

NATIONAL  
INDIAN  
GAMING  
COMMISSION

JUN - 9 1995

Floyd E. Leonard, Chief  
Miami Tribe of Oklahoma  
P.O. Box 1326  
Miami, Oklahoma 74355

Clark D. Stewart, President  
Butler National Service Corporation  
8405 Melrose Drive  
Lenexa, Kansas 66214

Dear Chief Leonard and Mr. Stewart:

On April 4, 1995, the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC) affirmed the Chairman's disapproval of the management contract dated October 12, 1993, between the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma (Tribe) and Butler National Service Corporation (Butler), a Delaware corporation. This letter supplements that decision.

On May 12, 1994, the NIGC requested an opinion from the Associate Solicitor, Division of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior, as to whether a restricted Indian allotment in the State of Kansas, known as the Maria Christiana Miami Reserve No. 35, falls within the statutory definition of "Indian lands" for purposes of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). Because of the expertise of the Solicitor's Office in Indian lands questions, the NIGC defers to their opinions.

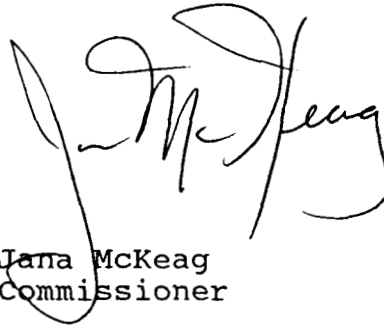
On May 23, 1995, the Solicitor's Office provided the NIGC with an opinion (enclosed) stating that the Maria Christiana tract does not constitute "Indian lands" for purposes of IGRA because the Tribe does not exercise governmental power over the tract. As a result of this determination, the management contract is also disapproved because the proposed gaming site does not qualify as Indian lands.

If you have any questions regarding this supplemental decision, please feel free to contact our office at (202) 632-7003.

Sincerely yours,



Harold A. Monteau  
Chairman



Jana McKeag  
Commissioner

cc: Kip Kubin, Esq.  
Payne & Jones  
11000 King, Suite 200  
P.O. Box 25625  
Overland Park, KS 66225-5625

Enclosure



## United States Department of the Interior

### OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR

In reply, please address to:  
Main Interior, Room 6456

MAY 23 1995

Michael D. Cox, General Counsel  
National Indian Gaming Commission  
1850 M Street, NW, Suite 250  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Cox:

On May 12, 1994 your office requested an opinion as to whether a restricted Indian allotment in the State of Kansas known as the Maria Christiana Miami Reserve No. 35 falls within the statutory definition of "Indian lands" for purposes of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act ("IGRA"), 25 U.S.C. §§ 2701-21 (1988).<sup>1</sup> In order to respond to your request, we must determine whether the Christiana allotment in Kansas is subject to the jurisdictional authority of the Tribe for purposes of gaming pursuant to IGRA. For the reasons set forth below, we conclude that the Christiana allotment does not constitute "Indian lands" for purposes of IGRA.

#### Historical Background of the Miami Tribe in Kansas and of the Christiana Allotment

By the Treaty of June 5, 1854, 10 Stat. 1093, the Miami Tribe agreed to cede to the United States most its remaining 500,000 acres of land in Kansas Territory, except 70,640 acres, which the Tribe reserved for its use. The United States agreed to pay the Tribe \$200,000 in 20 annual installments of \$7,500 with the remaining \$50,000 to be invested for the Tribe. The Treaty recognized two groups of Miami Indians: the Western Miami, recognized as the political body of the Tribe; and the Indiana

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<sup>1</sup> IGRA allows Class II and III gaming on "Indian lands." IGRA defines "Indian lands" as:

- (A) all lands within the limits of any Indian reservation; and
- (B) any lands title to which is either held in trust by the United States for the benefit of any Indian tribe or individual or held by any Indian tribe or individual subject to restriction by the United States against alienation and over which an Indian tribe exercises governmental power.

25 U.S.C. § 2703(4) (1994 Supp.).

Miami, consisting of individual Miami Indians who remained in Indiana. Article 4 of the 1854 Treaty provided that no annuities or other interest would be payable, without the consent of the Miami of Indiana, to any person not listed on a corrected list of members agreed to by the Tribe and witnessed by Commissioner Manypenny. Treaty of June 5, 1854, 10 Stat. 1093. The corrected list contained the names of 302 individuals who were permitted to remain in Indiana when the Tribe moved west to Kansas Territory and who were to receive their proportionate individual shares of the annuities due the Tribe. See Id.

In 1857, several families, who were descended from Miami tribal members, including the Frederick DeRome family (the family of Maria Christiana DeRome) petitioned Congress to add their names to the annuity rolls of the Indiana Miamis since they had been excluded from the original list of 302 eligible to remain in Indiana and receive an annuity. The leaders of the Indiana Miamis opposed the inclusion of these individuals on the list of eligible recipients of the annuity payments. See H.R. Rep. No. 3852, 51st Cong., 2d Sess. (1891); H.R. Exec. Doc. No. 23, 49th Cong., 1st Sess. at 14 (1886). Congress directed the Secretary of the Interior to pay annuities to these individuals and to place their names on the annuity roll of the Indiana Miami. Act of June 12, 1858, 11 Stat. 332. Congress further directed the Secretary of the Interior to allot to each of these individuals 200 acres of land out of the 70,640 acres reserved to the Western Miamis by the Treaty of June 5, 1854. Id.

In accordance with the Act, in October of 1858, the Secretary of Interior paid to these individuals a total amount equal to the annuities that had not been paid them in the preceding years, totaling \$18,370.89. The 68 names (5 more names were later added for a total of 73) were then added to the roll of those Indiana Miamis who were eligible to receive annuities.<sup>2</sup> See H.R. Misc. Doc. No. 83, 51st Cong., 2d Sess. (1891). Additionally, beginning in October of 1859, the Secretary of the Interior, as instructed, allotted to each of these 73 individuals 200 acres of land located in Kansas (total 14,533.38 acres) out of the 70,640 acres reserved to the Miami Tribe by the treaty of 1854. See H.R. Misc. Doc. No. 83, 51st Cong., 2d Sess. (1891).

The Maria Christiana tract was allotted from this reserved acreage in 1859. Although most of the Christiana allotment eventually passed out of the hands of the Indian heirs and therefore became

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<sup>2</sup> See H.R. Exec. Doc. No. 23, 49th Cong., 1st Sess. at 14 (1886). Among these are individuals from families named Minnie, Bowers, Harris, La Croix, and DeRome. The DeRome family members included, among others, a father, Frederick, his non-Indian wife, and their infant daughter Maria Christiana DeRome to whom an allotment was given in Kansas.

unrestricted, there remains a 35 acre tract that has remained in restricted status administered by the BIA for the individual owners.<sup>3</sup>

The 73 individuals added to the list by the Secretary of Interior continued to draw annuities at the designated places in Indiana for a number of years from 1859 until 1867. On September 20, 1867, based on the protest of the Indiana Miamis, the Attorney General of the United States issued an opinion which held that the names of these 73 individuals were improperly added to the annuity roll of the Indiana Miamis. He reasoned that the addition of these names violated the express terms of the 1854 treaty which required the consent of the Indiana Miamis before any additions to the roll could be made. Accordingly, in 1867 these individuals were dropped from the list of those entitled to receive a share of the annuities. See 12 Op. Atty. Gen. 236 (1867); S. Misc. Doc. No. 131, 53rd Cong., 3d Sess. (1895).

After these individuals were dropped from the annuity roll of the Indiana Miami, Congress further instructed the Secretary of the Interior to include these individuals on the rolls of the Miami Indians in Kansas if he found them entitled to be included. See Act of March 3, 1873, 17 Stat. 631. However, the Secretary of Interior found that the 73 individuals were not eligible to be included on the roll of the Western Miamis because they did not emigrate with the Tribe but remained in Indiana. See H.R. Rep. No. 3852, 51st Cong., 2d Sess. (1891).

#### The Miami Tribe of Oklahoma

In the Treaty of February 23, 1867, 15 Stat. 513, the Miami Tribe was encouraged to move from Kansas to a reservation established at the Quapaw Agency where they would confederate with several other tribes. The Miami Indians who remained in Kansas were to become United States citizens and surrender tribal membership if they fulfilled certain conditions. Act of March 3, 1873, 17 Stat. 631. Seventy-two tribal members elected to remove to Oklahoma, while those who remained in Kansas severed their tribal relations.

The Western Miamis ceded their remaining land in Kansas and Congress directed the Secretary of Interior to determine which

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<sup>3</sup> The United States, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, has continued to probate this property. In an action to obtain title by adverse possession, the District Court of Kansas partitioned the Maria Christiana allotment and granted clear title to 45 Acres of the allotment to Midwest Investment Properties, Inc. See Midwest Investment Properties, Inc. v. Derome, No. 86-2497-0 (D. Kan., May 3, 1989). The Secretary of Interior is authorized to probate allotted Indian lands when the owner dies intestate. See 25 U.S.C. § 372.

individuals were entitled to share in the resulting funds, including:

[T]hose persons of Miami blood or descent for whom provision was made by the third section of the act of June twelfth, eighteen hundred and fifty-eight, if in the opinion of the Secretary of the Interior the said Indians are entitled to be so included under treaty stipulations.

17 Stat. 631, 632. By letter dated February 11, 1873, the Secretary of the Interior forwarded to Congress a report from the Superintendent of Indian affairs which determined that none of the individuals who had received an allotment pursuant to the June 12, 1858 Act were entitled to share in the proceeds from the sale of the Tribe's land in Kansas. The Commissioner opined that these individuals of Miami blood had not been "recognized as Miamis, either by the tribe in Kansas or by those residing in Indianá, who . . . have never joined the tribe in Kansas, and until now have claimed no benefits from their annuities." See H.R. Exec. Doc. No. 199, 42nd Cong., 3d Sess. (1873). Maria Christiana DeRome had been included in this group and had received her allotment despite the lack of tribal membership in either group.

In addition to refusing to recognize these individuals as members of the Tribe or to share in the proceeds from the sale of lands in Kansas, in 1891 the Western Miamis sued in the United States Court of Claims, seeking reimbursement for their share of erroneous annuity payments made to the 73 individuals. The Tribe also sought reimbursement for the value of land erroneously allotted to these individuals in Kansas Territory, amounting to approximately 14,000 acres. The Court of Claims held that the Western Miamis were entitled to recover the amount of money erroneously paid as back annuities for the 73, as well as the value of the land allotted to these individuals. See The Western Miami Indians v. United States, Ct. Claims No. 1349, Jan. 9, 1891 in H.R. Misc. Doc. No. 83, 51st Cong., 2d Sess. (1891). In 1891 Congress appropriated \$18,370.89 to the Western Miamis to reimburse them for the annuities paid to those not entitled to them. Congress further directed the Secretary of the Treasury to pay the Western Miami Indians \$43,600.14 for 14,533 acres of land which were taken and allotted to persons not entitled to the lands. See 26 Stat. 1000.

In summary, the Christiana allotment was provided to a non-member of the Miami tribe, whose descendants were likewise not afforded tribal membership. It is located in western Kansas in an area ceded by the Tribe to the United States when the Tribe removed to Indian territory, i.e., present day Oklahoma. The Miami Tribe is now located approximately 180 miles from the Christiana allotment.

#### Tribal Jurisdiction under IGRA

Gaming activities on Indian lands are regulated pursuant to the

Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. "Indian lands" are not limited to those located within the boundaries of an Indian reservation. Congress also included trust lands and lands held by any Indian tribe or individual subject to restriction by the United States against alienation, provided, that an Indian tribe "exercises governmental power" over the land. IGRA does not define the circumstances under which a tribe "exercises governmental power" over restricted land. The legislative history of the Act provides no guidance on this issue.

Tribal jurisdiction is generally limited to "Indian country,"<sup>4</sup> but in enacting IGRA, Congress limited gaming to "Indian lands," which is not synonymous with "Indian country." Congress has used the definition of "Indian country" in numerous statutes. See e.g. 16 U.S.C. §§ 3371(c), 3377(c); 25 U.S.C. § 450h (a) (3); 25 U.S.C. § 1322 (a); 25 U.S.C. § 1903 (10); 25 U.S.C. § 3202 (8). IGRA's use of the phrase "Indian lands" rather than "Indian country" indicates that IGRA's jurisdictional reach is not identical to statutes which refer to "Indian Country."<sup>5</sup>

Indian tribes are possessed of sovereignty over "their members and

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<sup>4</sup> In 1948, Congress defined "Indian country" as follows:

Except as otherwise provided in sections 1154 and 1156 of this title, the term "Indian country", as used in this chapter, means (a) all land within the limits of any Indian reservation under the jurisdiction of the United States Government, notwithstanding the issuance of any patent, and, including rights-of-way running through the reservation, (b) all dependent Indian communities within the borders of the United States whether within the original or subsequently acquired territory thereof, and whether within or without the limits of a state, and (c) all Indian allotments, the Indian titles to which have not been extinguished, including rights-of-way running through the same.

18 U.S.C. § 1151 (emphasis added).

<sup>5</sup> In 15 U.S.C. § 1175, 64. Stat. 1135, Congress enacted legislation which specifically prohibited gambling devices in Indian country. Congress based the jurisdictional reach of this law on the Indian country definition contained at 18 U.S.C. § 1151. It is therefore evident that had Congress intended IGRA to apply to Indian-owned allotments without regard to the exercise of governmental authority, it could have similarly adopted the Section 1151 definition of Indian country for the IGRA.







