

UNITED KEETOOWAH BAND OF OKLAHOMA

Tribal Headquarters: Tahlequah, OK



A brief history

The Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Tribe originated in what are now South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia. The word “Keetowah” is the name the Creator gave to the Cherokee people. Legend has it the name was given in this way:

...seven of the wisest men of the ancient Cherokees went to the highest peak and fasted for seven days and nights asking the Creator for guidance. This peak is known today as “Clingman’s Dome.” On the seventh night of their fast, the Creator told them “You shall be Kituwah.” (Benny Smith, The Keetoowah Society of Cherokee Indians, Masters Dissertations, Northwestern State College, Alva, OK. 1967)

Through a treaty with the U.S. the United Keetoowah Band were forced to remove with all the Cherokee to Indian Territory in 1828. They adopted a constitution and formed the “Keetoowah Society,” in 1859. Unlike many of the other Cherokee, the Keetoowah sided with the North during the Civil War, believing the Americans of the South had stolen the lands the Creator had given to the Cherokee.

About the flag

The Keetoowah flag contains the tribal seal centered on a white field, symbolizing peace. Outside the field are four black seven-pointed stars centered at NE, SE, SW and NW. The seal consists of three colored concentric rings with a blue background. The outer ring is green with 19 evenly spaced seven-pointed black stars. The second ring is orange and

contains the words "UNITED KEETOOWAH BAND" at the top and the same words at the bottom in Cherokee script. The inner most yellow ring bears eleven, seven-pointed black stars.

The three rings represent the colorful history of the Keetoowah people. The 30 stars represent the campfires of the 30 original villages on the East. Inside the rings is a large golden seven-pointed star surrounded by two green oak branches similar to other Cherokee flags.

Educational Activity

Research how the Keetoowah received their name. How do you think their name might have influenced their role in modern history?