

AMERICAN INDIAN BULLETIN

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Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas



INTRODUCTION

The Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas has the oldest reservation in the state located on approximately 10,200 acres in the Big Thicket of Deep East Texas. The Tribe is a fully functioning sovereign government with a full array of health and human services, including law enforcement and emergency services. There are more than 1,300 members, about half of whom live on the reservation. The Tribe is governed by an elected Tribal Council and advised by a Principal Chief, Dennis Battise, Mikko Choba, Chief Kanicu, and Second Chief, Millie Thompson Williams, Mikko Istimatokla, Chief Poliika Istaaya (2025).

The tribes lived in adjacent areas in what is now the state of Alabama. By 1780, the tribes had migrated to modern-day East Texas. Although they were two separate tribes, the Alabamas and Coushattas have been closely associated throughout their history. Their cultures have some differences but for the most part are nearly identical.

RELATIVES

The Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas shares close kinship with several other American Indian tribes due to their origins within the Muscogee (Creek) Confederacy. Most notably, they are deeply connected to the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, sharing language and a significant portion of their history. Other related tribes include the Muscogee (Creek) Nation itself, as well as other historical members of the Confederacy like the Hitchiti, Natchez, Shawnee, Yuchi, and the Seminole. Furthermore, the Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town in Oklahoma represents another distinct group with direct ancestral ties to the Alabama people. While each has developed its own unique identity, their shared past and cultural roots remain significant.



HISTORY

During the Mexican War of Independence from Spain, the tribes fought with the revolutionaries. Their many combined contributions included a battalion of 300 warriors who were instrumental to the capture of San Antonio in the April 1, 1813 battle. The newly formed Mexican government recognized both tribes independently and offered them tracts of land for permanent settlement. Those lands are attributed to the tribes in early maps of the region, including Stephen F. Austin's 1829 map of Texas.

In 1836, Sam Houston brokered a treaty with the tribes before the Texas War of Independence from Mexico. The agreement provided the title of land between the Neches and Sabine rivers for one community with both tribes in return for assurance the tribes would not side with Mexico. Tribal members served as guides for Houston's army and provided provisions to feed Texas refugees fleeing from Santa Anna's army. Today, Houston's descendants still acknowledge that contribution to the Republic of Texas.

1780's

The Alabama and Coushatta tribes migrate across the Sabine River into Spanish controlled territory of modern day Texas.



Different types of pow wow dancers



Pow wow royalty



Indian Village is the center of activity at the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas powwow.

Old Tribal Center

Continue reading here

<https://www.alabama-coushatta.com/about-us/our-history/>

LANGUAGE LEARNING

Introduction

The Alabama language, also known as Alibamu, is a vibrant and historically significant Native American language spoken by the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas. Belonging to the Muskogean language family, it shares close ties with Koasati and more distant relationships with other languages like Chickasaw and Choctaw. Once also spoken in Oklahoma, Alabama is now primarily used by tribal members in Texas, particularly among elders, highlighting the ongoing efforts to preserve and revitalize this endangered linguistic heritage.



beginning, the start, the first, number one: *at̄ámm̄oona*
to mix together, combine, add numbers: *it̄asaachi*

one: *cháffáaka* two: *tóklo*
three: *tóchchina* four: *óstákala*
five: *táHáapi* six: *hánnáali*
seven: *ontóklo* eight: *ontóchchina*
nine: *chákkáali* ten: *pókköoli*

eleven: *pókköoli lawah cháffáaka*
twelve: *pókköoli lawah tóklo*
thirteen: *pókköoli lawah tóchchina*
fourteen: *pókköoli lawah óstákala*
fifteen: *pókköoli lawah táHáapi*
sixteen: *pókköoli lawah hánnáali*
seventeen: *pókköoli lawah ontóklo*

nineteen: *pókköoli lawah chákkáali*
twenty: *poolichhi tóklo*
thirty: *poolichhi tóchchina*
thirty-five: *poolichhi tóchchina lawah táHáapi*
forty: *poolichhi óstákala*
fifty: *poolichhi táHáapi*
sixty: *poolichhi hánnáali*
seventy: *poolichhi ontóklo*
eighty: *poolichhi ontóchchina*
ninety: *poolichhi chákkáali*
hundred: *taHáipa*
one hundred: *taHáipas cháffáaka*
one hundred two: *taHáipas lawah tóklo*

two hundred: *taHáipas tóklo*
two hundred two: *taHáipas tóklo lawah tóklo*

three hundred: *taHáipas tóchchina*
four hundred: *taHáipas óstákala*
five hundred: *taHáipas táHáapi*
six hundred: *taHáipas hánnáali*
seven hundred: *taHáipas ontóklo*
eight hundred: *taHáipas ontóchchina*
nine hundred: *taHáipas chákkáali*
one thousand: *taHáipas pókköoli*
two thousand: *taHáipas poolis*
three thousand: *taHáipas poolis tóchchina*
four thousand: *taHáipas poolichhi óstákala*
Five thousand: *taHáipas poolis táHáapi*
six thousand: *taHáipas poolis hánnáali*
seven thousand: *taHáipas poolichhi ontóklo*
eight thousand: *taHáipas poolichhi ontóchchina*
nine thousand: *taHáipas poolis chákkáali*

Counting in Alabama

Language learning resource

<https://sites.itservices.cas.unt.edu/~montler/Alabama/Dictionary/index.htm>

Resources

Official Tribal Website:

Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas: <https://www.alabama-coushatta.com/> - Primary source for all information.

History and Culture:

Texas State Historical Association - Handbook of Texas:

(<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/alabama-coushatta-indians>,
<https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/coushatta-indians>) - Historical overviews.

Tribal Histories (TxDOT Report): <https://ftp.txdot.gov/pub/txdot-info/env/toolkit/415-01-rpt.pdf> - Tribal perspective on history.

Texas Indians: <http://www.texasindians.com/albam.htm> - General cultural and historical information.

Language:

Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana - Our Language: <https://www.coushatta.org/our-language/> - Context on the Koasati language.

Government and Services:

Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas - Tribal Services:

<https://www.alabama-coushatta.com/directory/?page=3> - Information on tribal governance.

Archives:

Collection of Alabama-Coushatta Materials (SHSU):

<https://archivesspace.shsu.edu/repositories/2/resources/15> - Historical documents and photos.