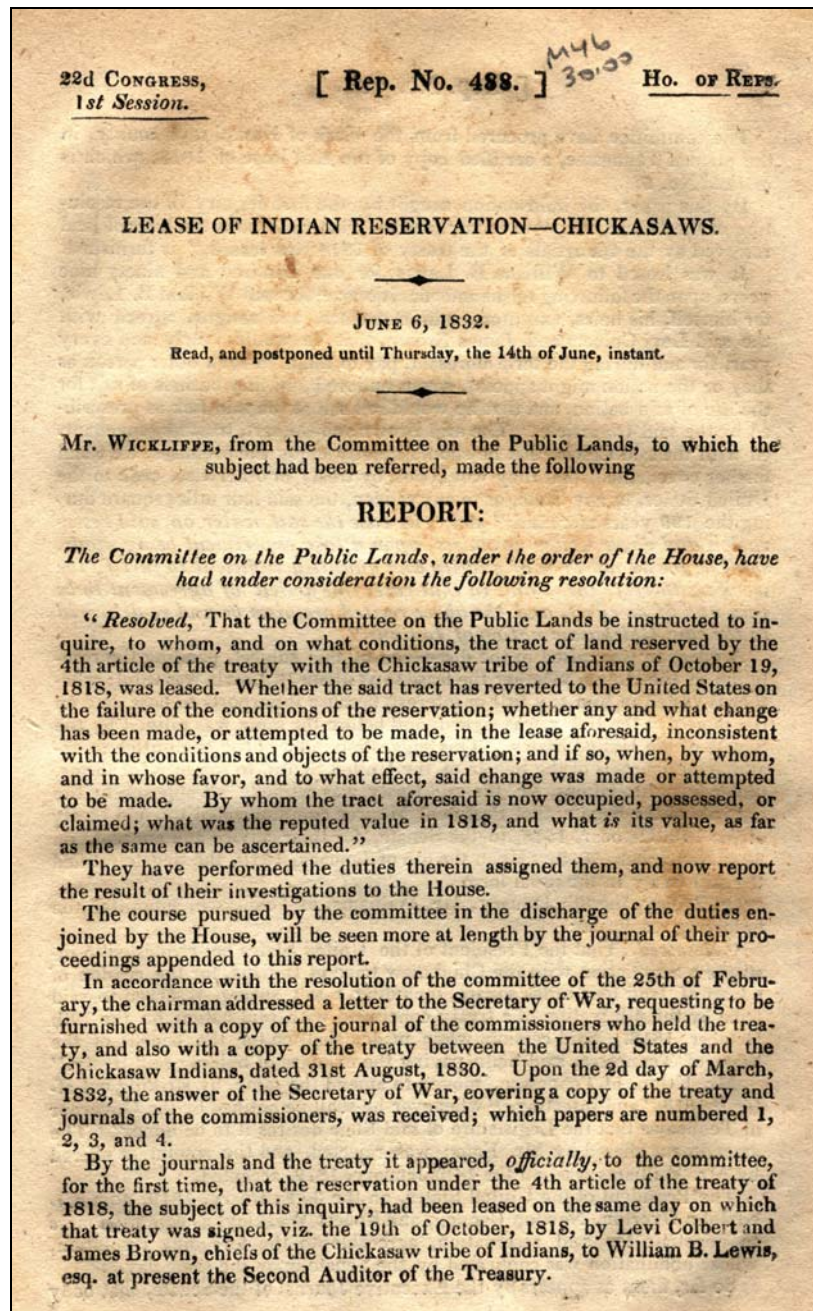


The Chickasaw People in Tennessee

Research Materials at the Special Collections Library



Front page of *Lease of Indian Reservation – Chickasaws*, 1832

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May 2006

Introduction

Early in their history, the Chickasaw people migrated from west of the Mississippi to what is now the state of Alabama. Eventually, they occupied not only Alabama but also parts of modern Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Like most of the other Civilized Tribes, they first encountered Europeans when Hernando DeSoto passed through their territory in 1540. This meeting did not go well: when the Spanish requested 200 Chickasaw women to accompany their expedition as bearers and for “other purposes,” they received a characteristically swift and violent answer that was nearly destructive enough to end their mission. Spanish expeditions were careful to avoid the Chickasaw after DeSoto’s misfortune, and the tribe remained unmolested until the late 1600s when they encountered French and British traders and settlers. The Chickasaw took advantage of the British traders to increase their military strength by trading captives for firearms. Using these firearms, the Chickasaw managed to retain a stranglehold on Lower Mississippi trade for many years.

Encroachment on Chickasaw land began in the early 1800s when the tribe allowed the United States to build the Natchez Trace through their territory and ceded some of their land to the U.S. Government. This problem was compounded by lax enforcement of laws prohibiting encroachment, which led to large numbers of squatters. Removal began in 1832 with the Treaty of Pontotoc, which ceded all Chickasaw lands east of the Mississippi for \$3,046,000 to be used for purchasing land in Indian Territory. Departure was delayed until 1837 because the Chickasaw could not find suitable land to purchase. They eventually leased land from the Choctaw, but this relationship proved exasperating to both parties and the Chickasaw moved to land in what is now southeastern Oklahoma in 1854. The Chickasaw Nation was dissolved in 1906 to allow for Oklahoma’s creation and was re-formed with a new constitution in 1983. It now has approximately 12,000 residents.

This bibliography provides an overview of the Special Collections Library’s holdings relating to the Chickasaw people. These items include materials documenting Chickasaw government in the Southeast, the Chickasaw Nation, Chickasaw claims against the U.S. Government, and the relationship between the Chickasaw and the U.S. Government. Researchers may consult these materials in the Library’s reading room on the second floor of the James D. Hoskins Library (1400 Cumberland Avenue) during our normal working hours of Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.30pm. Researchers should note that the Library also participates in the Southeastern Native American Documents project (available online), which provides access to six libraries’ holdings regarding Native American groups in the Southeast. More information can be found in the UT Libraries’ general catalog (<http://www.lib.utk.edu/catalog>) and on the Special Collections Library’s website (<http://www.lib.utk.edu/spcoll>).

Table of Contents

Chickasaw Government in the Southeast and Chickasaw Nation _____	4
Claims _____	4
Relationship with the U.S. Government _____	5

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