

The Early History of the O'odham People



<http://www.tonation-nsn.gov/history-culture/>

Historically, the O'odham (pronounced aw-aw-thum) inhabited a huge area of land in the southwest, extending South to Sonora, Mexico, north to Central Arizona (just north of Phoenix, Arizona), west to the Gulf of California, and east to the San Pedro River. This land base was known as the Papagueria and it had been home to the O'odham for thousands of years.



From the early 18th Century, the O'odham land was occupied by foreign governments. With the independence of the Republic of Mexico, O'odham fell

under Mexican rule. Then, in 1853, through the Gadsden Purchase, O'odham land was divided almost in half, between the United States of America and Mexico.

The Gadsden purchase created a border that has come to affect the O'odham in many ways, because immigration laws prevent the O'odham from crossing the border freely. On countless occasions, the United States Border Patrol has detained and deported members of the O'odham Nation who were simply traveling through their own traditional lands. Currently, O'odham members must produce passports and border identification cards to enter into the United States.

Additionally, the division of O'odham lands has resulted in an artificial division of O'odham society. The O'odham today are enrolled into four federally recognized tribal governments. The Tohono O'odham Nation, the Gila River Indian Community, the Ak-Chin Indian Community, and the Salt River (Pima Maricopa) Indian community. Each band is now politically and geographically distinct and separate. All of the groups still speak the O'odham language, which derives from the Uto-Aztecan language group, although each group has varying dialects.



Show what you know, a check for understanding



1. How do you pronounce O'odham? _____
2. Fill in the blanks: South to _____ north to _____
_____ (just north of Phoenix, Arizona), west to the _____,
and east to the _____
3. The name of the land base that has been home to the O'odham for thousands of years. _____
4. From the early 18th Century, the O'odham land was occupied by (circle one):
 - a) local governments
 - b) foreign governments
 - c) allied forces
5. What caused the O'odham to fall under Mexican rule? _____

6. Identify the cause and effect of the event that occurred in 1853 _____

7. List the 4 federally recognized tribes that resulted from Gadsden Purchase:
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____

