A State Denied

Trace how a federal law shaped a statehood movement.

OKH.C.4.1 "Describe the effects of the Curtis Act of 1898 and evaluate the outcome of the Indian-led movement to secure a separate statehood for Indian Territory, summarizing major features of the proposed state of Sequoyah's constitution."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two effects of the Curtis Act, circle three features of Sequoyah's proposed constitution, and number the steps that show what happened to the statehood plan. Use your marks to explain the movement's outcome.

The Plan for Sequoyah

1. In 1898, Congress passed the Curtis Act as the United States pushed to open Indian Territory to non-Native settlement. The law weakened the governments of the Five Tribes: the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole nations. It abolished their tribal courts and extended federal authority over matters they had handled themselves. It also advanced the division of land held by tribes into individual allotments, making remaining land available for others. These changes reduced tribal control over land and law. For many citizens, a future inside one large state now seemed likely, even though they had not chosen that path.

2. In 1905, delegates from Indian Territory met in Muskogee to draft a constitution for a proposed state called Sequoyah. Many delegates were leaders of the Five Tribes. Their plan offered an alternative to joining Indian Territory with Oklahoma Territory. The constitution proposed an elected governor, a legislature with two chambers, and a court system. It included a bill of rights and provisions for public schools. These features aimed to make Sequoyah a functioning state under the United States Constitution, not to restore the separate tribal governments the Curtis Act had weakened. Voters in Indian Territory approved the proposal by a large margin.

3. A vote in Indian Territory could not create a state on its own. Congress had to admit it, and Congress did not approve the Sequoyah plan. National leaders favored joining Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory in one state instead. Oklahoma entered the Union in 1907. The movement therefore failed to win separate statehood, despite strong support at home. Its constitution still showed that Indian Territory's leaders could draft a detailed plan for self-government within the federal system. Yet Oklahoma's admission did not undo the Curtis Act or return the Five Tribes' former control over courts and land.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Curtis Act change the Five Tribes' control over courts and land?

2. Choose two features of Sequoyah's proposed constitution. How would each help the proposed state govern?

3. Why did voter approval not result in a separate state of Sequoyah?

4. Did Oklahoma's admission in 1907 meet the movement's goal? Use evidence from the passage to explain.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write an 80 to 110 word museum label judging whether the Sequoyah movement was a success, a failure, or both. Explain one effect of the Curtis Act, name two features of the proposed constitution, and weigh voter support against the outcome in 1907.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two effects of the Curtis Act, circle three features of Sequoyah's proposed constitution, and number the steps that show what happened to the statehood plan. Use your marks to explain the movement's outcome. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Curtis Act change the Five Tribes' control over courts and land?	**It abolished their tribal courts and advanced the division of tribal land into individual allotments, reducing tribal control over law and land.**
2	Choose two features of Sequoyah's proposed constitution. How would each help the proposed state govern?	**An elected governor would lead the state government, and a two-chamber legislature would make laws. Accept other passage-based features with sound explanations.**
3	Why did voter approval not result in a separate state of Sequoyah?	**Congress had to admit the state but did not approve the plan. National leaders favored combining Indian Territory with Oklahoma Territory.**
4	Did Oklahoma's admission in 1907 meet the movement's goal? Use evidence from the passage to explain.	**No. The movement sought separate statehood for Indian Territory, but it was joined with Oklahoma Territory. Admission also did not restore the Five Tribes' former control over courts and land.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Sequoyah movement was both a political defeat and a demonstration of planning. The Curtis Act abolished the Five Tribes' courts, reducing their power to decide legal matters. In response, Indian Territory leaders drafted a constitution with an elected governor and a two-chamber legislature. They also included a bill of rights and public schools, showing how their proposed state would operate. Voters approved the plan by a large margin, but Congress did not admit Sequoyah. Instead, Indian Territory joined Oklahoma Territory in the state of Oklahoma in 1907. The movement showed local support for separate statehood, but it did not produce the state its supporters sought.

Accept a judgment of success, failure, or both if it accurately weighs local support and constitutional planning against Congress's rejection and the creation of a combined state. Constitutional features and Curtis Act effects must match the passage.