

The Historic Chisholm Trail Medal

The medal is available to anyone who has fulfilled the requirements, which are:

1. Visit the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center in Duncan, OK or the Chisholm Trail Museum in Kingfisher, OK
2. Complete the quiz on the Chisholm Trail provided by either of the museums
3. Restore one of the markers along the trail
4. Hike, bike or horseback ride at least 10 miles along the trail.



The Historic Trail Medal

Historic Chisholm Trail



History

Jesse Chisholm

Jesse Chisholm (1805-1868) was an Indian trader, guide and interpreter. Chisholm became a trader in his mid to late twenties, established trading posts in the Plains Indian country, and quickly established a reputation of fairness and neutrality. Jesse Chisholm knew 14 dialects of the natives' languages, and thus frequently served as a translator between tribes and the state and local governments.



Jesse Chisholm

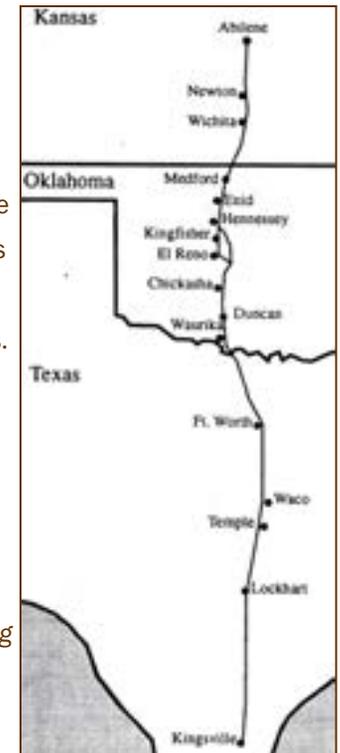
The Chisholm Trail was named after Jesse Chisholm because it followed a route Jesse Chisholm used in order to travel between his trading posts in Wichita, Kansas and Southwest of Oklahoma City.

The Trail

During the Civil War the North had depleted its cattle supply in order to feed its soldiers, while in Texas the cattle had roamed free and multiplied while the ranchers fought for the South. The resulting supply and demand differences made cattle much more valuable in the North than in the South. The difference was so great that while cattle were worth \$4 a head in Texas, they were worth \$40 in the northeast. A man by the name of Joseph McCoy realized the potential in this and in 1867 built stockyards in Abilene, Kansas on the Kansas Pacific Railway. He encouraged ranchers to drive their cattle to his stockyards to be sold up North.

The first to drive cattle to the stockyards on the Chisholm Trail was O.W. Wheeler, who drove 2400 head of cattle with his partners from Texas to Abilene. O.W. Wheeler drove the first of an estimated 5,000,000 head of cattle that were driven on the Chisholm Trail between the years of 1867 and 1884. As the railway worked its way further south cattle drives became shorter in length. They originally ended

in Abilene, Kansas, but later ended in Newton, Wichita, and eventually Caldwell, which was right on the border between Kansas and Oklahoma. With the invention of barbed wire farmers began putting up barbed wire fences to prevent cattle from eating their crops. These developments greatly discouraged cattle drives and by 1887 cattle drives were obsolete due to the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad arriving in Texas.



A map depicting the path of the Chisholm Trail