Department of Chahta Immi’s Mission Statement:

Chahta Immi toksali at nanah mihchachikat, Chahta Immi atokma anokfokkichit, annowachit, achonnachit, hayakachit isht okilayachih.

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians ©2011
Art tells a great deal about what they wore, believe, made, and the activities they engaged in. BIRD-MAN: half human, half bird figure with a ceremonial baton in one hand and a severed head in the other, a waist pouch is suspended from his belt (medicine bag) wearing a feather cape, headdress, ear spools, a lightning whelk shell pendant, beaded anklets, bracelets, and shoulder tattoos. His half flesh, half skull feathered headdress & cloak wrapped around him like burials. The Peregrine Falcon and his forked eye motif fill Mississippian religious art.

Of the three types of Choctaw dances genre’s (Animal, War and Social), Animal dances represent the largest number surviving today (Snake, Raccoon, Duck, Turkey, Quail, Turtle, Tick, Mosquito). Many other dances have been documented but are no longer practiced (Horn, Owl, Bison, Bear, Eagle and Alligator).

The Alligator dance was described by Bartram, 1791, was one that participants wore masks. In this dance “They have masks made like the head of this animal, one or two distinguishing themselves thus, while five or six others take masks of different animals which the alligator commonly eats, and then they make a thousand grotesque antics.”

The use of animal masks has been mentioned in the "Nittak Hollo Cito", a community Christmas gift giving event and in the telling of animal stories which have long been used as fable, to teach lessons of life.