

# Creeks & Cherokees



SS8H1.b. Evaluate the impact of European contact on Native American cultures; include Spanish missions along the barrier islands, and the explorations of Hernando de Soto.

# From Mississippian to Creek

- ∞ Ancestors of the **Creek Indians** migrated from the Mississippi Valley **into northern Georgia** in the **mid-1400s**.
- ∞ There are **no written records** to tell exactly how these tribe and cultures developed.





# From Mississippian to Creek

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- ✧ European explorers recorded how these tribes lived.
- ✧ Based on artifacts, the social groups of Georgia in the 1500s belonged to the same Mississippian culture.
- ✧ Most of these native tribes, including the group that became the Creek, spoke the Muskogean language.

# From Mississippian to Creek

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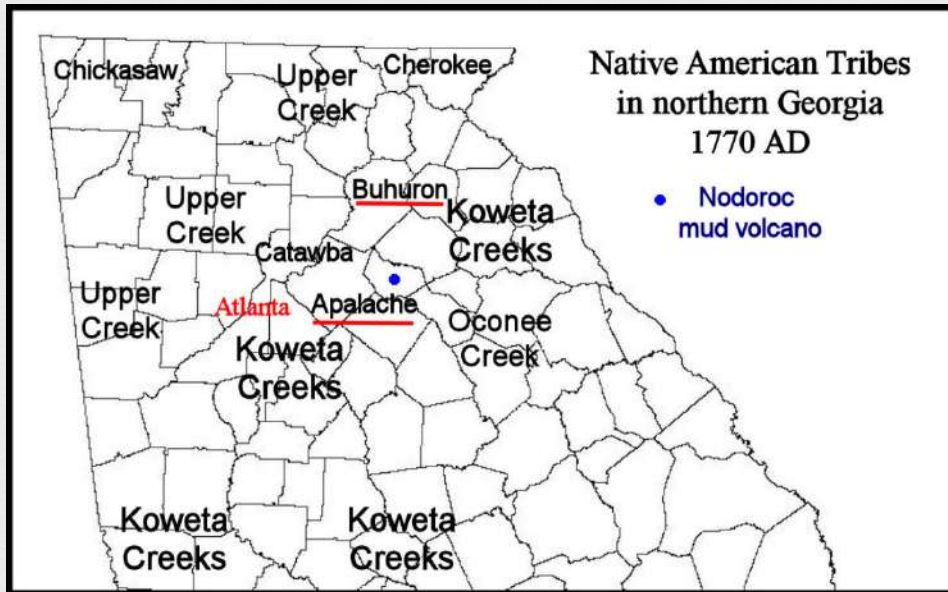
- ❧ The **Creek** were more than one tribe.
- ❧ They **were a group of several Mississippian chiefdoms that** had banded together and **formed a confederacy.**



Mississippian Indian chief

# From Mississippian to Creek

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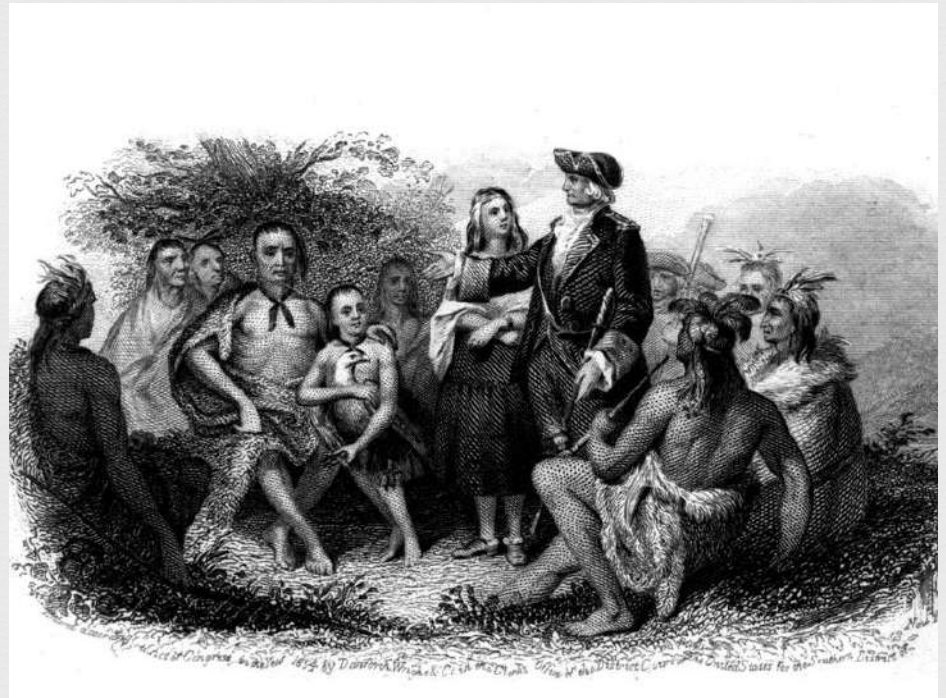
- ✧ The Creek Confederacy became the largest group in the Southeast.
- ✧ They originally occupied most of what is now Georgia.



# Creek Culture



- ❧ The name “Creek” comes from the English.
- ❧ Some **Indians** lived at the headwaters of the **Ocmulgee River**, which was called the **Ochese Creek** during the 1600s.
- ❧ **English** traders called them the **Ochese Creek Indians**.
- ❧ After awhile the Ochese was dropped and is was shortened to **Creek**.

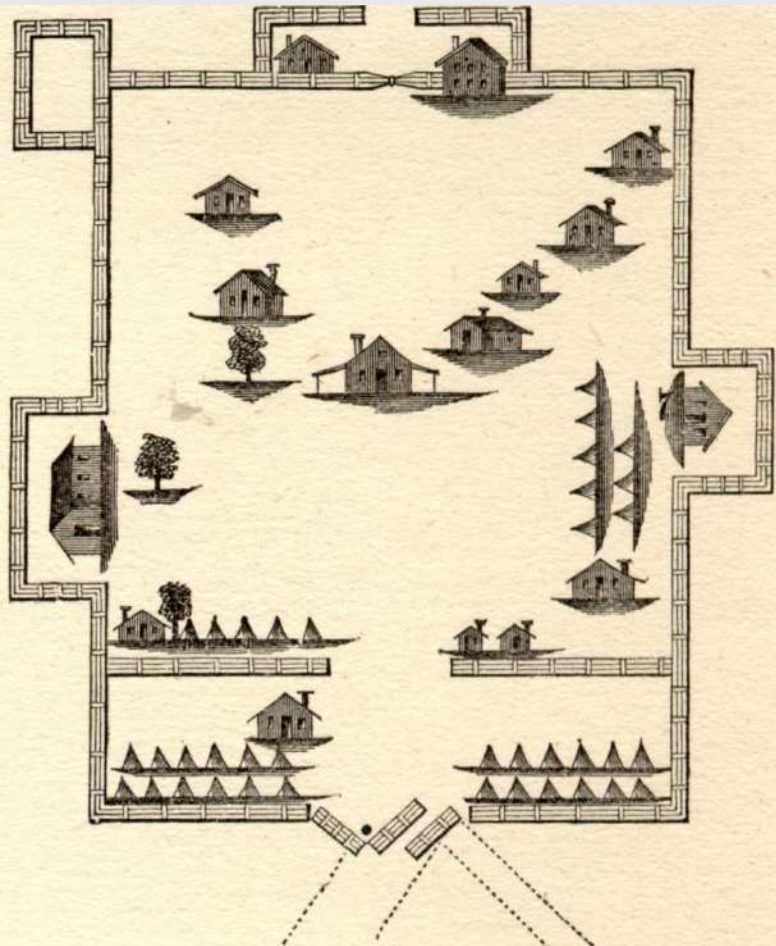


# Creek Culture



## Creek Towns

- ✧ Every major Creek town **had a center for ceremonial and political functions.**
- ✧ **Buildings** with open fronts **surrounded** a large open rectangular **space.**



# Creek Culture



## Creek Towns

- œ In warm months, the town leaders held important functions there.
- œ In cold months, Creek leaders met in a community house nearby that contained the ceremonial fire.





# Creek Culture



- œ Most Creek lived in large family compounds near the square grounds or spread out along a stream or river.
- œ The compounds had clusters of gardens, large fields, and several buildings.

# Creek Culture



- ❧ A family included all members of the same clan.
- ❧ A clan is a group of people with a common ancestor.
- ❧ Clan members were required to help each other in time of need and to defend each other when threatened.



# Creek Culture



- ❧ The Creek were a **matrilineal society**, meaning that **ancestry was traced through the mother's family**.
- ❧ After marriage, a young **man moved into the compound of his wife's family**.
- ❧ **Children belonged to their mother's clan** and were not considered related to their father's clan.



# Creek Culture



## Creek Government

- ❧ Creek towns were actually groups of small farming communities inhabited by groups of clan relatives.
- ❧ A chief governed each town.
- ❧ The position of chief was usually inherited and always held by a member of a specific clan.



# Creek Culture



- œ A group of elders made up a town council.
- œ This council assisted the chief in his official duties and in making decisions for the town.

# Creek Culture



## Creek Religion

- œ Religion was important to the Creek.
- œ The Green Corn ceremony was the most significant festival in the year.
- œ The Creek gave thanks for the new corn crop.





# Creek Culture



- œ The Green Corn ceremony also honored the renewal of life, and retold the history and laws of the town.
- œ An important event of the festival involved extinguishing the old council fire and lighting a new fire.

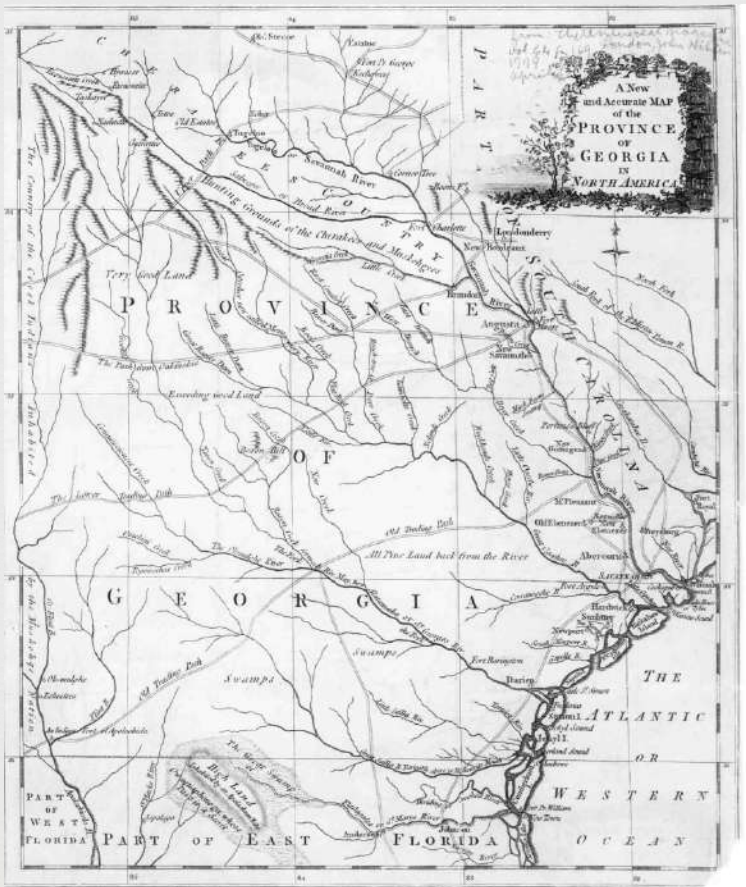
# Creek Culture



- œ The **women** of the tribe would start new fires in their homes with coals from the new ceremonial fire.
- œ Then the **feasting** would begin.
- œ **Fire and corn** celebrated life, health, happiness, friendship, and kinship.



# The Cherokee



- Second largest group of native American in early Georgia.
- Did not arrive in large numbers until the 1700s.
- Migrated from western North Carolina and occupied the northwest portions of Georgia.



# The Cherokee



- œ Cherokee culture was similar to Creek culture because both tribes descended from the Mississippians.
- œ Their towns and buildings were alike.
- œ Children belonged to the mother's clan.
- œ They celebrated a Green Corn ceremony.



# Maintaining Balance



- œ The Cherokee believed that maintaining harmony and order would keep the world balanced.
- œ If they did not droughts, storms, disease, or other disasters might destroy their crops or villages.

# Maintaining Balance



- œ The Cherokee practiced many of the same rituals as the Creek during the Green Corn ceremony, with perhaps a greater focus on harmony.
- œ The villagers
  - œ Cleaned their houses
  - œ Cleaned the council house
  - œ Threw away broken items
  - œ Dissolved unhappy marriages
  - œ Forgave old wrongs
  - œ Began the year with a clean slate





# Maintaining Balance



- œ Women were responsible for farming and furnishing the house.
- œ They were good farmers and they made benches, baskets, pottery, and clothing.

# Maintaining Balance



- ❧ Men were responsible for hunting.
- ❧ The most important game animal to the Cherokee was the deer.
- ❧ They ate the deer's meat, wore the skins, and made tools and ornaments from bones and antlers.
- ❧ They used ligaments for thread and hooves for glue.
- ❧ They tried not to waste anything and kill only what they needed.



# Cherokee Government



- ❧ Did **not** have a **chief** or national council **until** the **1700s**.
- ❧ Town **council** meetings were run **democratically**
- ❧ People **debated** an **issue** **until** they **reached** an **agreement**.



# Cherokee Government



- ❧ Women and men were allowed to voice their opinion.
- ❧ The most important question debated was whether to go to war.
- ❧ Cherokee did not fight for territory, only to pay back enemies who had killed Cherokee.

