

Tribal Treaties Database: Enhanced Access to the Agreements between Tribal Nations and the United States (1778-1886)

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Introduction

The Oklahoma State University (OSU) Libraries has long been a leader in providing access to Native American resources with several digital collections, including the *seven-volume Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, edited by Charles J. Kappler. In June 2021, the OSU Libraries partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Interior to enhance the online presence of this work with the launch of the Tribal Treaties Database (TTD). This database includes an updated comprehensive index and features ease in browsing the agreements between tribal nations and the United States from 1778 to 1886.

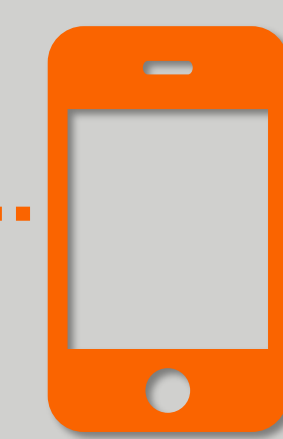
Importance of *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*

Compiled and edited by Charles J. Kappler, this historically significant, seven volume compilation contains U.S. treaties, laws and executive orders pertaining to Native American Indian tribes. Published by the U.S. Government Printing Office between 1904 and 1941 and reprinted in 1975, the volumes cover U.S. Government treaties with Native Americans from 1778 to 1886 (Volume II) and U.S. laws and executive orders concerning Native Americans from 1871-1970 (Volumes I, III-VII).

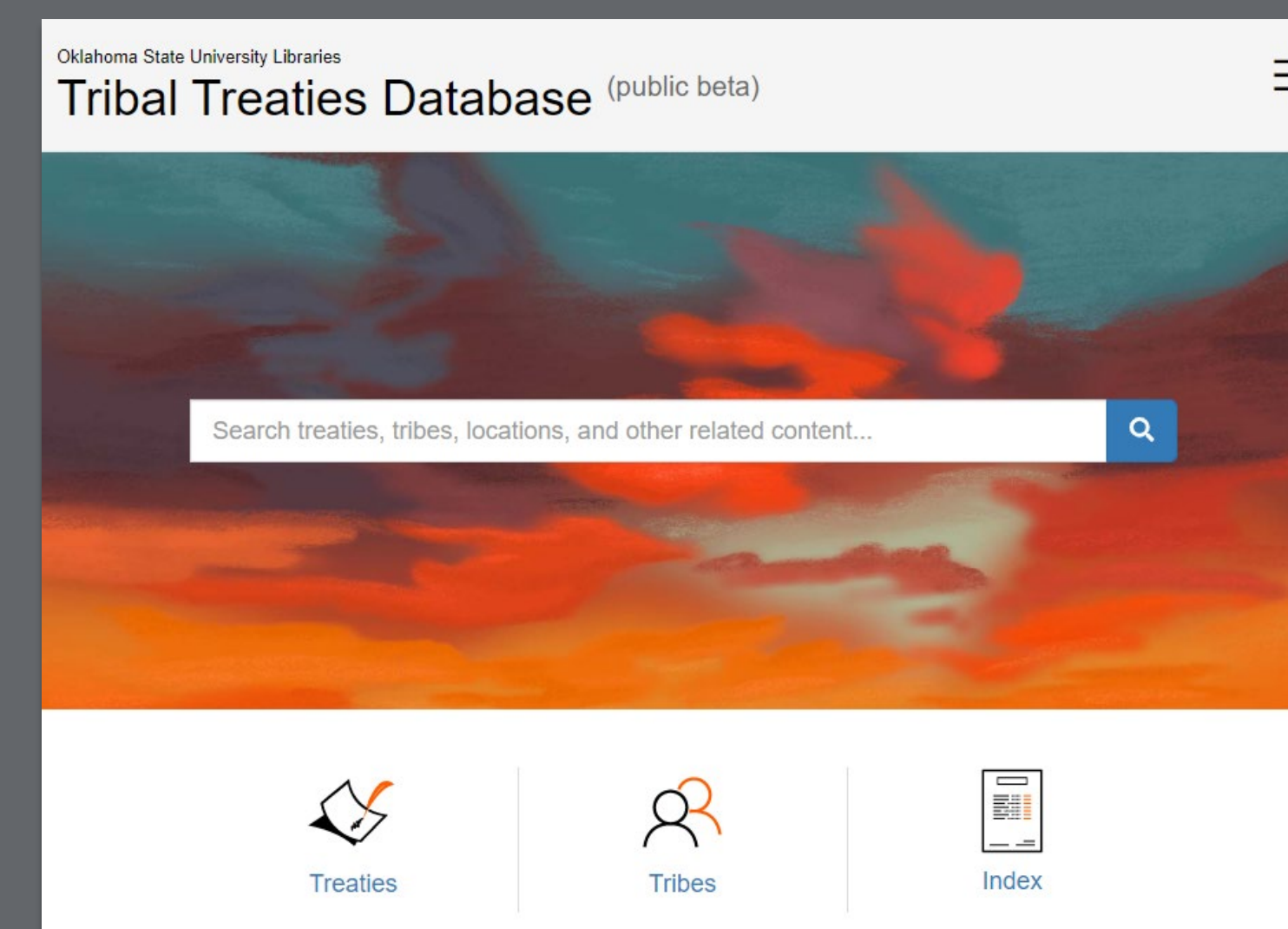
Volume II includes the 375 ratified treaties recognized by the U.S. Department of State, organized chronologically with the signing date, proclamation/ratification date, the Statutes at Large citation, and margin notes. The original index is organized by tribe and date. "This collection has served as the primary resource for these documents since its publication."¹



Take a picture to view
the database or visit
treaties.okstate.edu



The Tribal Treaties Database provides an easy-to-use interface connecting the public to treaties, agreements, and more supporting the study of Tribal Nations and their relationship with the United States.



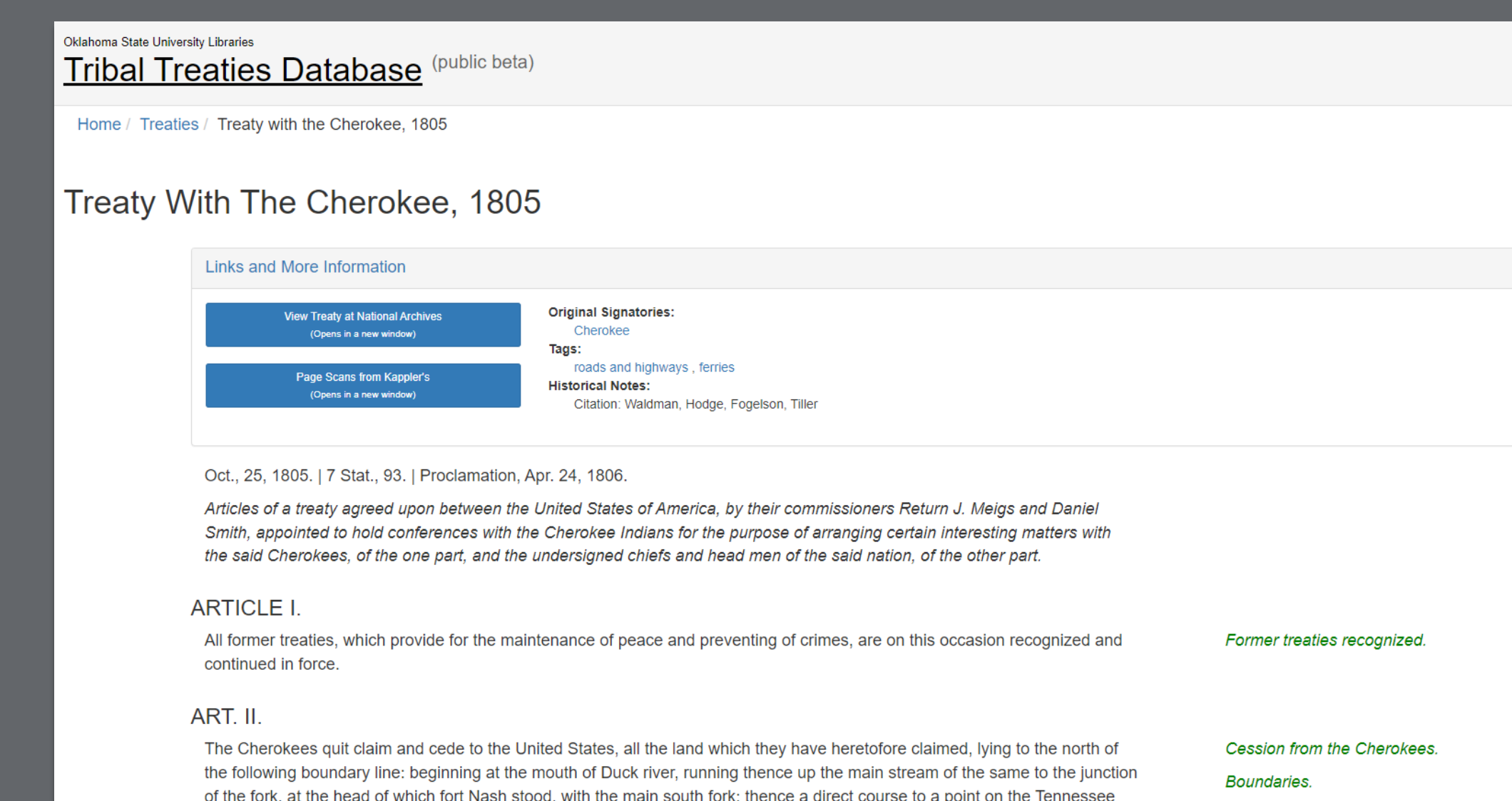
TTD landing page



List of original signatories

Year	Treaty	Original Signatories	Tags
1866	Agreement At Fort Berthold, 1866	Arikara, Gros Ventre, Mandan	roads and highways, telegraph lines, farmers and farming
1794	Treaty With The Six Nations, 1794	Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Tuscarora, Seneca, Mohawk	roads and highways, harbors and rivers
1814	Treaty With The Creeks, 1814	Creek	roads and highways, harbors and rivers
1817	Treaty With The Ponca, 1817	Ponca	roads and highways, harbors and rivers
1823	Treaty With The Florida Tribes Of Indians, 1823	Florida Tribes	roads and highways, harbors and rivers
1830	Treaty With The Choctaw, 1830	Choctaw	roads and highways, harbors and rivers
1816	Treaty With The Cherokee, 1816	Cherokee	roads and highways, fences, harbors and rivers
1801	Treaty With The Chickasaw, 1801	Chickasaw	roads and highways, fences
1805	Treaty With The Cherokee, 1805	Cherokee	roads and highways, fences
1863	Treaty With The Nez Perce, 1863	Nez Perce	roads and highways, farmers and farming

Treaties organized by year, signatories, and tags



Example of treaty with text, links, tags, notes within database

Tribal Treaties Database

The overarching goals of the TTD were to design a platform that was user-friendly, easy to navigate, easy to search, and housed in an open-source content management system. Our partners in the federal government requested features such as the ability to copy and paste content from the website and use enhanced subject matter indexing to search for treaties by city, state, tribe, and keywords.

The site was created in MODX, an open-source platform that powers other OSU libraries-related websites. Additionally, we utilized the HTML from the original 1990s digital project to help populate treaty entries and preserve the margin notes, original signatories, and historical notes. We contracted with an indexer to create a new comprehensive index of Volume II, which was added to the site, and worked with two subject-matter experts to identify select keywords and provisions. Tags have been included linking together topically related treaties. The beta release of the portal was delivered in November 2021, in time for the White House Tribal Nations Summit.

Elements of the TTD

- Ability to search across all treaties and agreements published in *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* (Volume II)
- Ability to sort treaties by year
- Identification of original signatories
- Enhanced index created in 2021
- Original index created in 1904
- Ability to view treaties at the National Archives via a link (if available)
- Ability to view the page scans from Kappler's Volume II in PDF format
- Links to additional resources and identification of relevant monographs

Future Updates

With the project's first phase complete, the team is now focused on the following enhancements to the database:

- Improving search functionality through the integration of Boolean commands (AND, OR, NOT)
- Mapping treaties to current Federally Recognized Tribes (successor-in-interest)
- Identifying and verifying states of applicability for each treaty
- Continuing to categorize and index treaty provisions

Federal Partners



¹Bernholz, C. D. (2003). *Kappler Revisited: An Index and Bibliographic Guide to American Indian Treaties*. Epoch Books.