

# History, Memory, and Georgia's Native Peoples

At a Glance

**Time:** 45 m

**Grade Level:** 4-12

**Description:** Brief introduction to the history of the Native American groups with history in the state of Georgia. Visualize differences in the quantity and quality of sources on each tribe. Consider how participants' perceptions may have changed, and the ways that historical sources accumulate.

**Standards:** SS1G1, SS3H1, SS3G3a, SS4H3, SS8H1, SS8H4, SSCG7, SSUSH1, SSUSH12, SSWH10

**Objectives:**

Participants learn the individuality of Native American tribes.

Participants learn the role Muscogee/Creek, Cherokee, and Yamacraw tribes played in Georgia and US history.

Participants learn why certain groups in history have larger historical narratives than others.

**Supplies:** Paper and/or slideshow

**Bibliography:** See appendix.

**Essential Questions:**

1. What is culture?
2. Why do cultures differ?
3. How were the tribes of Georgia culturally different?
4. What territory did Georgia tribes occupy?
5. How did geography affect cultures?
6. How do we remember Native American history in Georgia?

# Sample Script

Today we will be learning about the native peoples of Georgia. We will talk about the land they used to have here, how they are all different from each other, and how we remember them.

**Intro discussion:**

**How many tribes from Georgia can you name?**

**How many of you have heard of the Yamacraw? Cherokee?**

**Muscogee/Creek?**

*Today's focus: Yamacraw, Muscogee, and Cherokee. \*Take note that Europeans called the Muscogee the Creek tribe.*

**What do you know about the Yamacraw?**

**What do you know about the Cherokee?**

**What do you know about the Muscogee/Creek?**

**Activity 1: Mapping Territory**

Have a map of the southeastern U.S. set up on a white board, or print and hand out a map of the south-eastern US. Ask participants to outline their ideas of pre-Columbian Native American territories on the map. At the end make corrections as necessary by drawing over the students' map, or clear the board and show the correct overlay of Native American territory. Use the following questions to create a list of large modern cities that sit on formerly Native American land. Visit <https://native-land.ca/> for exact maps of native territories.

**What major city sits on formerly Yamacraw land?**

*Savannah, Georgia*

**Did the Yamacraw always live there?**

*The Yamacraw split from the Muscogee/Creek and Yamasee tribes and established their own territory in the borders between the two territories.*

**What well-known cities sit on former Cherokee land?**

*Columbia, SC*

*Chattanooga, TN*

*Nashville, TN*

*Kingsport, NC*

*Huntington, WV*

*Louisville, KY*

*Frankfort, AL*

*Alpharetta, GA*

*Cherokee territory encompassed North Georgia and spread northward and westward following the Appalachian Mountains.*

**Did the Cherokee always live there?**

*There is a lot of evidence that the Cherokee moved from the Great Lakes into their Appalachian territory.*

**What well-known cities sit on Muscogee land?**

*Atlanta, GA*

*Augusta, GA*

*Savannah, GA*

*Columbus, GA*

*Montgomery, AL*

*Macon, GA*

*Muscogee/Creek territory extended from Georgia's coast westward into what is now Mississippi.*

**Did the Muscogee always live there?**

*There is evidence suggesting that the Muscogee descended from Mississippian culture, which occupied their territories for thousands of years.*

Review a basic timeline of the Native Peoples in Georgia using map and notes below as guide.

Yamacraw	Muscogee/Creek	Cherokee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active from 1728-1743</li> <li>• Active along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina.</li> <li>• Ancestrally part of Muscogee/Creek culture.</li> <li>• Tribe formed as a result of the Creek war, when a faction of Muscogee/Creek and Yamasaw split off from their original tribes because they wished to not formally ally with any European powers.</li> <li>• Spoke a Muscogee/Creek Language.</li> <li>• Participated in the Creek War.</li> <li>• Trading partners with the British, but not formal military allies.</li> <li>• Sent representatives to Europe.</li> <li>• The tribe disbanded after the death of Tomochichi.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active from before European contact (c. 900 CE) to present day.</li> <li>• Active from the coast of present day Georgia to present day Alabama`.</li> <li>• Descended from large centralized mound building societies (Ocmulgee).</li> <li>• Originated as a complex political alliance of tribes between the Ocmulgee to the east and the Coosa and Tallapoosa to the west.</li> <li>• Spoke a Muscogee/Creek language.</li> <li>• Traded furs and indigenous slaves for British textiles and manufactured goods.</li> <li>• 1813 Civil War over whether to go with US policy encouraging European style farming.</li> <li>• Ancestral lands gradually ceded to US starting in 1790 and ending in 1832 when they moved from Alabama to what is now Oklahoma.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active from before European contact to present day.</li> <li>• Active in lower Appalachian mountains.</li> <li>• Trading partners and formal military allies with the British.</li> <li>• There are not enough sources that definitively recorded the beginning of this tribe.</li> <li>• Spoke an Iroquoian language. Sequoyah developed a syllabary for this language in the 1800s.</li> <li>• Cherokee Phoenix was the first Native American newspaper in the U.S., first published in the 1820s.</li> <li>• Participated in the Seven Year's War</li> <li>• Participated in the Revolutionary War</li> <li>• Participated in the Civil War.</li> <li>• Legislative measures to limit Cherokee autonomy beginning in 1827.</li> <li>• Formal removal of Cherokee began in 1838.</li> </ul>

## Activity 2: Source Sorting

I have here a big pile of sources (books, articles, letters, etc.) all about these different tribes. But they have gotten all jumbled up! Today I would like you to sort them according to what tribe they talk about. Keep in mind the map we've made, and the timeline we've just reviewed. Pay close attention, because some of these sources may discuss multiple different tribes. As you are sorting through these materials, pay close attention to details. Look for names of places, people, and dates. As we organize them, we'll place them in date order, oldest in the back, newest in the front. Sort the following sources into categories:

Yamacraw/Tomochichi

Cherokee/John Ross

Muscogee

**Discussion Questions:** These are basic discussion questions to facilitate a dialogue with students. Teachers should not feel limited to these questions.

**Which pile has the most sources?**

*The Cherokee and Muscogee/Creek pile should have more sources.*

**Why are more sources available on the Cherokee/John Ross and the Muscogee/Creek than there are on the Yamacraw/Tomochichi and in Georgia?** Possible answers:

*Cherokee and Muscogee/Creek were more prominent and influential than the Yamacraw.*

*The Cherokee and Muscogee/Creek were active much longer than the Yamacraw. Therefore more sources and history were able to accumulate.*

*The Cherokee and Muscogee/Creek tribes still exist in the eastern and western portions of the United States; the Cherokee and Muscogee/Creek people and their histories are more accessible.*

**What are some differences and similarities between the Yamacraw, Muscogee/Creek, and Cherokee?**

**What type of source is excluded from this list?**

*This is a relatively exclusive list because it includes only written sources. Some other types of sources on these topics include:*

*Oral Histories*

*Oral Traditions*

*Recordings of interviews*

*Documentaries*

*Artwork*

*Speeches*

*Historic Sites*

**Take Home Activities:** *Included in word document*

**Elementary level:** Send students home with worksheet reviewing the information they learned that day.

*\*For upper level students it would be best to use the worksheet to evaluate one source from the day's activity so that students know what is expected of them in their homework.*

**Middle and High school level:** Send students home with worksheet that requires them to find five additional sources on Georgia's Native American history. For high school the worksheet includes a thorough description of the sources they find.

**Advanced:** Have students find some types of sources not included in the activity (e.g. interviews, videos, oral histories, lectures), or sources that contradict each other. Have them write a one-page review on the sources explaining who created it, along with when and where it was created. Have the students discuss the source's strengths and weaknesses.

# GLOSSARY

**Jacksonian Democracy** – this term refers specifically to the period surrounding Andrew Jackson's tenure in office. He was seen as a champion of the common man, and stressed the need for suffrage for every white male over the age of 21, regardless of socioeconomic status, that farmers should be more supported/represented politically, and that western lands should be made cheaply available to white farmers of the United States. It also coincided with the period of Manifest Destiny, the Indian Removal Act, and the Trail of Tears.

**Manifest Destiny** – The idea that the United States had a divine mandate to expand the entire breadth of the North American continent. It argued that the expansion and colonization of people already living in these areas were morally good and necessary.

**Westward Expansion** – The United States expanded westward in an effort to provide cheap farmland to white European settlers. They accomplished this goal, during the term of Andrew Jackson, by forcefully removing Native American tribes.

**The Yamasee Wars that preceded Oglethorpe** – The Yamasee and Muscogee/Creek tribes both signed treaties with English settlements along the South Carolina coast. These treaties resulted in the

tribes becoming indebted to the settlers, and the settlers violating the treaties by seizing and enslaving some of the tribes' women and children. The tribes rebelled against the settlers. This war resulted in the Muscogee/Creek reforging alliances with the English, the Yamasee allying with the Spanish, and the Yamacraw splitting to establish a new tribe allied with neither colonial power.

**Spanish Colonialism in southern Georgia** - Throughout the 16th and 17th century, Spain maintained exploratory missions and settlements in southern Georgia. Some of the explorers during this time include Allyn (1525), and De Soto (1540). Some of the colonies established include Ulthinahica and Ocone.

**The trail of tears** -The Trail of Tears was the result of forceful Cherokee removal. Though some members of the Cherokee tribe moved west voluntarily to avoid European settlement, the vast majority were forcefully removed by the U.S. government following the New Echota Treaty. This treaty exchanged ancestral land east of the Mississippi River for land in "Indian Territory," along with some money, supplies, and other benefits. President Andrew Jackson gave the federal government power to enforce the treaty when he signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830, which empowered the U.S. military to round up Native Americans and move them by force to their new western territories in 1838.

**The Native American Diaspora** - The term diaspora refers to the dispersion of any people beyond their homeland. Native American diaspora specifically refers to the forced removal of indigenous people from their homelands by the United States government, and the ways they may have migrated to and from government established reservations.

# HISTORIO- GRAPHY

1. **1800s**: “Indians as savage.” Following the “Frontier Thesis,” many scholarly works and portrayals of Native Americans in popular culture represented them as a monolithic group, mostly of barriers to civilization, and as doomed relics of a bygone age. Many believed that industrialization, modernization, and American colonialism would be the end of indigenous life in North America, and that Native American history ended with the defeat of many western tribes like the Apache and the Sioux.

2. **1940s- 1970**: “Indians as victims.” The next shift in historiography of native peoples arguably began with Angie Debo’s *And Still the Waters Run*. In this book, published in 1940, Debo condemned the government sanctioned expansion of European settlement in indigenous territory, and the various atrocities committed in the name of progress. Though she condemned mistreatment of Native Americans, she represented indigenous peoples as victims and subjects, rather than active agents in their own narratives.

3. **1970s** : In the late 1960s, indigenous people began writing their own historical works, starting with *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* by Vine Deloria and *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown. These introduced a competing narrative of resistance and persistence, and made Native Tribes the active subjects of their own narratives. These works also

discussed the ways historic oppression and mistreatment of Native peoples directly influenced contemporary Native people's culture and socio-economic status in the United States. At this time, many US scholars drew from the fields of anthropology and history to write more thoughtful examinations of Native American history.

4. **1980s:** Influenced by the emerging field of ethnohistory, the new generation of historians presented Native peoples as the active agents in historical change. This period focused more in indigenous perceptions, not reactionary behavior. Much of the history in this period reexamined the colonial era in an effort to provide additional context to established narratives of US history. These reexaminations moved towards examining the motives and actions of individual sovereign tribes rather than considering Native peoples as one homogeneous group. This is also the period in which Native Americans in popular culture began to represent environmental causes. Postmodernism heavily influenced the narratives written about Native peoples during the 1990s. These works generally examined the ways that economics influenced cultural and societal changes to Native life. Works during this period did not focus on any specific region or time period, but expanded to cover the breadth of indigenous history. As scholarship progressed, there was also an emphasis on individualism.

# YAMACRAW

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