

(Transcript: Our Choctaw Indian Heritage)

(Photo of state map with outline of the Choctaw region)

Long before the city of Hattiesburg was established, the Choctaw Indians occupied this region at a location where the Bouie and Leaf Rivers meet.

(Photo of the Twin Forks region)

The settlement was known as Twin Forks.

(Photo of an early Twin Forks home)

Settlement houses were constructed of poles woven with flexible vines. Clay and mud mixed with straw was plastered over the vines to form walls, while roofs were made of pine or cypress bark.

(Photo of a clay fragment and similax vine)

This photo shows the clay fragment of a Choctaw wall along with a thorny similax vine that could have been used in construction.

(Photo of various Choctaw baskets)

Both are on display at the museum along with a variety of Choctaw baskets from the Phyllis Bailey and Ursula Jones collections. Early Choctaw baskets were created from swamp cane or honeysuckle found along Mississippi creeks. Natural resources such as berries and flowers were used to create bright colors.

(Photo of Choctaw cooking balls)

One of the more unusual museum items are these Choctaw cooking balls. The clay pots used to prepare meals would shatter if exposed directly to fire, so these clay balls were heated separately then added to water for cooking.

(Photo of "kabocca" sticks)

Most of us love sports, and the early indian settlers were no exception. Choctaw stickball has been described as "the father of all field sports." The sticks used in the game are called "kabocca". They look much like modern day Lacrosse sticks. The ones shown here were created by Reverend Nickey of the Sandersonville reservation.

(Photo of Choctaw arrowheads)

By the way, did you know that the word "Mississippi" in the Choctaw language means "Father of Waters."

(Photo of state map with outline of the Choctaw region)

And did you know that the everyday expression "OK" is said to have roots from the Choctaw word which could mean "thank you" or "all is well." Given the universal use of the expression "OK," we think it's safe to say the whole world speaks Choctaw.