

**Editorial Notes**

## REFERENCES IN TEXT

Act of February 7, 1887, referred to in text, is popularly known as the Indian General Allotment Act. For classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 331 of this title and Tables.

**CHAPTER 10—DESCENT AND DISTRIBUTION;  
HEIRS OF ALLOTTEE**

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**§ 371. Descent of land**

For the purpose of determining the descent of land to the heirs of any deceased Indian under the provisions of section 348 of this title, whenever any male and female Indian shall have cohabited together as husband and wife according to the custom and manner of Indian life the issue of such cohabitation shall be, for the purpose aforesaid, taken and deemed to be the legitimate issue of the Indians so living together, and every Indian child, otherwise illegitimate, shall for such purpose be taken and deemed to be the legitimate issue of the father of such child: *Provided*, That the provisions of this Act shall not be held or construed as to apply to the lands commonly called and known as the "Cherokee Outlet."

(Feb. 28, 1891, ch. 383, § 5, 26 Stat. 795.)

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## REFERENCES IN TEXT

This Act, referred to in text, is act Feb. 28, 1891, ch. 383, 26 Stat. 794, as amended, which enacted sections 336, 371, and 397 of this title and amended section 331 of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Tables.

## CODIFICATION

A further provision of section 5 of act Feb. 28, 1891, "that no allotment of lands shall be made or annuities

of money paid to any of the Sac and Fox of the Missouri Indians who were not enrolled as members of said tribe on January first, eighteen hundred and ninety; but this shall not be held to impair or otherwise affect the rights or equities of any person whose claim to membership in said tribe is now pending and being investigated," was repealed by a provision of the Indian Appropriation Act of Mar. 2, 1895, ch. 188, § 1, 28 Stat. 902.

**§ 372. Ascertainment of heirs of deceased allottees; settlement of estates; sale of lands; deposit of Indian moneys**

When any Indian to whom an allotment of land has been made, or may hereafter be made, dies before the expiration of the trust period and before the issuance of a fee simple patent, without having made a will disposing of said allotment as hereinafter provided, the Secretary of the Interior, upon notice and hearing, under the Indian Land Consolidation Act [25 U.S.C. 2201 et seq.] or a tribal probate code approved under such Act and pursuant to such rules as he may prescribe, shall ascertain the legal heirs of such decedent, and his decisions shall be subject to judicial review to the same extent as determinations rendered under section 373 of this title. If the Secretary of the Interior decides the heir or heirs of such decedent competent to manage their own affairs, he shall issue to such heir or heirs a patent in fee for the allotment of such decedent; if he shall decide one or more of the heirs to be incompetent, he may, in his discretion, cause such lands to be sold: *Provided*, That if the Secretary of the Interior shall find that the lands of the decedent are capable of partition to the advantage of the heirs, he may cause the shares of such as are competent, upon their petition, to be set aside and patents in fee to be issued to them therefor. All sales of lands allotted to Indians authorized by this or any other Act shall be made under such rules and regulations and upon such terms as the Secretary of the Interior may prescribe, and he shall require a deposit of 10 per centum of the purchase price at the time of the sale. Should the purchaser fail to comply with the terms of sale prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior, the amount so paid shall be forfeited; in case the balance of the purchase price is to be paid on such deferred payments, all payments made, together with all interest paid on such deferred installments, shall be so forfeited for failure to comply with the terms of the sale. All forfeitures shall inure to the benefit of the allottee or his heirs. Upon payment of the purchase price in full, the Secretary of the Interior shall cause to be issued to the purchaser patent in fee for such land: *Provided*, That the proceeds of the sale of inherited lands shall be paid to such heir or heirs as may be competent and held in trust subject to use and expenditure during the trust period for such heir or heirs as may be incompetent as their respective interests shall appear: *Provided further*, That the Secretary of the Interior is authorized, in his discretion, to issue a certificate of competency, upon application therefor, to any Indian, or in case of his death to his heirs, to whom a patent in fee containing restrictions on alienation has been or may hereafter be issued, and such certificate shall have the effect of removing the restrictions on alienation contained

in such patent: *Provided further*, That any United States Indian agent, superintendent, or other disbursing agent of the Indian Service may deposit Indian moneys, individual or tribal, coming into his hands as custodian, in such bank or banks as he may select: *Provided*, That the bank or banks so selected by him shall first execute to the said disbursing agent a bond, with approved surety, in such amount as will properly safeguard the funds to be deposited. Such bonds shall be subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.

(June 25, 1910, ch. 431, §1, 36 Stat. 855; Mar. 3, 1928, ch. 122, 45 Stat. 161; Apr. 30, 1934, ch. 169, 48 Stat. 647; Pub. L. 101-301, §12(c), May 24, 1990, 104 Stat. 211; Pub. L. 106-462, title I, §106(b)(1), Nov. 7, 2000, 114 Stat. 2007.)

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#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Indian Land Consolidation Act, referred to in text, is title II of Pub. L. 97-459, Jan. 12, 1983, 96 Stat. 2517, which is classified generally to chapter 24 (§2201 et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 2201 of this title and Tables.

This Act, referred to in text, is act June 25, 1910, ch. 431, 36 Stat. 855, which enacted sections 47, 93, 151, 202, 337, 344a, 351, 352, 353, 372, 403, 406, 407, and 408 of this title, section 6a-1 of former Title 41, Public Contracts, and section 148 of Title 43, Public Lands, and amended sections 191, 312, 331, 333, and 336 of this title and sections 104 and 107 of former Title 18, Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure. Sections 104 and 107 of former Title 18 were repealed and restated as sections 1853 and 1856 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, by act June 25, 1948, ch. 645, 62 Stat. 683. Section 6a-1 of former Title 41 was repealed and restated as section 6102(e) of Title 41, Public Contracts, by Pub. L. 111-350, §§3, 7(b), Jan. 4, 2011, 124 Stat. 3677, 3855. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Tables.

#### AMENDMENTS

2000—Pub. L. 106-462 substituted “under the Indian Land Consolidation Act or a tribal probate code approved under such Act and pursuant to such rules” for “under such rules” in first sentence.

1990—Pub. L. 101-301 substituted “his decisions shall be subject to judicial review to the same extent as determinations rendered under section 373 of this title” for “his decision thereon shall be final and conclusive”.

1934—Act Apr. 30, 1934, substituted “, all payments made, together with all interest paid on such deferred installments, shall be so forfeited” for “a further amount, not exceeding 15 per centum of the purchase price together with all interest paid on such deferred installments may be so forfeited”, inserted “allottee or his” in sentence beginning “All forfeitures shall inure” and struck out “hereafter” from last proviso.

1928—Act Mar. 3, 1928, inserted in introductory text “or may hereafter be made,” after “has been made,” “together with all interest paid on such deferred installments” after “purchase price”, “or may hereafter be” after “restrictions on alienation has been”, and “hereafter” in last proviso, and substituted “by this or any other Act” for “by any Act”.

### § 372-1. Repealed. Pub. L. 101-301, § 12(a), May 24, 1990, 104 Stat. 211

Section, Pub. L. 90-28, title I, June 24, 1967, 81 Stat. 69, provided that, on and after June 24, 1967, hearing officers appointed for Indian probate work did not have to be appointed pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act, as amended. Similar provisions were contained in the following prior appropriation acts:

May 31, 1966, Pub. L. 89-435, title I, 80 Stat. 181.  
 June 28, 1965, Pub. L. 89-52, title I, 79 Stat. 185.  
 July 7, 1964, Pub. L. 88-356, title I, 78 Stat. 284.  
 July 26, 1963, Pub. L. 88-79, title I, 77 Stat. 107.  
 Aug. 9, 1962, Pub. L. 87-578, title I, 76 Stat. 345.  
 Aug. 3, 1961, Pub. L. 87-122, title I, 75 Stat. 256.  
 May 13, 1960, Pub. L. 86-455, title I, 74 Stat. 104.  
 June 23, 1959, Pub. L. 86-60, title I, 73 Stat. 92.  
 June 4, 1958, Pub. L. 85-439, title I, 72 Stat. 155.  
 July 1, 1957, Pub. L. 85-77, title I, 71 Stat. 257.  
 June 13, 1956, ch. 380, title I, 70 Stat. 257.  
 June 16, 1955, ch. 147, title I, 69 Stat. 141.  
 Aug. 26, 1954, ch. 935, Ch. VII, 68 Stat. 813.

### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

#### SAVINGS PROVISION

Pub. L. 101-301, §12(b), May 24, 1990, 104 Stat. 211, provided that: “Hearing officers heretofore appointed to preside over Indian probate proceedings pursuant to the proviso repealed by subsection (a) [25 U.S.C. 372-1], having met the qualifications required for appointment pursuant to section 3105 of title 5, United States Code, shall be deemed to have been appointed pursuant to that section.”

### § 372-2. Indian probate judges

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, for fiscal year 2006 and each fiscal year thereafter, for the purpose of adjudicating Indian probate cases in the Department of the Interior, the hearing requirements of chapter 10 of this title are deemed satisfied by a proceeding conducted by an Indian probate judge, appointed by the Secretary without regard to the provisions of title 5 governing the appointments in the competitive service, for such period of time as the Secretary determines necessary: *Provided*, That the basic pay of an Indian probate judge so appointed may be fixed by the Secretary without regard to the provisions of chapter 51, and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, governing the classification and pay of General Schedule employees, except that no such Indian probate judge may be paid at a level which exceeds the maximum rate payable for the highest grade of the General Schedule, including locality pay.

(Pub. L. 109-54, title I, §108, Aug. 2, 2005, 119 Stat. 522; Pub. L. 112-74, div. E, title I, §111, Dec. 23, 2011, 125 Stat. 1009.)

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#### AMENDMENTS

2011—Pub. L. 112-74 substituted “for fiscal year 2006 and each fiscal year thereafter, for the purpose of adjudicating” for “in fiscal years 2006 through 2010, for the purpose of reducing the backlog of”.

### § 372a. Heirs by adoption

In probate matters under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior, no person shall be recognized as an heir of a deceased Indian by virtue of an adoption—

(1) Unless such adoption shall have been—

(a) by a judgment or decree of a State court;

(b) by a judgment or decree of an Indian court;

(c) by a written adoption approved by the superintendent of the agency having jurisdiction over the tribe of which either the adopted child or the adoptive parent is a