

**(7) Federal Register Notice of Final Determination**

**- July 27, 1981**

## Bureau of Indian Affairs

**Final Determination for Federal  
Acknowledgment of the Tunica-Biloxi  
Indian Tribe of Louisiana**

July 23, 1981.

This notice is published in the exercise of authority delegated by the Secretary of the Interior to the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs by 209 DM 8.

Pursuant to 25 CFR 54.9(h), notice is hereby given that the Assistant

Secretary acknowledges that the Tunica-Biloxi Indian Tribe, c/o Mr. Earl J. Barbry, Sr., P.O. Box 2182, Mansura, Louisiana 71350, exists as an Indian tribe. This notice is based on a determination that the group satisfies the criteria set forth in 25 CFR 54.7.

The contemporary Tunica-Biloxi Indian Tribe is the successor of the historical Tunica, Ofo, and Avoyel tribes, and part of the Biloxi tribe. These have a documented existence back to 1698. The component tribes were allied in the 18th century and became amalgamated into one in the 19th century through common interests and outside pressure from non-Indian cultures.

The tribe and its components have existed as autonomous political units since first contact. The Tunica tribe was governed by a succession of chiefs in a formally organized political system. The position of chief was maintained by the tribe until 1976, when the last chief died. A corporate form of organization was adopted in 1974 and continues to the present.

One hundred and eighty-six of the tribe's 200 members could prove descent from lists of Tunicas and Biloxis prepared in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

No evidence was found that the members of the tribe are members of any other Indian tribes or that the tribe or its members have been terminated or forbidden the Federal relationship by an Act of Congress.

Notice of proposed findings that the Tunica-Biloxi exist as an Indian tribe were published on page 84872 of the Federal Register on December 23, 1980. Interested parties were given 120 days in which to submit factual or legal arguments to rebut evidence used to support the findings that the Tunica-Biloxi Indian Tribe exists as an Indian tribe.

The 120-day comment period ended April 22, 1981 at which time the State of Louisiana requested an extension of the deadline on which to consider additional evidence. Two extensions, totaling 14 days, were subsequently granted by the Deputy Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs (Operations) with the concurrence of the Tunica-Biloxis and their attorneys. As of June 5 when the extension terminated, no new evidence or arguments had been received from the State of Louisiana or any other interested party.

Letters of support of Federal recognition of the Tunica-Biloxis were received from the Jena Band of Choctaws and the Clifton-Choctaw Reservation, Inc. A separate resolution of support was received from an

"assembly of tribal leaders domiciled in the State of Louisiana" and was signed by chairman of the following groups: the federally-recognized Coushatta Tribe; the Clifton-Choctaw, the Jena Band of Choctaw, the Apache Choctaw, the United Houma Nation, Inc., and the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe.

One other comment was received from an individual who concurred with the findings and provided incidental information about the group which was not intended as a rebuttal.

The determination is final and will become effective 60 days from the date of publication, unless the Secretary of the Interior requests the determination be reconsidered pursuant to 25 CFR 54.10.

Roy H. Sampsel,

Deputy Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs.

July 23, 1981.

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