



*Sash* c.1820s  
Probably Choctaw

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Wool and beads  
A.B.C.F.M. Collection  
E25410



#### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

By 1816, the Choctaw tribes living east of the Mississippi River had transferred nearly 8 million acres of land to the U.S. federal government. In exchange, these Native American people were to receive minimal financial compensation as well as Federal protection to remain in the east. At this time, the Choctaw wished to open a school for their children, and in 1819, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions established a school near the Yalobusha River in Mississippi.

However, Andrew Jackson's 1828 presidential campaign stressed his support for Native American Indian removal from east of the Mississippi River. This position was particularly supported by states such as Georgia that desired Native American land and resources. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act and the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, Seminole, and Cherokee were targeted by the government to sign treaties that would relocate tribes to what is now Oklahoma and Kansas. For the displaced Native Americans, migration resulted in disease and death for untold numbers of people heading for the new "Indian Territory."

#### ART HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This predominantly red sash ("eskofatshi") was likely created by a Choctaw woman and worn across the chest by a Choctaw man across their chest. It was collected by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and suggests the artistic tradition of the Choctaw when they were living in Mississippi. As the Choctaw relocated farther west, objects such as this sash would have signaled their tribal identity and perhaps helped them maintain their unique, traditional identity in a new territory.

#### SAMPLE GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Describe the distinctive colors and patterns (and if possible, suggest the materials) apparent in this Sash.
- Why might a tribe make use of these bold patterns to use as one symbol of their tribal identity?
- Who might have worn a sash like this? For what purpose?
- Do you think that purpose might have changed once the Choctaw were removed to new "Indian Territory?"

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Ask students to consider emblems of identity that they wear or that they see in our contemporary culture. Why are these worn? Is their significance and meaning as important today as this Sash would have been to its tribal members in the 1800s?