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Thirty Choctaw Indian students from Choctaw Central High School, a Bureau of Inc1ian Affairs school at Philadelphia, Miss., sang songs of the Choctaw, Quapaw, Kiowa, Osage, Hopi, Acana Pueblo, and Navajo tribes in their Choctaw costumes in an auditorium of the Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., on May 4.

Their Washington, D.C., appearance followed one before the Southern Division of the Music Educators. National Conference, Norfolk, Va., May 3. To appear before the Music Educators National Conference the group had to be recommended by leading musicians. The Choctaw Chorus was recommended by the Mississippi State Supervisor of Music and the head of the music department of the University of Southern Mississippi.

"The students learned their songs from the Indian chanters of the Choctaw Tribe. “Jimmie Gibson, a Choctaw and principal of Choctaw Central High School, explained before an audience that included bureau of Indian Affairs and other Department of the Interior personnel as well as the public.

Among the distinguished guests at the performance were Miss Wilma Victor, a Choctaw Indian and an Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior, and Phillip Martin, Chairman, Mississippi Choctaw Tribe.

The songs the chorus sang were arranged by Louis W. Ballard, a Quapaw Cherokee Indian who is a music curriculum specialist of the Bureau of Indian Affairs who directs his efforts toward putting American Indian music into Bureau of Indian Affairs classrooms. The group also performed Choctaw dances.

Among the songs the group sang were the Quapaw Peyote Song, Hopi Com Dance Song, Osage Soldier's Song, Ponca War Dance Song, Acana Rain Dance Song, and the Navajo Happiness Song. The chorus was directed by Minnie A. Hand and Cindy Brantley.

Dances included were the Fast War Dance, Turtle Dance, Wedding Dance, Changing Partners, and Walk Dance -- all of the Choctaw Indian Tribe. Drums and rattles accompanied much of the singing and dancing.

The Choctaw choral work is a part of the Title III program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. According to school Principal Gibson, California Achievement rest grades for the pupils have shown a clear correlation between the amount of music instruction received and improvement in reading and language skills.

Choctaw Indians still speak the Choctaw language by preference and learn English as a second language. The Choctaw language lacks many sounds and many concepts common in English. It also contains sounds that are not contained in English and these tend to carry over into English expression.

The music program of the school is · integrated with the language arts and social studies program and music, singing,. Chants, and dancing are orchestrated with literary historical, and social events. The Choctaw chants, dances, and rhythms are taped or recorded for posterity.

Mrs. Minnie Hand, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Choctaw music teacher says: “I have seen the magic of music work for Choctaw children. I have seen them-freed of 'inhibition as they dance, sing, and play small melody instruments. I have seen them lost in the mood of music, but I haven't seen them lost in music that really reached them deep down until I learned the Choctaw music and taught it to them.”

Miss Wilma Victor commenting upon the Washington, D. C. performance, said: “I know of no other Title III program that has excelled the Choctaw Central High School chorus. “ Miss Victor served on the advisory board that authorized the funding of the Choctaw chorus project under the Title III program.