

A STUDY OF THE COSTUMES OF TEN INDIAN TRIBES
AT THE TIME OF THEIR REMOVAL TO OKLAHOMA

By

Floy Lydia Childers

Bachelor of Science

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College

Stillwater, Oklahoma

1938

Submitted to the Department of Household Arts

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

1939

OKLAHOMA
AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL COLLEGE
LIBRARY
SEP 20 1939

A STUDY OF THE COSTUMES OF THE INDIAN TRIBES
AT THE TIME OF THEIR REMOVAL TO OKLAHOMA

By

FLOY LYDIA CHILDERS

Bachelor of Science

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College

Stillwater, Oklahoma

1938

Submitted to the Department of Household Arts

Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

1939

LIBRARY
AGRICULTURAL & MECHANICAL COLLEGE
STILLWATER, OKLA

APPROVED:

Sara J. Murray
Head, Department of Household Arts

Sara J. Murray
In Charge of Thesis

D. C. W. Intosh
Dean of Graduate School

118315

INTRODUCTION

The history of the development of dress throughout the ages is one of interest in any of its phases and the story of Indian costume should be particularly fascinating. Indian costume as used by the writer includes the clothing of both the men and women, their accessories and hairdress.

An effort to satisfy their innate love of adornment, is shown in the dress of the Indian; so too are depicted the different social, political, religious, economic, and geographic conditions which surround them. Since very little has been written on the everyday dress of the North American Indians and their original native costumes are rapidly disappearing, there is a need for research and permanent records in this field.

The ten tribes selected as representative of the Indians living in Oklahoma at the present time are the Five Civilized Tribes of the great Woodland group, two Plains and three Prairie tribes. For convenience in this investigation, the two Plains tribes and the three Prairie tribes were classified under the one heading--the Plains Indians.

It is the purpose of this thesis, therefore, to present information through a study of the historical background, concerning the types of Indian costumes worn at the time of the removal of the tribes to Oklahoma; to gain information from the aged members of various tribes concerning their manner of dress, the materials and colors used at this time; to show by means of illustrations the authentic clothing of the different groups; and finally to give the student a better appreciation of Indian costume.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express sincere appreciation to the following people: To Miss Sara T. Murray, Professor and Head of Household Arts, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, under whose direction this study was made; to Rex Cunningham, Assistant Professor of Architecture, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, who gave helpful suggestions as to technique used; to Mrs. Josephine Myers Wapp, Instructor of Art and Crafts of Chilocco Indian School, who gave valuable information concerning Indian history and dress; to Alfred Waters, member of the 1939 senior class of Chilocco Indian School, who assisted with the sketching of the plates; and to the many others who have contributed information toward this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. Historical Background	1
II. Costumes of Various Tribes	11
A. Five Civilized Tribes	11
1. Cherokees	13
2. Creeks	15
3. Seminoles	17
4. Choctaws	19
5. Chickasaws	21
B. Plains Indian Tribes	23
1. Comanches	25
2. Kiowas	27
3. Osages	29
4. Poncas	31 27
5. Otoes	33
III. Conclusion	35 29
IV. Bibliography	36 30

ILLUSTRATIONS

<u>Plates</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. Costume of the Cherokee Man	14a
II. Costume of the Cherokee Woman	14b
III. Costume of the Creek Man	16a
IV. Costume of the Creek Woman	16b
V. Costume of the Seminole Woman	18a
VI. Costume of the Seminole Man	18b
VII. Costume of the Choctaw Woman	20a
VIII. Costume of the Chickasaw Woman	22a
IX. Costume of the Comanche Woman	26a
X. Costume of the Comanche Man	26b
XI. Costume of the Kiowa Woman	27a
XII. Costume of the Osage Woman	30a
XIII. Costume of the Osage Man	30b
XIV. Costume of the Ponca Man	31a
XV. Costume of the Ponca Woman	32a
XVI. Costume of the Otoe Man	33a
XVII. Costume of the Otoe Woman	34a

Figures

1. Map Showing Location of Indian Tribes Before Removal	4a
2-13. Fabrics Used by All Tribes in General	34b-34g

A STUDY OF THE COSTUMES OF TEN INDIAN TRIBES
AT THE TIME OF THEIR REMOVAL TO OKLAHOMA

Historical Background

"At the present time there are about 335,000 Indians living in the United States; of these almost 120,000 live in Oklahoma. Yet, the first American explorers found very few Indians living here, since the greater part of those now here did not come until after 1820. The story of the removal of the great Indian tribes from their old homes to Oklahoma is one of the most tragic and romantic stories in all history, but before one can understand it as one should it will be necessary to know something of the Indians themselves, of where they formerly lived, and of their strange habits and customs of life.

"Most of the Indians now living in Oklahoma belong to the five great southern tribes, the Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, Choctaw, and Chickasaw. These are the so-called 'Five Civilized Tribes', most of whom live in the eastern half of our state. In the western half of Oklahoma are many small tribes of less civilized Plains Indians, some of whom still live in tents and wear blankets and moccasins."¹

"The Cherokees were the largest and most highly civilized tribe in the entire region now included in the United States. When first seen by De Soto and his men they numbered about twenty-five thousand people. Even at this time they lived in log cabins, cultivated the soil, raised crops of corn, beans, squashes, and tobacco, and had made considerable progress toward civilization.

¹ Buchanan and Dale, A History of Oklahoma, p. 73, Row, Peterson & Co.

"Their home was in what is now western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, and northern Georgia and Alabama, one of the most beautiful regions in the world. Much of the country is hilly; there are beautiful forests and many streams of clear sparkling water that abound in fish. In earlier times, there was much game in the forests, deer, turkey, bear, rabbits, and pigeons; wild nuts, fruits, and berries were to be found everywhere.

"The Cherokees were divided into two groups: One group, which lived among the hills and mountains was called the Cherokees of the Hills; south of those in the more level country lived the Cherokees of the Valley. One usually thinks of people who dwell among the hills and mountains as more crude and uncouth than those who live on plains and in valleys, but among the Cherokees this was not the case. Of the two groups, the Cherokees of the Hills were the more highly civilized.

"South and west of the Cherokees, in what is now Georgia and Alabama, lived the Creeks or the Muskogee tribe. De Soto also visited these people about 1540 and found them quite as well civilized as the Cherokees. As the years went by, however, the latter somewhat outstripped the Creeks in progress, and especially in taking up the ways of the whites."²

"The Creek nation, which was one of the most important and powerful of all Indian confederacies included some 50-70 towns and many great chiefs sat at its council fires. The nation occupied what is now the greater part of Alabama and a part of northern Georgia. They

² Ibid, p. 78-79

originally called themselves Muskogean, after tribes once powerful among them, but are now called Creeks, because of the many rivulets running through their country. In the days of Tecumseh they were to some extent an agricultural people, living in villages of log huts-- powerful fighters and jealous of their prowess; also eagerly vigilant lest the white take more of their land."³

"Far to the south of the Creeks lived their close kinsmen, the Seminoles. The word 'Seminoles' is said to mean 'strayed people' in the Muskogean language. There is a tradition among the Creeks that the Seminoles are the descendants of a large hunting party which strayed away from the Creek country, taking their women and children with them, and never returned.

"The Seminoles lived in what is now Florida. The tribe was not large; it numbered hardly more than three or four thousand people. The Seminoles were much less civilized than the Creeks or the Cherokees, in fact, they waged frequent and bloody warfare. In other respects they were much like their Creek kinsmen.

"West of the Creeks in Mississippi, and extending down into what is now Louisiana, lived the great tribe known as the Choctaw. They were also seen by the Spaniards under De Soto about 1540, but at that time were hardly so civilized as the Creeks and Cherokees. They were a large tribe which numbered about twenty-five thousand. Their country was divided into three parts, each ruled by a chief; these three chiefs with their headmen and advisers directed the affairs of the whole nation. In manner of life the Choctaws were somewhat like the Cherokees and Creeks, though for their livelihood they depended more upon hunting and fishing.

³ Barry, Ada Loomis, Yunini's Story of the Trail of Tears, p. 90, Fudge & Co., Ltd.

"North of the Choctaws, also in what is now Mississippi, lived their close kinsmen the Chickasaws. It is said that the word 'Chickasaw' in the Choctaw language originally meant 'to rebel'. The Choctaws say that the Chickasaws were formerly a part of their tribe, but that they rebelled and set up for themselves as an independent nation. The tribe was not large; it numbered not more than six or seven thousand people. In the extent of their civilization the Chickasaws were about like the Choctaws."⁴

"A study of the map of the eastern United States will show the region originally occupied by the Five Civilized Tribes was most important to the peoples of Europe who early sought to colonize America. (Figure 1) These Indians not only held the passes through the southern Appalachian Mountains, but also the headwaters of the streams that flow into the Mississippi and southward into the Gulf of Mexico."⁵

In the year of 1828 Andrew Jackson was elected President of the United States. He was a western man who had fought much against the Indians and had little love for them. At this time, all Indian life in the East became doomed. President Jackson urged, yes, and even forced the removal of the Indians from their beloved hills, streams, forests and valleys to a land of plains and of wilderness.

The Cherokees were the first to be forced to leave their homes and those months of hardships will be forever imprinted upon the minds of these people. "The old, the young and the sick rode in the wagons which carried the provisions and household goods. The others

⁴ Buchanan & Dale, A History of Oklahoma, p. 81-82. Row, Peterson & Co.

⁵ Ibid, p. 82

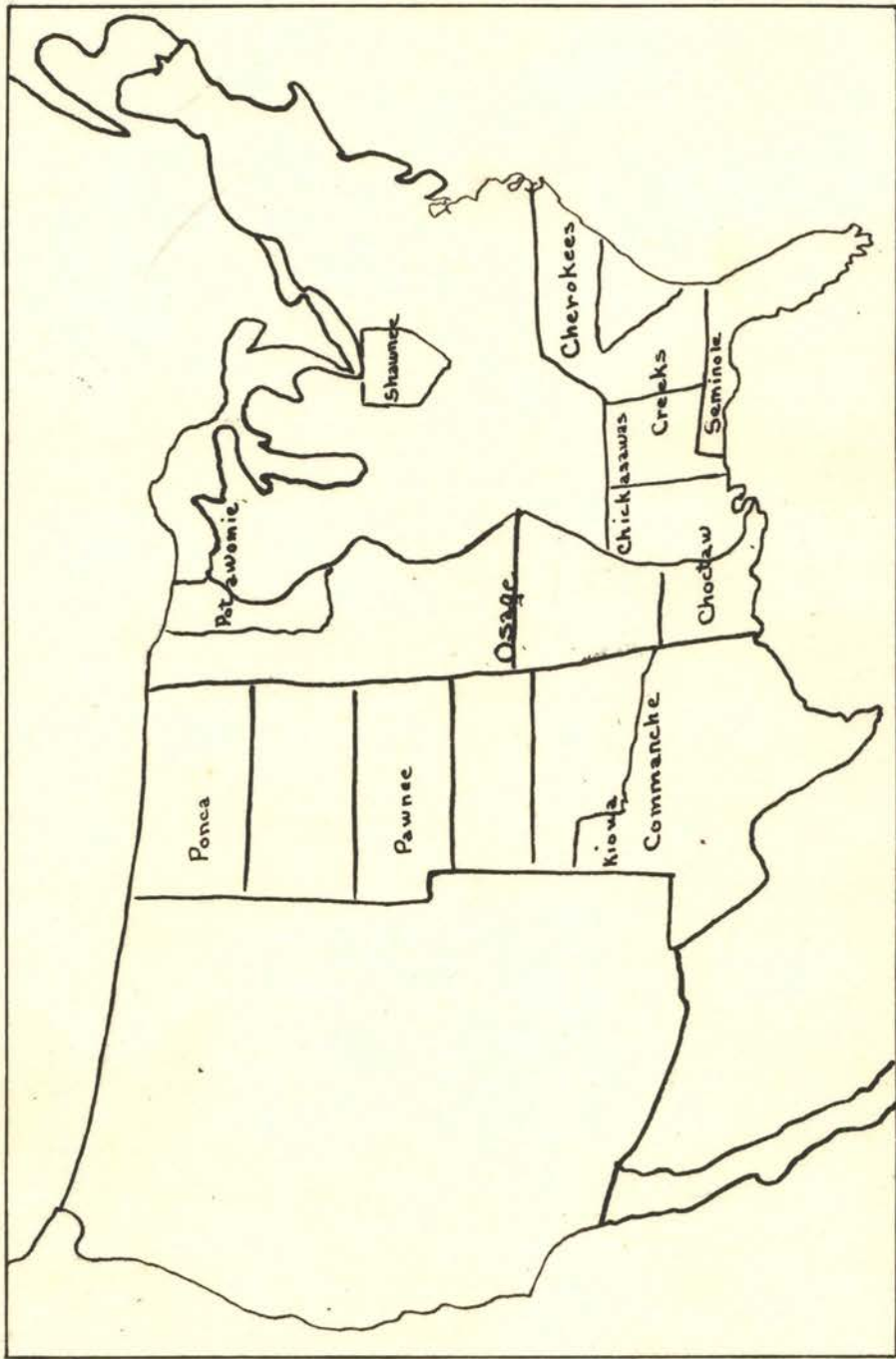


Fig. 1

went on foot or on horseback. They crossed Tennessee and Kentucky and then through Missouri into Oklahoma. Winter came on in the midst of the journey, and many died as the result of illness brought on by cold and exposure to sleet and snow."⁶ The road over which they traveled they ever after called 'The Trail of Tears'.

The Cherokees had been promised much land in Oklahoma and upon their arrival did receive quite an acreage, much of which was taken from them later.

While still living in the East the Creeks had owned a large tract of land but by treaties with the United States they had ceded much of it to the whites. By 1823 they had left only what they considered barely enough for their own needs. The whites were crowding in more and more closely upon the Creeks, causing them the same trouble and annoyance which the Cherokees had undergone. They resolved that if their lands were taken from them they would still stay, and 'die in the fence corners rather than leave the land of their fathers.'

However, in 1832 the Creeks gave up the struggle and agreed to give up all their lands east of the Mississippi and to remove to Oklahoma. The story of their removal is very much like that of the Cherokees--one of greed and injustice on the part of the whites and of suffering and hardship on the part of the Indians. The Creeks received a grant of land between the Arkansas and Canadian rivers.

In 1805 the Choctaws ceded a strip of land to the whites including the present site of New Orleans. The federal government then decided to take the Choctaw lands and bit by bit defrauded the

⁶ Ibid, p. 107

Choctaws out of all their land possessions in Mississippi in exchange for all that part of Oklahoma south of the South Canadian river. The physical moving of twelve thousand Choctaws remains to this day a masterpiece of bungling as many lives were lost without cause.

As the Chickasaws were a very intelligent people, it is likely that the great mass of this tribe realized more quickly than did the members of some other tribes that removal must come at last and that there was little use to struggle against it.

In 1837 it was agreed that the Chickasaws should settle on the Choctaw lands in Oklahoma, and that they should have the privilege of forming a separate district there. The Chickasaws later paid one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to the Choctaws for their land and became a separate nation. The United States government again profited by this deal as it gained control of an immense acreage of land known as the 'Leased District'.

In 1837 the Seminoles, who had been living in Florida, were finally defeated in battle and their removal to Oklahoma began. They were to be given a part of the lands belonging to the Creeks and to become a part of that tribe. However, they did not want to become a part of another nation and finally in 1856 the United States granted them a strip of land between the North and South Canadian Rivers and the Seminoles were allowed to form a separate nation.

The Five Civilized Tribes set about to adjust themselves to their new homes and the bitterness and heart burnings caused by removal grew less. "Undoubtedly their thoughts often turned back to the happy days in the old home they had left behind in the East, and they must have longed intensely to revisit the scenes of their childhood about

which so many pleasant memories clustered, to return to the place where their dead lay buried. No doubt they thought by day and dreamed by night of the green hills and sparkling streams they had loved so well.⁷ Yet they lost no time in idle pining but set bravely to work to build their new homes, to clear fields, to plant orchards, and in general to take up the ways of the white man--from farming to their adaptation of the white man's dress.

Besides those great groups east of the Mississippi River there were to the west of that river many other settlements of Indians. Most of the latter were wild, roving tribes of savages. The Comanches and Kiowas were two great and fierce groups who ranged over the entire plains country. For many years these two tribes had been closely allied and were in frequent and bloody collision with both the white men and other groups of Indians. Their winter homes were in the vicinity of the Wichita Mountains, from which place they went out to hunt the buffalo and to make frequent destructive raids into northern Texas or on caravans of the Santa Fe Trail. They were still entirely uncivilized. They were wonderful horsemen and daring warriors who were as difficult to catch as they were dangerous in battle.⁸ These two tribes were finally subdued and settled on the land where they had once roved, having their headquarters around Ft. Sill and Anadarko on the Washita River.

A reservation which was a portion of the Cherokee Outlet was set aside for the Osages. "It was made up of about one and a half

⁷ Ibid, p. 124

⁸ Harlow, Victor E., Oklahoma, Its Origins and Development, p. 115. Harlow Publishing Company

million acres of land lying between the Cherokee Country and the Arkansas River. The Osages were brought here in 1872. At that time the tribe numbered about fifteen hundred. Formerly they had lived along the lower waters of the Ohio River. They had been driven westward to Kansas where they had received a huge reservation. This had been reduced in extent several times by treaty, and at last, in the year 1872, the Osages surrendered all their land in Kansas and came to Oklahoma. Their new reservation was rather hilly and much of the soil thin. It was, therefore, not regarded as very valuable.⁹ In recent years much of it has been found to be underlaid with oil and gas, and as a result the Osages are now one of the richest people of the world.

"Several other tribes were brought to that part of the Cherokee outlet that lies just west of the Arkansas River. They were given large reservations and were placed under control of a single agency. One of these tribes was that of the Poncas or Ponca Sioux whose old home had been in Dakota. They had been removed to a reservation in western Nebraska, and from there, in 1877, they were brought to the Indian Territory. They were granted a reservation of more than a hundred thousand acres in the Cherokee Outlet.

"The Poncas at this time numbered between five and six hundred. They were a wild, barbarous people who lived in tents and delighted in feasts and dances. Most of them cared little for education or civilization, and they refused to give up their old Indian customs.

"The united tribes of the Otoes and Missouris were placed south of the Poncas. They were rather closely related to the Poncas. They had a reservation, part of which was in Kansas and part in

⁹ Buchanan and Dale, A History of Oklahoma, p. 150. Row, Peterson & Co.

Nebraska. From this they were removed to their new home in Indian Territory in 1832. Though they numbered but few more than three hundred, they were given a reservation of nearly a hundred thirty thousand acres. They, like the Poncas, were quite uncivilized and they were very much attached to their old habits of life."¹⁰

"In some ways the breaking of the Plains tribes was even more tragic than the experience of the Five Civilized Tribes. The same insistent demand for their lands, the same dishonesty in making treaties and invariably breaking them, the same insensibility of the whites to Indian suffering, characterized both. But the eastern Indians were already somewhat experienced in the white man's way of life, and were able promptly to adjust to new conditions; their tragedy was primarily one of forced removal, and they immediately picked up the methods of their accustomed life. The Plains Indians, driven almost in a day from the freedom of their wide prairies into the narrow confines of a reservation, were sent into a manner of life to which they had never been accustomed and to which it was almost impossible for them to adjust. They and their ancestors from pre-historic times had lived exclusively by the chase while under their new conditions they were deprived of the customary methods of providing their own food, and, with no experience and no aptitude in agriculture, were made absolutely dependent upon their conquerors for the bare means of existence. The Plains Indians bowed to the inevitable, settled on their reservations, accepted the white man's food and constraints, and began to learn painfully and slowly 'to

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 151-152

travel the white man's path.' Their bitter resistance so long as it promised any possibility of prevention or postponement of their fate is by no means strange.¹¹

¹¹ Harlow, Victor E., Oklahoma, Its Origins and Development, p. 233-234, Harlow Publishing Company.

FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES

Among the Five Civilized Tribes, the Indian costume is seen in tradition between the early Colonial dress and the old native dress of the various tribes. Unfortunately the general wearing of these costumes was discontinued about thirty years ago with the possible exception of the older Indian men and women.

Although their costumes varied according to the tribe, yet the general characteristics were the same. Before the advent of the pale face here in America, the Indians lived a comfortable, peaceful life. Their manner of dress was for protection and adornment and they used the only available materials on hand--skins of animals. After the introduction of cloth the style of Indian clothing changed. Buckskin has been and still is by far the best for making the original native costume. However, upon the arrival of the Europeans, the Indian women were quick to appreciate the advantages of cloth over buckskin, and they had a natural flair for ornamentation. Very soon after the first settlers arrived, the Five Civilized Tribes costume was of cloth ornamentated with designs in strips of contrasting colors or beads. The dress consisted of a long full skirt, a long sleeved blouse, and a short shouldercape with a heavy wrap or robe worn in cold weather. Even the leggins were made of cloth, and only the moccasins of buckskin. The men also adopted cloth garments, consisting of highly decorated breech clouts, long skirted shirt-like coats and full trousers. With the general acceptance of fabrics instead of buckskin, the costumes tended to be less and less alike for the new fabrics gave scope for originality in fashions, and the

personality of the wearer was reflected in his clothes. (Figures 2-13)

The ornamentation used by the Five Civilized Tribes resembled that of the other Woodland Indian Tribes. The designs used were mainly representations of flowers and plants. Shells, bones, teeth, stones, dyed porcupine quills, feathers and seeds were the most commonly used natural materials for decorative purposes.

CHEROKEES

The Cherokees who had been so long civilized and so familiar with the white man's ways "possessed the quaintest costume of the Five Civilized Tribes. Although comparatively little is known of the original home life, every day customs or costumes of the Cherokees, we do know that the Cherokees belonged to a different racial stock than the other Four Tribes."¹ They belonged to the same linguistic group as the Iroquois. As a general rule the Cherokees had straight or aquiline noses, high cheek bones, medium sized straight eyes, rather full lips and firm square chins. The color of their skins varied greatly, some being decidedly brown while others were scarcely darker than a brunette white person.

The early records of the costume of the men of this tribe shows that they dressed in buckskin coats or shirts and leggings which were of an unusual type with a pendant flap at the upper portion of the outer seam. They also wore the regular type breech clouts of skin. About their heads they wore broad bands with tails of feathers, or with a feather or two at the back of the head.²

The Cherokee man of fifty years ago adopted a form of the white man's trousers that came down to the instep and were narrow and fairly tight. These trousers were probably cut from their native leggings as they conformed to the body so closely. Their coat was designed on the order of a hunting jacket. The coat was rather baggy and had no waist. The corners were rounded or squarely cut, and the

¹ Verrill, A. Hyatt, Our Indians, p. 104, D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc.

² Ibid, p. 105

reverse was fairly deep. Since the trousers were of a dark blue color, the coat was generally lighter in color and usually red and blue striped. To add a native touch, buckskin fringe was attached to the plain loosely fitting sleeves. Fringe was also attached down the front of the hunting coat. To complete their dress, the Cherokee men wore a brightly colored neckerchief and plain moccasins. (Plate I)

"The women wore leggings and long, smock-like buckskin garments and confined their hair with ornamental bands or fillets. Both sexes wore low, soft moccasins very similar to those of the Iroquois."³

Since gathering was extensively used in the Indian's costume, calico was found to be a much easier fabric to handle than buckskin. In the everyday dress of the Cherokee women was found a long dark blue figured dress, with a full gathered skirt complete with a wide ruffle around the bottom. The blouse showed a quaint pattern having a square cut yoke in both the front and back with the remainder of the blouse being finely gathered onto the yoke. To complete the costume, a long finely gathered white apron was worn, the apron being wide enough to cover the skirt completely. With this costume there were also two long white gathered underskirts which were left entirely undecorated. The hair arrangement of the women was very simple, combing it back into two braids and coiling it at the nape of the neck. (Plate II)

The Cherokees wore moccasins of the Woodland style. They were generally made of buckskin, moosehide, or buffalo skin. These skins were used because they afforded ample protection for the feet when traversing forests or walking over water-smoothed rocks. They were generally made on a two-piece pattern with a puckered front, having soft soles and soft uppers.

³ Ibid, p. 105



Plate I



Plate II

CREEKS

The Creek Indians were no less diversified in their abilities than the Cherokees; however, a small differentiation is shown in their costumes. The Creeks were tall and slender and their color is called a dark cinnamon. Grant Foreman, in his book The Five Civilized Tribes, says: "These Indians are quite primitive in their appearance and I am told by white men that some of the towns this way are so hostile to the whites and so much exasperated by cheats put upon them in Georgia and Alabama, that they will not wear pantaloons. Why they make a difference and wear coats and vests I do not see. Several of the chiefs today were dressed in cloth coats or overcoats and skin leggings, some had turbans on, nearly all had moccasins instead of shoes. Some common Indians had blankets, worn in the usual Indian style."

The costume mentioned above was generally worn with several modifications. The men's shirt was cut on ample lines, resembling a night-gown, so that the shoulder seams extended part way to the elbows. The length of the shirt when leggings were used was to the knee. Later, when trousers were worn, the shirt could be shorter and was usually of jacket-coat length. The shirt was opened at the neckline and slipped over the head. The Creek men all wore a vest which was cut high to show at the neck only a small V, through which appeared an enormously wide and brilliantly colored scarf loosely knotted at the throat. These vests were highly decorated, and were perhaps of all tribes, the most attractive of their kind. The vests, being longer than those worn today, gave space and scope for ornamentation. They were made in almost every conceivable shade of red,

blue, and green. The edges were richly trimmed, chiefly with applique and beadwork designs. A very prevalent headdress of the Creek men was a bright scarf wrapped turban-wise, with the addition of all kinds of feathers and ornaments that pleased the fancy of the wearer. Most of these men wore moccasins; however, a few adopted the shoes worn by the Europeans. (Plate III)

The principal difference between the dress of the Cherokee and the Creek women was the absence of the square cut yoke in the latter's blouse. The Creek women usually wore a dark red one-piece dress. The skirt was heavily gathered so that long folds of material flowed from the waist to the ground. The blouse, which was fairly roomy and balloon-like, was gathered in at the waist onto the skirt. The sleeves were rather narrow at the shoulder, but swelled out into many gathers at the wrist. The blouse was open in the front to the waist-line and buttons and buttonholes were used as fastenings. The neckline was cut high and finished with a small flat collar. A large white apron, finely gathered, was worn over the skirt. (Plate IV)

Owing to the fact that these women were not far removed from their old native clothing, they wore shawls in the place of a cloak or overcoat. These shawls were usually square and heavily fringed. The Creek women also clung to their native moccasin or remained barefooted.



Plate III



Plate IV

SEMINOLES

The Seminoles are a picturesque tribe being altogether different from their near kinsman, the Creeks. "In physical appearance they resemble the South and Central American Indians rather than the other North American tribes. They are rather short and stocky with broad shoulders, deep chests, small legs, and with brown skins. Their lips are rather full, noses rarely aquiline and unusually broad and flat, eyes far apart and straight. They have small chins and coarse straight black hair."⁴

The most striking feature of the Seminole Indians is their costume. Totally unlike that of the previously mentioned Indian costumes is the dress of the Seminole who uses patchwork as the basis of a costume that has about it some most unusual features. The women usually wore long skirts that brushed the ground, which were finely gathered and bulky worn over a voluminous half petticoat. The skirt was gathered onto a waistband and had the opening or placket in the center back. The blouse, of the same fabric as the skirt, was made to slip over the head and resembled a cape with the opening sewed up. The neck was finished with a plain colored yoke, with the rest of the blouse finely gathered onto it, giving much fullness to the front and back. The blouse, which was worn outside the skirt, hung loosely from the shoulders and was wrist length. The most striking part of the blouse was the absence of armseye and sleeves.

The fabric used in these dresses was the same as used by the other tribes--calico. However, the Seminoles had a very unusual

⁴ Ibid, p. 114

method of putting their dress together. Instead of using one large piece of cloth, they cut their fabric up into pieces about five inches square and then pieced many different colored pieces together, as we would piece a quilt. There would be a row of plain color, usually yellow, purple, red and green and then a strip of pieced fabric. Their entire dress, both blouse and skirt was made in this manner and resembled patchwork when completed. Endless strings of bright colored beads covered the throats of the Seminole women. Strands upon strands of beads were worn from the shoulders to the chins forming a conical mound. The Seminole hairdress was also quite different. The women combed their hair from the back to the front and coiled it into one huge 'pom' low on their forehead. (Plate V)

The men were also noted for their picturesque costumes. They wore a one-piece garment resembling a dress. This dress was pieced in the same manner as was the woman's. The blouse hung loosely from the shoulder and was of fingertip length. To this a straight band of fabric was sewed and a very full ruffle attached which made the skirt and reached to the knees. The blouse was sleeveless but, unlike the woman's, contained arsholes. The men wore a headdress of cloth wound about the head resembling a turban. (Plate VI)

The men and women usually wore moccasins unless it was warm enough to go without. The moccasins they wore were distinctive of their tribe. They were usually high, reaching about halfway to the knee or sometimes higher, and were made of a single piece of buckskin gathered or puckered in one seam along the top, and with a puckered heel.

Seminole children were amusing small replicas of their elders, the boys in free swinging knee length dresses and the girls in the

18a.



Plate V



Plate VI

voluminous blouse and skirt.

CHOCTAWS

In considering the costume of the Choctaw Indian, it is noticed that they are predominately akin to the Cherokees. "The Choctaw dress was not materially different from that of the other Southeastern tribes of Indians. The men always wore a belt and breech clout, usually of deerskin. In addition they usually wore an upper garment of skin, or of feathers woven into a network of cords. In winter they wore skin leggings with the lower ends tucked into the moccasins and the upper ends coming high enough to be fastened with thongs to the belt; these were held in under the knee with ornamented garters. They wore moccasins when traveling but often went barefoot at home."⁵ The Choctaw men wore trousers that were narrow, but not skin tight. They were generally light in shade and almost always striped. Their dark blue coats had either cut-away or square corners, and were short. The tie was cravat-like, and was made very broad, but was tied in a sailor knot or pulled through a gold tie ring. The Choctaw men adopted the white shirt and gaiters of the pale face. Some of them wore large beaver hats with bands and feathers, but for the most part the men were bareheaded.

"The invariable female garment was a short skirt, usually made of deerskin. In winter the upper part of the body was protected by a shawl of skin, or woven feathers, or the inner bark of the mulberry tree, fastened over the left shoulder leaving the right breast exposed.

⁵ Brinton, Daniel G., *The American Race*, p. 13. David McKay Publishers, Philadelphia, 1901.

The women wore moccasins similar to those of the men.

"For ornaments they wore wooden beads as large as acorns, or dyed chinquapin nuts strung together, or even winter berries and the seeds of the red haw. Bones, shell gorgets, and colored stones were also worn. Feathers were worn in the hair, the kind depending upon the rank or condition or accomplishments of the wearer." For their everyday costume the Choctaw women depended on the charm and purity of line. Great simplicity went into their charming dress. The skirts were of ground length, and to prevent wear on roads the bottom was bound on the inside. The skirt was fully gathered and appeared wider at the hem by the addition of a flounce. The blouse was very close fitting with long tight sleeves. They adjusted a beaded belt which was fastened by braids of bright colored yarn. Aprons of moderate fullness were worn over the skirts. The bottom of the apron was finished with two tucks and a ruffle about three inches in width which added to the quaintness of the costume. The Choctaw women usually wore a triangular shaped shawl. The shawl was draped about their shoulders, crossing over the breasts and the ends securely fastened under the apron strings. These Indian women, like the men, also adopted the shoes of the white man. On their heads they wore white or colored kerchiefs which were either tied under their chins or turban fashion round the head. (Plate VII)

⁶ Ibid, p. 14



Plate VII

CHICKASAWS

While it has been reported that the Chickasaws dressed similar to the Creeks, the lore of this tribe is very meager.

The Chickasaws resembled the Choctaws in stature being rather short and heavy with a lighter brown complexion. They are a quiet home loving tribe taking kindly to the domesticity of their white neighbors.

The Chickasaw men wore a shirt-like frock of either dark blue or red calico having voluminous sleeves which were confined into a narrow band at the wrist. They were hesitant in accepting the trousers worn by white men, but clung to their native leggings. They desired to have their leggings conform to the shape of their legs. This was accomplished by adjusting the leggings as closely as possible, then saturating the chamois with water, causing them to shrink and fit like a cast. Leather thongs held the customary breech clout in place. They wore a buckskin belt about two inches wide which was highly decorated with bead embroidery. From this belt was suspended two decorative pouches, one used for a knife case and the other for tobacco. Moccasins of the traditional woodland style were worn by both the Chickasaw man and woman.

The Chickasaw women wore a long dark blue or red one-piece dress. The skirt was made of several full widths of fabric and brushed the ground. The upper part of the dress matched the skirt in color and was close fitting. The set-in sleeves were quite large and roomy and were finished at the wrist with a cuff. To complete this dress, a large white apron was worn which covered the front of the skirt. They wore a shawl-like kerchief about their shoulders

which was placed over their heads in cold weather. (Plate VIII)

The Chickasaws were more daring than the other Four Tribes in their choice of fabrics as they used material from bed ticking to the finest calico. On state occasions some of the women donned black glossy silk dresses.



Plate VIII

PLAINS INDIANS

The Indians of the plains varied greatly in habits, customs, mode of life, beliefs and costumes, each tribe being influenced more or less by its neighbors.

"Physically, these plains nomads were about as perfect specimens of mankind as it is possible to find. Although not so tall as is generally supposed, they were beautifully muscled and well proportioned, although as they grew older they were inclined to become fat and bow-legged. In color they varied from pale tan to fairly deep brown. Their hair was coarse, straight and jet black, their faces rather broad and square with high cheek bones, firm, well-developed chins, full lips and narrow but straight eyes, and high, broad but usually sloping foreheads."⁷

Before the coming of the white man, buckskin was used almost exclusively for Indian clothing but from the earliest Colonial days, all these tribes have used cloth in preference to other material.

"In the old days the Plains Indian's clothing was made entirely of skins. Buffalo, elk, antelope, mountain-sheep, and mountain-goat hides were used for this purpose. They were secured by the men and tanned by the women. Buffalo cowskins were commonly used for robes, breech clouts, leggings, moccasins, and shirts. Ordinarily the man wore only his breech clout, but he always had his soft tanned robe handy, so that it could be put on at once if visitors arrived or if he were summoned to a gathering of importance."⁸

"The woman wore long soft-tanned leather dresses extending from the shoulders nearly to the ground, but with short loose sleeves,

⁷ Ibid, p. 163

⁸ Solomon, Julian Harris, *The Book of Indian Crafts and Indian Lore*, p. 68, Harper & Bros., New York, 1928.

and sometimes with a cape, short leggings and moccasins, and in cold weather both men and women wore heavy warm robes of buffalo or bear skin, although blankets took the place of these as soon as the Indians came in contact with the white man.⁹

The pageant of clothes has ended. Gone are the lovely colors and resplendent costumes which the natives of America delighted to wear, gone also are the gracefully formed fashions of the women; the era of the machine and of the pale face has come and the Indian has given over to the wave of materialism.

⁹ Verrill, A. Hyatt, *Our Indians*, p. 142, D. Appleton-Century Co., New York, 1927.

COMANCHES

It is generally known that the Comanches accepted the civilized life of the pale face much more readily than did their close neighbors, the Kiowas. Physically the members of the Comanche tribe were much like the other plains Indians with broad faces, prominent high cheek bones, square chins, heavy, often hawk-like noses, sloping foreheads and narrow squinting eyes, with heavy coarse straight black hair and brown or light tan colored skins.

It was in their costume that the Comanches outshone all other tribes. The women wore a long one-piece dress which was never copied by any tribe except the Kiowas. The unusual feature of this dress was the odd sleeves. The dress was made in kimona style with the sleeves falling about three inches below the shoulder. To this kimona sleeve, a long straight sleeve was attached, giving the effect of a set-in sleeve. However, the underarm seam was left free with both edges hemmed. This unusual sleeve treatment had a very definite purpose--the babies suckled from the armseye. Another strange feature in the Comanche woman's dress is the treatment of the hem-line of the skirt. Instead of being straight around the bottom, the skirt had extension tabs on either side which fell about four inches below the regular hemline. To add a decorative note, colored ribbon was attached at the hemline. The dress was usually bright figured calico with a strip of contrasting figured calico deftly wrapped about the waist to form an apron. Above this was worn a three-inch natural color leather belt carrying one row of silver studs through the center. This belt was fastened on the left side with a silver buckle. Fastened across the front of the best were four vari-sized

pouches which were heavily beaded with the fringe hanging almost to the lower edge of the apron. (Plate IX)

The Comanche men adopted the white man's trousers and coat usually navy blue in color. The shirt was bright and gay with full sleeves gathered into a close fitting narrow band at the wrist. This shirt was topped with a contrasting neckerchief about twenty-four inches square, neatly knotted under the chin. (Plate X)

The Comanche men and women wore their hair in two braids tightly bound with bright colored yarn. These braids usually fell to the front. The moccasin peculiar to the Plains Indians were made with raw-hide soles and soft uppers covered with beads in traditional designs.



Plate IX



Plate X

KIOWAS

Gala colors figure conspicuously in the dress of the Kiowa tribe, reflecting the love of color of the native Indian. The Kiowa woman formerly dressed very much like the women of the other Plains tribes, wearing the one-piece buckskin garment which was decorated across the chest with hundreds of elk teeth, adding at the sides and bottom rattles made of deer hoof, or fringe. A huge buffalo robe worn hair side in, showed the elaborately painted skin side, served the women as well as the men the necessary protection in winter. The women's leggings of painted and beaded buckskin reached to the knees where they were securely bound. At the ankle they met the highly ornamented moccasin. The woman of the Kiowas evolved her jewelry from shells, bones, and claws of animals procured by the fishermen and hunters of her tribe.

While the European settlers left their imprint on the Kiowa dress, it was the dress of the closer neighbor and near kinsmen, the Comanches, that was more strongly reflected in the costume of the Kiowa Indian. The Kiowa woman was usually attired in a brightly colored kisona dress, which is practically the same as that worn by the feminine members of the Comanche tribe. The Kiowa woman wore a belt that was quite similar to the Comanche woman's belt, differing only in the type of beadwork. The same style apron was worn by the Kiowas; however, the aprons were of the same fabric and color as the dress. (Plate XI)

The Kiowa men dressed identically like the Comanche men, wearing navy blue trousers and coat, a gay colored shirt and a contrasting colored neckerchief.



Plate XI

Two braids bound at the ends with colored yarns, and a part extending from the forehead to the nape of the neck characterized the hair dress of the men and women of the Kiowa tribe. The moccasins were of the usual plains type, having raw-hide soles and soft tanned uppers.

OSAGES

Among the Osage Indians the beautiful ribbon work of both the men and women was the most distinctive feature of their costume. The Osages were among the few tribes which retained something of their former splendor in their everyday dress. This may be attributed to the fact that they have kept very much to themselves and have had less intercourse with other communities and have not been open to outside influences.

In color, the Osages varied from a pale tan or coppery tint, very much like that of a suntanned white man, to a pale olive. Their noses were well-bridged, often hooked, their eyes fairly large and straight, their chins well formed and prominent, and their lips full. Due to the fact that these Indians lived in open districts they were taller, better proportioned and less muscular than some of the other tribes settling in Oklahoma, but through generations of riding horseback they became bow legged and inclined to corpulency.

The women usually wore dark blue wool skirts with light colored blouses. The skirt resembled a blanket folded over one-third and wrapped about the body. This was held in place by a beautiful beaded or finger-woven yarn belt, fastened tightly underneath the fold, with the ends of the belt hanging down the center back. The bottom of the skirt and the edge that was folded over were finished with ribbon worked designs. The women wore plain colored blouses, cut perfectly straight with long tight fitting sleeves. The blouse was either undecorated or heavy with silver or copper disks or bangles. Due to the straight pattern of the blouse and to the

heavy decoration, it often pulled or drew tightly through the shoulder and across the bust. The neckline was finished with a narrow straight collar and decorated with ribbon work. To complete their costume, they wore brilliantly colored blankets about their shoulders. The Osage women's headdress was a square piece of cloth, usually beaded, wrapped about the hair, which was twisted into one braid and hung down the back. To hold the head-piece and hair in place there was a band or fillet of woven beads with strands of bright colored beads extending to the wearer's heels. (Plate XII)

The costume worn by the Osage men consisted of a straight cut shirt, very much like that of the Osage woman. However, the man's shirts were much more highly decorated. They wore breech clouts usually made from woolen fabric or a mixture of cotton and wool. In the place of their original buckskin leggings, the men wore dark blue woolen leggings made by their native pattern and trimmed with ribbon work and beaded designs. No Osage man's costume was complete without a bright colored blanket draped about his hips and waist. (Plate XIII)

Both the Osage man and woman wore moccasins that were heavily beaded and very beautiful. They also wore much jewelry worthy of mention--innumerable strands of beads about their neck, fine gold earrings--some of them quite plain, while others were enamelled and set with pearls, and wide silver bracelets. The men in particular wore wide highly designed bracelets on both arms, above and below the elbow. Often the Osage men wore large silver buttons on their shirts.

30a.



Plate XII



Plate XIII

PONCAS

Although the Ponca Indians were backward in picking up the threads of the new American civilization, they quickly withdrew from their native regalia and accepted the European mode of dress. As a general rule the dress previously worn by this tribe consisted of a breech cloth of leather and, when needed, a large robe of the skins of the deer or moose. They wore high close fitting leggings of deerskin decorated with porcupine quills and fringed along the seams.

Gay calicoes and colorful cotton prints took the place of the beautiful soft buckskin garments that were worn for so many years. The Ponca braves patterned their shirt after that worn by the foreign invaders. The shirt was of a colorful print cut perfectly plain with close fitting set-in sleeves which were finished at the wrist with a plain band. Realizing the importance of complements of color, a contrasting cravat was worn about the neck and loosely knotted under the chin. Fashioning their leggings by the white man's trousers, the Ponca men wore leggings of dark blue wool broad-cloth which fitted rather loosely. The outside seams were bound in ribbon matching the cravat. The breech cloth was also of dark blue and trimmed with contrasting ribbon. A brilliantly colored blanket was casually draped about the shoulders. The men wore their hair long and braided. (Plate XIV)

Two skins of buffalo, mountain sheep or deer, sewn edge to edge formed the dress of the Ponca woman who indulged her taste for ornamentation by sewing to the upper part of this garment elk teeth,



Plate XIV

fringe and elaborating it with quill work. The dress of the Ponca women reflected in cut and style the influence which began with the coming to this continent of the white settlers. Their dress was a two-piece style and of bright colored calico. The slip-over blouse of the same fabric as the skirt had about a four-inch slit at each side seam allowing the blouse to fit snugly at the waistline. The pretty fullness of the sleeves was confined with a band at the wrist. The collar was a full ruffle headed by a frill above a tight fitting band. The finely gathered skirt was finished with a ruffle which swept the ground. The placket or opening in the skirt was in the center back. The hairdress of the Ponca women is especially beautiful, combing the hair into two soft braids on either side of the back terminating with a fillet of blue and white beads from which hung nickel plated disks. (Plate XV)

Since these Indians lived in the land of sand, pebbles and grass stubbles, the style of the moccasin was a little different from those worn by certain woodland tribes. The Poncas wore beaded moccasins, having a tough, thick but flexible sole and soft uppers.



Plate XV

OTOES

The Otoes were quite noted for refusing the white man's civilization and customs, so it is not surprising that they clung to many native features of their costume. In ancient times they dressed in the true plains style of costume, wearing the breech clout, leggings, moccasins and a large buffalo skin robe.

Upon the adoption of the new fabric introduced by the early settlers here in America, the Otoes modified their costume to a marked degree. Fashioning their new costume on the order of their former native dress, they were to be seen wearing leggings and breech clouts. However, the style of the leggings changed with the years and became rather loose and baggy. The Otoes used gay colors in their dress. Since the leggings and breech clout were usually neutral in shade, they bound the outer seams with bright ribbon to give a dash of color. A blouse was worn which extended to the broad part of the hips. The fullness of the sleeves was adjusted by a tight narrow cuff. The front closing was partially concealed by two large nickel-plated disks. For further decoration, strips of ribbon were stitched across both the front and back of the blouse extending from one sleeve to the other. At the waistline a belt of braided yarn was loosely knotted, the ends falling gracefully to the hem of the blouse. (Plate XVI)

The women dressed much like the men, wearing the same style shirt and decorated in the same manner. They wore a skirt of medium fullness which reached to the ground. The skirt was decorated with rows of ribbon to add variety and interest. Small nickel-plated



Plate XVI

disks were attached to the strips giving an unusual effect to the entire costume. (Plate XVII)

Both the men and women arranged their hair very plain, combing it into two braids and binding it tightly with two different colored yarns. They wore the usual type plains moccasins sparsely decorated with beadwork.

34a.



Plate XVII

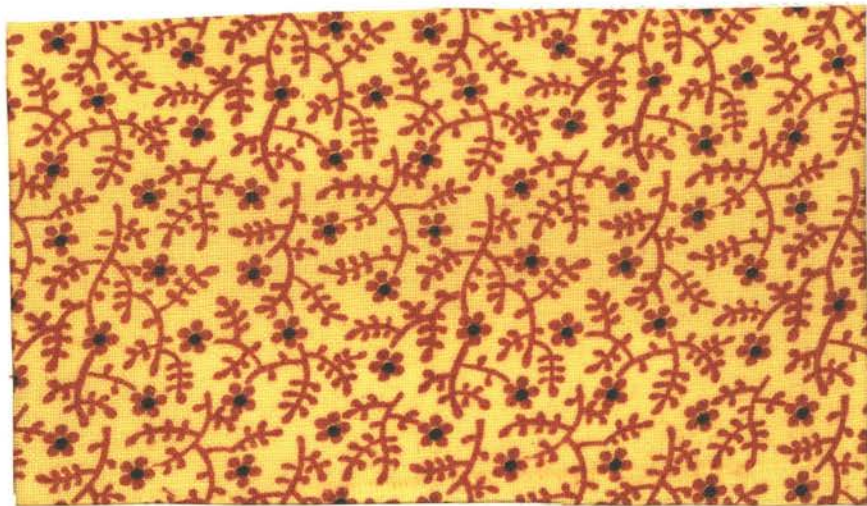


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

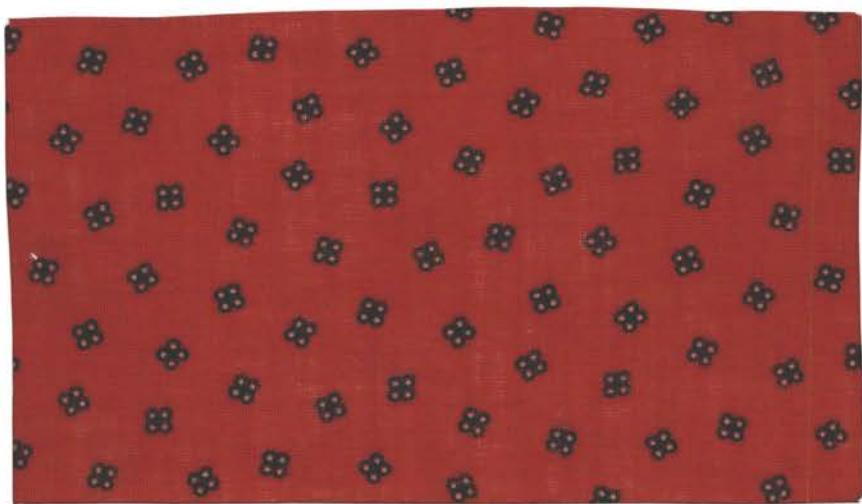


Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

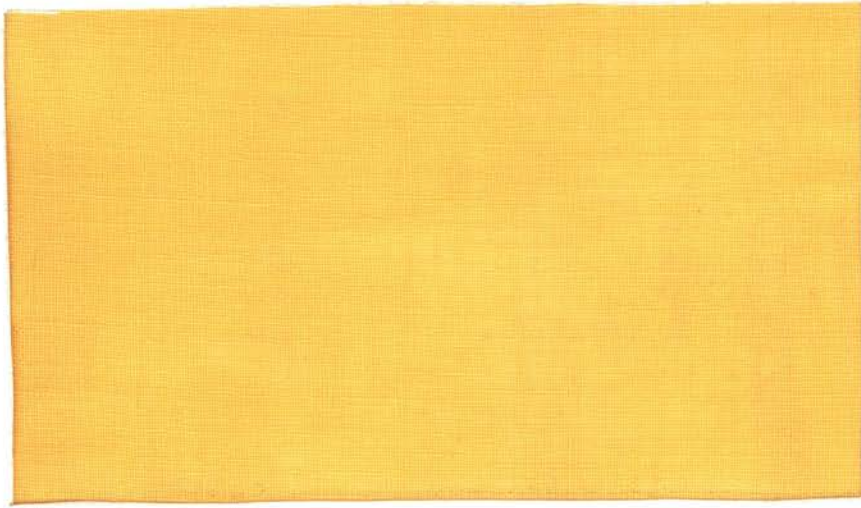


Fig. 8

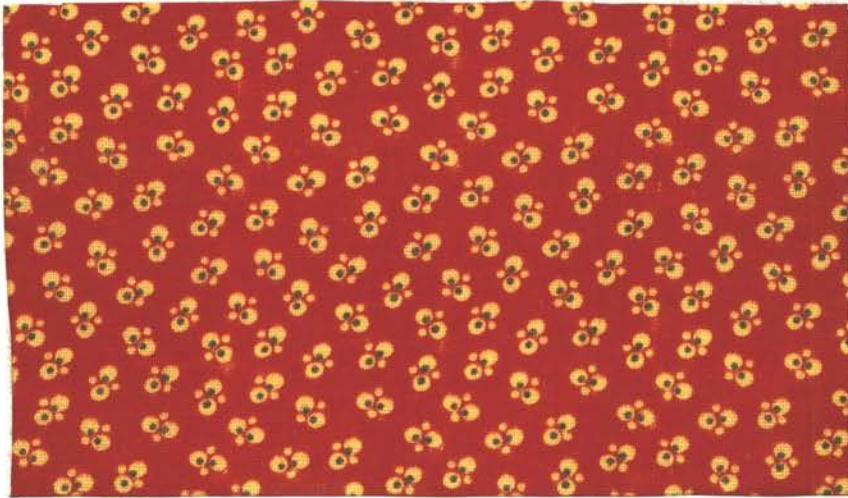


Fig. 9



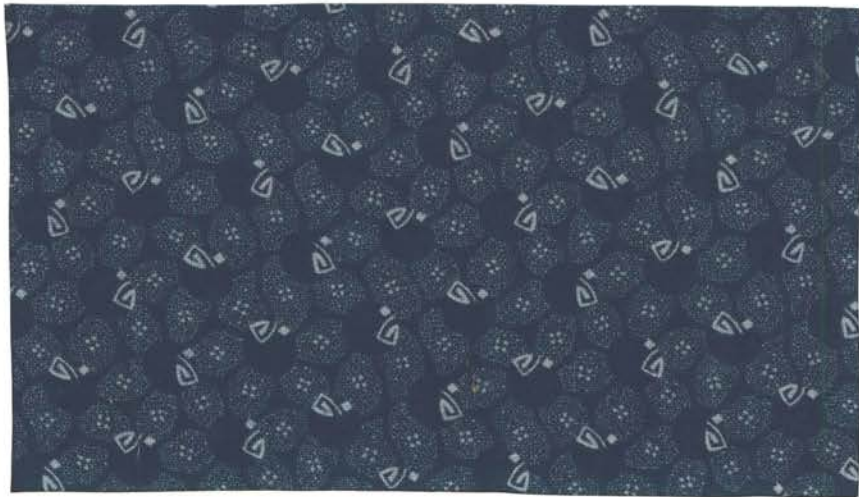


Fig. 10



Fig. 11

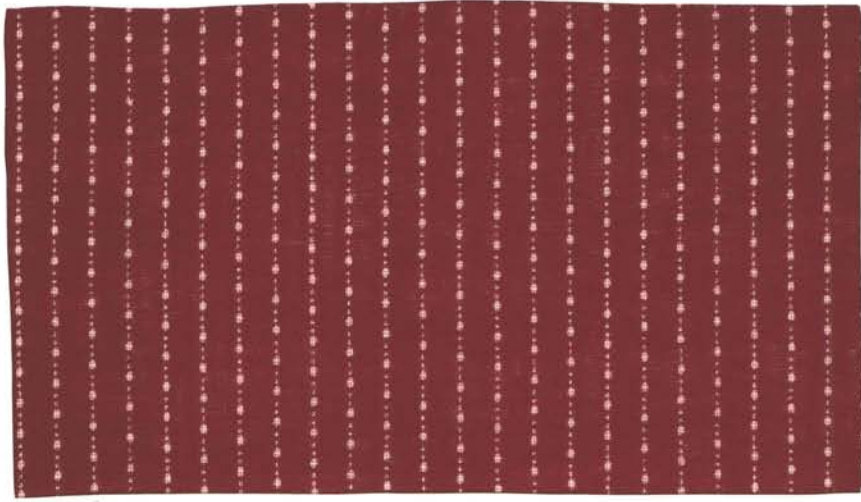


Fig. 12



Fig. 13

CONCLUSION

Although the Indians gathered together in Oklahoma came originally from many parts of the United States, it is interesting to note that there are many similarities in dress among the Five Civilized Tribes as well as among the Plains Indians. However, there are few parallelisms between them. The most distinct relationship shown is that these two groups of Indians retained the wearing of their moccasins until the very last. This was probably due to the fact that both groups valued comfort in clothing above everything else. There was a marked difference in the designs used by these Indians, those of the Five Civilized Tribes being more floral and plant-like in form while those of the Plains Tribes were geometric in form and embodied more symbolisms.

The Europeans affected the native dress to such an extent that the Indians finally injected into their costume the wool from Scotland, beads from Austria and Italy, and ribbons from France. The Indians have been slow to accept many of the customs of the whites, particularly their language and mode of living, but not the manner of dress. Indians, being of reticent nature, felt the need to change their mode of dress in order to appear inconspicuous when in public, as their native dress made them self-conscious. The love of their native costume was strong and even when the costume of the white man has been adopted almost completely, the Indian blanket draped about the shoulders, the braided hair, the profusion of jewelry, or the combination of colors selected gives evidence of the fact that the costume of the Indian is not forgotten even though rarely worn in public gatherings.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barry, Ada Loomis, "Yunini's Story of the Trail of Tears",
Rudge & Co., Ltd.
- Buchanan and Dale, "A History of Oklahoma", Row, Peterson, and
Company.
- Curtis, Natalie, "The Indians", Book II, Harper and Bros. Pub.,
New York, 1911.
- Denver Art Museum, Indian Leaflet Series, Vol. 1, 1930-32.
- Newell-Cicero, "Indian Stories", Silver, Burdett & Co.,
New York, 1912.
- Salomon, Julian Harris, "The Book of Indian Crafts and Indian
Lore", Harper and Bros., New York, 1928.
- Seymour, Flora Warren, "The Indians Today", Benj. H. Sanbourn
and Company, Chicago, 1928.
- Seymour, Flora Warren, "Story of the Red Man", Longmans, Green & Co.,
New York, 1929.
- Verrill, A. Hyatt, "Our Indians", D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc.,
New York, 1927.

Baltimore - PARCENMENT

100 X RAB U.S.A.

Mrs. Orval Calderhead
Typist

BALTIMORE - PARCENMENT

100 X RAB U.S.A.