

Key Vocabulary

fur trade

Chouteau family

Three Forks

sovereignty

Osage Trace

Texas Road

Spanish Louisiana

Louisiana Purchase

Doctrine of Discovery

Lewis and Clark Expedition

discovery rights

Fort Gibson

Learning Outcomes:

The learner will be able to...

- Identify the characteristics and importance of the fur trade in early Oklahoma.
- Summarize the role that river transportation and early roads played in the fur trade.
- Compare and contrast how French, Spanish, and American interactions with Native nations led to cross-cultural exchange and conflict.
- Explain the importance of the Louisiana Purchase in Oklahoma history.
- Describe the various roles that Fort Gibson played in early Oklahoma history.
- Define the Doctrine of Discovery and explain how it was used to justify control of lands by the French, Spanish, and US governments.

Compelling Question:

- What is the relationship between trade and cultural exchange?

Chapter Overview

In the 1700s and early 1800s, Native nations built successful trade and political networks through kinship alliances. French families like the Chouteaus formed ties with Osage communities and participated in the global fur trade. Two decades after the Louisiana Purchase, the United States established Fort Gibson, which drew diverse groups of travelers and traders to the region.



Fig. 2.1: In the painting *Frontier Trade*, 1790–1830, Charles Banks Wilson shows a flurry of trade and commerce in the Indigenous fur trade. We see trading posts, salt exports, and forts along the Arkansas River.

Courtesy of the Capitol Art Collection, Oklahoma Arts Council.

Many people called the Arkansas River Valley home, including the Wichitas, Caddos, Pawnees, Quapaws, Osages, French, Africans, Shawnees, Illinois, Miamis, Omahas, and Poncas. Located in the center of the North American continent, the Arkansas River and its tributaries flow from southeastern Colorado, northeastern New Mexico, and the Texas Panhandle through Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Arkansas. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, Native Americans, not Europeans, controlled the Arkansas River world. When Native nations lost ground, as the Tunicas did in the 1500s, Caddoan speakers did in the 1700s, and the Osages did in the early 1800s, they lost it to other Native nations. Only in the 1820s did white settlers begin to outnumber Native communities.

River Systems and the Indigenous Fur Trade

Imagine the world as a place where Indigenous people trapped and traded furs. They traveled by boat (first by canoe, then keelboat, and later steamboat) along an extensive river system, made up of the Mississippi River and its western tributaries, or the rivers that flow into the Mississippi, including the Missouri, St. Francis, White, Arkansas, Ouachita, and Red. The river systems connected people from different places and made it possible for an international trade economy to grow. The Mississippi River connected the Missouri and Arkansas river worlds. The Arkansas River world is an interesting place to study the ways Indigenous and European peoples encountered one another and developed strong trading partnerships.

Native Ground and the International Fur Trade

Trade relationships with Europeans were essential in the Indigenous **fur trade**. Soon the French began building trading posts to be near Osage territory. During the 1700s in French Louisiana, the combined Indigenous population of Osage, Pawnee, Wichita, and Comanche Nations was larger than the French population. In order for the French to obtain hides, pelts, and related goods, French traders needed to develop relationships with the Osages, who controlled access to a vast trade network that included Native nations on both sides of the Mississippi near the mouth of the Missouri River. In exchange for bison, deer, and bear products, the Wichitas and Caddos received guns, powder, knives, European shirts, cloth, and blankets.

In 1719, French explorer Jean Baptiste Bénard de La Harpe traveled up the Arkansas River into today's northeastern Oklahoma and met with people of several Native nations. During the same period some French soldiers traveled up the Arkansas on their way to Wichita villages in present-day Kansas and then on to present-day New Mexico.

The fur trade was an early example of the capitalist boom in North America. When we talk about the fur trade, we are talking about an exchange of European-made goods or food that Indigenous people wanted for their animal skins, including furs, pelts, and hide. Hide becomes leather, meaning that the skin of animals, for instance deer, cattle, and bison, was turned into shoes, belts, clothing, bags, book covers, and floor coverings. And hats lined with beaver fur became a luxury item in high demand all across the world, from New York to Guangzhou, China, to Paris, France.

Until the early 1800s, Indigenous kinship networks set trade policy. For example, in the fur trade, marriage between Osage women and French men strengthened kinship connections and trade relationships. Such relationships resulted in Native-French communities along the Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers. Osage clans, or extended family groups, adopted the French traders to ensure their children's patrilineal clan affiliation. Patrilineal societies trace descent from father to son. Such marriages between prominent individuals in these diverse communities led to continued material wealth for both. For instance, Osage traders acquired guns from French traders and strengthened their power over other Native nations in the region.

The Osage people thrived on gathering, hunting, and farming. Gender roles among the Osages were complementary, meaning that men and women performed different tasks of equal importance. Women planted corn, squash, and beans along the rivers near their homes. Men hunted bison and women cured the bison meat and processed the hides.

In the 1700s and 1800s, hunters and trappers (or *coureurs des bois* in French) within this broad world exchanged furs, hides, pelts for horses, guns, and other trade goods. Some place-names in eastern Oklahoma today indicate the enduring influence of the French. Examples include the Verdigris River (from the French words for green and gray), the town of Vian (from the French word *viande* meaning meat), and the Kiamichi Mountains and Kiamichi River (from the French word *kamichi* for horned screamer, a type of water bird similar to the whooping cranes that the French observed on the riverbank in the spring).

The Arkansas River Valley remained an Indigenous world. The French and Spanish were there, but Native nations lived there in greater numbers. For example, the Osages and Pawnees dominated the fur trade in this area. To the west, the Comanches oversaw a trade network that connected central Mexico to the southern plains. And Cheyennes, Arapahos, and Kiowas began coming to the plains to engage in trade.

The Chouteau Family, St. Louis, and the Fur Trade

Families were at the center of the fur trade. The **Chouteau family**, one of the most important trading families in the region, emigrated from France in the early eighteenth century and settled first in New Orleans. Following the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Auguste Chouteau and his stepfather, Pierre LaCledé, moved upriver from New Orleans to present-day Missouri and Illinois. There they developed fur trading interests in what would become the city of St. Louis, near the merging of the Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers. The site was ideal because it was a neutral place for trade among the Osage, Otoe-Missouria, and Sac and Fox nations. The Osages, larger in number than the others and centralized in larger villages, served as important intermediators for the tribes west and east of the river. In this environment, Chouteau and LaCledé developed diplomatic skills such as speaking several languages, including French, English, Spanish, Osage, and Pawnee. These skills would prove useful in their development of trading partnerships with people from both Indigenous and European nations.

The Chouteau family and other families made St. Louis the center of the fur trade in the American West. Trappers brought furs to St. Louis in small boats. The furs were processed in St. Louis and then exported on larger ships to destinations such as New Orleans, New York, Montreal, London, Paris, and Guangzhou. The Chouteau family diversified their business into warehouses and processing and counting houses. Their business stretched from St. Louis to the trading posts in the Arkansas and Missouri river worlds, including present-day Oklahoma. These territories were all part of the Louisiana Territory, a vast area of land claimed by the French. The Chouteau family formed alliances with Osage and Shawnee families through kinship ties such as marriage and adoption. The story of the Chouteaus highlights the importance of Indigenous and French kinship in the fur trade.



Fig. 2.2: *Mo-Hon-Go, Osage Woman*, by Charles Bird King. Mo-Hon-Go (or Mi-Ho'n-Ga or Mi-hun-ga), daughter of Osage leader Clermont, was A. P. Chouteau's first Osage wife and the mother of his son. After traveling in Europe in the late 1820s, Mo-Hon-Go returned to the United States and sat for portrait artist Charles Bird King in Washington, DC.

Courtesy of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.



Fig. 2.3: *Wáh-chee-tee, Wife of Cler-mónt, and Child*, by George Catlin. In 1834 artist George Catlin visited Fort Gibson and painted portraits of prominent Osage people, including Wáh-chee-tee, the wife of Osage leader Clermont, and their child. Osages had been importing cloth in vibrant colors from Europe for more than one hundred years.

Courtesy of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Osage Women, Marriage, and the Fur Trade

In the late 1700s Osage women began marrying French traders to create kinship ties that strengthened trade relationships. It was not always this way. However, with more competition in the region coming from the Comanches to the west and the Spanish colonial presence, kinship became a necessity. Osage clans adopted these prominent traders to ensure their children's patrilineal clan affiliation. These types of marriages between prominent individuals from Native and French communities resulted in stronger trade relationships and wealth in both communities. Osage sons typically married Osage women while Osage daughters often married European or Osage men.

Prominent French merchant families, such as the Chouteau, Mongraine, and Lambert families, developed kinship ties when their sons married prominent women from prestigious or hereditary chieftan clans. These unions required extended family member participation and gift-giving. For example, Noel Mongraine married "Marie" Pawhushan, the daughter of one of the most powerful turn-of-the-century Osage chiefs, Pawhuska, or White Hair. They lived in St. Louis for years before "Marie" Pawhushan returned home and married an Osage man. Such was the fluidity of marriage relations.

Daughter of Osage leader Clermont (or Claremore), Mo-Hon-Go (or Mi-Ho'n-Ga or Mi-hun-ga), was A. P. Chouteau's first Osage wife and the mother of their son. Their daughter Amelia received a section of land in the 1825 removal treaty. This treaty removed the Osage people from Missouri and Arkansas territories and provided land at Three Forks near Fort Gibson to French Osage children, including Amelia. In 1827, Mo-Hon-Go and five other Osage people traveled to France with their French guide, who promoted their visits throughout Europe, including Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. Returning from Paris to the United States in 1830, Mo-Hon-Go and other Osage people visited the US Capitol in Washington. There Mo-Hon-Go and her daughter sat for portrait artist Charles Bird King.

Another artist, George Catlin, visited Fort Gibson in 1834 and painted portraits of prominent Osage people. One of his paintings depicts Wáh-chee-tee, the wife of Osage leader Clermont, and their child. Catlin described Wáh-chee-tee as "richly dressed in costly cloths of civilized manufacture, which is almost a solitary instance amongst the Osages." However, Osages had been importing cloth from Europe for more than a century.

Chouteau's Trading Post at Three Forks

The Wichita, Caddo, Quapaw, and Osage nations hunted, lived, and traded in the area around **Three Forks** in today's eastern Oklahoma, where the Verdigris, Grand, and Arkansas rivers converge (near the city of Muskogee today). In addition to the rivers, Three Forks contained salt deposits and abundant game, making it a popular place for salt collection and hunting. By the mid-1700s the Osage hunting trail known as **Osage Trace**, later called the **Texas Road**, became a popular trail at Three Forks. In the 1790s brothers Auguste and Pierre Chouteau built a trading post in this area, selling such goods as bridles, cloth, and guns to the Osages and other tribes in exchange for hides and pelts. The Chouteaus managed the family's fur trade in the Three Forks area, where the Osages settled after being pushed out of Missouri.



Map 2.1: The Three Forks area. Located in present-day northeastern Oklahoma at the junction of the Grand, Verdigris, and Arkansas Rivers, Three Forks was a key location in the fur trade industry. The Chouteau family formed alliances with Osage and Shawnee families through kinship ties to strengthen trade relationships in this area.

Courtesy of Brad Watkins, PhD.

The Chouteaus established families in St. Louis. Their marriages represented careful alliances within the close-knit community. In 1783, Auguste Chouteau married Marie Thérèse Cerré, the daughter of a prosperous merchant. The couple remained together for nearly forty years and had seven children. Their children attended boarding schools in Montreal and Paris. For example, Auguste Chouteau, Jr. attended school in Montreal in the early 1800s. As a child in St. Louis, Auguste learned to speak French, English, Spanish, Osage, and Pawnee. He had brothers and sisters and cousins who were Osage, Illinois, and Otoe-Missouria. In addition to the families they created in St. Louis, the Chouteaus maintained Osage families at Three Forks. In 1798, an Osage clan granted both LaCledé and Auguste Chouteau honorary membership in recognition of their diplomatic importance.

Spanish Louisiana

In 1763, the Treaty of Paris ended the French and Indian War, also known as the Seven Years' War, between Great Britain and France and their allies. As a result, France withdrew from North America, and the seven-year global war between the two nations came to a close. All lands west of the Mississippi River were now part of **Spanish Louisiana**. Native tribes established and strengthened ties with their new trading partners. The Caddos, for instance, quickly made peace with the Spanish. The Spanish, in turn, supplied them with trade goods just as the French had. And the Caddos helped negotiate a treaty between the Spanish and the Wichitas. Though France no longer claimed the region, French trappers and traders remained. The Osages and other Native nations determined their own kinship and trade relationships and decided to include European traders in the larger fur trade network.



Map 2.2: The Louisiana Purchase and the Adams-Onís Treaty boundaries. The purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803 included the area that became Indian Territory.

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Louisiana continued to change hands. It returned to French control in 1800. In 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte, emperor of France, sold all of Louisiana to the United States for \$15 million. By acquiring this vast amount of land, the United States doubled in size. The area soon to be known as Indian Territory, much of present-day Oklahoma, was part of Louisiana Territory. As a result, President Thomas Jefferson and the US government were now in control of the land where they would eventually force Native nations from the east to resettle.

The Louisiana Purchase and Its Aftermath

Upon signing the Louisiana Purchase, President Jefferson wrote to members of Congress to congratulate them, describing the purchase as “favorable to the immediate interests of our western citizens.” He said it was important to “the peace and security of the nation.” The president concluded that the purchase of the land from France “adds to our country territories so extensive and fertile and to our citizens new brethren to partake of the blessings of freedom and self-governance.” Jefferson quickly began organizing expeditions to explore this newly acquired land. He had high hopes for its future and how the young country could benefit from it.

This purchase also had its critics, though. There was concern that the territory was too large to be controlled and defended. Another concern, which arose after the purchase, was the impact that western settlement and the creation of new states might have on the balance of political power between the North and the South. By the early nineteenth century, the institution of slavery was increasingly a southern institution, with northern states moving away from or abolishing slavery altogether. This addition of new territory complicated that issue, and, as we will see, eventually led to the American Civil War. Moreover, President Jefferson’s assertion that the new land would allow more people the opportunity to enjoy freedom and self-government failed to consider that freedom and self-government were the very rights taken from the Indigenous people already living in Louisiana Territory.

The Doctrine of Discovery

The newly acquired 828,000 square miles of territory cost the United States \$18 per square mile. And the purchase of the land came with a clear understanding of who would benefit most from this arrangement. The purchase gave the United States two important things. First, it meant that the United States, and no other colonial power, had claim to the land. Second, it meant that the United States had the “right” to the land already occupied by Indigenous people. This right could be enforced through varied means, including conquest, pacification, absorption, or extinction.

Ideas about how land is discovered, explored, and claimed by intruding nations, even as Indigenous people have lived there for centuries, can be traced to the **Doctrine of Discovery**.

The Doctrine of Discovery

The Doctrine of Discovery harmed many Native nations in the early days of colonization. In the seventeenth century, British settlers began to colonize the region now known as New England. Wampanoag, Abenaki, Pennacook, and other Indigenous peoples already occupied the lands. British settlers used the Doctrine of Discovery to defend their actions. Indigenous peoples began to suffer from European diseases. Settlers believed that the death of Indigenous peoples was an act of God. This belief supported their claim to possession of the land. Disputes between the settlers and Native groups led to bloody conflicts. They also led to the removal of many Native nations from the area.

Since the establishment of the United States, the federal government has continued to uphold the Doctrine of Discovery through its actions and policies. The 1823 Supreme Court case *Johnson v. McIntosh* reinforced the idea that Indigenous people had only a right to occupancy, not ownership, of land conquered by the United States. The Doctrine of Discovery influenced national concepts, in particular Manifest Destiny, the nineteenth-century idea that American settlers were divinely ordained and destined to expand across the continent. As settlers continued to push westward, more Native nations were edged out of their lands and often relocated to different parts of the country. The ideas established by the Doctrine of Discovery guided government policies, such as the 1830 Indian Removal Act and the subsequent Trail of Tears. Although originally established for the purpose of protecting Spain's claim to land in the Americas, the Doctrine of Discovery strongly influenced the expansion of colonial powers into the Americas and provided justification for the dispossession of Indigenous lands for many centuries.

In March 2023, the Vatican in Rome rejected the Doctrine of Discovery for not respecting the human rights of Indigenous peoples. This was a significant historical development considering that the doctrine originated from the Vatican in 1493. The Vatican's reversal of the doctrine calls into question the centuries of relocation and land dispossession Native nations experienced not only in the United States but in Canada, Australia, and other countries. In 2023, First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City provided an opportunity for reflection on the Doctrine of Discovery with its exhibit “200 Years of Doctrine of Discovery: *Johnson v. McIntosh* and the Indian Removal Act.” Exhibits like this one encourage the public to learn more about the Doctrine of Discovery, settler colonialism, and tribal sovereignty today.

By the late fifteenth century, it was clear that multiple European powers wanted to explore and claim North American lands that were previously unknown to them. This presented a problem. They needed to make sure that if one country claimed new lands, their claims would be respected by other countries. In 1493, Pope Alexander VI issued the Bull *Inter Caetera*, more commonly known as the Doctrine of Discovery. This document was initially meant to justify Spain's claim to much of the land in the so-called New World. It later became a basis for agreement between other Christian European countries to respect claims to new land.

But there was more to the Doctrine of Discovery. It also explained how European countries could claim Indigenous land, legally and morally. According to the doctrine, land that was occupied by non-Christians would be considered discoverable and conquerable. This meant that if the Spanish or French, for example, explored land that today is part of Oklahoma, they could lay claim to it if it was not already claimed by another Christian power. We can trace the dispossession of Indigenous land over the next several hundred years back to ideas set forth in the Doctrine of Discovery.

Three important Supreme Court rulings (sometimes called the Marshall Trilogy) shaped the legal standing of Native nations. In 1823, the US Supreme Court drew on the Doctrine of Discovery in the first of the three cases, *Johnson v. McIntosh*. In writing the Court's opinion, Chief Justice John Marshall declared that "the principle of discovery gave European nations an absolute right to New World lands." Indigenous people had the right to occupy the land, but not to own it. And that right to live on the land was ever changing over the course of the nineteenth century. When the United States had purchased the Louisiana Territory twenty years before the *McIntosh* decision, Jefferson and Congress had understood the purchase in the context of the Doctrine of Discovery. The 1831 Supreme Court ruling in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* further limited the status of Native nations. The court described them as "domestic dependent nations," and as "wards" rather than as independent, or fully sovereign, nations. The Supreme Court did recognize the role of tribal sovereignty to a greater extent in its 1832 ruling in *Worcester v. Georgia* (discussed more in chapter 3), but the federal government used the first two of the Marshall Trilogy rulings in the years ahead to justify greater land dispossession and to decrease the rights of Native nations to challenge this dispossession.

The expansion of the US empire through the Louisiana Purchase changed everything. President Jefferson intended to continue the forced migration of Native Americans already in progress. He planned to formally relocate all eastern Native nations into the "new" territory. Around this same time, Jefferson chose Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the new territory and lands farther west. The explorers formed the "Corps of Discovery" and set forth on their journey up the Missouri from St. Louis. They relied on the Chouteau family for provisions.



Fig. 2.4: In 1804, Big Axe, Big Horse, and six other leaders from the Otoe and Missouri nations camped with members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition for three days along the Missouri River. Lewis and Clark presented leaders from both nations with Jefferson peace medals.

Courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Jefferson used the Lewis and Clark expedition (1804–6) to exercise discovery rights over Native nations whose homelands stretched from the Mississippi River to the Columbia River.

The Chouteau family had long traded with the Osages at Three Forks and established a successful trading post there. The first official United States visit to Three Forks took place in November 1806. This visit occurred when Lieutenant James Biddle Wilkinson of the Zebulon Pike expedition encountered Osage hunters in the area.

Fort Gibson

In 1824, soldiers from Fort Smith in Arkansas Territory established **Fort Gibson**, the first US military post in Indian Territory (what would become Oklahoma) on the east side of the Neosho River about three miles from its mouth.



Fig. 2.5: In 1824 Fort Gibson became the first US military post in Indian Territory. The fort was also the headquarters for a commission created by Congress in 1832 to carry out the removal of Native nations from the Southeast to Indian Territory. Today Fort Gibson Historic Site is a national historic landmark managed by the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

River navigation was important at Fort Gibson, but so was road travel. Located on the Texas Road, a route that connected Missouri in the United States to Mexico, Fort Gibson was established to protect the nation's southwestern border complete with a stockade and barracks. Treaty councils, where the United States and Native nations came together to make formal agreements, met at Fort Gibson.

Oklahoma is part of the southern Great Plains. Environmental historians describe the western half of Oklahoma as grasslands, with mixed-grass prairie as a transitional zone between the tallgrass prairies to the north and east and the shortgrass high plains to the south and west. Mixed-grass prairies contain a variety of plant species, including the tallgrass varieties switchgrass and big bluestem and shortgrass such as buffalo grass. The grasslands of Oklahoma nourished grazing animals such as deer and bison and later horses and cattle.

The lands that would become Oklahoma are rich in mineral resources including petroleum (crude oil and natural gas), coal, and nonfuel minerals, including limestone, gypsum, salt, clays, iodine, sand and gravel, lead, zinc, and copper. Oklahoma has mineral wealth in all seventy-seven counties. Today petroleum production in Oklahoma represents more than 90 percent of Oklahoma's annual mineral output.



Fig. 2.6: Jennifer Frazee became director of the Fort Gibson Historic Site in 2021.

Courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Fort Gibson Historic Site

In 2021, Jennifer Frazee (Choctaw) became director of the Fort Gibson Historic Site, a military site established in 1824 at Three Forks in eastern Oklahoma. The US Army fort served as the departure point for numerous expeditions to the West. In addition, the Dawes Commission met at Fort Gibson in 1893 to enroll Cherokee Freedpeople. Frazee believes in the importance of Oklahomans knowing and understanding their history. Her main focus as director is on enhancing the site as a place for students to engage and interact with the past. When students visit the site, they can see reconstructions of the buildings that once made up the fort. They can also visit the bake house there to see the operation of a Civil War-era oven. They can learn about the stories of individual people who lived and worked at the fort. As of 2024, Frazee and her team are working on a restoration of the historic hospital. The site also offers candlelight tours, baking demonstrations, and programs about hunting and trapping.

A. P. Chouteau traded with the soldiers at Fort Gibson for provisions and building materials. By the 1820s, the Chouteaus expanded their small trading post on the Verdigris River into one of the largest trading centers on the western frontier. They employed men of diverse races to work in their fur business, and they built the boats on which they shipped furs to either New Orleans or St. Louis. They hired skilled river men to navigate the Mississippi River. Upon reaching their destination, the river men would sell the furs and the wood used to build the boats. Then they would load boats with supplies, such as casks of nails and barrels of liquor, and return to Three Forks.

Conclusion

After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the lands we call Oklahoma today became part of the United States. In 1825, the US federal government established the area as reservation lands for many Native nations. The reservation lands came to be known as Indian Territory, although the US Congress never issued official territorial status to the reserved lands. In 1890, the western portion of the lands, also the original homelands of Indigenous peoples, was reestablished by the federal government as Oklahoma Territory. In 1907, Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory officially became a single state, the state of Oklahoma.



Fig. 2.7: *Steamer Heroine on the Red River, 1838*, by Peter Rindlisbacher. The steamboat Heroine sank in the Red River in 1838. It was carrying supplies to the soldiers at Fort Towson. The steamboat was discovered and excavated beginning in 1990 and provides clues to the role of river transportation in Indian Territory.

Courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Oklahoma serves as a place to examine the intersections of land, race, and identity. Native nations learned how to build successful trade and political networks through Native kinship alliances. Families like the Chouteaus integrated themselves into Native communities and participated in the global fur trade. From the mid-1700s to mid-1800s, the world experienced a rising demand for furs to be made into clothing and home furnishings. This drove a boom in the fur trade that significantly impacted Native nations in Louisiana Territory. The French were particularly interested in capitalizing on the fur trade, so they built relationships with Native nations in Louisiana Territory, including land that later became northeastern Oklahoma. Through these connections the French gained access to trapping in the area. The fruitful relationship between the Osages and their Chouteau trading partners led to the family's deeply established relationship with the Osages and other tribes. When France withdrew from North America, power moved to the Spanish, though independent French trappers and traders remained. Marriage between Osage women and French men strengthened kinship ties and trade relationships.

Mapping Indigenous Oklahoma

UNIT 1

Following the Louisiana Purchase, a US delegation visited Three Forks in November 1806. When Fort Gibson was established in 1824, the fur trade and kinship ties with the Chouteaus and their Native partners grew stronger. By the 1830s, the fur trade economy had declined, and the Five Tribes, consisting of the Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), Seminole, Choctaw, and Chickasaw Nations, were forcibly removed to Indian Territory from their homelands in the southeastern United States.

Once Louisiana Territory, including Oklahoma, was incorporated into the United States, Indian Territory became the new home for the Five Tribes. Fort Gibson served as a significant military post during the forced relocation and settlement of the Five Tribes on lands that had once belonged to the Osages, Wichitas, and Caddos. All these communities were now competing for land and resources. The next chapter will examine the aftermath of the Louisiana Purchase and European exploration in Oklahoma. It will also trace the origins of the Five Tribes in the southeastern United States before the federal US government forced them to move west to Indian Territory.

Short Answer Questions

- 1 What factors contributed to the success of the fur trade in Oklahoma?
- 2 Why was the trading post at Three Forks an important hub for trade?
- 3 Provide an example of the cultural exchange that occurred between Osage and French people.
- 4 Identify one way the Louisiana Purchase was a benefit to the United States and one way it was a drawback.
- 5 How was the Doctrine of Discovery used to justify European control of Indigenous lands?

Short Response Questions

- 1 Indigenous groups, the Spanish and French, and the United States all participated in the fur trade. Identify three ways the fur trade contributed to cultural exchange. In your response be sure to include examples from the text to support your answer.
- 2 How did the French presence and the Spanish presence in present-day Oklahoma differ during this period? How were they the same? In your response, be sure to include examples from the text to support your answer.