

Indian Territory and the Weelaunee Forest

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



INDIAN TERRITORY. (Class. 1, 1864.)
 The total surface of the Five Civilized Tribes and the lands of the Choctaw Agency from the present Indian Territory. All lands except the lands of the original Indian territory are considered under the class of Indian Territory.

THE LANDS OF THE FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES. (Class. 1, 1864.)
 Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, Delaware, Seminole, and Shawnee.

THE LANDS OF THE CHOCTAW AGENCY. (Class. 1, 1864.)
 The lands of the Choctaw Agency, 1,500,000 acres, including 1,000,000 acres of the Five Civilized Tribes, and the remainder of the Indian Territory, 1864.

THE LANDS OF THE WAGON WHEEL AGENCY. (Class. 1, 1864.)
 The lands of the Wagon Wheel Agency, 1,000,000 acres, including 1,000,000 acres of the Five Civilized Tribes, and the remainder of the Indian Territory, 1864.

THE LANDS OF THE WICHITA AGENCY. (Class. 1, 1864.)
 The lands of the Wichita Agency, 1,000,000 acres, including 1,000,000 acres of the Five Civilized Tribes, and the remainder of the Indian Territory, 1864.

THE LANDS OF THE YUKON AGENCY. (Class. 1, 1864.)
 The lands of the Yukon Agency, 1,000,000 acres, including 1,000,000 acres of the Five Civilized Tribes, and the remainder of the Indian Territory, 1864.

THE LANDS OF THE DELAWARE AGENCY. (Class. 1, 1864.)
 The lands of the Delaware Agency, 1,000,000 acres, including 1,000,000 acres of the Five Civilized Tribes, and the remainder of the Indian Territory, 1864.

THE LANDS OF THE SEMINOLE AGENCY. (Class. 1, 1864.)
 The lands of the Seminole Agency, 1,000,000 acres, including 1,000,000 acres of the Five Civilized Tribes, and the remainder of the Indian Territory, 1864.

THE LANDS OF THE SHAWNEE AGENCY. (Class. 1, 1864.)
 The lands of the Shawnee Agency, 1,000,000 acres, including 1,000,000 acres of the Five Civilized Tribes, and the remainder of the Indian Territory, 1864.

During the Summer of 2021, activists uncovered a plan created by Atlanta City to bulldoze parts of the a forest in South Atlanta. In it's place, a massive police training facility would be erected. Part of which would include a mock city for the use of training police in the art of urban warfare. This has earned the project the nickname of Cop City. Since that uncovering, an international campaign has ensued to fight against the construction of Cop City. It remains an autonomous, grassroots campaign that fights on many fronts from phone zaps to marches to music festivals to tree sitting to acts of sabotage against construction equipment.

The fight against Cop City will affect the entire world. This is because police tactics are commonly shared among different police forces across the globe through police exchange programs. The police exchange program between Israel and Atlanta City is particularly notorious. This has coincided with Atlanta City PD becoming increasingly militarized, violent, and lethal. If such a massive police facility were to be completed, police exchange programs would not just continue they would accelerate. The tactics developed in Cop City would be exported to other states in the US, to Israel, and beyond.

All in all, the fight to stop Cop City represents many different political issues. As was covered in the previous paragraph, it is a fight against international police militarization. It is also a fight against environmental racism. Atlanta City has the greatest density of tree canopy of any American city and trees provide notable benefits to urban environments such as beauty, green spaces, and measurably cooler outside environments. From the perspective of combating climate change, a mature forest is also important for capturing and storing carbon. Clearing this ecosystem would go a long way towards making a city which comprises of 50% Black residents even more inhospitable due to the aforementioned rise in militarized policing as well as the increased temperatures. The loss of the forest in South Atlanta

would also deprive residents in that area of a large green space employed by many.

"We feel the strong need to insist on our usage of the word 'history' as something more than an abstract narrative. It is flesh and blood, the tales and songs of joy and sorrow and pain told by the people who lived it, and not just the numerical record keeping of the structures that caused ongoing suffering which still benefit from this abstraction. It is common to argue for preserving history for its own sake, which certainly is useful and laudable. We want to argue for preservation on the basis of its material effects on the people of the past and the present, and to demonstrate the direct continuity of control of these structures over the people they affect, and the repeating patterns of rhetoric used to justify it."

—*A Brief History of the Atlanta City Prison Farm*,
Atlanta City Press Collective

The concept of Indian Territory developed over the 19th Century. It was originally designated in The Great Plains (Oklahoma, Nebraska, Kansas, and parts of Iowa), a region that was largely considered uninhabitable at the time. The Great Plains sometimes went by another name: The Great American Desert. A botanist named Edwin James bluntly remarked that Oklahoma should, "forever remain the unmolested haunt of the native hunter, the bison, the prairie wolf and the marmot." By the 20th Century, Indian Territory had solidified as a concept and had shrunk to the Eastern portion of Oklahoma Territory. However, it should be noted that many 20th Century Historians referred to Oklahoma Territory pre statehood as Indian Territory. History shows that the process of forced removal was a deliberate effort on the part of the United States to displace the people indigenous to Turtle

Island from the land European settlers saw as desirable. When settler colonial interests found use for Oklahoma, settlers expanded to that land too.

Many activists have taken to calling the forest in South Atlanta Weelaunee Forest after the river which runs through it - changing names to reflect a region's history is an important exercise but it cannot stop there. One such important development in the fight against Cop City has been the involvement of Mvskoke activists. In late November 2021, Mvskoke people from Oklahoma returned to the Weelaunee Forest in order to host a stomp dance. This migration is the first of its kind. In March 2023, Mvskoke activists delivered an eviction notice to the mayor of Atlanta City calling for the end of any development in Weelaunee Forest.

The inclusion of Mvskoke people in defending the forest is important because the legacy of genocide perpetrated by the United States remains unbroken. Until that is no longer the case, it is up to activists to disrupt the status quo and confront this legacy. This cannot be done without the direct involvement and support of those who have been victimized by this legacy.

The battle against cop city has grown into a complex and exciting movement fighting for racial justice, environmentalism, and decolonization. The completion of this project would have widespread consequences and is relevant to everyone. However, for Oklahoma, it has a particular relevance to a land that is still used to concentrate a great deal of indigenous people who were forcibly displaced from their ancestral lands.

Eviction Notice Delivered by Mvskoke Activists to
Mayor Andre Dickens:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attention: Mayor Andre Dickens and the Atlanta City Council

Andre Dickens, Mayor and the Atlanta City Council
68 Mitchell St SW
Atlanta, GA 30303
United States

Contemporary Mvskoke People are now making the journey back to our homelands, and hereby give notice to Mayor Andre Dicken, the Atlanta City Council, the Atlanta Police Department, the Atlanta Police Foundation, the Dekalb County Sheriff's office, and so-called "Cop City" that you must immediately vacate Mvskoke homelands and cease violence and policing of Indigenous and Black people in Mvskoke lands. We also ask for an independent investigation into the assassination of our relative Tortuguita and that the trumped up charges be dropped against Weelaunee Forest defenders.

According to the history of Mvskoke Peoples, we originated in so-called Georgia near the Ocese Creek in the valley of the Ocmulgee River. As individual Tribal Nations, we lived as stewards and in relationship to this land for more than 13,000 years until the illegitimate state of Georgia negotiated with the tyrant Andrew Jackson for the militarized forced removal of Mvskokes and Cherokee relatives to Indian Territory in Oklahoma. The state of Georgia has been operating illegitimately and without the consent of its original peoples ever since.

Georgia is the birthplace of oppressive policing, originating with Indigenous genocide and the Trail of Tears and the capture and

enslavement of African descendants seeking freedom. Our ancestors who are buried here continue to suffer while the City of Atlanta and the State of Georgia deploy the very same escalated militarized tactics against Black, Indigenous and people of the global majority that were used in Indigenous genocide and Black enslavement. The state and the City of Atlanta have a historical, moral, and legal obligation to cease the clearing of trees and land and to cease developing militarized weaponized policing.

Since the 1832 Trail of Tears, where nearly half of our people were brutally murdered by the predecessors of the very same entities seeking to establish a massive “cop city,” the colonial presence of the state and local governments of Georgia and police have unjustly denied Mvskoke people access to our homelands. As ceremonial people, we have come home to gather medicines, have ceremony, and be welcomed by our ancestors. This is impossible for us when Atlanta and Dekalb County undertake plans to build a massively oppressive militarized policing facility within what is known as the Weelaunee forest (paying homage to the Mvskoke description of the South River, Ue Lane or “yellow water”). For us as Mvskoke peoples to have a safe homeland to return to, the “cop city” project must immediately be stopped. Cop city cannot be built in the Weelaunee forest, in the city of Atlanta, in the state of Georgia or anywhere in the Mvskoke homelands. Cop city cannot be built at all.

As the original relatives of this land and as ceremonial Mvskoke people, we stand in solidarity with the Black residents of Atlanta in opposition to continued genocide via cop city.

In solidarity,

Mekko Chebon, Mvskoke Ceremonial Leader
Fuswvlke (Tiger)

T. Gouge (Ecovlke)

hôbEthlE

Nokvs Holate

Jordan Harmon, Mvskoke Creek, Ceyaha descendant

Reverend Keyanna Jones

Kauma Franklin, Community Movement Builders

Yonasda Lonewolf, Indigenous Peoples Movementu

Support Victor Pueres

"Victor is an Indigenous land defender who has spent much of his adult life caring for the water, for the land, and for his elders.

On March 5, 2023, Victor was arrested at the South River Music Festival. Victor was unloading camping equipment from his truck with his dog inside when heavily armed police charged at him from the woods, violently assaulted him, and hauled him to jail. After spending months inside DeKalb County without bail set or being indicted for a crime, he has now been transferred to an ICE facility where he again sits without bail.

Victor has given so much to so many throughout his life — please stand with him and demand his freedom!"

Visit FREEVICTOR.ORG for updates on his situation.

You can send letters to Victor via this address:

Victor Puertas
095610252
6B 215B
P.O. Box 248
Lumpkin, GA 31815

Use notebook paper and pen. Include a return address on both the envelope and in the letter.



REST IN POWER TORTUGUITA

APRIL 23, 1996 – JANUARY 18, 2023

MURDERED BY GEORGIA STATE PATROL



INDIGENOUS ANARCHIST, LOVING PARTNER, DEAR FRIEND, FOREST DEFENDER, TRAINED MEDIC, BRAVE SOUL AND SO MUCH MORE.

TORT DIED A REVOLUTIONARY DEATH. THEY DID NOT DIE IN VAIN BUT FOR THE MOVEMENT TO END POLICE MILITARIZATION AND PROTECT OUR FOREST. IN TORT'S NAME, WE CONTINUE TO FIGHT TO DEFEND THE WEELAUNEE FOREST AND STOP COP CITY. WITH LOVE, RAGE AND A COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER'S SAFETY AND WELL-BEING.

**JUSTICE FOR TORTUGUITA
FIGHT LIKE HELL FOR THE DEAD AND LIVING
FROM ATLANTA AND BEYOND, WE ARE ALL FOREST DEFENDERS**

DEFENDTHEATLANTAFOREST.COM

Sources:

Indian Territory: <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entryname=INDIAN%20TERRITORY>

Creek (Mvskoke): <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=CR006>

Westward Expansion: <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=WE021>

Muscogee (Creek) tribal members migrate to homelands 200 years after ancestors' forced removal: <https://www.mainlinezine.com/muscogee-creek-tribal-members-migrate-to-homelands-200-years-after-ancestors-forced-removal/>

Eviction Notice from the Mvskoke People: <https://defendtheatlantaforest.org/2023/03/10/eviction-notice-from-the-mvskoke-people/>

U.S. Police are Being Trained by Israel—And Communities of Color Are Paying the Price: <https://progressive.org/latest/us-police-trained-by-israel-communities-of-color-paying-price-shahshahani-cohen-191007/>

Mvskoke protesters deliver eviction notice to stop “Cop City” on Georgia homelands: <https://www.mvskokemedia.com/mvskoke-protesters-deliver-eviction-notice-to-stop-cop-city-on-georgia-homelands/>

A Brief History of the Atlanta City Prison Farm: <https://defendtheatlantaforest.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/OAPF-history-zine.pdf>

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Sunrise Distro

