

OUR OWN COUNCIL'S TRY-IT:

Georgia's Native People

An "Our Own Council's" award reflects what is special about a community, area or resource in a council. The Girl Scout Council of Northwest Georgia's "Georgia's Native People" Try-It will help Girl Scout Brownies (2nd and 3rd grade) DISCOVER the history, heritage and culture of the indigenous people of **Georgia**: how the first people in this area lived, how they worked and played, and why they are no longer in Georgia as independent nations.

To earn the Georgia's Native Peoples Try-It, Girl Scout Brownies must choose and complete any four of the six activities. As girls begin to work on the activities, leaders may find some Brownies have stereotyped ideas about Native people or are only familiar with the Plains or Southwest Nations. There are excellent resources about the Creek and Cherokee Nations in the library and on the internet; the Atlanta Resource Center has a "Georgia's Native People" Treasure Box, a "We the People" (Cherokee) Treasure Box, a "Trail of Tears" Treasure Box and a "Muskogee: People of the Creeks" Treasure Box. Both the Dalton and Atlanta Resource Centers have a "Native American Neighbors" Treasure Box and Native American Indian resource and activity books. See the **appendix** for more resources and tips.

The Georgia's Native People Try-It **patch** has a traditional Cherokee design, one that might have been woven onto a girl's dress using quills or beads. It is a flower and leaf design; the dark blue leaf is at the top of the Try-It patch.

Acknowledgement: Mrs. Donna Grant and Mrs. Renee Taylor, leaders of a Cobb County Brownie troop, initiated the original "American Indian Heritage" Try-It in 1992.

NOTE: To avoid activities that might show disrespect for the Cherokee or Muskogee cultures or sacred beliefs, we have deliberately left out activities that ask girls to "dress like Indians" or "do an Indian dance."

GEORGIA'S NATIVE PEOPLE

Long before European explorers and settlers arrived in Georgia, the "First People" had their own nations with their own languages and cultures. There were two major nations in Georgia, the Muskogee and the Aniyunwiya. (We know them today as the Creek and Cherokee people.)

Aniyunwiya (Ah-nee-yoon'-wi-yah) the name the **Cherokee** use for them selves, means "The Real People." They also called themselves Tsa-la-gi (cave dwellers) which became "Cherokee."

The meaning of **Muskogee** (Mus-kō-jee), the word the **Creek** use for themselves, is unknown. The first Europeans in America noticed that their villages were always by small streams and called them the "creek people"

Before you begin your Georgia's Native Peoples Try-It activities, decide together in your Brownie Ring (your planning time) which one of these Nations – Muskogee or Cherokee - you want to learn about. Then choose and do four or more activities to earn your patch.

1) GAMES – With others, play a game or team sport that Muskogee or Cherokee children played in the past. Can you think of a modern game that is like the Native game you learned?

2) WORDS & MUSIC – Native people used stories to entertain and to teach. Read or listen to a story from the Cherokee or Muskogee (Creek) people, then share it with others. Listen to traditional or modern music composed by a Cherokee or Muskogee musician.

AND/OR: If you like, learn a few easy Cherokee and Muskogee words. In Cherokee* *osiyo* (pronounced oh-see-yoh) is a friendly greeting and *wado* (wah-doh) means "thank you." In Muskogee, *hesci* (pronounced heese-chee) is a friendly greeting, and *mvto* (pronounced muh-toh) means "thank you."

* Go to www.cherokeetourismok.com to hear these words spoken.

3) POW WOWS – A Pow Wow is a gathering of Native people to bring many nations together in peace and harmony. People get together to show support for one another, to display traditional wares and to dance. Also, traditional foods are available for you to sample. Plan and go on a trip to a Pow-Wow or other Native American Indian celebration that is within 100 miles of your meeting place. Before you go, review Pow Wow etiquette (found in Appendix)

AND/OR: Visit a museum, historic site or council ground that will help you learn more about the Native people you are studying.

4) CRAFTSWOMEN – Cherokee and Muskogee women have always created beautiful objects for their home or to wear. Today they may use traditional designs or create new ones. Learn about some of the old and new designs and use one to create something of your own. Here are some things you might choose to make:

- Necklaces, bracelets and anklets
- Clay pots
- Baskets
- Hair ornaments
- Woven belts or head bands
- Woven wall hanging
- Gourd art

5) WHERE ARE THEY TODAY? Native people did not just live in the long-ago past! There are Native people living all over the United States today. Many Native people live in homes like yours, wear clothes like yours and go to school or work like you and your family do. However, the Cherokee and Muskogee Nations no longer exist in Georgia. Find out why and how the people were forced to leave Georgia and where most Cherokee and Muskogee live today.

6) I'M HUNGRY! In the days before supermarkets, Muskogee and Cherokee women and girls held the important jobs of growing and preparing food for their families. They planted corn, beans, squash and sunflowers. They cooked cornbread, soups and stews. Find and try out a simple recipe for cornbread or hominy, or beans or squash, or roast sunflower seeds.

AND/OR: Plant and tend a garden that includes corn or beans or squash or sunflowers.

RESOURCES

- The Atlanta and Dalton Resource Centers each have at least one Treasure Box with books, tapes and videos related to the Native people of the Southeast. You may reserve materials up to six weeks in advance and check them out for up to two weeks. Deposit required.
- Your local **public library** will have age-appropriate materials, often shelved in a separate children's section.
- The **Internet** has great resources, but not all of them are legitimate and not all are appropriate for children. Be sure to research with care and skepticism.
- The **Chieftain's Museum/Ridge Home** in Rome, Georgia is always willing to tailor a tour or activity session to Girl Scout activities. They are located at

501 Riverside Parkway; call (706) 291-9494 for information and to reserve a workshop.

- **Etowah Indian Mounds State Historic Site** preserves temple mounds built by Paleo-Indians (prehistoric times) and includes a small museum. Etowah also has Saturday programs on Cherokee and other Southeastern Indian cultures. (Check www.gastateparks.org for a calendar of special events.) 813 Indian Mounds Rd., Cartersville; (770) 387-3747.
- **Indian Springs State Park** – The Creek (Muskogee) Indians used the springs for centuries to heal the sick and impart extra vigor to the well. A seasonal museum highlights Creek Indian and other park area history. There are usually spring and fall Native American culture celebrations. Call (770) 504-2277 for more information or check the Georgia State Parks Web site. Indian Springs is located off I-75 in middle Georgia outside the town of Flovilla.
- **New Echota State Historic Site** - In 1825 the Cherokee national legislature established a capital called New Echota. It became the government headquarters for the Cherokee nation that once covered north Georgia, western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee and northeastern Alabama. Today, visitors can see several original and reconstructed buildings as well as a film in the site's museum. Located outside Calhoun at 1211 Chatsworth Hwy., NE; (706) 624-1321. Visit www.gastateparks.org.
- **Red Clay State Historic Park** became the council grounds of the Cherokee after they were removed from Georgia but before the Trail of Tears. Located in Bradley, TN just over the Georgia state line in Cohutta, the park includes a small museum, farm buildings, Blue Hole Spring and commemorative eternal flame. "Cherokee Days of Recognition" are held the first Saturday and Sunday in August. This annual includes authentic Cherokee crafts and food, Cherokee storytelling, music and dance. 1140 Red Clay Park Road, Cleveland, TN; (423) 478-0339. www.state.tn.us/environment/parks/redclay.
- **Funk Heritage Center**, Reinhardt College, Waleska (Cherokee Co.) – A museum focusing on the history of Southeastern Native peoples and Appalachian settlers. Includes interactive exhibits, a film, contemporary art by Native people. Group tours available: (770) 720-5970. (www.reinhardt.edu/funk)
- **Ocoee Whitewater Center** (Copperhill/Ducktown TN) at (423) 496-5197 or toll free at (877) 692-6050: Year-round indoor and outdoor conservation education programs available, including "Walk Like a Cherokee" (cultural history of Cherokee Indians).

APPENDIX

OFFENSIVE WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

Tips to help well-meaning folks avoid being un-knowingly rude or offensive to many Native Peoples:

PLEASE DON'T SAY:

- **Squaw** – This is a word that has been used to refer to “Indian” women for many years, but its original meaning is very vulgar; we can’t even print the direct translation.
- **Redskin** - In its origin, “redskin” referred to the bloody scalps of Native People - including women and children - that were sold for bounties with animal skins. Bounty hunters would come to the trading post with their deer-skins, raccoon-skins and red-skins. (*Not* a great name for a sports team!)
- **Brave** – This word has been used for many years to refer to “Indian” men. It comes from an old stereotype of Native people as “noble savages.” Native people are not wild animals or savages, and each man has his own personality. No one likes to be a label instead of a person.
- **Chief** - This is a word commonly used as a nickname which incorrectly labels men who are Native People. It would be like calling all white men “Prez” or “King” or all Catholics “Pope.” Very few Native people ever earn the prestigious title of Chief of a Nation – and not all chiefs are men.
- **“Stop acting like a bunch of wild Indians!”** – This comes from a long-held stereotype that Native people are “wild.” Often, anything white (European) people did not understand or that was different from their culture was labeled “wild.” You can also fight stereotypes by not using expressions like, “Sit Indian style,” or, “Walk Indian file.” Just say, “Sit with your legs crossed” or “Walk single file.”
- **Tribe** – “Nation” or “people” is usually more correct.

PLEASE DON'T ASK:

- **“Are you a real Indian?”** – It is extremely rude to ask personal questions such as “How much Indian are you?” or “Or you a full-blood?” Or to make comments such as “You don’t *look* Indian.”
- **“May I touch you?”** - Touch your own skin – it feels the same!

POW WOWS

"We know them as ceremonies, because we are celebrating something. We are celebrating the birth of a new Grandbaby, crops were good...everybody's happy. All of these ceremonies go along with our lives. They are family oriented."

-Abe Conklin, Ponca/Osage (1926-1995)

These ceremonies, commonly known as pow wows, have evolved from a formal ceremony of the past into a modern blend of dance, family reunion, and festival. Pow wows are famous for their pageantry of colors and dance, which have been adapted and changed since their beginnings into a bright, fast, and exciting event geared towards Native people and visitors alike.

Pow Wow Etiquette for Visitors and Newcomers

- **Bring your own seating** when attending pow wows, because public seating is the exception rather than the rule.
- **Do not sit on the benches around the arena.** These benches are reserved for the dancers only. You may set up your chairs directly behind the benches, but it is usually good courtesy to ask the permission of the dancer whose bench you are sitting behind, as he/she might have family who are going to sit by him or her.
- **Do not touch dancers' regalia.** It is not a costume, and may have been in the family for many generations. Do not pick up loose feathers from the ground; show a pow wow official where it is and they will pick it up.
- **Donate money to the Drum.** This is done during a blanket dance, when a blanket will be laid out on the ground and a song or songs will be sung. It is customary to place a dollar bill (or more if you wish) on the blanket and dance the rest of that song, whether you are dressed or not. If you don't want to dance, you should ask a dancer to place the money on the drum for you. The drum has probably traveled a great distance to give you the beautiful songs you hear, and count on this to help pay their expenses.
- **Always stand during special songs.** This includes Grand Entry, Flag Songs, Veteran Songs, Memorial Songs, Prayer Songs or any other song that the M.C. designates. It is also customary to remove your hat during that song.
- **Always listen to the M.C.** He will give all of the information you need, as well as entertain you and keep you posted on news. He can answer any questions you have.
- **Remember you are a guest.** Have fun, ask questions (but avoid interrupting, especially elders) and meet people. Everyone there is welcome!

AT THE POW WOW...

The Arena

The arena is where most of a pow wow takes place--it includes the actual circle where the dancers dance as well as the area containing the M.C. and benches. The arena can be anywhere from inside a gymnasium to preferably under the sky. The most important part of any arena is the Drum, which includes the instrument as well as the singers. The Host Drum, or Head Drum, is placed in the middle of the arena, a place of respect. In the outdoors, the drum is placed under an arbor made of four upright posts with tree branches and leaves lashed on the top to form a roof which protects the drum from the direct rays of the sun.

The Emcee's table is also center point in the arena, not only because it holds the master-of-ceremonies, but also because it is where give-aways are arranged and announcements are posted. To the side of the Emcee's table is where the colors (flags) are posted and retrieved at the beginning and end of each dance session. The colors are very important to the Native Americans, who value veterans very highly. Usually the flag of the United States, Canada or Mexico, an eagle staff and the flag of a branch of military service are carried in and posted. The eagle staff, a curved staff about five or six feet in height with eagle feathers attached, serves as the flag for Native Americans.

The Emcee

The Master of Ceremonies, or Emcee (MC) for short, is the one person who is responsible for setting the tempo for a pow wow. He decides which dance is held when and how long they may go on, announces events, but more importantly, tells jokes! The main purpose of an Emcee is to get the dance alive and moving by keeping everyone in good spirits.

The Arena Director

The Arena Director is the keeper of the circle, the man who ensures all of the functions of the pow wow flow smoothly. It is his responsibility to make sure that all of the dancers and, especially the drum, receive water when they are hot, that the arena remains clean from pollution and trash, and that people who disrupt the dance are escorted out. The Arena Director picks up all items that are dropped by a dancer in the arena and those items are his to keep, although he may give them back for a small monetary gift given by the person who dropped it to be forgiven for the mistake.

Head Man and Head Lady

The Head Man and Head Lady Dancers are respected dancers who are asked to serve as the model for all other dancers. They are the first people to dance in a song, and no other person is allowed to dance until they do. This is a position of

great respect and usually requires a give away in return for being asked to perform the duties of Head Man and Lady.

“Princesses”

Among Native people, a princess is not royalty like a European princess. She is more like a good-will ambassador. Her nation or organization elects her to represent them at pow wows all around the country. Usually a “princess” is a young woman between 15 and 20 years old.



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