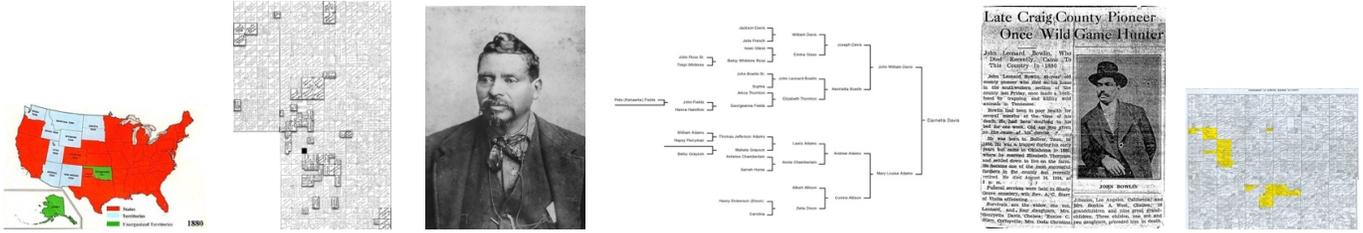


Mapping Family, Race, and Tribe in Indian Territory: Intersectional Loyalties and Allotment Era Policies Personified



As the Indian Wars waned and the surge to settle on the western frontier mounted, pressure grew to divest the Five Southeast Tribes of the lands granted them in Indian Territory. This poster visually maps the various allegiances claimed by two mixed-race families whose identities were transformed under a dual system of federal policies enacted during Allotment. Of the two systems employed in allotting acreage to eligible citizens of the Cherokee, Muscogee Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole Nations, one was based on blood quantum and the other on the status of former slaves owned by members of the Five Tribes.

Shifting racial identities are the focus of *Untangling a Red, White, and Black Heritage, a Personal History of the Allotment Era* (University of New Mexico Press, 2018) on which the poster is based. The book contrasts the fates of the two families—one of Cherokee Freedman descent and the other of Muscogee Creek heritage. Their histories, along with the federal policies that molded their lives, offer a corrective to accounts of racial mixing on the frontier. The 1890 Census below belies any mixtures (Debo, 1989, p. 13).

1890 Indian Territory Census

Nation	Whites	Negroes	Indians	Total	% Indian
Cherokee	29,166	5,127	22,015	56,309	39.1
Choctaw	28,345	4,406	11,057	43,808	25.2
Chickasaw	48,421	3,676	5,223	57,329	9.1
Creek	3,287	4,621	9,999	17,912	55.8
Seminole	172	806	1,761	2,739	64.3
Total	109,393	18,636	50,055	178,097	28.1

The details of the families quest for prosperity and dignity, provide a trove of fact-based evidence that is frequently lacking, yet sorely needed, in current racial discourse. Their 150-year legacy extends to the present, inviting a fresh view of who we think “we” are. Profiles of key family members attest to the families’ multicolored threads (and intersectional loyalties) as some embrace Civil Rights, some help free Alcatraz, and some place family pride above racial affiliation, while still others “passed” for White. Thus, the book assesses the impact of Allotment era assimilationist policies on racial categories and stereotypes, looking beyond white/nonwhite binaries to other countries for alternate social and political terminology, and fresh perspectives on people of color. Its aim is to stimulate reflection on, as well as inform and enhance, racial discourse.

Theoretically, while de Tocqueville anticipated the threat that racial polarization held for a nation comprised of three races, in the intervening years, scholars intent on decolonizing historical frames have pondered alternative perspectives on our collective history. Among those re-examining the Intersection of indigenous peoples and those of African descent are scholars reconstructing the antecedents of colonialist nomenclature (Jack D. Forbes) or tracing the evolution of racial constructs in their interrelationships (David Chang, Kendra Field, Barbara Krauthamer, Katja May, Tiya Miles and Sharon Holland, Theda Perdue, Circe Sturm, and Fay Yarbrough). Yet others have considered appropriate frameworks for dismantling the lens of settler colonialism (Ta-Nehisi Coates, Ibram Kendi, Devon Mihesuah, Audra Simpson, Lorenzo Veracini, and Patrick Wolfe). Jurists have also contributed their thoughts (Lolita Buckner Innis and Carla D. Pratt), addressing substance over legal technicalities in the decades-long conflicts between Freedmen and native citizens as evinced in the 2017 Cherokee Nation v. Nash et al. decision of US District Court Judge Hogan. Tri-racial historiography, or “who tells the story,” is therefore a provocative component of the poster’s visual presentation.

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