

VISITOR INFORMATION GUIDE

About

TAHLEQUAH

OKLAHOMA

History of Tahlequah & Interesting Facts

Presented By



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ABOUT TAHLEQUAH.....

A COMMUNITY RICH IN OKLAHOMA HISTORY and RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE TOP TOWNS IN THE U.S.A.



THE HISTORY OF TAHLEQUAH

THE FIRST OFFICIAL CHEROKEE EXPLORERS of the Arkansas river valley came in 1809. This was just six years after the United States purchased the huge inland Empire of Louisiana from the French.

They came because, in the homelands of the Lower Cherokees, in Georgia and Alabama, the White settlers were pushing them back, invading their ancestral hunting grounds and demanding that the native Cherokees be moved to the new American wilderness empire.

THE EASTERN CHEROKEES WHO REMAINED behind in Georgia and Alabama when the Western Cherokees crossed the Mississippi, had been making important strides in the development of a true Cherokee culture.

The Lower Cherokees returned to their homelands with such favorable reports of the land between the Arkansas and White rivers that many families moved immediately, without either the aid or the coercion of the United States government.

By 1817, about 2,000 Lower Cherokees were in the western lands where they became known as the Arkansas or Western Cherokees. In 1822, an unlettered but brilliant Cherokee, *Sequoyah*, developed a completely phonetic alphabet for the Cherokee language, the first alphabet for any Indian tribe. The alphabet was so simple that even illiterate Indians could learn to use it rapidly.

Another major achievement came in 1827 when the Cherokees became the first American Indian tribe with a written constitution. Under the constitution written at the Cherokee capital at New Echota, Georgia, *Jotin Ross* was elected Principal Chief, highest administrative office in the Cherokee Nation.

SPURRED BY SEOUOYAH'S INVENTION, IN 1828, Elias Boudinot began publishing *The Cherokee Advocate*, America's first Indian newspaper. The paper was published in both English and Cherokee and brought the Cherokees not only their own national news, but also news of the United States.

Pressures intensified to move the Cherokees in 1828 when gold was discovered in Cherokee country. Actions of the state of Georgia became harsher, especially after the election of Indian fighter *Andrew Jackson* as President of the United States.

In May 1839, *General Winfield Scott* and Federal troops occupied the Cherokee nation, rounded up the remaining Cherokees and forced them to move to the

Indian territory. This removal, one of the darkest episodes in American history, is known as the *Trail of Tears*, because of the intense sufferings en route caused by blizzards, disease, and hunger. An estimated 4,000 of the original 16,000 Eastern Cherokees died on the Trail of Tears.

TRADITION SAYS THAT THREE CHEROKEE Commissioners were selected to choose a site for the Western capital. Only two survived the Trail of Tears. They chose the rolling hills and clear streams where Tahlequah now stands for the new capital. When convinced the third commissioner would not arrive, one turned to the other and said: "*Tah-le-Quah*" which means "*two is enough*" in Cherokee.

The coming of Statehood for Oklahoma in 1907 had two important influences on Tahlequah. The city was named the county seat for the newly created Cherokee County. Then, the first Legislature authorized purchase of the Cherokee Seminaries and established Northeastern State Normal School at Tahlequah. Later, the college was renamed Northeastern State Teachers College, then Northeast Oklahoma State University, and now evolved to prestigious Northeastern State University, or commonly known as NSU. The university, one of Tahlequah's most important economic influences, also forms the center for cultural development of the city.



In 1917, Tahlequah established its first municipal water service and, in 1920, set up its own electrical system. These municipal utilities have played an important role in keeping Tahlequah's property taxes among the lowest in the state.

Following World War II, a new element entered the economy of the Tahlequah area when Lake Tenkiller was built in southern Cherokee County. Each year the lake attracts thousands of visitors and has become a retirement mecca. Lake Tenkiller, with other water developments in the Arkansas valley, has opened up the Tahlequah area as a tourist and recreation center.

IN RECENT YEARS, RENEWED INTEREST IN Tahlequah history has resulted in the establishment of the Cherokee Heritage Center at the site of old Park Hill. These developments have renewed one of Tahlequah's oldest and greatest asset, which is the natural beauty that has attracted people to the region for centuries.

The Tahlequah Area Chamber of Commerce enjoys a close working relationship with the City and County governing bodies, the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, and Northeastern State University. Working together toward common goals, these groups have provided strong leadership as Tahlequah has progressed.

TAHLEQUAH'S RICH HERITAGE, commitment to quality education, and unbound natural beauty blend to create a unique quality of life that is enjoyed by area residents and visitors. Tahlequah's attractions draw greater numbers of tourists and residents each year.

TAHLEQUAH ONE OF THE TOP TOWNS IN THE U.S.A.

ACCORDING TO PRENTICE HALL, Tahlequah is right up there nationally in popularity. This company, considered a major American publisher, was the one which rated the Tahlequah area as one of the four top areas in the United States for retirement. And, the Prentice Hall book titled "The 100 Best Small Towns in America" had named Tahlequah as one of the Best in the Nation. The beginning of this book reads, "Are you fed up with city living?": Would you like to start a new life in a place with clean air, safe streets, good schools and friendly neighbors? If so, here are one hundred all-American small towns where you can find your dream!"

The author nationally researched towns with populations between 5,000 and 15,000 and sought features such as scenic location, viable economic base, population diversity, high education level, good schools, readily available health care, and low crime rate. Tahlequah was an obvious choice.

The big export item of Tahlequah and such small towns has always been people, mostly young people. and most reared in an environment where traditional values of family, community, faith, hard work, and patriotism remain strong. Small wonder the nation places small towns up on a pedestal - as those such as Tahlequah are helping to preserve the American dream. Self-reliance is a key quality of the residents, and the willingness to look problems square in the eye probably comes first.

In Tahlequah one learns of hospitality, absence of serious crime, and preservation of good manners. The residents do not have that anonymity that allows a rude, hostile, aggressive, pushy attitude. The citizens of Tahlequah are pleased to be recognized as one of the outstanding small towns in the nation. But, to those who live in Tahlequah, it came as no surprise. Known as 'Oklahoma's and the Nation's best kept secret', Tahlequah was an obvious choice.



CENTURY 21 Wright Real Estate is proud to be a part of the Tahlequah community and its growth.

Interesting TAHLEQUAH AREA Facts



www.CityofTahlequah.com

Tahlequah is Oklahoma's 30th largest city.

Tahlequah is Oklahoma's 9th fastest growing city.

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| • City Population | 16,255 (2006 Estimate) |
| • County Population | 44,617 (2005 Estimate) |
| • City population change from 2000 to 2005 | +12.08% |
| • Owner-occupied housing units | 2,416 |
| • Renter-occupied housing units | 3,287 |
| • Av household size of owner-occupied units | 2.45 persons |
| • Av household size of renter-occupied units | 2.15 persons |
| • The land area of City of Tahlequah: | 12 miles |
| • The land area of Cherokee County: | 751.0 square miles |
| • The water area of Cherokee County: | 25.4 square miles |
| • Tahlequah elevation: | 850 ft above sea level |
| • Tahlequah location position | Lat:35.56N - Lon:94.58W |
| • Average temperature | 60 degrees F |
| • Average days above 90 degrees | 59 days |
| • Average days below 32 degrees | 79 days |
| • Average annual rainfall | 48.14 inches |
| • Average snowfall | 8 inches |

TAHLEQUAH POPULATION PROFILE & STATISTICS

SEX & AGE

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| • Male | 47 % |
| • Female | 53 % |
| • 18 Years & Over | 77.8 % |
| • 65 Years & Over | 13 % |
| • Median Age | 26.4 yrs |

RACE

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| • White | 59 % |
| • American Indian - Alaska Native | 26.9 % |
| • Hispanic or Latino | 7.3 % |
| • Black or African American | 2.5 % |
| • Asian | 0.5 % |
| • Two or more races | 6.9 % |



HOUSEHOLDS

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| • Households | 5,703 |
| • Family Households | 54.8% |
| • With children under 18 | 35.5% |
| • Married-couple family | 65.6% |
| • With children under 18 | 30.2% |
| • Householder living alone | 34.2% |
| • Householder 65 years and over | 11.6% |
| • Households - indiv. under 18 yrs | 29.7% |
| • Households - indiv. over 65 yrs | 22.5% |
| • Median house value | \$71,600 |
| • Median mortgage owner costs | \$698 |
| • Median gross rent | \$399 |
| • Median household income | \$23,238 |
| • Median family income | \$34,811 |
| • Per Capita Income (dollars) | \$13,371 |
| • Number of Banks | 5 |
| • Deposits (in millions) | >\$350 |
| • Number of Credit Unions | 2 |

IMPORTANT AREA CONTACT INFORMATION

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--|
| City of Tahlequah | 918-456-0651 | www.CityofTahlequah.com |
| Tahlequah Chamber of Commerce | 918-456-3742 | www.TahlequahChamber.com |
| Tahlequah Tourism Council | 918-456-3742 | www.TourTahlequah.com |
| Tahlequah Main Street Assoc | 918-431-1655 | www.TahMainStreet.com |
| 911 Business Office | 918-458-6513 | www.CherokeeCounty-911.com |
| Tahlequah Public Schools | 918-458-4100 | www.Tahlequah.k12.ok.us |
| Tahlequah City Hospital | 918-456-0641 | www.tch-ok.org |
| Northeastern State University | 918-456-5511 | www.nsuok.edu |
| Cherokee Nation | 918-453-5000 | www.Cherokee.org |
| United Keetoowah Band of Okla | 918-431-1818 | www.UnitedKeetoowahBand.org |
| Cherokee Heritage Center | 918-456-6007 | www.CherokeeHeritage.org |



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Information provided by Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Tahlequah Area Chamber of Commerce and City of Tahlequah, Oklahoma.