

Appalachian American Indians—A Timeline of the Historic Period

- Prior to 1700** Shawnee and Mingo colonies claimed the eastern panhandle of what is now WV and the south eastern area- including the areas that are now Pocahontas and Greenbrier counties. In 1670 there were known to be Cherokee as far north as the Kanawha Valley.
- Around 1700** The Mingo moved south into what is now Logan County named after the Mingo chief Logan. In the Northeast counties were groups of Seneca, Tuscorora, Delaware and Ottawa.
- 1701 Documents locate a Shawnee village site in Hardy County WV. This was later abandoned when the Shawnee moved to what is now the Point Pleasant area and joined with the colony led by Chief Cornstalk.
- 1757 The Cherokee laid claim to all of the land SOUTH of the Kanawha River. The Shawnee largely moved with Chief Cornstalk's group to the area around what is now Xenia Ohio and established a town called Hokolesque but still retained claim to the land North of the Kanawha.
- By 1760 Cherokee land claims were from the Southern bank of the Kanawha through Kentucky into Tennessee and south into Georgia and the Carolinas.

- By 1760 Some Shawnee groups were also found in the southern states (as far south as Alabama) but later most went back north into Kentucky and Ohio
- 1820 Following Tecumseh's death in 1813, the Shawnee people who followed his movement began returning to homes in Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Virginia. Some lived with friendly Quakers and Amish families.
- 1830 The Indian Removal Act was passed calling for the relocation of all tribes to "Indian Territory" west of the Mississippi River. Under the terms of the act individuals were to be allowed to stay in their homes if they gave up all tribal claims and allegiance and agreed to become citizens of the states they lived in.
- 1832 The Treaty of 1832 called for the removal of all Shawnee to the west. The US government sent troops to forcibly remove Indians from Ohio and the Ohio River Valley if necessary. Some Shawnee families broke away from Chief Blue Jacket's group headed west and came into WV south of the Kanawha and into Kentucky and hid among the Cherokee who still lived in the area. Some stayed with "mixed blood" relatives who were a significant part of the population. Although the major Cherokee population centers at this time were in Tennessee, northern Georgia and Arkansas, some families broke with the main Cherokee body and moved back into the hills of the Carolinas and Virginia (now WV). Many "mixed-blood" families of Cherokee, Shawnee and English/Scots/Irish heritage were formed at this time.

1835--- The Treaty of New Echota is signed selling all Cherokee Tribal lands east of the Mississippi to US government. (This treaty was signed by a small group of Cherokee and was invalid. The treaty was a violation of Cherokee Law which made the sale of Tribal Land without Tribal approval a capital offense. Most of the members of the “Treaty Party” were subsequently killed by Cherokee vigilantes setting off a civil war among the Cherokees in Indian Territory).

1837-1839---The Trail of Tears Federal Troops under General Winfield Scott rounded up the Cherokee in Tennessee, Georgia, and the Carolinas. Some Cherokee in the Carolinas (under Chief Yonaguska (Drowning Bear)) resisted and went into hiding in the hills. The Cherokee in North Carolina were later given an amnesty by Winfield Scott and live there on the “Quallah Boundary” to this day as the Eastern Band Cherokee. Cherokee and Shawnee living in Virginia and Kentucky were not moved at this time since Scott didn’t have enough men to bother with the relatively small number of people living on land most white settlers didn’t want. Thousands of those who did travel the Trail of Tears died along the trail of starvation, disease and exposure. Estimates of the total deaths from this forced march range from one-in-four to one-in-three.

1863--- Founding of West Virginia. West Virginia was officially a “segregated state” with racial lists of all inhabitants. Many Native American and “mixed” blood families were identified as “white” or “colored” on the census. “Indians” by law did not exist and it was not legal to register a child as “Indian” at birth.

- 1890--- Documentation by the American Bureau of Ethnography and the US Census places “pocket communities” of Cherokee in Logan, Mingo, Summers, Monroe, Greenbrier, Clay and Fayette County. There were also Shawnee living in these communities. Eastern Blackfoot are located in Roane County.
- 1894--- Documented Shawnee “pocket community” in Mason County.
- 1902--- Shawnee Communities identified in Braxton, Clay, McDowell, Fayette, Mason, Mingo and Kanawha counties. The largest Shawnee community appears to have been on the Little Kanawha River.
- 1940s-1970s Federal Government policy is to move Indians off the western reservations to find work in the cities and in other parts of the country. Families of many different tribal lineage’s settle in West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia and Ohio. Many families of Lakota, Pawnee, Seneca and other tribes settled in our area during these years.
- 1965 Following the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the West Virginia Legislature passes state laws which fully enfranchise all citizens. It is again legal for Native Americans to own land in West Virginia and to indicate Native American ancestry on birth records.
- 1989 The Appalachian American Indian Society is formed. This subsequently becomes Appalachian American Indians of West Virginia. The group is formally recognized as an “inter-tribal tribe” by the Legislature in 1996 and 1998. AAIWV is also incorporated as a 501c3 organization for tax purposes.

