

Chickasaw Cession – History

The history of the Chickasaw Cession runs from 1832 to the present. A treaty of cession was made and entered into by General John Coffee, who was duly authorized by the President of the United States, and the whole Chickasaw Nation, in General Council assembled at the Council House, on October 20, 1832. The results of this treaty ceded the lands north of a line drawn from the southwest corner of Tunica County to the northwest corner of Lowndes County, embracing in whole or in part 24 counties. Terms of this treaty specified that lands should be surveyed and sold at an agreed upon minimum price; proceeds from which were to go to the Chickasaw Indian Tribe. This treaty is known as the Pontotoc Creek Treaty and was ratified on March 1, 1833, after which the immediate survey was authorized, and land sales begun. As news spread that cheap land was available, it appears that buyers came, and land sales were rapid, and it also appears that these rapid transactions contributed to the neglecting of sixteenth section reservation for the benefit of township schools. This mistake was noted and the United States Government, in an effort to correct this error, issued lands in lieu of those sold sixteenth sections in various parts of the State, most of which being given from lands the government owned in the Delta counties.

The total amount of land ceded in the Chickasaw Purchase was 6,283,804 acres. The 36th part of this amount was 174,555 acres, being the amount of land given in lieu of those sixteenth section sales. A review of the original survey approved February 8, 1838, reestablished the north boundary approximately three miles south of the Tennessee state line and reduced the number of acres to 6,071,169.2, but apparently the amount of lieu land remained constant. The Mississippi Legislature in 1848 authorized a 99-year lease “renewable forever” at a price not less than \$6 per acre; the proceeds to be a charge upon the State to be held in trust. The total sale yielded approximately \$1,047,330. The 1856 legislature authorized the use of these funds at eight percent interest to be paid to the counties in the Chickasaw Cession on a per acre basis. Loans were made to various railroad companies at an interest of eight percent. A legislative act in 1863 authorized the railroads to pay their indebtedness in gold, silver, or treasury notes of the State into the State Treasury to be used to defray ordinary state expenses. In so doing, the state bound itself to pay the interest to the various counties in the Chickasaw Cession. The railroad companies eventually defaulted in payment or made settlements with worthless paper resulting in almost a total loss. Since this time, the State Legislature has appropriated monies representing the amount of interest lost due to these investment failures; however, the amount of interest has been reduced to six percent since enactment of the 1890 Mississippi Constitution, Section 212. The amount of this Chickasaw Cession school money appropriated by the legislature annually is \$62,191. (See Chapter 87 of the 1984 Laws.) This amount is disbursed in equal payments on May 1 and November 1. The above amount represents approximately 36¢ per acre per year paid to the counties in lieu of possible returns that could be realized if the sixteenth sections in the Chickasaw District were still available for the utilization of township schools.