

The [Drum Creek Treaty](#) was passed by Congress July 15, 1870 and ratified by the Osage at a meeting in Montgomery County, Kansas on September 10, 1870. It provided that the remainder of Osage land in Kansas be sold and the proceeds used to relocate the tribe to [Indian Territory](#) in the [Cherokee Outlet](#). They were thus one of the few American Indian nations to buy their own reservation. The reservation, of 1,470,000 acres (5,900 km<sup>2</sup>),<sup>[14]</sup> is coterminous with present-day [Osage County, Oklahoma](#) in the north-central portion of the state between [Tulsa, Oklahoma](#) and [Ponca City, Oklahoma](#).



Oklahoma and Indian Territory map, circa 1890s created using Census Bureau Data.

It was many years before the Osage recovered from the hardship suffered during their last years in Kansas and their enforced removal to their new home in 1871. Many adjustments to their new way of life had to be made. During this time, Indian Office reports showed nearly a 50 percent decline in the Osage population. This was due to the failure of the US government to provide adequate medical supplies, food and clothing. The people suffered greatly during the winters.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the number of full-blood Osages, who were generally against [allotment](#), was surpassed by the number of

mixed-bloods, who were more open to allotment. In 1906, the Osage Allotment Act was passed by the U.S. Congress. The act separated the land and distributed it among tribal members and created the Osage Tribal council to deal with the tribe's political, business, and social affairs.

Although the Osage were encouraged to become settled farmers, their new land was the poorest for agricultural purposes in the Indian Territory. They existed by subsistence farming, later enhanced by raising stock. They were fortunate to have lands covered with the rich **bluestem** grass, which proved to be the best grazing in the entire country. This enabled the growth of revenues by leasing **grazing rights** to cattle ranchers. Their income from grazing rights led the Indian Commissioner to call them "the richest people in the country."

The Osage's experiences with the US government increased their ability to negotiate for their rights. Through the efforts of Principal Chief **James Bigheart**, in 1907 they negotiated to retain **mineral rights** to the reservation lands. These were found to have great amounts of **crude oil**, from which tribal members benefited. They were unyielding in giving up their lands and held up statehood for Oklahoma before signing an Allotment Act. They are the only tribe today to retain a federally recognized reservation within the state of Oklahoma.