

OUR OWN COUNCIL'S

"Georgia's Native People" Try-It



An "Our Own Council's" award reflects what is special about a community, area, or resource in a council. The Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta'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 People 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 libraries and on the internet; the Atlanta, Dalton and Griffin Service Centers have at least one activity kit on Georgia's Native People plus books on American Indians in general. 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: This Our Own Council's Try-It evolved from Girls Scouts of Northwest Georgia's "American Indian Heritage" Try-It and Girl Scouts of Pine Valley's "Native American Heritage" Try-It.

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." At Pow-Wows, if there are some dances that visitors are invited to join – enjoy!

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 themselves, means "The Real People." The Muskogee also called them *Tsa-la-gi*, which became "Cherokee" in English.

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"

To earn this Try-It, you must complete activity #1. Then choose and try any other three (or more!) activities.

1) 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. Most 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. Look at a map of Georgia that shows where they once were. Find out why and how the People were forced to leave Georgia and where most Cherokee and Muskogee live today.

2) GAMES – With others, play a game or sport that Muskogee or Cherokee children played in the past. Do they still play it today? Do you play a game that is like the Cherokee or Muskogee game you learned?

3) WORDS & MUSIC – Read or listen to a story that Cherokee or Muskogee (Creek) people tell their children to explain why things happen or how things came to be. Listen to traditional or modern music composed by a Cherokee or Muskogee musician.

AND: 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.'

4) 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 purchase. Plan and go on a trip to a Pow-Wow or other Native American Indian celebration. 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.

5) 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.

6) TIPIS AND FEATHERS? Some people believe all Native American Indians lived in tipis (tepees) and wore feathers in their hair or in a headband. Some people think they still do! Be a history detective and find out:

- What did the Muscogee or Cherokee people wear before the European colonists came to America? What did their house look like?
- After the European colonists came to Georgia, the Cherokee and Muscogee people adapted some of their ways of dressing and building homes. What did Cherokee or Muscogee clothing and homes look like then?
- What types of homes do the Muscogee and Cherokee people live in today? What do their everyday clothes look like? What clothes do they wear when they dance at Pow Wows?

RESOURCES

- The Atlanta, Dalton and Griffin Resource Centers each have at least one activity kit 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 three weeks. *Security 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. 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 in prehistoric times and includes a small museum. Etowah also has 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 healthy. A seasonal museum highlights Creek Indian and other park area history. There are usually spring and fall Native American cultural 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. 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 event 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)
- **Chief Vann House Historic Site** was the home of James Vann, a Cherokee Indian leader and wealthy businessman. He established the largest and most prosperous plantation in the Cherokee Nation, and in 1804 he completed construction of a beautiful brick home, the most elegant in the Cherokee Nation. Today the Vann House survives as Georgia's best-preserved historic Cherokee Indian home. A guided tour allows visitors to see the house which features beautiful hand carvings, a remarkable "floating" staircase, a 12-foot mantle and fine antiques. Call (706) 695-2598 or go to

www.GeorgiaStateParks.org/ChiefVannHouse to find out about special events. 82 Ga. Highway 225 N, Chatsworth , GA 30705.

- Chieftain’s Museum and Major Ridge Home participates with the National Park Service as a site on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. At the core of the house is a two-story "dogtrot" log cabin that once served as the home of prominent Cherokee leader Major Ridge and his family. Today Chieftains Museum / Major Ridge Home is open to the public as a historic site and interpretive museum. The museum presents interpretive exhibits, educational programs, and special events that pertain to the Ridge family and Cherokee history and culture. Rome, Georgia 30162; 706/291-9494; info@chieftainmuseum.org; <http://www.chieftainmuseum.org/>.
- **Ocmulgee National Monument** preserves traces of over ten millennia of native Southeastern culture, including Mississippian mounds. It is located on the east bank of the Ocmulgee River, within the city limits of Macon, Georgia. Ocmulgee has a visitor center that houses an archaeological museum that interprets the cultures of the Native Americans who had inhabited this site. Near the visitor center is a reconstructed thousand-year-old ceremonial earthlodge. A variety of hands on activities including creation of pottery, rope and baskets are available for people to learn by doing. Call and ask about our free summer children's workshops in July: (478) 752-8257; www.nps.gov/ocmu/

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 children and women, 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.

AT THE POW WOW...

Arena – dance circle, this area is blessed before the dance and must remain pure throughout the Ceremony. There is a single entrance to the arena facing East, you should not enter the arena unless invited, and this is the only entrance that should be used to enter. This invisible boundary should not be broken at anytime by any one.

Regalia – attire worn by dancers – NOT a costume. The development of a dancer's regalia is a very personal process. Often items have taken years to create or may be gifts and have deep meaning.

Master of Ceremonies – (MC) officiates over Ceremony proceedings. Guide to the events – pay attention to his announcements.

The Drum – the heartbeat of Mother Earth. The drum acts as an agent to bring harmony and balance to participants and to spectators. The drum acts as an intercessor to the spiritual realm.

Grand Entry – opening processional of officials and dancers.

Head Man Dancer – lead dancer, he will begin and guide the other dancers through the dance.

Head Woman Dancer – lead dancer, she will begin and guide the other dancers through the dance.

Intertribal Dance – social dance; open to visitors to come join the dancers in celebration.

"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.

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 (feathers are sacred to some Native Americans.)
- **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!

Native American Tribes of Georgia



The original natives of the area that is now Georgia included:

- The Apalachee Indians
- The Cherokee Indians
- The Hitchiti, Oconee and Miccosukee Indians
- The Muskogee Creek Indians
- The Timucua Indians
- The Yamasee and Guale Indians

Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta, Inc

www.gsgatl.org

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Dalton Service Center and Badge & Sash Store
2204 E. Walnut Ave., Dalton, GA 30721
(706) 226-1435

Griffin Service Center and Badge & Sash Store
350 Airport Road , P.O. Box 1569, Griffin, GA 30224
(770) 227-2524 or toll free at (800) 327-4475

Mableton Service Center
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