

# Alabama-Coushatta

The Alabama-Coushatta are actually two separate tribes that combined to live together. Neither tribe was originally from Texas. They were forced out of Alabama in the 1780s by settlers who wanted their land, and they settled in Northeast Texas.

The Alabama-Coushatta were a culture of farmers who lived in villages. Before contact with the Europeans, they lived in Indian style houses in large villages. After the settlers arrived, however, this Native American group began building European style houses on European style farms.

These Native American groups farmed corn, beans, squash and other crops. They also hunted deer and gathered berries, roots and nuts in their region. They used bows and arrows to hunt larger animals. One favorite food was bear. To hunt smaller animals like birds and rabbits, they used blow guns made from long lengths of cane.

The Alabama-Coushatta are part of the Southeastern Mound Building cultures. Their culture and government were based on religious beliefs, and ceremonies and traditions were a huge part of their lives. They built huge mounds of dirt and paced a temple or the house of a priest or chief on top. There are thousands of these mounds all over the southern U.S.

Fire was very important to the Alabama-Coushatta, and each house kept a sacred fire burning at all times. At the main temple, there was also a fire that burned constantly.

In 1858, the Alabama-Coushatta were given 1280 acres of land in East Texas, where their reservation is today. In 1955, the U.S. Government dissolved the reservation. Today, approximately 1100 Alabama-Coushatta still live on that tribally owned land near Livingston, Texas.

# Atakapan

The Atakapan lived in an area starting around modern day Houston and going east into Louisiana. Some of them lived along the coast, and others lived farther north near the Caddo territory.

During the summer the Atakapan moved around the Gulf Coast catching fish, crabs and clams in the gulf. They also hunted birds and small game like rabbits. A little farther inland, they could also find bears and deer and gather plants for food. During this season, they lived in temporary camps.

In winter, the Atakapan moved farther inland and made more permanent camps. They would bend sapling trees over to make a frame then cover it with bear skins or grass. This type of crude hut is known as a “wickiup.”

During the fall and winter, many ducks and geese would migrate through the coastal plains and marshes, so the Atakapan would hunt them. The land along the coast here is marshy and not good for growing crops. So the Atakapan were hunters and gatherers, **not** farmers.

All the Atakapans are gone now. They died out from European diseases or were absorbed into other tribes in the middle of the 1800s. We know less about them than most other Native American groups.

# Caddo

The Caddo lived in northeastern Texas in the Piney Woods. This part of Texas has a dense pine forest with lots of hardwood trees. The area gets a good annual rainfall and has many rivers, creek, swamps and lakes.

The Caddo were farmers, because it was the best way to get food in their area. During planting season, all the Caddo gathered from neighboring villages and worked together to plant each field. In this way, the entire Caddo community cooperated to ensure that there was enough food for the next season.

The Caddo also made very fine pottery. Because they lived in the woods, they were able to make many fine wooden tools for farming. They made beautiful polished stone axes, as well. If they needed something that they could not grow, they traded food, tools or pottery with other Native American groups to get it.

Because the Caddo were farmers and didn't have to move around to find food, they were sedentary. They stayed in one place and built houses. Their houses were beehive-shaped, wide at the bottom with a point at the top. The houses were made of wood frames covered with mats of long, dried grasses. These houses are known as "Caddoan mounds".

Caddo groups were organized into confederacies. A confederacy is made up of groups of people who agree to work together for a common goal. The Caddo worked together to plant crops for food and to protect their villages from danger.

By the mid-1800s, the United States had moved the Caddo from Texas to a reservation near Binger, Oklahoma. As reservation is an area of land set aside as a place for Native Americans to live. Today, about 2000 Caddo live there.

Though they do not live in Texas anymore, the Caddo left our state a great gift. The name *Texas* comes from a Caddo word that means "friend."

# Cherokee

The Cherokee lived in the same part of east and northeast Texas as the Caddo. This part of Texas is the western end of a dense pine forest full of oak, hickory and pecan trees. There are several large rivers and many smaller rivers, flowing creeks, springs and lakes.

The Cherokee lived and farmed in small clearings in the pine forest near sources of fresh water. There were no big herds of buffalo in this area, so farming was the best way to get food. The Cherokee were sedentary, because they had no need to move around looking for food or water. They built towns with permanent houses made of logs.

The Cherokee adopted much European culture. They dressed much like the Anglo-American settlers and adopted European lifestyles. Some even owned slaves.

The Cherokee even copied the Europeans by developing a Cherokee alphabet and publishing a Cherokee newspaper. Many of them could read and write during a time when many white men could not.

The Cherokee had a well-organized government. Each Cherokee village had two governments, a White Government and a Red Government. The White Government had a Caucasian Chief, and the Red Government had a Native American Chief. The Red Chief was in charge of giving advice, planning war parties, victory dances, spiritual games and all military purposes. The white leaders got to choose the Red Chief, and were in charge of everything that the Red Government did not handle (such as the problems of the city).

Today, there are still many descendants of the Cherokee living in Texas and Oklahoma.

# Coahuiltecan

There is really no single Coahuiltecan tribe or culture. There were actually over a hundred similar Native American cultures living in the Coahuiltecan region. This region was located in South Texas and northeastern Mexico.

Before the Europeans arrived in Texas, the Coahuiltecan cultures hunted herds of buffalo on the lush grasslands of the South Texas Plains. The men also hunted deer, peccary and rabbits with bows and arrows. Women gathered plants, fruits and roots. There was plenty of food and water. The Coahuiltecan were prosperous and peaceful.

During this time, the nomadic Coahuiltecan cultures lived in temporary camps. They would bend sapling trees over to make a frame then cover it with bear skins or grass to form a hut for shelter. This type of crude hut is known as a “wickiup.”

Around the end of the 1700s, the climate in the Coahuiltecan region began to change. It got much hotter and drier. The grass quit growing, and the streams dried up. The buffalo and other animals left, so there was much less food for a hunting and gathering family. The starving Coahuiltecan began eating whatever they could find, including insects and dirt.

After this climate change, the Coahuiltecan had to move around constantly looking for food. They stopped building much in the way of shelter and mostly slept in the open.

Once the Spanish came and built missions, most of the Coahuiltecan people moved into them in order to have a steady source of food, water and protection. Many married Spanish soldiers and settlers. Today, their descendants live throughout South Texas, but not as Native American bands. The culture and languages of these people are completely gone now.

# Comanche

1 The Comanche were powerful hunters and fighters who lived in Northwest Texas and the Panhandle. The Comanche were nomads who followed the buffalo. Buffalo provided almost everything the families needed to survive: clothing, blankets, food, and hides for their tepees. While the men hunted buffalo, the women would gather plants and other foods they could eat.

2 The Comanche used a wooden frame made of two poles, called a travois, to carry their belongings as they moved around. Originally, they used dogs to pull the travois. Once the Spanish brought horses to Texas, however, the Comanche very quickly learned to ride. This gave them a great advantage over other Native American groups as they competed for the buffalo.

3 The Comanche very quickly gained control of the Great Plains and Central Plains regions by fighting ferociously with other Native American groups and with the Europeans passing through.

4 The Comanche generally traveled in bands, each with its own leader. During wars or raids, however, several bands might unite and choose a temporary war chief. During raids, the Comanche would steal things from other tribes and often kidnapped women or children to sell as slaves or trade for goods.

5 During times of peace, the Comanche were actually very good traders. They traded buffalo goods and horses with the Caddo and Wichita in exchange for food. They also attended Spanish trade fairs. The Comanches attended these fairs well-dressed in fine European style clothes. They always had a proficient interpreter, who spoke English, Spanish, French and several Indian languages. Much of what the Comanche traders brought to the fairs was stolen. They sold the kidnapped women and children for ransom, often to their own relatives. This got them in trouble later with the American settlers.

6 By 1875, all the Comanche had been moved to a reservation in Oklahoma. At that time, the U.S. government did not honor its promises to the Comanche to provide food and shelter. They lived in poverty for many years. Today, there are many Comanche descendants still living.

# Concho

1 The Concho are really more of a Mexican tribe than a Texas tribe. They lived along the Rio Concho River in Northern Mexico. The Concho River joins the Rio Grande River in the Big Bend region of far West Texas. Today, this part of Texas is a semi-desert. It doesn't get much rain at all, and if you get very far away from the rivers, the land is very dry.

2 The Concho were very similar in culture and appearance to the Jumano. They were both farmers and hunters and gatherers. The bands who lived near the river would farm, because it was the easiest way to get food. They probably grew corn, beans and squash like all the tribes around them.

3 Those who lived farther away from the river, would have to hunt. The Concho hunted rabbits, deer, birds and anything else they could find with bows and arrows. They also used traps to catch small animals and fished in the Concho River.

4 While the men hunted, the women would gather whatever plant foods they could find.

Also, during the winter months, all the bands of the Concho would have had to hunt and gather. One special food source they had was the cactus that grew in their region. The fruit of the cactus, called tunas, are sweet and good to eat. The Concho women were experts on all the edible plants in their region, and they even knew which ones could be used as medicine.

5 The Concho lived in huts made with a wooden framework covered by grass or skins. Inside they had mats made of woven grasses. Because they moved around quite a bit, their houses were not particularly sturdy.

6 Many of the Conchos were captured by the Spanish to be sold as slaves to work in mines. This slave raiding destroyed much of the Concho population, and diseases brought to Texas by the Europeans killed off many, as well. When their numbers got very, very small, many of the Concho joined the Jumanos. Their descendants live with the Jumano today.

# Jumano

1 The Jumano lived along the Rio Grande River in the Mountains and Basins region of Texas. They are considered Puebloan, because they lived in villages in buildings called “pueblos.” A pueblo is like a big apartment building made from huge adobe, or mud, bricks. A whole family would live in one small room of the pueblo. They share almost everything.

2 The Jumano were farmers. Because the land is dry, it is difficult to grow crops in this region. The Jumano irrigated their crops from nearby streams using hollow gourds. Along with their crops, the Jumano also made simple pottery to store food and seeds.

3 When the Jumano needed something they could not grow, they would travel long distances to trade for it with other Native Americans. They often traded dried corn, squash or beans for buffalo hides, meat, cloth, shells, salt or other goods.

4 Each Jumano village had its own leader, but he was not considered a Chief. The Jumano

lived in bands, but little is known of their government.

5 Although it seems that the Jumano were quite adaptable to difficult environmental conditions and friendly with other tribes, most of them did die out. Some were killed fighting off the Spanish invaders, and others died of European diseases. Today there are no Jumano villages remaining, and only a very small number of their descendants still live in Texas.



# Karankawa

The Karankawa lived south of the Caddo, along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. They were nomads. A nomad is a person who does not have a permanent home but moves from place to place within a certain area.

During the winter, the Karankawa lived along the shore and on islands off the coast. They caught fish and shellfish for food. They traveled the waterways in dugout canoes, canoes made by hollowing out a long log.

The Karankawa's winter villages were large, with enough houses to shelter hundreds of people. To build their houses, they would stick one end of some tree limbs or saplings in the ground forming a big circle. Then, they'd bend these in towards the middle and tie them together to make a frame. Then, the frame would be covered with grasses, leaves, or animal skins.

In the summer, these villages broke into smaller bands of families, which moved inland to hunt small animals and birds and to gather wild plants and berries for food.

Unlike the Caddo, the Karankawa did not govern themselves with a confederacy. Instead, they had a chief in each village. When the large villages broke up and moved inland in summer, each smaller band had its own leader.

The Karankawa were often the first Native Americans that the Europeans met when they arrived on the Texas shore. As Europeans arrived, they moved onto the Karankawa's lands. But the mid-1800s, the Karankawa had died out from European diseases and from many battles with European groups.

# Kiowa

1 The Kiowa lived in and around the Texas panhandle. They were nomadic buffalo hunters and gatherers. They were famous for their long distance raids. Some of these raids went all the way down into Mexico and north almost to Canada. The Kiowa were friends and close allies with the Comanche, who lived in the same region.

2 The Kiowa lived in teepees, because they are very easy to move. The Kiowa constantly moved around following the buffalo herds. Buffalo meat was their most important food. The Kiowa women also gathered plants, roots and berries to eat when they could find them.

3 The Kiowa organized themselves by age. This is called age grade social organization, and it means that people of certain age ranges would belong to social groups. As a person got older, he or she would move from one social group to the next.

4 As the Kiowa moved around, the women carried their babies in a papoose. A papoose is a little like a backpack. The Kiowa are famous for their beadwork, and the papooses often contained very intricate and decorative beadwork.

Beadwork was also found on horse halters, moccasins and other articles of clothing.

5 The Kiowa once lived on the same reservation as the Caddo and Wichita near Andarko, Oklahoma. Times were pretty hard on the reservation. The Native Americans had to wait in long lines for a monthly food ration. This was not at all the life promised to them by the U.S. This reservation was eventually closed down, but more than 5000 Kiowa still live there.

# Lipan Apache

1 The Lipan were a small group of Eastern Apache bands who, in an attempt to preserve their heritage and lives, continuously migrated away from aggressive and hostile people. Their history is one of migration due to being displaced by Europeans and, in turn, displacing the people who lived on land they wanted to occupy. They became skillful warriors and shared a history of warfare with other native groups and also Europeans. They arrived in the Texas Panhandle and the Edwards Plateau around 1680, pushing Caddoan and Algonkian tribes eastward.

2 The Lipan Apache lived close to nature, hunting for food and skins for clothing. They were expert hunters, laying traps, using throwing sticks, bows and arrows and spears. They also were experts at knowing which plants to gather for food and medicine.

3 The Lipan Apache were very adaptable to their environment. They lived in tepees when buffalo hides were plentiful, and they built wickiups or other crude shelters when buffalo were scarce.

4 The Tigua men also hunted deer, rabbits, antelope, bear and any other wild game they could find for meat. The women and children collected wild foods like berries when they were in season.

5 The Lipan Apache made moccasins, pouches and bags to carry their things out of leather. They also wove baskets. Sometimes they lined the baskets with clay to hold water. Mostly they used items that were easily and quickly transported, things that were light and wouldn't break.

6 When the Lipan Apache were sent to reservations and sedentary life, they had to be taught how to grow crops, because they had always hunted and foraged for food.

7 The few Lipan who survived and moved to the reservations intermarried with other Apache and members of other native groups or even with members of the white community. Very few true Lipan Apache descendants still live today.

# Mescalero Apache

1 The first Mescalero Apache migrated to the panhandle region of Texas from Canada around 1528. At first they farmed on the plains. They were semi-sedentary. They would farm and stay in one place during the growing season. Then, when the crops were in , they would switch to a nomadic lifestyle and hunt and gather for food. The Mescalero Apache farmed corn, beans and squash, like the other Native American tribes around them.

2 Before the Spanish brought horses, hunting buffalo on foot was very hard to do. One way the Mescalero Apache would hunt buffalo was to stampede them over a cliff. Men would surround the herd and start yelling and waving things in the air. The buffalo would run, and the men would chase them towards a nearby cliff. When the buffalo in front saw the cliff, they would try to stop, but the buffalo in the back couldn't see the cliff and would push them over. Men at the bottom of the cliff would shoot the hurt buffalo with arrows and stab them with spears to kill them.

3 When the horse arrived with the Spanish, all this changed. Now Native American hunters on fast horse could zoom in on the buffalo and chase them. If the buffalo charged them, they could ride away and escape. Hunters with horses could also follow herds for several days and travel long distances to find herds. All this meant that hunting buffalo became an easier way to get food than farming. So the Mescalero Apache quit farming and became nomadic hunters and gatherers, living in teepees and wickiups.

4 The Apache were organized in bands. There was no tribal leader over all the bands. Instead, each band consisted of several families and had one leader. At times, two or more bands would join together to make war or protect themselves. The Mescalero Apache became famous for fighting the Comanche, Spanish and the Americans who tried to take their land. Geronimo was a famous leader of the Mescalero Apaches.

5 In the 1860s, most of the Mescalero Apache were moved to a reservation in New Mexico where they still live today.

# Tigua

1 The Tigua are the only Puebloan tribe still in Texas. The Pueblos are a number of different Native American tribes who lived in the southwest in pueblos, or large adobe houses. All the different Puebloan tribes shared similar ways of living, even though they spoke different languages and had slightly different cultures.

2 The Tigua were farmers. Most of their food came from the crops they planted and tended. Corn was their main crop, but they also raised other crops such as beans and squash. The Tigua raised cotton and used it to make cloth. They raised gourds, which could be dried out and used as containers.

3 The Tigua stored and cooked their food in well-made pottery. The Tigua and other Pueblo tribes are famous for their beautiful pottery. Much of this pottery has lovely painted designs.

4 The Tigua men also hunted deer, rabbits, antelope, bear and any other wild game they could find for meat. The

women and children collected wild foods like berries when they were in season.

5 The land farmed by the Kiowa was all owned by the tribe, but each family was given the right to farm their own plot of land. The family didn't actually own the land, they just farmed it. The men cleared the fields and prepared the soil. The women did most of the rest of the farming. They used sharp sticks to poke holes to put seeds in. The children would walk the fields every day and pick insects off the plants and pull up weeds by hand.

6 To farm, you need water. Most of the southwest is very dry. Because of this, most of the Tigua settled near streams or rivers.

7 Around 1848, crooked land speculators stole much of the Tigua land from them. The State of Texas ignored the Tigua's Spanish land grant and allowed them to be driven out. In 1968, the President signed an act of the U.S. Congress recognizing the Tigua as a tribe and making their land a reservation. This is where the Tigua still live.

# Tonkawa

The Tonkawa lived in central Texas near modern Austin on the Edwards Plateau. They were friendly and shared lands with the Karankawa and Coahuiltecan bands.

The Tonkawa believed that they were descended from wolves. For this reason, they would never kill a wolf. They also refused to farm, because wolves hunt for their food. The Tonkawa, then, were hunters and gatherers. They lived in a region with lots of animals to hunt, including deer, buffalo, fish, crawfish, clams and mussels. This area also had many springs and rivers, along which grew pecan trees and plenty of plant foods.

Because the Tonkawa often moved around to find food, they usually lived in tepees, wickiups or other types of huts. They covered their huts with brush, grass or anything else available.

The Tonkawa were friendly with the Anglo-American settlers and often allied themselves with the settlers against the Comanches and Wichita. They served as scouts for the U.S. Army sometimes.

In the mid-1800s, the Tonkawa were moved to a reservation in North Texas. Later they were moved to reservations in Oklahoma. Today, the Tonkawa tribe office is located in Tonkawa, Oklahoma. In the 1960s, there were only 35 Tonkawa left there.

# Wichita

The Wichita lived in the northern central parts of Texas. From spring until fall, the Wichita lived a semi-sedentary life growing maize, pumpkins, squash, beans and even planted plum trees. Even though they lived near several rivers, the Wichita did not eat fish.

While they were in the village, the Wichita lived in grass houses. These houses were made of very sturdy forked cedar poles covered by dried grasses. They were shaped like giant cones, and each house had 10-12 beds in it. In the center was a small hole to let out the smoke from the fire burning in the middle of the house floor. The Wichita's houses were very well made and lasted for many years.

In the fall, the Wichita would close up their villages and migrate west to hunt buffalo. During the hunt, they lived in tepees.

The Wichita governed themselves through chiefs, subchiefs and also religious leaders called Shamans. These leaders controlled the occurrence and procedure of ceremonies. They did not have to serve as police. Wichita were kept in line by their families. A Wichita child could be punished for misbehaving by a very large number of adults!

Many of the Wichita suffered from a smallpox epidemic in 1837. After that, there were very few left. The United States then moved them to a reservation on the Brazos River called Clear Fork. In 1859 they were again moved, this time to a reservation near Andarko, Oklahoma. The Wichita still live there today.

