

Exploring More Indigenous History

**Sat. Jan. 11, via Zoom, Discussion of The NY Times Best Seller
*Killers of the Flower Moon***

On Saturday morning, Jan. 11, we will continue our education into the disregarded history of America's Indigenous People. From 10:30 to noon, we will discuss the NY Times bestseller **Killers of the Flower Moon** via Zoom. **If you would like the Zoom link to join this discussion, please email racialequitybuddies@fhcpresb.org People who have not read the book but are interested in the topic are welcome to join us.**

Our hosts for this conversation are Mark Wedell and Chiq Montgomery. Chiq is a founding member of REB, and Mark is a dedicated supporter.



[George Catlin: Osage Indians](#) *Osage Indians*, oil on card mounted on paperboard by George Catlin, 1861/1869; in the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. 46.2 × 62.2 cm.

This article contains links to video clips, archival photos showcasing the Osage Nation before "**Killers of the Flower Moon**", and some history not covered in the book. On Jan. 11 we look at the Osage Nation, whose original name is Ni-u-kon-ska ("People of the Middle Waters")



A Very Brief History of The Osage Nation

In the eighteenth century, the Osage lived in Virginia's Piedmont region, where French and Spanish missionaries converted the Indians to Catholicism. When white people settled the region, the tribe migrated to the valleys near the Ohio and Missouri Rivers. After the West opened and settlers began

arriving, the Osage were forced to move again. They went to Kansas, where they farmed the land and hunted.

In the nineteenth century, the white man was continually chasing the Indians off their land. As a result, the Osage weren't destined to remain in Kansas. But in 1871, when the United States seized their property, the government had a change of heart, if only for a short period. They paid the Indians for what they took, and with the profits the tribe bought a million and a half acres in northwestern Indian Territory, which later became Oklahoma.



Chief Bigheart (left) negotiated a historic treaty with the U.S. preserving mineral rights on Osage tribal lands.

OSAGE LANDS & MINERALS - 1872 to TODAY [Microsoft Word - B.5.a.Lands&Minerals1872-TodayFactSheet.docx](#)

In the early 1870s, the Osage were driven from their lands in Kansas onto a rocky, presumably worthless reservation in what was then Indian Territory, and would later become part of Oklahoma. This land they purchased from the Cherokee with funds from sale of their land in Kansas. It would become the present home of their nation: the Osage Reservation - 1.5 million acres in

northeast Oklahoma. The photograph below shows an Osage camp on their new reservation.



In the late 1800s, the federal government wanted Native Americans to assimilate - give up their way of life and blend into white society. One way to accomplish this was the Dawes Act in 1887 which divided up the communally owned reservations into privately-owned allotments - a share or piece of land, with “surplus” land sold to non-natives. For most tribes, this would “end the old communal way of life and turn American Indians into private property owners” - and make it possible for whites to buy Indian land (Grann 49).

Another reason for allotment was the U.S. wanted to turn the Indian Territories into the state of Oklahoma but to do this, all land had to be individually owned (Powell 56). However, because the Osage had purchased their own reservation land, they were exempt from these earlier allotments under the Dawes Act. Under the wise leadership of Chief James Bigheart, the Osage insisted on the following unique provisions in their Osage Allotment Act in 1906:

(1) Larger Allotments: Instead of allotting just 160 acres to each person and selling the rest, as other tribes had been forced to do, the Osage allotted all their reservation land to their people. This gave 657 acres each to the 2,229 registered Osage (Grann 52). (2) Reserved Communal Mineral rights: (a) They “reserved” - held back from allotment - their mineral rights: the right to mine or produce oil and gas, rocks, and minerals from under the ground was not allotted, and so was never lost. (b) They retained communal ownership of these reserved mineral rights, so all subsurface minerals belonged to the entire tribe instead of individuals. Instead of leaving to chance who might get rich later from oil and gas being found on their particular allotment, all tribespeople share equally in any mineral wealth (Wilson 62). Each received a “headright” - right to a share of the whole mineral interest (oil) income - which could be passed on from generation to generation.

Oil Discovered



One of many vehicles owned by members of the Osage Nation. COURTESY RAYMOND RED CORN



[OSAGE; CALVIN COOLIDGE](#) PRES. CALVIN COOLIDGE (CENTER) WITH OSAGE NATIVE AMERICANS OUTSIDE THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D.C.



Members of the Osage Nation from Oklahoma on the steps of the Capitol in Washington D.C., circa 1925

[BING VIDEOS](#)

[SEE OSAGE INDIANS. NATIVE AMERICANS 1930S OKLAHOMA \[COLORIZED RARE FILM\] - YOUTUBE](#)

[BING VIDEOS](#) THE OSAGE BEFORE KILERS OF THE FLOWER MOON 13 MINUTE CLIP

[THE RARE ARCHIVAL PHOTOS BEHIND 'KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON' - ATLAS OBSCURA](#)

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