

MUSCOGEE CREEK INDIAN FREEDMEN BAND



MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE MUSCOGEE CREEK FREEDMEN

Myth: Freedmen are not “Native American” or indigenous to the tribe and should not be citizens in the tribe.

Fact: Creeks of African ancestry have been a part of the Creek Nation odyssey for as long as there has been a Creek Nation by birth, intermarriage, shared language, food, and culture. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation is a sovereign nation, not a race, and citizenship and nationality shall not be dependent on race.

1. See The Creek Treaty of Washington, 1826 by Richard J. Hryniewicki
 - a. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40578419>
2. See 1832 Parsons & Abbott Census Roll documents.
 - a. <https://nativeheritageproject.com/2014/07/14/parsons-and-abbott-roll-1832-creek-census/>
 - b.

Myth: If Freedmen were Creek by blood, they would be tribal members.

Fact: The Muscogee (Creek) Nation expelled Black Creek Citizens who, for generations, shared culture, language, traditions, and history. In 1979, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation voted to expel its Black Creek Citizens, contradicting Article II of the Treaty of 1866, which granted full Citizenship to emancipated persons (Creek Freedmen) who had been enslaved by Citizens of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. There is no stipulation in the treaty that Freedmen and their descendants must show a “blood quantum” for citizenship.

Myth: Freedmen think they are “better than” or above Creek citizens because current citizens had to prove that they were Creek by blood to enroll. Freedmen should not be granted a “pass.”

Fact: All Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizens must trace their ancestry to the Dawes Rolls to establish citizenship. This is the exact requirement for Muscogee (Creek) Nation Freedmen descendants. Additionally, many Muscogee (Creek) Nation Freedmen can also trace their ancestry to Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizens who were denied blood status due to racial bias and their mixed African ancestry and who were later appointed to Muscogee (Creek) Nation Freedmen roll.

Myth: Freedmen do not have traditional stomp grounds or practice Mvskoke traditions.

Fact: Mvskoke traditions were practiced in the three tribal towns of Arkansas, Canadian, and North Fork. There were African Muscogee (Creeks) attending their mother's stomp grounds. Many Creek Freedmen practice traditions today, speak the language, sing traditional Creek songs, eat traditional Native foods, and continue to embrace the culture.

Myth: Freedmen only want to be citizens to get "benefits" from the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Fact: Freedmen are entitled to citizenship and benefits based on birthright. Benefits are the rights of all citizens. Long before there were "benefits" associated with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, African Creeks served in high office, fought in the Civil war, and held high offices in the Muscogee (Creek) Nation during reconstruction.

Myth: During allotment, Muscogee (Creek) Nation land was "stolen" to be allotted to Freedmen who were not Creek and not a part of the tribe.

Fact: Creeks of African descent were citizens by birthright, marriage, and the 1866 Treaty and were allotted land like any other Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizens.

Myth: Freedmen were forced upon the Muscogee (Creek) Nation because the United States did not want to "deal with" formerly enslaved people.

Fact: If anything, the United States "forced" the Muscogee (Creek) Nation through the Treaty of 1866 to "deal" with the consequences and take responsibility for having enslaved persons of African descent in their tribal nation.

Myth: Not all Mvskoke people enslaved or condoned slavery; therefore, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation should not be "forced" to accept freedmen as citizens.

Fact: The Muscogee (Creek) Nation as a people and their laws condoned the enslavement of persons of African descent and must deal with the ramifications of past transgressions and should honor the Treaty of 1866 Article 2.