



Dawes Card

CHECKLIST

Extracting important information from historical documents is an important skill in genealogy. Always look at copies of documents or the actual documents themselves. Indexes of primary source material usually do not contain all the information that can be gleaned from the document.

Use this checklist to examine Dawes Cards* for Freedmen of the Five Tribes: Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, Creek, and Cherokee. Dawes cards categorized as freedmen minor cards are slightly different than those categorized separately. Those minor cards are covered in a separate checklist.

- Application Date.** Keep track of this date of the original application in order to make date-related inferences using other information gleaned from the card.
- Applicant Name.** Dawes cards provide the last name and first names of applicants.
- Applicant Age.** Look for the age provided. This should be the age of the applicant on the application date.
- Parent Names.** If parent names are known, they will be on the back of the Dawes card.

- Parents alive or deceased.** If an applicant's parent is deceased the card will say so. So if you are unsure of when a particular applicant's parent died, you can know it was sometime before the application date.
- Slaveholders.** If the applicant or their parents were held in slavery before emancipation, names of slaveholders for the applicant and the applicant's parents are provided on the card.
- Card Number.** This number corresponds to the application file. Sometimes the card number is listed on the field number line.
- Residence and Post Office.** Keep track of these locations. Applicants may be found before and after the Dawes era in these locations.
- Large Stamps on the Card.** Take note of any information indicated that was stamped on the card. Canceled or denied cards still have valuable genealogical information.
- Handwritten notes or remarks.** Read any handwritten remarks in the remarks column or elsewhere on the card. They can provide additional information.