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# Indigenous Nations Studies Journal

Vol. 3 No. 1

Spring 2002

*Indigenous Nations Studies Journal* is published biannually by the Center for Indigenous Nations Studies and The University of Kansas.

The *Indigenous Nations Studies Journal* is an interdisciplinary publication that is juried by peers. The *Journal* publishes contributions that fall within the scope of Indigenous peoples, communities, and issues in history, law, cultural studies, literature, and language.

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## **A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**

This issue of the journal was made possible with the assistance of Melissa Isaacs Fisher, Dianne Reyner, Gil Hood, David Querner, Denise Lajetta, Patricia Pena, Cedric Sunray, and Paula Courtney, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Word Processing Center, in addition to the Editor and Associate Editor. Thank you

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Vol. 3, No. 1

Spring 2002

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# **The Resurgence of the Choctaws in the Twentieth Century**

**By Clara Sue Kidwell**

## *Abstract*

After the Civil War, the Choctaw Nation experienced a rapid transition from a cultural, tribal identity to a political, national one. Railroads and white entrepreneurs entered its territory and propelled it into a market driven economy. Individual monetary interests conflicted with communal property rights, and allotment of tribal land finally destroyed the Nation's land base. The dissolution of the tribal government with Oklahoma statehood would have destroyed the nation altogether except for the need to oversee the final disposition of tribal land, coal and timber resources. Long-term coal leases meant that the government had to maintain a semblance of fiduciary responsibility to the Choctaw Nation. In 1959 the appointed Choctaw Chief attempted to have the relationship between the Nation and the federal government terminated without losing services to tribal members. The termination legislation passed, but services were lost as well, and a groundswell of opposition to termination in the 1960s, including a significant and vocal group of urban based Choctaws, led to a resurgence of national, political Choctaw identity and the repeal of termination.

In 2001 the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma operated with about 5,000 employees and an annual budget of over \$366.5 million. Currently the Choctaw membership is approximately 128,000.<sup>1</sup> Although the Nation operates much as a major corporate entity in American society, it predates the United States. Choctaw