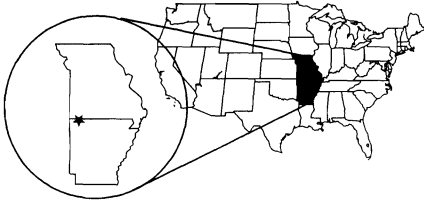


CHICKAMAUGA CHEROKEE



In 1991 the Chickamauga Cherokee of the Sac River and White River Bands ended their union with the Northern Cherokee Band and took their traditional name, “Chickamauga Nation” [see Cherokee]. Arkansas and Missouri have recognized them, federal recognition is pending.

These two southern bands formerly used a seal that bore a seven-pointed star, the unifying symbol of the Cherokee people, with a single feather used as a prayer fan (*Sac River & White River Bands of the Chickamauga Cherokee Nation of Arkansas and Missouri*, undated pamphlet). The new seal, which appears on a white field to form the tribal flag, adds many elements to the old seal. The circles formed by the seal represent the enclosed, dependent moon, a symbol of life of all creatures of heaven and earth.

Most of the writing is in the Cherokee script devised by the great chief, Sequoyah. At the top is the phrase pronounced *Hunetlanuhi Tohewa*, meaning “Great Spirits” (sample seal provided by the Chickamauga Cherokee Tribal Headquarters). These are the names of the Supreme Being of the Native and Christian faiths in the Cherokee language. Its location symbolizes God’s position over all things. The tribal name on the seal appears in red (but not on the flag), for the “blood of life given by our mothers and shed for us by our warrior fathers”.



Two dates appear in the base: 1755, when the Chickamauga came into existence and began their migration to the Ozark Mountains, and 1983, when the tribe achieved state recognition. The names of the two bands, again in the Cherokee script, ring the bottom of the outer

circle. Sacred symbols appear within two yellow lightning bolts. The left bolt contains Living Sourwood, a plant used in the eternal fire, in Eagle Dancer wands, and in traditional tribal medicine. On the right bolt is the *Uktenna*, a serpent with red and blue antlers. This mythical animal has two colored antlers to symbolize the balanced duality of the sexes. It also recalls the duality of war and peace and of animals and plants among living things.

The inner red circle symbolizes the sun, source of all energy. It also signifies the heat of the "Grandfather Fires" and the red flesh of all animal life. The seven-pointed gold star represents the seven original clans of the Cherokee people and symbolizes the Morning Star, the beacon to guide the scattered Chickamauga back to their rich origins.

Above the red circle appears "CHICKAMAUGA-CHEROKEE NATION", with "of ARK." and "& MO." at either side. The crossed blow-gun dart and Cherokee holy pipe emphasize the Chickamauga's cultural heritage in both war and peace. The large central golden eagle feather is the feather of the Chickamauga Nation. It is placed upright in supplication to the supreme being. It further symbolizes the tribe's "right dealings, honesty to all creation, and the duty they have to God". In actual use, this feather serves as a prayer fan, and its seven spots recall the seven sacred rites and the seven holidays of the Cherokee life cycle.

Below the prayer fan is the council fire, evoking the tribe's central focus and expressing the Native religion. Below the star is the "Pure Rock", a crystal that serves as a traditional tribal holy object. The crystal is associated with *Ushikah*, the election and balancing of the head chief once every seven years. According to the Chickamauga designer, Richard Craken, also known as Star Buck, "seeing this seal and knowing its meanings completes the whole in the mind which is the Spiritual realm of our Creator, God". Craken designed the seal and flag based upon an 1895 seal. The current flag and seal were adopted and reaffirmed at the tribe's general council meeting in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, in 1990. ☛