Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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"Oklahoma! Its very name stirs memories of a long-ago Indian civilization."

So begins "Indians of Oklahoma" - a 16-page illustrated booklet published this week as the first of a regional series to be issued by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs. About a dozen more booklets will follow, each devoted to the history and progress of Indians in a particular state or region.

"At least 68 tribes are associated with Oklahoma's history," Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall pointed out. "The State's name, in fact, means 'red people'. We feel that the Oklahoma booklet is the perfect choice as flagship for this new series."

Future booklets will describe the aboriginal peoples of Arizona, North Carolina, New Mexico, Alaska, the Dakotas, Florida and the Gulf Coast, Eastern States, Great Lakes Region, Northwest, Montana and Wyoming, and California, among others.

In addition to informing, the Oklahoma booklet might give the general reader a few surprises. For example:

--No Indian reservations exist in Oklahoma. Most lands passed from tribal to individual Indian ownership before the turn of the century. Today, private lands are "checker boarded" among Indian lands held in trust by the United States for individual Indians and tribes.

--No more than six of Oklahoma's 68 tribes are indigenous to the state. Others were "resettled" there from the East because of pressures exerted by white settlement. Others sought sanctuary in the area of their own accord.

--Only five percent of the original 30 million acres allotted to individual Indians remains in Indian hands. While some owners retained and benefited from their allotments, others sold out for a fraction of the land's value.

The booklet briefly traces the history of Indian migration to the State from other parts of the country, and describes their progress and problems of today. Oklahoma is unique in that most of its Indian people live among the general population and are often not recognizable as Indians apart from other citizens.

Included in the booklet is a map identifying the origin of Oklahoma tribes and 11 photographs of life among the Indians, both today and in the past. Copies are available at 15 cents apiece from Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. A discount of 25 percent is allowed on quantity orders of 100 or more, to be mailed to one address.