



Department of Chahta
Immi's Mission Statement:

Chahta Immi toksali at
nanah mihchachikat,
Chahta Immi àtokma
anokfokkichit, annowachit,
achonnachit, hayakachit
isht oklilayachih.



DEPARTMENT OF CHAHTA IMMI

"Lifeways of the Choctaw People"

Tribal Archives

Choctaw Museum

Cultural Affairs

Tribal Language

Special Projects/ Media

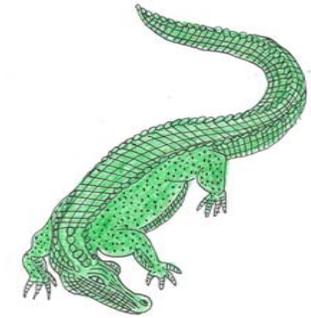
Chahta Immi Cultural Center

The mission of the Department of Chahta Immi is to inspire, promote, embrace, and enhance the Cultural heritage of the Choctaw People.

* For more information please call (601) 663-7506 or the MBCI Office of Public Information at (601) 663-7532 and visit the MBCI website: www.choctaw.org



The Alligator



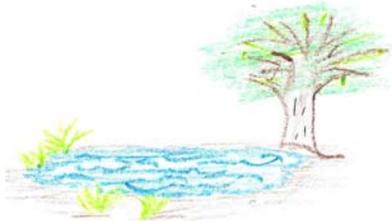
and the Hunter



The Alligator and the Hunter



"My Brother", said the hunter.
"I pity you". Then the alligator spoke in a voice so weak that the hunter could barely hear it.
"Is there water nearby?" said the alligator.
"Yes" said the hunter. "There is a deep pool of clear cool water not far from here. It is just beyond that small stand of trees to the west. There the springs never dry up and the water always run. If you go to that place, you will survive." "I cannot travel there by myself," said the alligator. "I am too weak. Come close so I can talk to you. I will not harm you. Help me and I will also help you." The hunter was afraid of the great alligator, but he came a bit closer. As soon as he was close, the alligator spoke again.



"I know that you are a hunter but the deer always escape from you. If you help me, I will make you a great hunter. I will give you the power to kill many deer." This sounded good to the hunter, but he still feared the alligator's great jaws. "My brother," the hunter said, "I believe that you will help me, but you are still an alligator. I will carry you to that place, but you must allow me to bind your legs and bind your jaws so that you can do me no harm."



Immediately the alligator rolled over to its back and held up its legs. "Do as you wish, " the alligator said. The hunter bound the alligator's jaws firmly with his sash. He made a bark strap and bound the alligator's legs together. Then, with his great strength, he lifted the big alligator to his shoulders and carried it to the deep cool water where the springs never dried. He placed the alligator on its back close to the water and he untied its feet.



He untied the alligator's jaws, but still held those jaws together with one hand. Then he jumped back quickly. The alligator rolled into the pool and dove underwater. It stayed under a long time and then came up. Three more times the alligator dove, staying down longer each time. At last it came to the surface and floated there, looking up at hunter, who was seated high on the bank.

"You have done as you said you would," said the alligator. "You have saved me. Now I shall help you also. Listen closely to me now and you will become a great hunter. Go now into the woods with your bow and arrows. Soon you will meet a small doe. That doe has not yet grown large enough to have young ones. Do not kill that deer. Only greet it and then continue on and you will meet a large doe. That doe has fawns and will continue to have young ones each year. Do not kill that deer. Greet it and continue on and you will be an even greater hunter. Next you will meet a small buck. That buck will father many young ones. Do not kill it. Greet it and continue on and your power as a hunter will become greater. At last you will meet an old buck, larger than any of the others. It's time on Earth has been useful. Now it is ready to give itself to you. Go close to that deer and shoot it. Then greet it and thank it for giving itself to you. Do this and you will be the greatest of hunter."



The hunter did as the alligator said. He went into the forest and met the deer, killing only the old buck. He became the greatest of the hunters in his village. He told this story to his people. Many of them understood the alligator's wisdom and hunted in that way. That is why the Choctaws became great hunters of the deer. As long as they remembered to follow the alligator's teachings, they were never hungry.