma where he earned a bachelor’s in Anthropology, the comparative study of human societies and cultures and their development. He then went to Drew University in New Jersey where he received a master’s in Historical Archaeology.

He then taught classes at Drew University and at South-

western Oklahoma State University in Weatherford for a short time. While he was doing his studies, he had a job with the Oklahoma Highway Archaeological Survey with the State Highway Department working in the lab and doing fieldwork.

After gaining his degrees, Briscoe began his own consulting company called Briscoe Consulting Services in 1982, which he owned until the end of 2010. If an entity wanted to conduct an activity that required the manipulation of the soil, such as building a pipeline, Briscoe would survey the area to see if anything of historical value was in the way of that process. If there were public involvement, state regulations or potential for cemeteries, Briscoe’s company would usually be involved.

If Briscoe found something in the way of the construction, he researched and would find a safe alternative route for construction. Avoiding archeological or historical sites (and cemeteries) was taken as his way of preserving at least a portion of the heritage for future generations. This was a great part of his career until he sold it to his partner, with whom he still does various consulting projects.

For a man with an exceptional interest in artifacts from the past, this was a prime career. “Usually you find something fairly interesting every time you go out and do something,” said Briscoe enthusiastically. “It’s kind of like Christmas every time you go out,” he continued.

Briscoe’s profession has also allowed him to be able to work with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma on numerous occasions. He recalls one notable experience where he did a massive survey around Tushka Homma and found the original Oklahoma Nvnihi Waiya, which is about two miles from the Choctaw Cap-

itol building.

This historical Choctaw settlement is where the first Choctaws to move into the area established a community. They built a mound in respect to their ancestors and gave it the same name as the location where the Choctaw people are believed to have originated.

To Briscoe’s delight, several years ago, when the traditional village was built on the Capitol grounds, he was asked to demonstrate how to make ar-

“It’s kind of like Christmas every time you go out.”
– James Briscoe

rowheads to patrons who were willing to learn.

“They know they are going to make their own arrowhead and they just flock to that place,” stated Briscoe as he spoke of the patrons’ positive response to the arrowhead booth at the Labor Day Festival over the years. He went on to mention that in the last years, the numbers to make arrowheads has been consistently over 400.

When teaching arrowhead making at the festival, Briscoe has a partner named Curtis Tindle. Their booth is something the duo anticipates and prepares for year-round. “Finding a good piece of flint is sometimes fairly difficult,” mentioned Briscoe. We “save them up all year long for those kids,” he continued.

Flint is the material from which the arrowheads are made. Briscoe describes it as a glassy, obsidian material, like volcanic glass. It has is able to create a conchoidal fracture, which is a characteristic only contained in certain materials, usually glass.

Briscoe explains chipping flint by using the conchoidal fracture as the act of shooting a BB at glass. Where it hits will leave a small hole, but on the other side, the hole is bigger, making a cone effect in the glass.

“Making the arrowhead is just directing where you want to strike that piece with your BB,” explained Briscoe. Tindle and Briscoe utilize deer and elk antlers on the flint to make the same effect the BB has on the glass. By striking the right location on the flint, it creates the desired shape.

This skill to create and teach others to create great arrowheads is one that Briscoe has picked up due to curiosity on the subject and many years of working to perfect the process. It is a skill he is greatly pleased to share with others. “You’ve never seen true magic until you help a kid make his own arrowhead,” he said with a smile.

Briscoe modestly asserts Tindle as having a greater expertise at the art of making arrowheads, as well as several Choctaw artists. He mentions Joe Watkins, Les Williston and Ian Thompson as a few of his favorites.

To go along with his works at Labor Day and his survey work for the nation, Briscoe has proven to be a useful resource. “When they need some particular bit of history or extra consulting... I jump right in,” said Briscoe as he told how individuals have relied on his extensive knowledge and experience to complete tasks.

Aside from his work with the Choctaw people, throughout his career Briscoe has been assigned to interesting tasks all over the world. He has worked with various organizations over the years that have taken him around the globe.

In his recollection, the most impressive thing he has seen was in the city of El Irbil, Iraq. “The middle of town has the world’s oldest surviving city. They found stuff [dated] to 5,000 B.C. Continuous occupation for 7,000 years,” explained Briscoe.

He told of a large mesa-like hill in the middle of the desert, which was the city being

rebuilt over time on top of its ruins. He explained that over history, the city would be destroyed and rebuilt on top of itself, creating layer after layer of town to compose this large mesa, where the current city rests.

He mentioned that on top of the mesa was a Mesopotamian palace that is still standing and a Roman bath that was built by Israeli engineers. With all the medieval buildings, “it was just like time traveling to the past,” he exclaimed.

Throughout his life, Briscoe has seen many impressive historical sites and artifacts, but the Choctaw ways still intrigue him more than many, making him very proud of his heritage. Because of his enjoyment for his career he can easily say, “The last time I ever worked for a living was my freshman year in college.”

Briscoe is more than happy to do what he does for the Choctaw Nation. He acknowledges that he has a responsibility to the Choctaw Nation to give back in the way he knows how and loves. He does it out of admiration for his heritage, because as Briscoe says, “You don’t have anything if you don’t have respect in your heritage.”



Briscoe on his search for the perfect pieces of flint.

War on the waves

World War II Naval veteran recounts battles at sea

By **BRET MOSS**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Outside the city of Marietta, Okla., lies the residence of U.S. Navy veteran Sylvester Alfred Wells, a man who has seen many important pieces of American naval history.

Wells, who is known as S.A. to most, boasts nine battle stars, each representing a naval battle in which he served his country during World War II in the Asiatic and Pacific arena.

Wells was born in 1925 near Marietta and attended Tahlequah Indian School from the first to sixth grade and then moved with his family because his stepfather worked on the railroad, which required relocation. They later moved back to Marietta in 1939.

Wells’ biological father was full-blood Choctaw, making him half Choctaw of which he is very proud.

On June 23, 1943, 17-year-old Wells enlisted in the Navy. “I went in on what they call a Minority Cruise in the Navy. You go in when you’re 17 and you get out when you’re 21,” he said. He went to boot camp in San Diego, and from there, went to torpedo school in Newport, R.I.

In a rather clever move, Wells chose to enlist in the Navy to avoid being drafted into the Army.

Upon completing his torpe-



Wells during his naval career.

do training, Wells was sent to Recife, Brazil, to a repair ship called the Melville. The Melville repaired a wide variety of naval equipment. It contained a machine shop that allowed for repairs to whatever was needed. “They could do just about anything and repairs for other ships,” recalls Wells.

After a year with the Melville, he travelled to Brooklyn, N.Y., where he boarded the Melvin, a Fletcher-class destroyer. This was the second ship of the U.S. Navy to be named after John T. Melvin.

“It was a new ship... we had to take it on a shakedown cruise,” said Wells. Shakedown cruise refers to a sort of trial run for the ship and crew. They would test the guns and other functions of the destroyer to make sure operations went smoothly and familiar-

ize themselves with the workings of the ship, he explained.

The Melvin’s shakedown cruise took place in February of 1944 in Bermuda. After the shakedown, they traveled with the battleship Iowa through the Panama Canal to Pearl Harbor where Wells and the Melvin’s crew got their first assignment in the Marshall Islands.

This assignment was part of the United States’ efforts to take back ground on the Pacific front. The Melvin would go from island to island, fighting to relieve them of Japanese control. “Just about every engagement they had, we were in,” stated Wells.

For these engagements, Wells’ battle station was the portside depth charges on K-Guns. He would fire 300-pound canisters of TNT to certain depths in order to sink submerged submarines that opposed the American efforts.

Wells’ job was to set the depth at which the canister would explode to make the most efficient impact to the submarine. Each certain depth was calculated by sonar and then relayed to Wells as he competed his duty.

Wells was also charged with loading the canisters after they were fired. When it came time to reload, about three or four men would load the 300-pound cylinder that had an approximate two-foot di-



A photo of Wells over 60 years later at his home.

ameter and three-foot length.

Other than manning the K-Guns and depth charge canisters, Wells was also assigned to do maintenance on torpedoes.

Over the course of his tour in the Pacific, Wells recalls engaging about six submarines. “In Saipan, we caught one on the surface and we were going to ram it,” declared Wells. This was not an unusual approach to sinking surfaced submarines at the time. The Melvin was equipped with a cutting bow, which was a large piece of steel designed to ram subs without hurting the ship.

The crew had fired a shot at the sub before attempting to ram it, and when they got to where the sub was, it had already submerged. Wells is unsure whether or not the shot made contact and sank it, or if the sub submerged to avoid the ship because it was in the blackness of night.

Among the most notable events in his travels, Wells took part in the largest naval battle in World War II and

what is said to be the largest naval battle in history. “We escorted the 25th Army Division into Leyte Gulf for that invasion,” said Wells.

While in Leyte Gulf, the Melvin got an assist for sinking a Japanese battleship and destroyer and fired nine torpedoes, according to Wells. “They were firing at us and they were hitting all around, but they didn’t hit us,” mentioned Wells as he told of how the Japanese radar systems were sub par to its American counterpart at the time.

The crew of the Melvin also used a witty tactic to avoid shots from the enemy. The crew in the firing room would burn oil to create a large amount of smoke to construct the illusion that the ship was on fire, making the Japanese suspect they had disabled the vessel. This would also provide a smoke shield, making it hard for the Japanese to see the Allied Forces. “She [the enemy ship] thought we had been hit, but we were making smoke,” exclaimed Wells.

Wells and the Melvin were involved in numerous other World War II naval battles in the effort to win the Pacific for Allied Forces. Out of all these conflicts, “what scared me most out there was the weather,” stated Wells as he recalled how nature was sometimes a more menacing foe than the opposing force. Traveling through several typhoons and over the 7-mile-deep Mariana Trench, the deepest place on Earth, did not sit well with him. “I didn’t know it at the time and I’m glad I didn’t,” said Wells with a laugh.

During the patrols in the Pacific, the crew of the Melvin went 62 days without seeing land. At one point during

the patrol, the aircraft carrier Saratoga lost a man overboard. Because of this, three destroyers containing about 900 men were sent back to rescue the fallen naval seaman.

Eventually the Melvin found the individual and rescued him safely. This was a dangerous task according to Wells. “There we were with searchlights and if there had been any submarines out there, they could have sunk us,” because they would have seen the searchlights, said Wells.

He traveled to Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and towards the end of the war, he was within 70 miles of Tokyo. They fired upon the enemy, but by that time they didn’t have enough resources to fight back. Not long after that, Japan surrendered on Sept. 2, 1945.

After Japan’s surrender the Melvin was ordered to patrol an area near Japan to clear out underwater minefields. The crew would cut the cables that the mines were anchored to, they would float to the top and then the crew would shoot them to make a huge explosion.

In February of 1946, Wells was discharged from the Navy in Norman. He went on to work in the oil field and did a variety of jobs there. He became very adept at repairing machinery and fixing various things. He traveled to the ends of the country working for the oilrigs and even worked on some offshore rigs.

Wells now resides in Marietta and has a wife and two daughters, Tanis and Leslie. He is proud to have served his country in its time of need and is humble about the great service he has given for every American citizen.

McMinn’s story lends insight to role of Choctaw women

Edith Frances Jones McMinn is a Choctaw woman whose story lends insight to the roles that Choctaw women played in American society in the early to mid-1900s.

Great attention has been focused on ancient Choctaw and considerable awareness has been shown to the Code Talkers of the World Wars, but often overlooked is the life of the Choctaw women whose diligence has aided in granting the Choctaw Nation such a respectable name.

Edith was born in her parents’ home in Stigler on Nov. 15, 1923. Her parents were Edward Jones and Ella James Jones – both full-blood Choctaw. She was one of eight children that her mother brought into the world.

Edith and her family lived in Stigler for the earliest years of her life, but by the time she was able to attend school, they moved to the country on the outskirts of Stigler.

“I started school in a little community named Havana,” said Edith as she described her younger days. She continued by remembering that it was a two-room schoolhouse about five miles south of Stigler.

She began her studies in the “primer” and continued them through the eighth grade in Havana. “I didn’t know English when I started school, so my cousin who was a few grades ahead of me had to interpret for me,” Edith remembered.

In consideration for her learning, Edith’s parents began to speak English around her in order to help her learn.

Upon completing the eighth grade at Havana, she continued her education at Haskell Institute, which is a school in Lawrence, Kan. It was about a two or three-hour train ride from her departure in Muskogee to Haskell Institute. “That was the first time I had ever rode a train,” said Edith as she recalled her first trip and the motion sickness that followed.

During her time at Haskell Institute Edith studied many subjects, among which she particularly enjoyed history. Volleyball was also a common activity for the young Choctaw.

With nearly 1,200 students enrolled in the institute from various Native American backgrounds, Edith was pushed to become fluent in the English language, which all attendees spoke.

When she was 20 years old, Edith graduated from Haskell Institute. This was during World War II, a time with a shortage of men and a great demand for manufacturing work.



Edith Jones McMinn receives her nursing hat and pin, left; pictured with Chief Gregory E. Pyle, below; and with husband James McMinn, right.



There was a manufacturing plant in Sunflower Village just west of Kansas City and a short distance east of Lawrence. At this plant, “They were begging everyone to work there. Several of us girls went to work there,” said Edith.

“I wanted to be a nurse and was accepted at Phoenix, Ariz., to take my training, but I stayed and worked at the war plant.” Edith worked in the plant until it was closed.

Edith described her job at the plant as “a man’s job.” She cooked bazooka powder, which was used to make shells for guns. “Before cooking, it looked like white cornmeal, but after cooking it looked like a sheet of rubber,” she recollected.

She ran one of two big iron machines, which were called “Even Speed.” She would pour the chemical that looked like cornmeal between two rollers in the machine and then would cook it at 350 degrees for a certain amount of time until it became the finished rubber looking product.



This was a fairly dangerous job. “We had a timer and we had to turn the heat off at a certain time or the chemical would explode,” said Edith. She went on to describe that the machine was in a small room that contained a door she could look through. She stood behind the door for protection of possible fires.

Since the chemical was so easy to catch fire, Edith and her co-workers were required to wear only clothes that were fire resistant. In the event of a fire, there was an open space that would funnel the flame, while the girls ran in the other direction.

In one instance, one of the girls ran the wrong way during a fire and caught fire. “It burned the coveralls off her back,” said Edith. The girl that was burned was transported to Kansas City, where she was treated for her injury.

She was in need of blood, so Edith and the rest of the girls traveled to Kansas City and donated their blood to their colleague. Edith remembers not heeding the advice of the hospital employees and getting sick after exploring the city immediately after giving blood.

Following the closing of the plant, Edith moved to Dallas to attend school, but she was too late, for the semester had already begun.

While waiting for the next semester, she spent a short time as a waitress. Following her waitressing, she went to work at Baylor Hospital as a nurse’s aid, where she worked for seven and a half years.

While waitressing, Edith met her first husband, Arnold Gayhart, and married him in 1946. She had two children with Arnold. They were Mary Frances Gayhart, born Sept. 1,

1947, and Elvin Wayne Gayhart, born Aug. 14, 1950.

Elvin passed away in late 1979 due to a semi truck accident in Cushing, Okla. He was a veteran of Vietnam and an electrician’s helper before becoming a truck driver.

After her first marriage ended, Edith met and married a part Cherokee man named James McMinn. They were wed on May 26, 1959, in Stonewall, Texas.

In 1963, Edith graduated from her training to become a LPN, which at the time was referred to as Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Paris, Texas. While she was going through training, James worked for the county doing construction work.

In 1969 the couple moved to Stigler and lived in a house on Edith’s grandmother’s land. After two years that house burnt down and they moved into town while they built another home.

They completed and moved to Edith’s current residence in November of 1979. While living there, she worked for Haskell County Hospital and he worked at Bennett Western Auto.

Western Auto closed its doors in 1970, so James went to work for Allen Canning Company. Edith soon joined James working at the canning company because she worked nights and weekends at the hospital, which limited the time the couple could be together.

In the mid 1980s Edith and James retired from their jobs and spent their time together. James passed away in April of 1990 at the age of 78 just before he would undergo heart surgery.

Since then, Edith has been exceptionally active within the Choctaw community. She is on the Senior Citizen’s Committee at the Stigler Community Center and attends the weekly lunch every Wednesday.

She has taken many trips with her Choctaw group and enjoys it very much. They have traveled to Branson, San Antonio, Memphis, Meridian and Choctaw, Miss., together. Edith has seen the Dancing Rabbit Treaty Mounds and the Tribal Complex of the Mississippi Choctaws.

She enjoys taking part in many of the Choctaw Nation events such as the Labor Day Festival and makes a point to hear Chief Pyle’s State of the Nation Address.

In her 93 years of time on this earth, Edith has experienced much, and in her memories lie experiences that only a woman of her time can possess.

Future generations of Choctaws will create their own histories, but it is important that the histories of ancestors not be forgotten.

Harris shares memories of fulfilling life experiences

Doecha Carolyn Thompson Harris was born on March 18, 1944, in the Tahliha Indian Hospital to Marie Orman, a full-blood Choctaw. As she knew it, her name was Carolyn Orman, but discovered it was Doecha Carolyn Thompson when she was 16.

In her early years she went to school at Cass School in Kineme, which is five miles out of Stigler. She lived in a house on top of a large hill there and did her lessons by coal oil lamp. It was very cold in that house and she remembers the wind blowing though the boards of the home.

Eventually, her grandfather, Wilburn James, sold his allotted land and bought a place in Stigler. It was a much better place to live. She remembers being thankful for the clean water that the new home provided. He even bought a television, which was unusual for the folks of the community.

She attended Stigler School from the second to the twelfth grade. Upon graduation, she wanted to join the army, hoping that it would provide her with a career and an opportunity to see the world, but her parents would not allow it.

In regards to her future, she spoke with the BIA and chose to go to school in Lawrence, Kan. She was ready to leave on a Monday with a bus ticket in her possession, but she got married that Saturday before.

She was at the New Hope Baptist Church, which was having an association meeting and her first husband proposed to her because he knew she would be leaving soon.

She said yes and the preacher who was at the meeting, Reuben Anderson, married them on the side of the road under a tree for a quick wedding. Her new husband had to go to work for his construction site the following Monday so there was little time to celebrate.

The couple lived in Tahlequah for a few months, but moved to Oklahoma City for his job. Doecha became pregnant while in Oklahoma City and bore a daughter, Gwendolyn. There were complications for Doecha and Gwen shortly after the birth.

Doecha needed gall bladder surgery, which



Doecha Thompson Harris in high school, left; on her wedding day to William Harris, below; and she and William, right.



worked at the McAlester Ammunition Depot in the bomb and mine division. She would roll 500 pound bombs over a stencil board that said “US Navy Ammunition Depot.” She would run up to 1,000 bombs a night.

There were many employees working with her because it was in the time of Vietnam and ammunition was in high demand. She lived in Stigler and a man with a van would come and pick up workers to take them to the depot.

Eventually she went to work for the Choctaw Nation, doing work with her husband as a coordinator for the GED office in Durant.

She then transferred to Tahlequah to work in the Council House for the Choctaw Historical Society. This was a job she enjoyed because she was a museum curator. She was sent to various museums for training in the Oklahoma City area.

The Council House was converted to the Choctaw Nation Historical Museum, with the dedication ceremony on Labor Day, Sept. 1, 1975. The members of the Board of Directors had a three-phase plan to restore the building. Phases one and two were to renew the inte-

rior and exterior of the building. Phase three was designated to renew the recreational facilities for visitors.

Doecha remembers giving tours in that building and getting enjoyment from tourists’ misinformed thoughts about Choctaws. She remembers that many people thought Choctaws were still wild, a fact that she set them straight about.

After her time with the Choctaw Nation, she got a job with the Indian Hospital in the public health service, which was a government job. She worked as an administrative clerk in a hospital. She worked there for six years.

During these times she got a divorce from her first husband and met the man she calls her “dream man,” William Carson Harris, and married him on Oct. 1, 1977. He was working for the Corps of Engineers in Sallisaw, so Doecha got a job with that organization.

She enjoyed her job with the Corps of Engineers. She witnessed many things about the business become computerized as she worked and learned as things progressed. She retired in 1994.

In her retirement Doecha has done many things and had many hobbies. She traveled to Fort Smith, Ark., and met a woman who taught her how to work with porcelain china. She learned how to make porcelain Indian dolls with this talent as well.

She did not stay out of work long before applying for another job. She was hired as an administrative clerk for the Ruben White Clinic in Poteau. She only stayed with that job a short time before deciding she wanted something different.

She became involved with the Community Health Representatives (CHR) through the Choctaw Nation. She eventually moved into the position of Field Office Director for the Spiro Community Center, a job that she held until the mid 2000s.

In more recent years, Doecha has been involved with the Spiro Community Center and the events that go on in that area. She works closely with the seniors helping to plan trips and events.

She enjoys bowling, golf and embroidery in her free time. She is close with the Lord and especially enjoys going to church. She encourages those around her to have a close walk with the Lord.

OBITUARIES

Cordia Bunch-Heimel

Cordia L. Bunch-Heimel passed away on Aug. 30, 2011, in Fontana.

A native of Oklahoma, Bunch-Heimel was a resident of Fontana for more than 15 years. She was a retired LVN. She was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation. She was a long-time Dallas Cowboys fan and an avid Bingo player.

She was preceded in death by her daughter, Paula Gann. She is survived by two children, Mike Bunch with wife Helen, and Linda Morrison with husband Jerry; one sibling, Lewis Amos of Oklahoma; grandchildren, Nick Bunch, Robert Bunch, Heather Bunch-Money, Joseph Bunch, Kimberly Bunch, Raoul Contreras, Lori Morrison-Contreras, Jake Morrison, Graciela Morrison, Tom Morrison, Breanne Morrison, Lee Gann, Andrew Gann, and Paul Gann; great-grandchildren, Cheyenne Nicole, Thomas Bunch, James Bunch, Addison Bunch, Sean Money, Makaley Money, Jacob Money, Cordia Contreras, Cayetano Contreras, Alex Morrison, Andrea Morrison, Madison Morrison, Olivia Morrison and Rylee Morrison.

Shelly Ody

Shelly Denise Strait Ody, 46, passed away July 16, 2011, in Whittier, Calif. Shelly was born on March 1, 1966, in Los Angeles and was the twin of Kelly Dean Strait who passed away on May 11, 1990.

Shelly loved to play jokes and her laughter will be missed. She cherished her family and being a mother to her four daughters was most important to her. She enjoyed working with children and worked as a School Aid at McKibben Elementary School in Whittier, where she also worked on the McKibben PTA, serving as its president for multiple years. Shelly loved being a Choctaw, attending the Okla Chahta Gathering in Bakersfield and many pow wows in the Southern California area.

Shelly was preceded in death by her parents, Bill and Myrtle Strait; her twin brother, Kelly Strait; sister Brenda Strait; and nephew Nicholas Jaragowsky.

She is survived by her loving family which consisted of husband Steve Ody; daughters, Tess Gamble, Alison Ody, Samantha Ody, and Jennifer Ody; grandson Logan Chassereau; brother Gary Strait, sisters, Pam Reeder, Kathy Strait and Theresa Schulte; brothers-in-law, Ron Reeder and Mike Schulte; nieces, Lindsay Reeder and Nina Sandoval; nephews, Bill and Justin Heddy; one grandnephew and one grandniece; Ron Strait; a large extended family and many, many friends.



Julius Bowen Jr.

Julius L. Bowen Jr., 70, passed away on Sept.19, 2011, in Lawton. He was born on Feb. 4, 1941, in New Haven, Ill., to Julius L. Bowen Sr. and Mary Louise Thomas. He married Andrea “Tweetie” Lyons on July 17, 1997, in Pawnee. He was affiliated with the Baptist Church, had served in the Marine Corps, League Past President, as a Boy Scout Troop Master, and on the Advisory Board at Oklahoma University for Native Americans. He was a Marine Advisor in Vietnam, serving five tours of 13 months in Vietnam, and was a Civil Engineer.

Julius enlisted in the U.S. Marines in 1957 and received his honorable discharge on Sept. 26, 1966, with the military rank of Corporal. He served in Vietnam and received the Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Citation, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm Leaf and Frame, Vietnam Civil Action Color Medal with Palm and Frame, Republic of Vietnam Campaign with Four Bronze Stars, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with one Bronze Star, National Defense Medal, Republic of Vietnam Service Medal dated from 1962 to 1966, Combat Air Crewman Wings with three Gold Stars, Navy Parachute Wings, Meritorious Mass (for mines and booby traps) deployment in combat, and other Shooting Badges, and miscellaneous awards. His military experience included Boot Camp MCRD in San Diego, Calif., Advance Infantry Training at Camp Pendleton, Calif., Sea School, MCRD at San Diego, Marine Detachment USS Helena CA-75 Cruiser, 1st Reconnaissance Bt. 1st Marine Division Camp Pendleton, Calif., (Recon Trained) HMM 363 Helicopter Squad, HMM 364 Helicopter Squadron, Navy Adviser Unit 79.3.6 Vietnam HMS 36 1st Marine Air Wing, and served from 1962 to 1966 in Vietnam.

He was a devoted husband, father and grandfather. He believed highly in God.

Julius was preceded in death by his parents, Mary Louise Swink and Julius L. Bowen Sr.; three grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Julius is survived by his wife, Andrea “Tweetie” Bowen of Pawnee; daughters, Sabrina Stephens with husband Gerald of Hugo, and Leah Vannoy with husband Samuel of Lawton; sons, Julius L. Bowen III of Hugo and George Russell Gardipe Jr. with wife Lisa of Lawton; 17 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; sister, Mary Katherine Vannoy with husband John of Geronimo; brother Phillip Bowen of Van Nuys, Calif.; aunts, Ruth Fuller of Sawyer, Betty Span Hanks of Van Nuys, Calif.; niece Deborah Louise Vannoy of Geronimo; along with a number of other relatives and many friends.

Rev. Ted Hilliard

The Rev. Ted Hilliard passed away on Aug. 29, 2011, in Fort Smith, Ark., two days prior to his 89th birthday. He was born Aug. 31, 1922, in Grapevine, Texas, to George Washington Hilliard and Daisy Dean Callahan Hilliard, who was a Choctaw original enrollee.

Hilliard farmed in both Texas and California until the late 1950s. He then operated a nursery and landscape business in California, retiring from that business and relocating to Salisaw in the early 1990s. Before leaving California, he taught high school vocational education classes in Chowchilla, Calif.

He served as pastor for Round Mountain Community Church in Vian for several years. The Rev. Hilliard was proud of his Choctaw lineage, which traces to Louis Durant, one of the earliest intermarried whites in Mississippi. He served in the U.S. Army in Italy and North Africa, receiving an honorable discharge in 1945.

He was preceded in death by two wives, Martha and Hattie Belle. He is survived by a daughter, Cheryl Marie Good of Salisaw; and two sons, Rev. Phillip Hilliard of Alhambra, Calif., and Ted C. Hilliard of Tracyton, Wash.; six grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; and five great-great grandchildren.

Grace Townsend

Grace Burkett Townsend, 92, passed away on Sept. 8, 2011, in Durant.

Grace was born June 12, 1919, in Pollard, the daughter of James Henry and Leona (Sanford) Smith. She had lived in the Boswell area for many years before moving to Durant. She raised 10 children, in addition to working at the Wanda Ruth Skating Rink in Jay and the Tin Top Café in Boswell.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husbands, Grelie Burkett and Leroy Townsend; and one son, Darrell “Coonie” Burkett.

Grace is survived by children, Travis Gene Burkett with wife Alma of Portor, Texas, Ben Burkett and Leonard Kowalski, both of Houston, Burl Burkett with wife Carla of Silo, James Burkett of Hillsboro, Texas, Noel Burkett with wife Tammie of Blue, Billie-Faye and Wesley Gryniewicz of Hartford, Conn., Eva Dean and Derek Brazier of Magnolia, Texas, Nona Darough of Lockhart, Texas, and Ona Mae Strain of Durant; sisters, Netti Shouse of Tulsa, and Jimmy Shouse of North Carolina; 17 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren and 10 great-great-grandchildren.



Jesse Lee Howard

Jesse Lee Howard passed away on June 21, 2011. Jesse Lee was the first child born to Cecil Monte Howard and Etta Scroggins Howard.

He graduated from Spaulding High School. He later joined the Oklahoma National Guard. His unit was called to active duty and sent to Korea.

He was a wonderful family man, a good Christian and was respected by all who knew him. He has been greatly missed by his family.

Jesse is a grandson of original enrollee Emery Goodwin Howard. He was very proud of his Choctaw heritage.

He was preceded in death by his father, mother and one infant sister, Jo Ann.

Jesse is survived by his wife, Florence; one son, Gary with wife Susan of Oklahoma City; one daughter, Gina Meek with husband Stan of Norman; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Jesse had two brothers, Jimmy Howard with wife Norma of Oklahoma City, and Wayne Howard with wife Carolyn of Newalla; two sisters, Carlene Castañeda with husband Bob of Oklahoma City, Linda Bible and Jimmy Sanders, both of Holdenville.

Ivan Kelly

Ivan Noel Kelly, 68, passed away on Oct. 6, 2011, at his home in Durant. He was born on June 10, 1943, in Durant, born to Jack Drake and Mary Catherine (Crowder) Kelly. He attended Russell Elementary School, Durant Middle School, graduated from Durant High School and attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University. He married Carolyn Wells on March 22, 1965, and to this union was born two children, Cynthia and Brian.

He loved helping others in need and had a strong commitment to serving the people of Durant and Bryan County. He was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Bail Bonding Commission and was a devoted basketball official and baseball umpire in the surrounding area from 1970 to 1983. He deeply cherished his family and treasured his time with his friends drinking coffee at Wright's Drive Inn. He enjoyed playing dominos, building and mowing. Ivan will be deeply missed by his family, friends and the people of Durant and Bryan County.

Ivan is survived by his caring and devoted wife of over 46 years, Carolyn Kelly of the home; children, Cynthia Kelly and Brian Kelly of Durant; brother Morris Kelly and companion Betty of Durant; sister Barbara Gantt with husband Solomon of Ada; grandchildren, Caleb Spence of Durant, Chloe Spence Kendrick with husband Jordan of Kingston, and Dal Kelly of Pottsboro; mother-in-law Laverne Wells Maddox of Durant; and other relatives and friends.

Ivan was preceded in death by his parents, Jack and Mary Kelly; sisters, Mary D. Kelly Thompson, formerly of Red Bluff, Calif., and Lorene Frances Melton, formerly of Waco, Texas; and brother Richard “Dick” Kelly of Bakersfield, Calif.



Perry Pritchard

Perry Lynn Pritchard passed away on March 1, 2011, in Pyote, Texas. He was born on Sept. 13, 1950. He was raised in Wickett, Texas. He went to Monahans High School and then to Texas State Technological Institute in Sweetwater, Texas. He also served on the Pyote Texas City Council for 14 years. He is the grandson of Mary Elizabeth Frazier Buchanan, one of the Choctaw original enrollees. He was also grandson of Larkin Pritchard and Emma Roundtree, and the son of Mildred Christine Buchanan, and the late Alton Perry Pritchard, from Spencerville.

Perry was a proud husband and father. He enjoyed working with his cows, making hand-made spurs, in which he took much pride. He also enjoyed cowboy poetry gatherings in Alpine, Texas, Jean Prescott music, a good rodeo and researching his genealogy. He was proud to be Choctaw/Cherokee. Most of all, he enjoyed knowing good people. He was quiet and he “listened” with his eyes. His briskets would make one’s mouth water. He was on an award-winning cooking team. He and God walked in his pasture together.

After his passing, his friends continued working on Perry’s shop, a place he worked so hard to finish.

He is survived by his wife, Abigail B. Pritchard of Pyote; daughter, Alexis P. Collins of Monahans, Texas; sons, Seth Pritchard of Andrews, Texas, and Nolan Pritchard of Del Rio, Texas; two grandchildren, Leighton Collins and Maddox; brother L. Gene Pritchard of Red Oak, Texas; sister Beverly P. Biggs of Raleigh, N.C.; nieces and nephews, Julie and Emily Pritchard, and John, Jay and Brendy Biggs; aunts, Mary, with Jim Davis of Ft. Towson, and Marie B. Nelson of Bakersfield, Calif. Go rest easy, Cowboy.



Pauletta Willis

Wanda Pauletta Thomas Willis, 65, of Lago Vista, Texas, passed away on Oct. 31, 2010. Pauletta was born to Paul and Vineta Thomas on Aug. 20, 1945, in Lubbock, Texas. She was married to R. Nolen Willis on Dec. 1, 1965, at Westside Baptist Church in Sapulpa. Pauletta and Nolen had two children, Jeffrey Wayne Willis and Sarah Willis Dahlberg and the light of their life, grandson Logan John Dahlberg who was born on Jan. 20, 2010.

Pauletta loved life and lived it to the fullest. She enjoyed traveling and designing and decorating and hand making incredibly beautiful home and personal artifacts which she liked to share with family and friends. Over the years she was engaged in a variety of “projects.” Once she had mastered a particular skill or craft, she moved on to a new “project.” In addition to being a great wife and mom, her many and varied interests included duplicate bridge, doubles tennis, flower decorating and her incredible gardens. Where ever she and Nolen lived, she always requisitioned a goodly amount of lawn which was then transformed into a beautifully landscaped garden.

In 2001 Pauletta was diagnosed with stage-two breast cancer. After months of chemotherapy and radiation her doctors declared her “cancer free.” Unfortunately in April 2007, she was informed that she had stage-four breast cancer which had metastasized to her bones and liver. At the time, Pauletta declared that she was not going to let the cancer dictate her life and she continued to enjoy traveling and carrying out a myriad of “projects” she loved.

After two years of a mostly normal life, Pauletta began that tortuous and difficult final decline dreaded by all cancer patients. Never willing to give up hope she was committed to continue her battle with cancer and she soldiered on.

One of the things that motivated Pauletta to fight with all of her strength was the prospect of her first grandchild. In the summer of 2009, Pauletta explicitly directed her oncologist to keep her alive until her grandchild was born. Happily, on Jan. 20, 2010, Pauletta, her husband Nolen, their daughter Sarah and Sarah’s husband Greg welcomed Pauletta’s first grandchild, Logan John Dahlberg.

The birth of Logan seemed to mark the beginning of the end; she had accomplished what she wanted so dearly to do, to hold and love her only grandchild.

Her family could sense that once Logan arrived, Pauletta seemed to be finally resolved to fight the cancer with the knowledge that her fight would ultimately end in her passing.

Pauletta was preceded in passing by her younger sister, Glenda and her father, Paul Abram Thomas.

Survivors include her husband Nolen; her children, Jeff with wife Maria; Sarah with husband Greg; grandson Logan John Dahlberg; her mother, Vineta; her brother, Wayne Thomas with wife Brenda; her sister, Marilyn Evans with husband Winston Evans; her aunt, Joy Culbreath with husband Muggs; her uncles, Charles Clark with wife Kathy, Junior Clark and Eub Thomas; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and other family and friends.



Rev. Isaiah Wesley

The Rev. Isaiah Wesley, 80, of McAlester, passed away on Sept. 1, 2011, in Oklahoma City. He was born to William Taft and Rebecca (Pickens) Wesley on Dec. 23, 1930, in Blanco. Rev. Wesley attended Blanco School and Pittsburg High School. He served as a Corporal in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He married Joyce Arlene Fuller on April 17, 1959, in Chicago. She preceded him in death in 2000. Rev. Wesley worked as a mechanic for Crane Carrier Co. in Tulsa for over 30 years before retiring. Rev. Wesley pastored several area churches including, Brushy Baptist Church, Rock Creek Baptist Church, Cedar Baptist Church and Zion Missionary Baptist Church. He enjoyed reading the Bible, watching OU football and spending time with his family.

He was preceded in death by his parents, William Taft and Rebecca Wesley; his first wife in 2000, Joyce Wesley; and an uncle, Henry Wesley Jr.

He is survived by, his wife Mary of the home; daughters, Arlene Murphree with husband Randy of Tulsa, Janet Wesley of Tulsa, Diane Whalen with husband Randall of Glenpool, and Carol Scully with husband Mark of Powder Springs, Ga.; grandchildren, Phillip Wesley, Stephen Wesley, Matthew Murphree, Elijah Whalen, Allison Scully and Ryan Scully; brother Paul Wesley with wife Leona of McAlester; sisters, Ramona Robertson, Leola Lester with husband Bill, Loyce Wright with husband Dave all of McAlester, and Rozelle Wesley of Kiowa; along with aunts, numerous nieces, nephews and other family members and friends.



Jesse Taylor

Jessie Harold Taylor, 53, passed away on Sept. 23, 2011, in Hugo. He was born April 25, 1958, in Sobol, to Wilson and Deloris (Billy) Taylor.

Jessie Taylor married Angela Luper on on Feb. 3, 2006, in Goodwater. The most important people in his life were his wife, girls, and his large family with which he enjoyed spending time. He enjoyed gardening, fishing, and hunting. He was a shade tree mechanic, carpenter, and all around handy man.

Jessie was preceded in death by his mother, Deloris Taylor; three brothers, Kurt Taylor, Jeff Taylor and Wilson Taylor Jr.; one nephew, Donald Porky Vanhoose; one niece, Jennifer Taylor; great nephew, Dakota Vanhoose; and grandmothers, Nellie Billy and Ida Taylor.

He is survived by his wife, Angie of the home; children, Raymond Taylor with wife Kendra of Hugo, Misty Riggs with husband Troy of Talihina, Amanda Dawn Taylor, Samantha Jane Taylor, and Baylyn Laraine Taylor, all of the home; grandchildren, Ethan Taylor, Anthony Chandler, Trevor Malakowsky, and Trace Malakowsky; father Wilson Taylor Sr.; brothers, Steve Taylor with wife Lisa of Ringold, Rayburn Taylor Sr. with wife Tonya of Sobol, John Taylor Sr. with wife Nikki of Sobol; sisters, Velma Whisenhunt with husband Pat of Emory, Texas, Karen Burt with husband Danny of Hugo, Phyllis Bohanon with Gary Tollett of Sobol, Ava Hilton with husband Charles Sr. of Talihina, Brenda Haycraft with husband Dean of Hugo, Jennifer Davidson with husband Aubrey of Rattan; numerous nieces and nephews; as well as many other relatives and friends.

Don't lose sight of diabetic eye disease

Thousands of Native American adults are at risk of losing their vision as a result of complications from diabetes

Diabetes affects nearly 26 million people in the United States. In addition, another 79 million people are estimated to have pre-diabetes, a condition that puts people at increased risk for diabetes. All people with diabetes, both Type 1 and Type 2, are at risk for diabetic eye disease, a leading cause of vision loss and blindness.

“The longer a person has diabetes the greater is his or her risk of developing diabetic eye disease,” said Dr. Suber Huang, chair of the Diabetic Eye Disease Subcommittee for the National Eye Institute’s (NEI) National Eye Health Education Program. “If you have diabetes, be sure to have a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year. Diabetic eye disease often has no early warning signs, but can be detected early and treated before noticeable vision loss occurs.”

Diabetic eye disease refers to a group of eye problems that people with diabetes may face as a complication of the disease and includes diabetic retinopathy, cataract and glaucoma. Diabetic retinopathy, the most common diabetic eye disease, is the leading cause of blindness in adults 20–74 years of age. According to NEI, 4.1 million people have diabetic eye disease and its prevalence is projected to increase to 7.2 million by 2020.

While all people with diabetes can develop diabetic eye disease, African Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Hispanics/Latinos, and older adults with diabetes are at higher risk of losing vision or going blind from it. All people with diabetes should have a dilated eye exam at least once a year to detect vision problems early. In fact, with early detection, timely laser surgery, and appropriate follow-up care, people with advanced diabetic retinopathy can reduce their risk of blindness by 90 percent.

Clinical research, supported in part by NEI, has shown that maintaining good control of blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol can slow the development and progression of diabetic eye disease. In addition to regular dilated eye exams, people with diabetes should do the following to keep their health on TRACK:

- Take your medications.
 - Reach and maintain a healthy weight.
 - Add physical activity to your daily routine.
 - Control your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol.
 - Kick the smoking habit.
- “Don’t lose sight of diabetic eye exam at least once a year. Diabetic eye disease often has no early warning signs, but can be detected early and treated before noticeable vision loss occurs.”

For more information on diabetic eye disease and tips on finding an eye care professional or financial assistance for eye care, visit www.nei.nih.gov/diabetes or call NEI at 301-496-5248.

The National Eye Institute (NEI), part of the National Institutes of Health, leads the federal government’s research on the visual system and eye diseases. NEI supports basic and clinical science programs that result in the development of sight-saving treatments. For more information, visit www.nei.nih.gov.

About the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NIH, the nation’s medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

New heat pumps to improve efficiency

A pair of “Heat Pumps” was recently installed in the IT building in Durant as part of the Choctaw Nation’s effort to conserve energy and go green.

The “Heat Pumps” will both heat and cool the building at a significant energy saving versus the 20-year-old air conditioners and electric resistance furnaces that were replaced. It is estimated that the old air conditioners had an efficiency “SEER” rating of 6 and the air conditioning side of the new “Heat Pumps” have a “SEER” rating of 15. “SEER” is seasonal energy efficiency ratio. The old electric furnace has an efficiency rating of 100 percent, meaning 1 watt of electricity consumed and 1 watt of heat out. The heating side of the “Heat Pumps” has an efficiency rat-



The new “Heat Pumps” look like traditional air conditioners.

ing over 300 percent, 1 watt of electricity consumed but 3 watts of heat out. Annual savings is estimated to be \$1,638.56 which is a decrease of 22,446 kilowatt hours annually. The EPA estimates that will reduce CO2 emissions by 15.2 metric tons annually.

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facebook.com/choctawnationofoklahoma

GHOST STORIES AT TRIBAL HEADQUARTERS



Eugene Taylor and Greg Rodgers take a pose at the mic before telling their creepy tales.



Lori, Alexis and Christian Hopkins take their seats along with Brian Gonzalez before the lights go out for the spooky stories.



Choctaw Storyteller Greg Rodgers signs a few of his books before getting down to business.



Cheyenne Murray, Shanelka Barboan, Sydney Branson, Kira Moore, Morgan Stew and Kenzi Clapp put on brave faces before the ghost stories begin.

Photos by BRET MOSS | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Eugene Taylor entertains the audience with his Choctaw tales.

The many benefits of trees around the home

Environmental benefits

Trees alter the environment in which we live by moderating climate, improving air quality, conserving water, and harboring wildlife. Climate control is obtained by moderating the effects of sun, wind and rain. Radiant energy from the sun is absorbed or deflected by leaves on deciduous trees in the summer and is only filtered by branches of deciduous trees in winter. We are cooler when we stand in the shade of trees and are not exposed to direct sunlight. In winter, we value the sun’s radiant energy. Therefore, we should plant only small or deciduous trees on the south side of homes.

Wind speed and direction can be affected by trees. The more compact the foliage on the tree or group of trees, the greater the influence of the windbreak. The downward fall of rain, sleet, and hail is initially absorbed or deflected by trees, which provides some protection for people, pets, and buildings. Trees intercept water, store some of it, and reduce storm runoff and the possibility of flooding.

Dew and frost are less common under trees because less radiant energy is released from the soil in those areas at night.

Temperature in the vicinity of trees is cooler than that away from trees. The larger the tree, the greater the cooling. By using trees in the cities, we are able to moderate the heat-island effect caused by pavement and buildings in commercial areas.

Air quality can be improved through the use of trees, shrubs and turf. Leaves filter the air we breathe by removing dust and other particulates. Rain then washes the pollutants to the ground. Leaves absorb carbon dioxide from the air to form carbohydrates that are used in the plant’s structure and function. In this process, leaves also absorb other air pollutants—such as ozone, carbon monoxide, and sulfur dioxide—and give off oxygen.

By planting trees and shrubs, we return to a more natural, less artificial environment. Birds and other wildlife are attracted to the area. The natural cycles of plant growth, reproduction and decomposition are again present, both above and below ground. Natural harmony is restored to the urban environment.

Economic benefits

Individual trees and shrubs have value, but the variability of species, size, condition and function makes determining their economic value difficult. The economic benefits of trees can be both direct and indirect. Direct economic benefits are usually associated with energy costs. Air-conditioning costs are lower in a tree-shaded home. Heating costs are reduced when a home has a windbreak. Trees increase in value

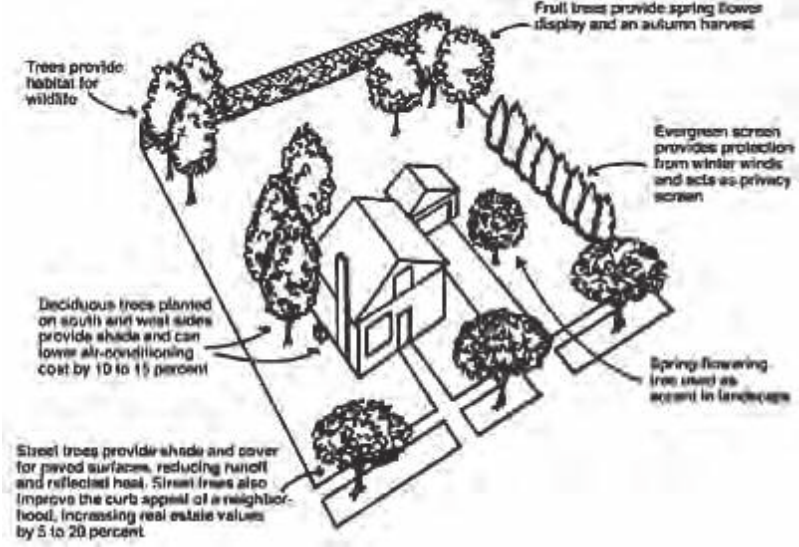
from the time they are planted until they mature. Trees are a wise investment of funds because landscaped homes are more valuable than non-landscaped homes. The savings in energy costs and the increase in property value directly benefit each home owner.

The indirect economic benefits of trees are even greater. These benefits are available to the community or region. Lowered electricity bills are paid by customers when power companies are able to use less water in their cooling towers, build fewer new facilities to meet peak demands, use reduced amounts of fossil fuel in their furnaces and use fewer measures to control air pollution. Communities also can save money if fewer facilities must be built to control storm water in the region. To the individual, these savings are small, but to the community, reductions in these expenses are often in the thousands of dollars.

Planting the tree

The ideal time to plant trees and shrubs is during the dormant season and in the fall after leaf drop or early spring before bud break. Weather conditions are cool and allow plants to establish roots in the new location before spring rains and summer heat stimulate new top growth. However, trees properly cared for in the nursery or garden center, and given the appropriate care during transport to prevent damage, can be planted throughout the growing season. In tropical and subtropical climates where trees grow year round, any time is a good time to plant a tree, provided that sufficient water is available. In either situation, proper handling during planting is essential to ensure a healthy future for new trees and shrubs. Before you begin planting your tree, be sure you have had all underground utilities located prior to digging.

See diagram below



Lots of fun at CHR October Fest



Assistant Chief Gary Batton welcomes everyone to the CHR October Fest before handing the mic over to Chaplain Bertram Bobb for a prayer.



District 7 Councilman Jack Austin visits with Stephen Billy of Finley.



Christine Scott of Atoka



Maggie Mae Anderson of Coalgate

Photos by LARISSA COPELAND | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Mary Marshall of Atoka looks at some of complimentary items at the festival.



Tribal Chaplain the Rev. Bertram Bobb and Willhemina Baker of Wilburton.



Outreach Services Social Worker Farron Dill sings for entertainment while Pat Hunter and Ovie Austin of Poteau dance the two-step.



District 1 Junior Miss Choctaw Mandy Steele performs the Lord's Prayer in sign language.

Idabel holds appreciation dinner



District 1 Councilman Thomas Williston takes time out to greet Aiden Williston and District 1 Little Miss Whitney Griffith. Everyone enjoyed a traditional meal of fried pork, banana, fry bread, fried potatoes, pinto beans and assorted cobbles.

Photos by KAREN JACOB | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Williston welcomes Doretha Bowen and Ada Wilson.

Games and good company at Senior Bingo Appreciation Day

Photos by LARISSA COPELAND | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



District 6 Councilman Joe Coley and Raymond Mackey of Wister are all smiles at the event on Oct. 13.



Andy and Norma Choate came from Finley to take part in today's games.



Jim and Charlene Lloyd, left, and Sue Crowley of Atoka, enjoy the Bingo and time with friends.



Walter Amos of McAlester at the Senior Bingo Appreciation Day.



District 11 Councilman Bob Pate visits with A.R. Kirkpatrick of McAlester.



District 4 seniors Buzz and Evelyn Williams have fun playing a game of Bingo.

Outreach Services' Harvest Carnival Costume Contest

Photos by LARISSA COPELAND | Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



6-11 category winners
1st place: Chris Ozuna of Atoka
2nd place: Martha Hobie Taylor of Rattan
3rd place: Bryar Coleman of Tuskahoma

5 & under category winners
1st place: Justin Yandell of Tuskahoma
2nd place: Isabell Samuels of Honobia
3rd place: Jayce White of Talihina



12 & up category winners
1st place: Selene Roberts of Wilburton
2nd place: Mariah Harris of Broken Arrow
3rd place: Juanita Gonzalez of Stigler



JAMES

Three generations deep in tradition

Continued from Page 1

basketball, baseball, and ran track.” Outside of school, Harry also spent time boxing at a local club.

At the age of 19, before his school days were over, Harry decided to enlist in the U.S. Army.

“Everybody in this part of the country is pretty patriotic,” he says, including his parents. “They let me do what I was supposed to do. If they didn’t feel it was right, I’m sure they wouldn’t have let me do it. I think Indians feel different about joining the service than others do.”

Harry went to Fort Bragg, N.C., for basic training. There he was asked if he spoke any foreign languages and he said he did. “English,” he says with a laugh, knowing it wasn’t the answer they were looking for, “Choctaw is my first language.”

Upon completion of basic training he was soon shipped overseas. As an infantryman assigned to the 11th Airborne, he served his country in World War II during an occupation mission of Hokkaido, one of the northern islands of Japan.



Photo provided

Harry James during his Army days.

decisions, his actions, his honorable service, has made a lasting influence on some of their choices on joining the military themselves.

Harry has several who followed his footsteps into service in the armed forces – son Michael served in the Marine Corps and son Thomas was in the U.S. Army. His grandchildren also continued the path with granddaughter Kristi Durant and grandson Chad Murphy both enlisting in the Army. Chad and his wife, Jeri, have both been deployed to Iraq, Chad twice and Jeri once. Chad is currently stationed at Fort Carson, Colo.

Harry said Chad called him from Iraq when he got his CIB (Combat Infantry Badge). “He was excited,” says Harry. “He wanted me to know.”

Growing up in the James household, Michael says his father’s service wasn’t much of a topic for discussion. “My dad didn’t talk much about the military when we were kids,” says Michael. “Sometimes he’d bring up the training, the way they were taught to think, but nothing about actual things that happened to him. He grew up in a different time, a time when they didn’t really talk about the things that they experienced. It’s worked for him though, to keep it in. When we were growing up and something happened, his saying was, ‘Shake it off. Tomorrow is a new day.’”

Though Harry was humble about his service, it is one of the reasons Michael decided to serve his country. “It’s because of my dad and my uncles,” he says. “Talihina’s got a lot of veterans. It’s a very patriotic area.”

Once, Harry told Michael about Joseph Oklahombi, one of the Choctaw Code Talkers, though Michael didn’t know that about Oklahombi at the time. “He compared him to Sgt. York. That’s all he said about it though.” (Note: At the Battle of Mont Blanc Ridge Oklahombi reportedly captured more men than York did during the Battle at Argonne Forest, both similar battles. Oklahombi was awarded the Silver Star for his actions; however, York was awarded the Medal of Honor.)

Michael, who today is a nurse at the W. W. Hastings Indian Hospital in Tahlequah, joined the Marine Corps in 1979. Since he was only 17 he needed a parent’s signature to enlist. Harry reluctantly signed the papers allowing him to join. Michael sensed that it troubled his dad that he was signing up but he never tried to talk him out of it, only offering advice. Michael

After the war, he entered the Army Reserves, returned to Talihina and reentered school graduating in 1949.

In 1950, Harry was again called back to active service with the Army, this time for the Korean War.

Uncomfortable speaking about his experiences during the wars, he says he felt lucky that he made it home uninjured. “I try to forget about all that,” he says.

He received two Battle Stars for his service during the wars.

Never one to try to sway his children or grandchildren’s



Choctaw Nation: LISA REED

Three generations of veterans from the James family take part in the gourd dance at the pow wow during the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival. Patriarch Harry James of Talihina, center, his son, Michael James of Tahlequah, right, and grandson Chad Murphy, currently residing in Fort Carson, Colo., regularly participate in intertribal pow wow dancing, as do many of Harry’s grandchildren. Teaching his children and grandchildren tribal dances has always been very important to Harry.

remembers his dad telling him, “Nobody wins in war.” Harry took the day off of work when Michael shipped off for his training.

After attending boot camp in San Diego, he was stationed at Camp Pendleton where he worked in the communications field and completed two extended overseas training missions. His first deployment was to Japan and the Philippines, conducting numerous training missions on different islands, at one point spending over 30 days on a small Filipino island. His second trip over focused on helicopter operations in Japan, and he also spent time in Korea.

“I learned a lot from those trips, about how people are around the world,” says Michael.

Michael returned back to Oklahoma and he began nursing school after receiving an honorable discharge from the Marine Corps in 1983.

Though military service throughout family lineages isn’t too uncommon, the James family stands out for many other reasons as well. Three generations deep in the armed forces, the family is also steeped in the traditions and culture of their tribes.

“As Indians, we do a lot of things out of respect,” says Michael. “I learned a lot about respect from dancing; my parents made sure of that.”

“I started war dancing in 1957 at a pow wow in Binger, Okla.,” says Harry. “Carol was dancing long before that though.”

According to Carol, being raised among many different tribes, immersed in the cultures, is where she found her love of dancing. “I grew up with the dancing,” she says, “the culture, just learning it. I’m still learning. You never stop.”

Together, Harry and Carol raised their children engaged in the tribal dance cultures, taking them to pow wows, and continuing the tradition with their grandchildren. As a family, they attended and danced at pow wows and social gatherings.

“Carol and I always took our kids with us everywhere we went,” including pow wows and Choctaw social gatherings, says Harry. “That’s how they learned, they just got out there and danced. Now, we take our grandchildren when we can.”

Along with intertribal dancing at pow wows, Harry and Carol also took their family to meet with other families in Talihina as part of the Indian Club for Choctaw social dancing and other traditionally native activities. “I remember my older friends playing games of stickball with the other kids, too,”

“Our parents taught us that our culture, like anything good, will endure.”

– Michael James

says Michael.

This is something Michael is grateful for. “I’m glad mom and dad recognized how important our culture is and that we needed to participate in it and know it,” says Michael. “We were always around the dancing.”

It was at a pow wow in Talihina where Harry began gourd dancing. Gourd dancing is believed to have been started by the Kiowa tribe and revived in Carnegie, Okla., in the mid-1950s.

During the gourd dances, they sing and dance, usually holding in one hand a fan of feathers, in the other a gourd rattle, usually a metal can or salt shaker rattle.

“It’s very spiritual,” says Michael. “Like a prayer in movement, the positive vibration, the drumming. It’s like singing a hymn in church. I feel a connection to earth and sky, like it’s all interwoven during the gourd dancing.”

Michael says his dad has no pain when he dances.

Both Harry and Michael have been asked to be the head gourd dancer at the Choctaw Nation Labor Day pow wow, with Michael performing the duty this year.

“I was very honored to get to be the head gourd dancer at the pow wow,” says Michael. “It’s like we came full circle with my dad being able to be there after he’d been the head dancer before. It was awesome to be able to have my nephew, Chad, there too,” who, with his family, was visiting Oklahoma while on leave from the military.

Speaking on his nephew, Michael says he’s a lot like Harry. “He’s an impressive young man,” he says. “His mannerisms are like my dad’s.”

Chad’s young daughters also took part in the pow wow dancing.

With the children grown and not being one to keep still for long, Harry has stayed busy over the years working in the art and trade of silversmithing. Harry retired from the Choctaw Nation Health Care Center in Talihina in 1982 after 28 years, with 33 years total in civil service. In 1980, knowing his retirement was soon approaching, Harry sought out a skilled hobby to keep him busy during his retirement. He was taught to be a silversmith by fellow Choctaw silversmith Jerry Lowman. “He’s been at it ever since,” says Carol.

What started as a hobby has turned into a small side business. Harry sells his jewelry pieces at art shows, fairs, festivals and pow wows. He focuses on jewelry and often incorporates symbols of Choctaw culture.

The Choctaw social dancing still has a place at the James’ family get-togethers during the holidays. Michael usually plays the role of Santa Claus at the family Christmas gathering, much to the delight of the children and leads some of the social dances. “He comes in and does a war dance,” says Carol. “The kids just love it.”

“It’s good to see that it’s moving forward with this generation too,” says Michael. “Our parents taught us that our culture, like anything good, will endure.”

Goodland begins restoration process on historical cabin

The 163-year-old Goodland Academy has begun restoration efforts to rebuild a historical cabin located on its campus. The cabin has fallen in serious disrepair over the past few decades because of a poor foundation and lack of funding for upkeep. A volunteer group from Claremore performed the clean up of the cabin’s fallen porch and its dilapidated composition shingle roof.

“This building has so much historical significance that we took it upon ourselves to start restoration, it’s too important to lose,” Goodland President David Dearing said, “Our history is so intertwined with the Choctaw Nation that we felt it imperative to restore the building to its former

glory.”

The small, one-room cabin is especially important because it’s made from the timbers of the home of the first governor of the Choctaw Nation, Basil LeFlore. The cabin was originally built in 1837 on another section of the Goodland property. Governor LeFlore purchased the cabin and expanded it for use as his home and as a council house for the tribal government. Many of the policies of the early Choctaw Nation were created in this building. Governor LeFlore’s wife, Carrie Gooding LeFlore, was a teacher at Goodland during this time and was responsible for teaching one of the greatest Choctaw superintendents in Goodland’s history, Silas

Leonard Bacon. Basil LeFlore and his wife, Carrie, are both buried in Goodland’s cemetery, itself a gift from them to the local community. In 1931, the home was reconstructed on Goodland’s campus and dedicated as a museum through the efforts of Mr. W. E. Schooler. According to historical documents, the cabin was in memorial of Schooler’s wife, Annie Crosse Schooler, and it served as a reminder of the early days when the Choctaws and their white friends did so much to carry on, even under difficulties, the church and school they loved (Reflections of Goodland, Volume 1, 1940).

In 1935, the cabin was moved by the WPA across campus to make room for the

current school building. A rock chimney and modern porch were added to the cabin. The last restoration efforts, a modern composite shingle roof, was added by the Jaycees Club of Hugo in the 1960s.

David Dearing further stressed Goodland’s commitment to the restoration, saying, “If we have to buy one log at a time, we will. We will be building the cabin to original specifications and the WPA-built, stone chimney will remain. We will also be building a proper foundation so this sort of thing never happens again.”

Goodland already has a few contacts concerning builders and suppliers with



Submitted photo

The historic cabin circa 1930.

backgrounds in historical restorations. The building will remain near its current site and will be open to the public once the project is complete. Support and assistance

in completing this project is welcome.

For more information, please contact David Dearing at 580-326-7568 or david@goodland.org.



Choctaw Nation: CHRISSY DILL

Vangie Robinson demonstrates traditional Choctaw pottery during a special event for Leadership Oklahoma on Oct. 27 in Durant.

Novices to experts

Students are becoming teachers of the Choctaw Nation culture

By LISA REED

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

An awakening is taking place in the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. It's no longer just pokni teaching her family to bead or mafo speaking the language. Grandmothers and grandfathers are being joined by younger generations who are becoming involved in the culture of the tribe.

One trend in particular is becoming more evident. People who spent a year or two attending cultural classes are now becoming the teachers.

"Some exceptional students are taking over as teachers and that is the way it is supposed to be," Dr. Ian Thompson said. Thompson is the director of Choctaw Nation's Historic Preservation Department and has witnessed the transformation of novices to experts.

"There are several in particular who have been attending the pottery and moccasin classes that we have been hosting over the last year-plus, who are now filling in or teaching classes on their own," Thompson continued. "It is rewarding to see the fulfillment they get from sharing what they have learned with others. Those students will eventually have their own students who will also teach. That is the way that traditional culture has always been passed on."

Vangie Robinson of Boswell attended pottery classes in Durant for two years and is now demonstrating the art around the country.

"I started the classes because I like learning new things and enjoy creating something," Robinson said.

Robinson's work won an honorable mention in the 2011 Choctaw Nation Art Show in September at Tushka Homma. She has attended festivals in Arkansas and Louisiana and provided a demonstration this month on the revitalization of traditional pottery at symposium in Natchez, Miss.

Robinson and fellow student Dan Berneir often fill in for the regular instructors at the Durant pottery class. It is held twice a month at the Cultural Resources office. They recently held their first firing of Choctaw pots and pipes after the burn ban was lifted in Bryan County.

Berneir says his interest in learning and now teaching how to make Choctaw pottery and moccasins is to preserve cultural paths.

"My grandmother would tell me stories," he said. "I've been interested all of my life but am able to learn more now that I have moved back to the area."

Berneir entered a pair of moccasins in the Choctaw Nation Art Show this year, winning second place in the Cultural division. He has set up demonstrations at the Ouachita Festival at Beavers Bend and worked with Robinson at a cultural event held in Durant for Leadership Oklahoma.

Bill and Shirley Lambert became involved in the pottery classes in Idabel and helped teach until the classes ended. The couple still create the clay pots in their spare time at home. They are working with clay that they brought home with them from New Mexico. They also use clay from the Tom, Okla., area, cleaning all the rocks and sticks out before they start molding their creations. Different materials are added to the clay to prevent cracking, most often sand or crushed pieces of pottery.

"Ian taught us how to make a fire pit and we fire our own pottery at home," Shirley said.

The Lamberts miss the bi-weekly pottery classes but enjoy going every week to the senior center in Idabel where they continue to participate in several activities.



CHOCTAW NATION CULTURAL SERVICES


Seeking more information on your
Choctaw heritage?
Wondering what cultural events are
happening in your tribe?

For these questions and more, Choctaw Nation's cultural
services website has answers!

Historic Preservation Department • Tribal Archaeology • Cemetery Restoration • NAGPRA/Repatriation

CHOCTAWNATIONCULTURE.COM

CHIEF GREGORY E. PYLE • ASSISTANT CHIEF GARY BATTON



Choctaw Nation's Christmas in the Park

Chief Greg Pyle and Assistant Chief Gary Batton invite
you to drive through the Choctaw Nation Capitol Grounds
at Tushka Homma to see the beautiful holiday lights.

The Christmas displays range from Native American to
traditional.

Hot chocolate and ornaments will be given
on Fridays & Saturdays.

Open daily from sundown until 9:30 p.m.
through December 31st.

Early Choctaw settlement discovered in Mississippi

Exciting archaeological discoveries made this summer and fall in the Choctaw Homeland are helping us to learn more about our history. The Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department is collaborating with archaeologists in Kemper County, Mississippi, to study several recently discovered Choctaw sites that date to the 1700s and early 1800s. This is the first time that Choctaw archaeological sites dating to the earlier part of this time range have ever been studied, and work at these localities is providing us with a rare glimpse into the lives of our ancestors during the decades before the Trail of Tears.

Over the last few years, Mississippi Power, Liberty Fuels and North American Coal have been planning and conducting preliminary work on the construction of a new power plant and an associated lignite mine in Kemper County, Mississippi. This project, overseen by the U.S. Department of Energy, falls under the National Historic Preservation Act, a federal law which requires the overseers of federally supported projects to make careful consideration of potential impacts to historic sites and Native American sacred sites before work begins. More than a year ago, the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department was notified about the project, and has since been consulting with the Department of Energy concerning the project's potential for impacting important ancestral Choctaw sites. To further comply with the law, North American Coal also contracted with Mississippi State University to survey the lignite mining area, while Mississippi Power Company contracted several cultural resource management firms to conduct archaeological surveys at the future plant site and along all gas and transmission lines supporting the plant.

The archaeologists examined site records, early aerial photographs, and the topography of the area. They also conducted systematic shovel tests to see what types of material lay below the soil. Through these techniques, they located many archaeological sites; some thousands of years old, some only a few decades old.

At least 10 of them are Choctaw sites dating from the 1700s-1800s. Of these 10, some are significant, and portions of the proposed project have been moved to avoid damaging them. Work demonstrated that some of the other Choctaw had been previously disturbed, or were very ephemeral in nature. This left four other potentially substantial Choctaw sites sitting within the proposed lignite mine area and requiring further study.

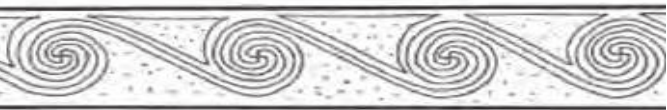
The area in which these sites are located is right in the heart of the Choctaw homeland. Although we will not give details on these sites' exact locations in order to protect them from the threat of vandalism or looting, their location corresponds almost exactly with Henry Halbert's geographical description and map coordinates for hunting lodges and possibly other outposts of the Choctaw town of Shomo Takali (Hanging Moss).

This outpost was located about two miles away from the village itself, in a particular stream valley that abounded in springs and salt licks that attracted deer. According to Halbert (n.d.), speaking of the upland portion of this outpost; "These lodges occupied a most picturesque position, standing amid the massive



Photo courtesy Hunter Johnson

A crew from Tennessee Valley Archaeological Research surveys one of the sites.



Iti Fabussa



Photo provided

Skyler Robinson prepares to do a ground penetrating radar (GPR) on one of the sites.

moss clad oaks which the high hills were crowded, and overlooking the deep open valley of... to the west, which even in mid-winter was always clothed with a green luxuriant growth of vegetation."

Basic testing was conducted at the four sites to determine if they may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, as localities that have the potential to provide new information about American history. At the request the historic preservation departments of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) studies were also conducted to take a non-invasive look at what is buried under the soil, and to ascertain the possibility of Choctaw graves being located at the four sites. Skyler Robinson and James Carver from the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department took Choctaw Nation's ground penetrating radar unit to Kemper County Mississippi and assisted with the survey.

The ground penetrating radar survey, combined with the shovel tests, and a few very small excavations, has turned up a number of interesting things at the sites. All four of the sites have many buried features: things such as hearths, filled in trash pits, and house foundations. At one of the sites, a large, anciently filled-in post hole was encountered and partially excavated by archaeologists. As they excavated it, they uncovered four large Choctaw clay pots, probably dating to the mid 1700s. Other than a few small fragments, this is the first time that Choctaw pottery dating to this time period has ever been uncovered by archaeologists. Studying these early pieces will help modern Choctaw potters to learn the techniques and design styles of our ancestors and aid in efforts to revitalize Choctaw traditional ceramics.

At another of the sites, a small, anciently filled pit was partially excavated. In the fill, archaeologists found Choctaw-made metal jewelry, glass beads, stone tools, fragmentary Choctaw ceramics, early 1800s European ceramics and glass, and plant materials including acorn shells and nuts, hickory hulls, corn, as well as possible remains of black walnut, squash rind, and a persimmon seed. Pig bone and eggs shell were found in the pit fill as well.

From just this small excavation, we learn a little bit about the activities our ancestors were conducting at the site, and a lot about the foods they were eating. These foods represented a diet that consisted of a combination of indigenous plant foods supplemented with domesticated animals that the Choctaw communities obtained from Europeans and then raised themselves. This, as well as the range of artifacts recovered supports a few rare written sources from the time period that suggest Choctaw communities during these decades were eclectic, maintaining some elements of traditional life, and adopting others items and traits from Europeans to suit their preferences.

This work confirmed that at least three of the four sites are Choctaw, and that all four have extensive archaeological

deposits capable of providing a lot of new information about Choctaw history. All four are eligible for listing on the National Register, because of their potential to provide new information about Choctaw history.

The time period to which they date is particularly significant. Archaeology has been able to give us a lot of information about the history of our ancestors 1,000s of years ago, but has told us very little about Choctaw life from AD 1600-1800. The "missing" period from 1600-1800 was a critical point in Choctaw history, in which our ancestors fought to maintain their sovereignty in the face of colonial powers, adopted smaller, weaker Tribes into the larger body of Choctaws, and created a society whose members traveled to Oklahoma and established the Choctaw Nation as it is today.

We don't currently know a lot of details about this period, but it would be nice to learn, because it was such an important time in our history. Of course, to many Choctaw people these sites also have value far beyond the information that they contain, representing physical traces of Choctaw ancestors' homes, and a Choctaw traditional lifeway that is the foundation of today's Choctaw traditional culture.

The newly discovered Choctaw archaeological sites have a great potential to tell us about our ancestors and history. However, we must never lose sight of the fact that they were made and lived in by our ancestors, and are in a sense, sacred. The next step is for the ground penetrating radar data to be synthesized and thoroughly analyzed to see if any of the sites may contain Choctaw burials. Then, a plan of action will be created to minimize impacts to possible burials, and at the same time to gather as much information as possible from the rest of the sites about the lives of our ancestors before mining activities impact them.

Much is yet to happen, but thanks to what our ancestors left at these sites, in a year or two we may know much, much more about Choctaw history and the lives of our forebears than we do today.



Above, a 1700's Choctaw ceramic vessel recovered from one of the sites (courtesy TVAR). At right, an artistic rendering by Ruby Bolding of another one of the recovered vessels.



Photos provided