



# Finding Your First American Ancestors



## **The Dawes Rolls of the Five Civilized Tribes in Oklahoma, 1898-1914**

The Dawes Rolls was taken during the years 1898-1914. In order to be listed on the Dawes Rolls, your ancestors must have lived in Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) as members or citizens of the Five Civilized Tribes (Chickasaw, Cherokee, Choctaw, Muscogee-Creek and Seminole).

The Dawes Rolls are the required records for enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes in Oklahoma today. You must have a direct lineal ancestor by blood listed on the Dawes Rolls. State-issued birth or death records are required as proof of lineage back to an original enrollee. All tribes have different requirements for citizenship, membership or enrollment.

The Dawes Rolls only collected information on First Americans living in Indian Territory/Oklahoma. Ancestors found on the 1900 U.S. Federal Census living in other states will most likely not be found on the Dawes Rolls. The federal census is not the same as the Dawes Rolls. Many settlers living in Indian Territory before statehood (1907) were in search of land, so most people counted in the Federal Census as living within tribal nation boundaries in Indian Territory in 1900 were not connected to the tribes on the Dawes Rolls.

### **What are the Dawes Rolls?**

The Dawes Rolls of the Five Civilized Tribes are a list of First Americans by blood, and other people living with these tribes in Indian Territory during 1898-1914. They were created to divide the land the tribes held in common, to give it to individual tribally enrolled citizens so they would have the right to sell the land after 25 years, if desired. Every person on the Dawes Rolls has a roll number, but this does not necessarily indicate degree of blood.

The Dawes Rolls were created by the Dawes Commission. The enrollment period closed March 4, 1907, but court cases involving disputed enrollment continued until 1914 when the enrollment process was ultimately ended. People born after 1907 will not be listed on the Dawes Rolls.

The Five Civilized Tribes in Oklahoma were forcibly removed (commonly referred to as "Removal" or the "Trail of Tears") to Indian Territory during the 1830s from areas in Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky, Georgia, Tennessee, the Carolinas and Florida. There are many reasons a person may not be found on the Dawes Rolls, including but not limited to: lack of documentation, refusal or failure to enroll with the Dawes Commission and rejection from the rolls due to lack of proof of connection to a tribe.

Once you have located your ancestor on the Dawes Rolls, you can look up their census card and enrollment packet. This can be done at the Oklahoma Research Center or by using subscription based-websites such as Fold3 or Ancestry.com.

To request Dawes Rolls research, please provide the following information: full names of family members (including married and maiden names), birth dates, death dates and any other identifying information about your direct blood ancestor(s) who were alive between the years 1898-1914 and living in Indian Territory.

## Getting Started

1. Complete the pedigree sheet included in this packet.
2. Where was your family living in the 1900s? If they are listed as living in Indian Territory, there is a chance they will be listed on the Dawes Rolls of the Five Civilized Tribes. This is the only type of record used to determine eligibility for Certificate Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) and citizenship. If they were living elsewhere, they will not be included on the Dawes Rolls. To search the Dawes Rolls, visit [OKHistory.org/research/Dawes](http://OKHistory.org/research/Dawes).
3. Did you find a matching name? If so, check the age of the ancestor to see if it matches within two to five years of the age your ancestor would have been in 1902. *If not, your ancestor is likely not included on the Dawes Roll.* (Note: Even if the age does not match the names of the parents, siblings and grandparents may match.) If the age does come within that range, you can click on the card number in blue to view more people included on this card. (Note: Some people are on a card alone; if the screen stays the same, they are on a card by themselves.)
4. Are the people included familiar to you as possible family members? If so, you are on the right track. If they are not familiar, you may try more names that match your ancestor. Be sure to pay close attention to spellings and different spellings of first and last names. *If no results are found, your ancestor may not be included on the Dawes Roll.*
5. For more information on this process, contact Chickasaw Nation Tribal Government Services at [CDIB@Chickasaw.net](mailto:CDIB@Chickasaw.net) or (580) 436-7250 or visit [Chickasaw.net/CDIB](http://Chickasaw.net/CDIB).
6. To contact a genealogist at the Chickasaw Cultural Center, please email [Genealogy@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Genealogy@Chickasaw.net).

## Keep in Mind

- If you do not find your ancestor on the Dawes Rolls, it does not mean you are without First American heritage. Reasons for ancestors not being included range from being rejected by the Dawes Commission, to being a member of a tribe other than those of the “Five Civilized,” to your ancestor simply choosing not to enroll or failing to enroll.
- In 1900, there were three times as many non-Indigenous people as there were First Americans living in Indian Territory. Ancestry.com is a useful website for locating families in the 1900s.
- The race category on the 1900 and 1910 census was an open choice. Anyone could choose to claim First American heritage, so this is not a viable resource in determining citizenship or CDIB eligibility.
- While a DNA test can show an estimate percentage of First American ancestry, it does not show tribal affiliation; therefore, it is not a viable resource in determining citizenship or CDIB eligibility.

## Genealogy Request Form

The purpose of this form is to help you gather information about your relatives. Try to find as much information as possible. Once completed, you can send this form to a staff genealogist at [Genealogy@Chickasaw.net](mailto:Genealogy@Chickasaw.net). They will research your heritage through numerous online resources. Be sure to provide your contact information so they can reach you with any search results.

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**Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tribal affiliation/roll number:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name to be researched: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_

Death date: \_\_\_\_\_

Tribe: \_\_\_\_\_

Roll number (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Relative/spouse name (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Name to be researched: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_

Death date: \_\_\_\_\_

Tribe: \_\_\_\_\_

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Death date: \_\_\_\_\_

Tribe: \_\_\_\_\_

Roll number (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Relative/spouse name (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

## **Additional Contact Information**

### ***Tribal Enrollment Offices for the Five Civilized Tribes***

#### **Chickasaw Nation**

Phone: (580) 436-7250

Email: [CDIB@Chickasaw.net](mailto:CDIB@Chickasaw.net)

#### **Choctaw Nation**

Phone: (800) 522-6170, ext. 4030

Fax: (580) 920-7001

Email: [cdib-membership@choctawnation.com](mailto:cdib-membership@choctawnation.com)

#### **Cherokee Nation**

Phone: (918) 458-6980 or (800) 256-0671, ext. 6980

Email: [registration@cherokee.org](mailto:registration@cherokee.org)

#### **Muscogee (Creek) Nation**

Phone: (800) 482-1979, ext. 794

#### **Seminole Nation**

Phone: (405) 257-7242

Email: [loggins.m@sno-nsn.gov](mailto:loggins.m@sno-nsn.gov)