

Caddo Mounds: A Regional Center of the Mississippian Culture (800-1300 A.D.)

Alongside Highway 21 in northeast Texas, three earthen mounds stand on the prairie as a testament to the once bustling village and ceremonial center that occupied this region. The 397-acre Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, which sits on a high alluvial terrace, about one mile north northeast of the Neches River, was at one time a large civic and ceremonial center of the Caddo. The Caddo were the westernmost peoples of the Mississippian culture, which stretched eastward to Georgia and northern Florida and as far north as Illinois and Wisconsin (refer to Map 1). The Caddo shared many cultural affiliations with the Mississippian tradition including; intensive agriculture, large, well-organized villages, flat-topped earthen mounds, and numerous material objects of distinctive, skilled manufacture.



(Caddo children perform a traditional dance at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site. Courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission).

During the sites peak of occupation (800-1300 A.D.), Caddo Mounds consisted of a large village of beehive-like thatch houses, flat-topped temple mounds and a burial mound set apart from the village. Today, the site consists of two temple mounds, known as the High and Low Temple Mounds, a Burial Mound, a large portion of the village area, as well as a quarry (or borrow pit) and several natural springs.

As a result of its geographic location, Caddo Mounds developed into a thriving regional trade center within the Mississippian culture sphere. Archeological evidence recovered from the mounds including marine shell from the Gulf Coast and copper from the northern Plains region demonstrate its significance in facilitating trade with both local and distant groups. When Europeans arrived in Caddo territory, the well-traversed trade routes leading to and from the Caddo Mounds site evolved into what today is known as the historic *El Camino Real de los Tejas*. This roadway system supported European settlements and economic and political growth in the State of Texas for over 300 years.

The Caddo and their culture are an important part of Texas' heritage. These mounds serve as an example of a Caddo civic, economic and ceremonial site as well as an entry point for learning more about these people and their role in Texas and American history. At their peak, ca. 1100 A.D., the Caddo were the most highly developed prehistoric culture known within the present state of Texas. Students can see the Caddo's importance in early Texas reflected in the state's name. *Tejas* is the Spanish spelling of a Caddo word *taysha*, which means "friend" or "ally". In

the seventeenth century the Spanish knew the westernmost Caddo peoples as "the great kingdom of Tejas" and the name lived on to become what is now the 28th state of the United States—Texas.

About This Lesson

General Citation

This lesson is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration files for Caddo Mounds State Historic Site (also known as the George C. Davis site) and materials prepared by the Texas Historical Commission. It was written by The Ohio History Connection, an education consultant. Teaching with Historic Places (TwHP) is sponsored, in part, by the Cultural Resources Training Initiative and Parks as Classroom programs of the National Park Service. This lesson is one in a series that brings the important stories of historic places into classrooms across the country.

Where it fits into Curriculum

Topics: This lesson could be used in units on early history in the American South. It provides interesting context about the Caddo people who have lived in Texas since 750 AD. *Time period:* Nineteenth century

TEKS Standards

Fifth Grade Social Studies

- 5.4(B) identify reasons people moved west.
- 5.4(C) identify examples of United States territorial expansion.
- 5.4(G) identify the challenges, opportunities, and contributions of people from Native American groups.
- 5.24(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as computer software; interviews; biographies; oral; print, and visual material; documents; and artifacts to acquire information about the United States.
- 5.24(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions.
- 5.24(C) organize and interpret information in outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps.

Sixth Grade Social Studies

- 6.2 (B) evaluate the social, political, economic, and cultural contributions of individuals and groups from various societies, past and present.
- 6.21(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as computer software; interviews; biographies; oral; print, and visual material; documents; and artifacts to acquire information about the United States.
- 6.21(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions.
- 6.21(C) organize and interpret information in outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps.

Seventh Grade Social Studies

- 7.2(A) compare the cultures of American Indians in Texas prior to European colonizations such as Gulf, Plains, Puebloan, and Southeastern.

- 7.2(B) identify important individuals, events, and issues related to European exploration of Texas such as Alonso Alvarez de Pineda, Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca and his writings, the search for gold, and the conflicting territorial claims between France and Spain.
- 7.21(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as computer software, interviews, biographies, oral, print, and visual material, documents, and artifacts to acquire information about the United States.
- 7.21(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions.
- 7.21(C) organize and interpret information in outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps.

Eighth Grade Social Studies

- 8.29(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as computer software, interviews, biographies, oral, print, and visual material; documents, and artifacts to acquire information about the United States.
- 8.29(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions.
- 8.29(C) organize and interpret information in outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps.

High School Social Studies

- 2(A) identify the major characteristics that define an historical era.
- 2(C) apply absolute and relative chronology through the sequencing of significant individuals, events, and time periods.
- 29(A) use a variety of both primary and secondary valid sources to acquire information and to analyze and answer historical questions.
- 29(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions.
- 29(H) use appropriate skills to analyze and interpret social studies information such as maps, graphs, presentations, speeches, lectures, and political cartoons.

National Council for the Social Studies

I. Culture

Early Grades

- Ask and find answers to questions related to culture in the contexts of school, community, state, and region.

Middle Grades

- Ask and find answers to questions related to culture;
- Find, select, organize, and present information to compare various cultures according to specified aspects of culture, such as institutions, language, religion, and the arts.

High School

- Ask questions related to culture and find, select, organize, and interpret data from research to address research questions;
- Analyze historic and current issues to determine the role that culture has played.

II. Time, Continuity, and Change

Early Grades

- a. Use a variety of sources to learn about the past;
- b. Describe how people in the past lived, and research their beliefs and values;
- c. Use historical methods of inquiry and literacy skills to research and present findings.

Middle Grades

- a. Formulate questions about topics in history, predict possible answers, and use historical methods of inquiry and literacy skills to locate, organize, analyze, and interpret sources, and present supported findings;
- b. Identify and use a variety of primary and secondary sources for reconstructing the past, such as documents, letters, diaries, maps, textbooks, photos, and other sources;
- c. Research and analyze past periods, events, and issues, using a variety of primary sources (e.g. documents, letters, artifacts, and testimony) as well as secondary sources; validate and weigh evidence for claims, and evaluate the usefulness and degree of reliability of sources to develop a supportable interpretation.

High School

- a. Formulate questions to investigate topics in history, identify possible answers, and use historical methods of inquiry and literacy skills to select, organize, analyze, synthesize, and interpret sources, and present findings;
- b. Research and analyze past periods, events, and issues, using a variety of primary sources (e.g. documents, letters, artifacts, and testimony) as well as secondary sources; validate and weigh evidence for claims, check the usefulness and degree of reliability of sources, and evaluate different interpretations in order to develop their own interpretation supported by the evidence.

III. People, Places and Environments

Early Grades

- a. Gather and interpret information from various representations of Earth, such as maps, globes, geospatial technologies and other geographic tools to inform the study of people, places, and environments, both past and present.

Middle Grades

- a. Ask and find answers to geographic questions related to regions, nations, and the world in the past and present.

High School

- a. Ask and find answers to geographic questions related to regions, nations, and the world in the past and present.

Objectives for Students

- 1) To explain the significant role Caddo Mounds State Historic Site played in the American South as a regional, political and ceremonial center from 800-1300 A.D.
- 2) To understand the importance of the Caddo culture to early Texas History.
- 3) To analyze the impact of European expansion within the American South on Caddo culture.

Materials for Students

The materials listed below can be used either directly on the computer or can be printed out, photocopied, and distributed to students.

- 1) two maps depicting Caddo trade routes and Caddo presence in the American South;
- 2) two readings about Caddo history, culture and trade;
- 3) one document containing excerpts from Henri Joutel's journal;
- 4) three photographs, one map and two drawings of Caddo culture.

Visiting the Site

Caddo Mounds State Historic Site is located at 1649 State Hwy. 21 W., Alto, Texas. It is owned and operated by the Texas Historical Commission. The site is open Tuesday-Sunday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. It is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Admission is \$4.00 for adults, \$3.00 for ages 6-12, college students, and adult tour groups. Children 5 and under are free. Reservations are requested for guided interpretive tours, including school tours (\$1.00 per student), or large family groups. Please contact the site five days in advance of your visit. For more information, please visit the site [website](#) or call 936-858-3218.

Getting Started

Inquiry Question



Who are these people? What are they doing?

Setting the Stage

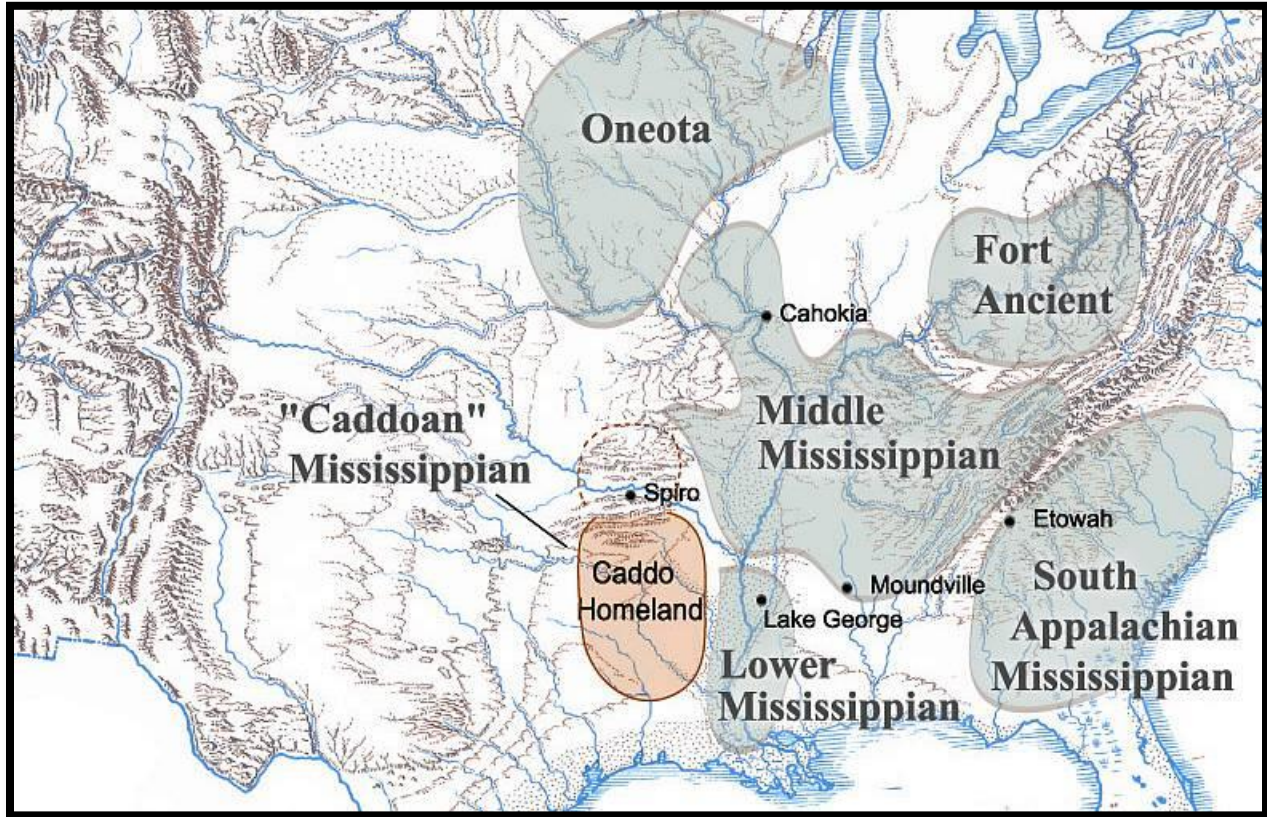
Prior to the European explorers landing on the North American continent, many American culture groups built earthen mounds as ceremonial spaces for ritual purposes. These mounds were large structures built entirely of packed earth. The Mississippian cultures, which flourished between 1000 and 1600 A.D., are the best known example of these mound-building cultures. During the peak of their civilization, Mississippian cultures spread across a large portion of the continent, as far north and east as present-day Ohio, and as far south and west as present-day Texas. Mississippian cultures shared characteristics including large communal plazas, intensive agriculture; flat-topped temple mounds paired with round-top burial mounds, a complex hierarchical society, and shared religious symbols and styles of decoration. The largest of the known Mississippian centers was Cahokia, located in the present-day State of Illinois. Today the site consists of 80 remaining mounds including a temple platform and burial mounds. The majority of Mississippian mound sites weren't nearly as large as Cahokia. Most, including the site preserved at the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, contained only a few mounds, and rose and declined within a few hundred years.

The Caddo people were the western-most of the Mississippian cultures. The Caddo culture is primarily differentiated from other Mississippian cultures by their shared language and shared customs, especially oral tradition. Between 800 and 1300 A.D., the Caddo were the dominant culture in an area that included northeastern Texas, southeastern Oklahoma, northwestern Louisiana, and southern Arkansas. One of their important regional ceremonial sites is preserved today as the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, in Alto, Texas (near Nacogdoches). The site includes a High Temple Platform Mound, a Burial Mound, and a Low Platform Mound that was probably used for rituals.

In addition to being a ceremonial center, this site would have been a center of Caddo trade and economic life. Archeological investigations of the site have found many items at the temple mound sites made of materials such as copper, marine shells, and high-quality flint that cannot be found near the Caddo Mounds site. The close association of a village with these mounds indicates that the Caddo both lived and worshipped at this site between 800 and 1300 A.D. Many of the trade routes used by the Caddo became important routes for Spanish explorers and later settlers. One such trail is the historic *El Camino Real de los Tejas*, which served as the primary route between Mexico and Louisiana. The close association of the site with Texas State Route 21 shows that the area remained a route of trade and travel through the arrival of Anglo-American settlers in Texas.

Locating the Site

Map 1: Mississippian Culture Sphere

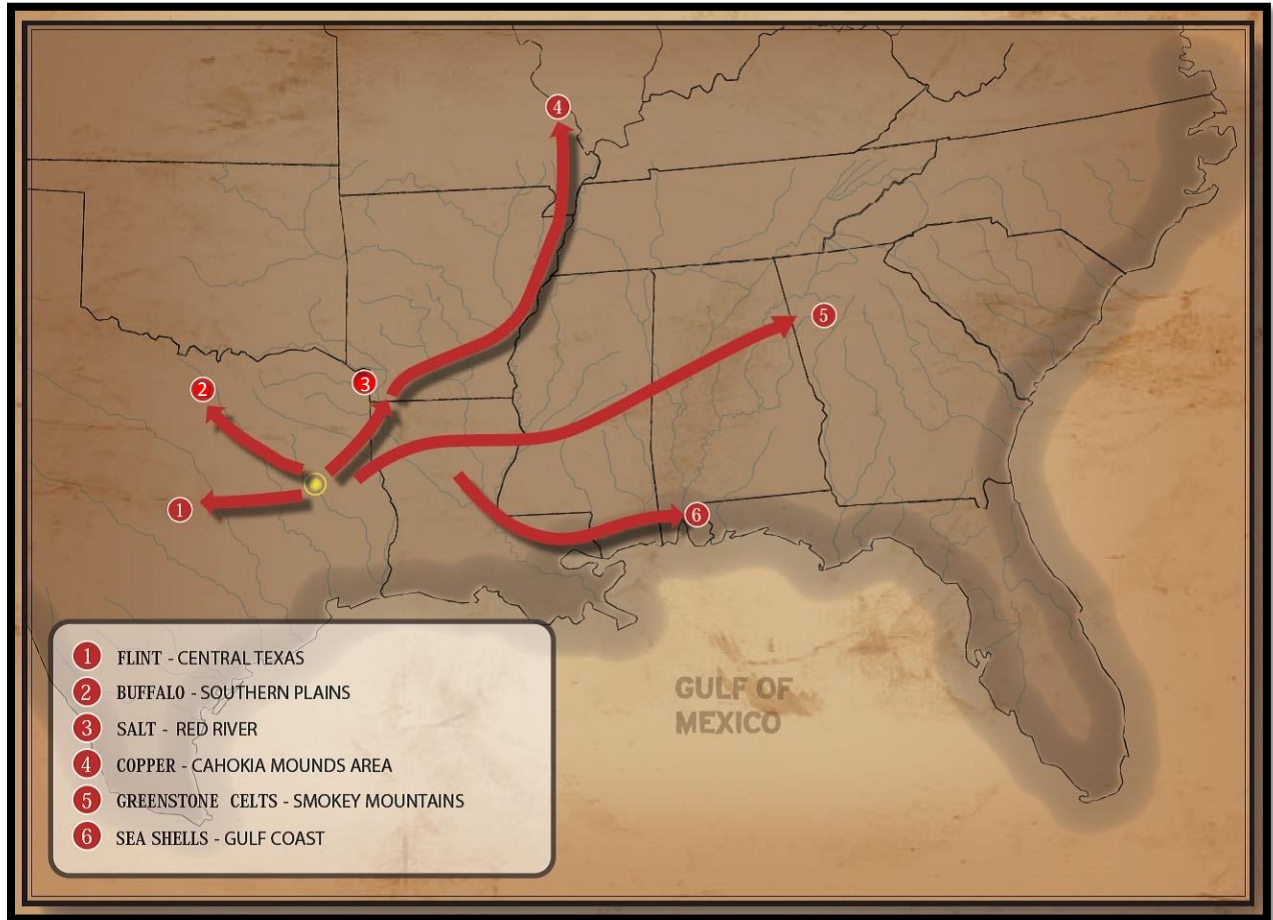


(Shown here are the major cultural areas of the Mississippian Cultures between about 1000-1600 A.D. Courtesy of "Texas Beyond History" project at the University of Texas, Austin www.texasbeyondhistory.net)

Questions for Map 1

1. Where are the Caddo in relation to other Mississippian cultures? Why did this location become a regional trade center?
2. How might Caddo culture have differed from other Mississippian groups? Are these differences related to their geographical position?
3. Compare Map 1 to Map 2. How do the Caddo trading routes compare with the location of Mississippian cultures? What does this tell us about Caddo social relationships?

Map 2: Caddo Trade Networks



(This map demonstrates the significant location of the Caddo in facilitating trade throughout the United States. Courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission)

Questions for Map 2

1. Examine the location of each resource. How were the Caddo able to acquire them? What were they used for?
2. What archaeological evidence of trade has been found at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site? Where was it found? What do both the artifact and its location tell us about the role Caddo Mounds played within the broader Caddo trade network?

Determining the Facts

Reading 1: "The Kingdom of *Tejas*"

The Mississippian cultures were a group of people that flourished in North America between 1000 and 1600 A.D. Their reach stretched eastward to Georgia and northern Florida and as far north as Illinois and Wisconsin, (as shown in Map 1). They shared many traits, such as their subsistence on corn agriculture, large-well organized villages, and participation in similar religious practices like the building of mound complexes. The Mississippian peoples were never politically united, even within closely related culture groups. While today we identify Mississippian peoples as similar based on their culture and traditions, it is important to note that during the period they were active in North America (1000-1600 A.D.), each group of villages was an autonomous unit, governed by a hereditary ruler.

The Caddo were the westernmost people of the Mississippian cultures, as well as one of the earliest to emerge. By the year 800 A.D., they had begun to settle in villages in eastern Texas and western Louisiana. In Caddo culture during the Mississippian period, certain villages emerged as ritual centers, where the religious and political leaders of the area lived. At these ritual centers, temples and other special buildings were built on top of earthen mounds. These temple sites and the related burial mounds were arranged around open central spaces, or plazas, in the middle of the village. These plazas allowed the Caddo to gather for religious and political ceremonies. Each of these mound sites would have been centers of small, independent societies who shared a culture and language, but were entirely independent of each other politically. The Caddo organized their society through clan groupings. Their society was stratified, with some clans and some people ranking higher than others. Caddo religious and political leadership were hereditary, passed down through the mother's family. During this period, Caddo society was made up of a variety of tribal groups, each with its own center of political and religious life.

The ritual center preserved at the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site was at the south-western edge of the Caddo culture sphere. It was established around 800 A.D., and occupied until about 1300 A.D. During this time, it served as the dominant religious and political center within the region. The most prominent site features encountered at the site today include; three large earthen mounds and a village area which is mostly concentrated around and between the mounds (refer to Map 3). The mound located east of Highways 21 is known as the High Temple Mound and is the largest and southernmost of the group. To the northwest is the second mound, known as the Low Temple Mound. To the north of this mound is the Burial Mound, which was used for the burial of special individuals such as political and religious leaders and their retainers or individuals in service to the leader.

The Caddo cultivated crops such as corn, beans, squash and sunflowers. Their homeland was also rich in game and wild fruits. Tobacco was cultivated for ritual use. Among the Caddo, farming was a communal activity, primarily the responsibility of women. The women worked together to plant and harvest. Caddo society was complex and highly-organized. Within their communal society, each person's role was defined by age, sex, and kin group.

The stratification of Caddo society is reflected in the arrangement of structures at the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site and other similar sites. The inner village closest to the mounds was where the political and spiritual leaders lived. The remainder of the village housed the commoners, who provided the labor force for mound- and temple-building and food production. Round, beehive-shaped multi-family houses were made of thatch and ranged in size from 25–45 feet in diameter. Archeologists believe Mississippian temple mounds and burials mounds were exclusive areas where religious and government activities took place. The areas around the mounds were exclusive, sacred spaces where the leaders and social elite lived and worshipped. These areas were distinct from the outer village and farms that were reserved for the common farmers.

The spiritual and political center of the village, the High Temple Mound provided a base for public buildings of worship or government. It was at least three times its current length and reached 35 feet tall. Archeological evidence suggests that, from time to time, the buildings on top of the temple mound were ceremonially destroyed by fire and then rebuilt on a layer of fresh dirt brought in to cover the charred remains. In this way, the mound grew over time. Borrow pits located around the perimeter of the village provided soil to construct the mounds. Laborers hauled the earth in baskets.

The Burial Mound was about 20 feet tall and 90 feet in diameter when the village was abandoned. It was built in successive stages and contained around 90 bodies in about 30 burial pits. Refined objects found buried with the dead suggest the mound was reserved for community leaders, and evidence suggests family members or servants may have been sacrificed and interred along with them. These objects were made of different materials than the objects archeologists have found at the village site. While the everyday items recovered from the village consist of earthen vessels and stone tools, the objects recovered from the Burial Mound are made from materials like copper, marine shells, and high-quality flint that needed to be transported or traded for from far outside the Caddo homeland.

The Caddo's religious life was also stratified. Their beliefs included the *Caddi Ayo*, the supreme god who was the creator of all things, along with many lesser spirits. Fire played an important role in Caddo spiritual life and their creation story. Archeologists do not know the reason for the burns on the Low Platform Mound at the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, or its connection with the Burial Mound, but it is believed that special ceremonies took place on the Low Platform Mound. Historical accounts indicate there may have been a perpetual flame kept in one temple and guarded over by the *xinesi*, the village leader and head priest. Other heads of the community were the *caddi*, or chief, who was supported by the *canahas*, or council of elders.

The settlement at the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site flourished until the thirteenth century, when its regional influence declined as outlying hamlets and trade groups became self-sufficient and grew less dependent on the cultural center in religious and political matters. At this point, the Caddo Mounds site was abandoned. This abandonment of the site was planned, as demonstrated by the final layers of clay capping added to the mounds. However, some

Caddo remained in the area, and retained practices similar to their earlier culture, including language and oral traditions.

Caddo society and culture were fundamentally altered by the arrival of Europeans in North America. Like other American Indian groups, they had little immunity to European diseases. Between the time of first contact in the 1690s and 1816, it is estimated that Caddo population declined by as much as 95%. As a result of this decline in population, the various loosely affiliated Caddo groups began to come together in ever-stronger alliances. By the 1800s, the Caddo were organized in three main groups—the Hasinai, Cadohadacho, and Natchitoches. The Hasinai Caddo consolidated in east Texas, the Natchitoches were centered in western Louisiana, and the Cadohadacho had relocated west of the Red River along the boundary between the U.S. territory of Louisiana and the Mexican province of Texas.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, these groups further consolidated as they went through the long process of being forcibly removed from their ancestral homeland by the U. S. Government as well as Anglo-American repressive measures and colonization efforts. By 1815, Anglo-American settlements were beginning to encroach on the Caddo's ancestral homeland, especially on the excellent farmland. Anglo-Americans, accustomed to a land-use pattern in which each family lived on and farmed its own plot of land, were unsympathetic to the Caddo's communal land use practices.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Caddo were systematically forced off of their land by the U.S government. In the Treaty of 1835, the Caddo gave up nearly one million acres of land in return for a promised \$80,000 from the United States government. The Caddo were required to leave their land and relocate outside the boundaries of the United States. Most of them moved into Texas (which was not yet a part of the United States), and settled on the Brazos River. In the 1840s, the Caddo signed treaties of peace and friendship with the Republic of Texas who had declared independence from Mexico. However, when Texas became a U.S. state in 1845, these treaties did not recognize their right to the land they lived on. When Anglo-American settlers arrived in the region and began to come into conflict with the Caddo, there was no legal barrier to prevent the U. S. government from removing them from the Brazos River Reserve.

In June of 1859, the Caddo were instructed to leave the Brazos River Reserve in order to take up new land in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). In August, the Caddo left their homes in Texas, taking with them only what they could carry. They were accompanied by a military escort and military provision wagons, which had some space for the young, the old, and those unable to walk. Most of the Caddo walked the 200 miles to the area on the Washita River in Indian Territory where they were settled in the Wichita Reserve. There they did their best to maintain their communal way of life and maintain their traditions.

Between 1889 and 1901, the United States government re-apportioned the land reserved for the Caddo into 160 acre plots for each person in the tribe. This measure destroyed the Caddo's communal economy, and resulted in a tremendous loss of land. In the Wichita Reserve, 152,714 acres were allotted to the Caddo, Wichita, and Delaware; 586,468 acres were taken away from

them and opened to settlement. The tribes kept only 1/5 of the land they were allotted in 1859. The Caddo did their best to maintain their traditions through oral storytelling and the Caddo language and their traditional hereditary chiefs. In 1938, the Caddo reorganized their tribal government to allow for elected leadership. They thereby attained federal recognition as a sovereign nation with a right to self-government. In 2002 they officially became The Caddo Nation of Oklahoma. The Caddo Nation maintains a connection to the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, returning there for events such as Caddo Culture Day.

Questions for Reading 1

1. What traits are shared between the Caddo and other Mississippian cultures? How can you see this reflected at Caddo Mounds?
2. What evidence found at Caddo Mounds reinforces their social structure?
3. What do the mounds tell you about Caddo religious life?
4. How were the Caddo people impacted by European contact?
5. How have the contemporary Caddo tried to maintain their culture and traditions? Why is it important for them to preserve the ways of their ancestors?

Reading 1 was sourced from the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site website, <http://www.visitcaddomounds.com>; the Tejas: Life and Times of the Caddo site at Texas Beyond History, <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/tejas/> and the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site website, <http://cahokiamounds.org>.

Reading 2: A Regional Center of the Mississippian Culture Sphere: Caddo Mounds

From 800-1300 A.D the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site served as an important regional center within the Mississippian culture sphere. Its location, high on an alluvial terrace in East Texas about one mile north northeast of the Neches River, contributed to its economic significance and participation in an extensive long-distance trade network that stretched across the Southeastern United States.

The alluvial prairie where the Caddo Mounds site is located possessed ideal qualities for the establishment of a village and ceremonial center. The area provided good sandy loam soil for agriculture, and abundant natural food resources in the surrounding forests such as black walnuts, hickory nuts, pecans, and wild grapes. It also provided a permanent water source from local springs that flowed into the nearby Neches River. This important water source also provided catfish and largemouth bass. The surrounding bottomland forests were home to a variety of wildlife including squirrels, armadillos, raccoons, turkeys, opossums, whitetail deer, and turtles. Furthermore, its strategic position within the Caddo Homeland, a resource-rich area located to the south of the Arkansas River Valley, made it an ideal hub for economic, ceremonial and civic activity.

The Caddo Homeland served as the main habitation region of the Caddo culture for about 1,000 years. Its geographic boundaries of the region were vast. To the north were the Ouachita Mountains, to the west was the Blackland Prairie, and to the east the Mississippi Valley. The Mississippian culture groups, such as the Caddo, who inhabited this area, lived in farmsteads, hamlets and villages along streams and rivers found throughout this region. The most notable of these waterways was the Red River. The Red River was an important resource to the Caddo. It served as a natural transportation route that linked the Caddo Homeland to the southeastern Mississippi Valley and the western prairie-plains. It also provided access to rich aquatic resources such as turtles and fish as well as fertile floodplains that were ideal for farming.

Early Caddo ancestors were hunters, gatherers, and fishers, but by about 2000 years ago, some of these groups began to cultivate domesticated plants. Gradually farming became more important and by 800 A.D. we see the first appearance of corn at Early Caddo sites. Corn would eventually become a staple of the Caddo diet. It was a versatile crop that could be prepared in numerous ways including raw, parched, roasted, steamed, boiled, ground into flour, and more. In addition to corn, the Caddo also cultivated beans, squash, maygrass, amaranth, pumpkins, goosefoot, chenopods and sunflowers. The Caddo harvested cane and hardy grasses which were woven together to form layered protective floor coverings for Caddo homes and temples.

Due to the subtropical humid climate, the Caddo living south of the Ouachita Mountains were able to have a long growing season. This meant they could harvest two crops per year, which was important to Caddo subsistence and trade. Agricultural products could be traded for items such as marine shell from the Gulf Coast, dried buffalo meat and hides from the Plains, as well as cotton and turquoise from the Southwest.

Women were responsible for the majority of farming and food preparation, although during the harvest men would help clear the fields. Fields were owned by the community, with specific

families being assigned particular plots. Planting and harvesting was a community effort based on social rank. The Caddo would begin with the highest ranked community member, the xinesi and continue until each family plot had been tended.

In addition to aquatic resources and crops such as beans and corn, wild plants and game were important to Caddo subsistence. The Caddo consumed such wild plants as nuts (hickory, walnut, acorn, and pecan), berries, plums, persimmon, grapes, and various seed plants. While the Caddo hunted rabbit, turkey, birds and other small animals, the white-tailed deer provided most of their meat. The hide, antlers, sinew, and bones were used for tools and clothing. Bear was also hunted for food in addition to its fur and fat. Bear became an important resource following European contact as it was often traded with the French for weapons, metal tools, and horses. Buffalo were hunted in the north and northwest in the prairie-plains region, but did not become a main food source until the Caddo obtained horses in the late seventeenth century.

Given its geographic location between three major culture areas and ecological zones with very different natural resources, it is no surprise the Caddo Homeland, as well as the Caddo Mounds site became an important center of trade in the American Southeast. The Caddo traded resources located within their Homeland amongst each other as well as with outside groups. The most well-known of these trade items were bois d'arc (Osage orange) wood, which was typically made into finely crafted bows, and salt from local salt springs. Archeological evidence and ethnographic data suggest both items were traded hundreds of miles to the east and west.

In exchange for salt and bois d'arc wood, the Caddo imported stone and finished tools. The Ouachita Mountains provided highly valued mineral deposits used for items such siltstone axes. From Central Texas came chert used for tools and arrowpoints.

The people of Caddo Mounds used clay deposits from the adjacent Neches and Sabine River valleys to fashion exquisite clay pottery. Ceramic vessels produced by the Caddo were used for cooking, storage, serving and ceremonial purposes. Typically, the everyday pottery used for cooking and storage was not decorated, while the pottery for special occasions was commonly decorated with incised lines forming complex circular and rectangular designs. Although it varied in terms of design, color, size, etc. Caddo pottery represents one of the unique features of Caddo culture. Due to the distinctness of these ceramics as a result of the skill and creativity of its makers, archeologists have been able to trace Caddo pottery hundreds of miles from its homeland. When Europeans invaded the Caddo Homeland it deeply impacted the Caddo pottery tradition. By the 1800s the original tradition had all but disappeared.

Many of the objects recovered from the Burial Mound at Caddo Mounds were made of materials foreign to the surrounding region. For instance, marine shell, copper and high quality flint found within and around Caddo Mounds can be traced hundreds of miles away to the Florida Coast and the northern Plains. The extent to which these items traveled demonstrates not only their desirability but the vastness of the trade networks within the Caddo Homeland. It is suggested by early archeologists working at the Caddo Mounds State Historic site that the highly specialized trading system utilized by Caddo Mounds was controlled by an elite group of

individuals at the site and that upon the death of a member of this elite, the special goods were buried in the Burial Mound at the northern edge of the village.

As a result of their strategic position between the Plains and lower Mississippi Valley, and the well-developed trade routes throughout the region, the Caddo were ideally suited to carry information between neighboring and distant groups. It was for this reason that the Caddo not only became known for their expertise in trade, but as information brokers.

When Europeans began to explore the American Southeast, they too were attracted to the abundant resources as well as the strategic position maintained by the Caddo within the Arkansas River Valley. During the early eighteenth century French traders lived in Caddo villages along the Red River to take advantage of the already established trade routes and the reputation of the Caddo as information brokers. The French and Spanish established missions and trading posts along the thoroughfares, which collectively became known as *El Camino Real de los Tejas*. The trails that comprised *El Camino Real de los Tejas* were transportation arteries that supported European settlements and economic and political growth in the State of Texas for over 300 years.

The Caddo were located between the horse frontier in the west and the gun frontier to the east. They were ideally suited to assist the Europeans in trade. The partnership between the Caddo and Europeans resulted in a great deal of economic success for both parties. Access to the horse and gun trade provided the Caddo with a means of inserting themselves into the fur trade of deer and buffalo hides. As a result of their participation in the fur trade, they were able to increase their bison hunting. The expanded hunting activities not only allowed them to acquire large quantities of European goods to be exchanged with other natives groups, but it led to the establishment of new settlements. Additionally, as a result of their importance in the European trade, the Caddo played an active role in arranging political and economic measures between other Native Americans and the Europeans.

Questions for Reading 2

1. Why was Caddo Mounds an ideal location to establish a regional trade center? Why was access to natural resources important to trade? How did outside groups obtain Caddo produced items?
2. How did the trade networks impact Caddo Mounds social structure? What archaeological evidence discovered at the Caddo Mounds site supports the type of social structure utilized by the Caddo?
3. How did the location of the Caddo people impact their relationship with the Europeans? Other Native American groups?

Reading 2 was sourced from the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site website, <http://www.visitcaddomounds.com>; and the *Tejas: Life and Times of the Caddo* site at Texas Beyond History, <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/tejas/>.

Document 1: Excerpts from Henri Joutel's Journal of La Salle's last voyage, 1684-1687

During the spring of 1687, Henri Joutel, a crewmember on French Explorer René-Robert Cavellier, Sieur de La Salle's expedition to the New World, spent four months among the Caddo and recorded his observations of the Caddo in a journal, excerpts of which are featured below.

Tillage

"When they design to Till the Ground, they give one another Notices, and very often above an Hundred of each Sex meet together. When they have till'd that Piece of Land, after their Manner, and spent part of the Day, those the Land belongs to, give the others to Eat, and then they spend the rest of the Day in Dancing and Merry Making. This same is practis'd from Canton to Canton, and so they till Land all together". Page 142-143

Instrument for Tilling

"This Tillage consists in breaking up just the Surface of the Earth with a Sort of Wooden Instrument, like a little pick-axe, which they make by splitting the End of a thick Piece of Wood, that serves for a Handle, and putting another Piece of Wood sharp Pointed as one End into the Slit. This Instrument serves them instead of a Hoe, or Spade, for they have no Iron Tools. When the Land has been thus till'd or broke up, the Women Sow and Plant the sow. Indian Corn, Beans, Pompions, Water Melons, and other Grain and Garden Ware, which is for their Sustenance". Page 143.

They do the work at Home

"It is they (women) that do all the Work in the Cottage, either in Pounding the Indian Corn and Baking the Meal, or making the Pottage of the said Meal, by them call'd Sagamite, or in dressing their other Provisions, or drying or parching, or smoaking their Flesh, fetching the Wood they have Occasion for, or the Flesh of Bullocks, or other Beasts kill'd by their Husbands in the Woods, which are often at a great Distance, and afterwards Dressing them as has been said. They Sow and Plan, when the Land has been broke up, and in short, do almost all that is requisite for the Support of Life". Page 144

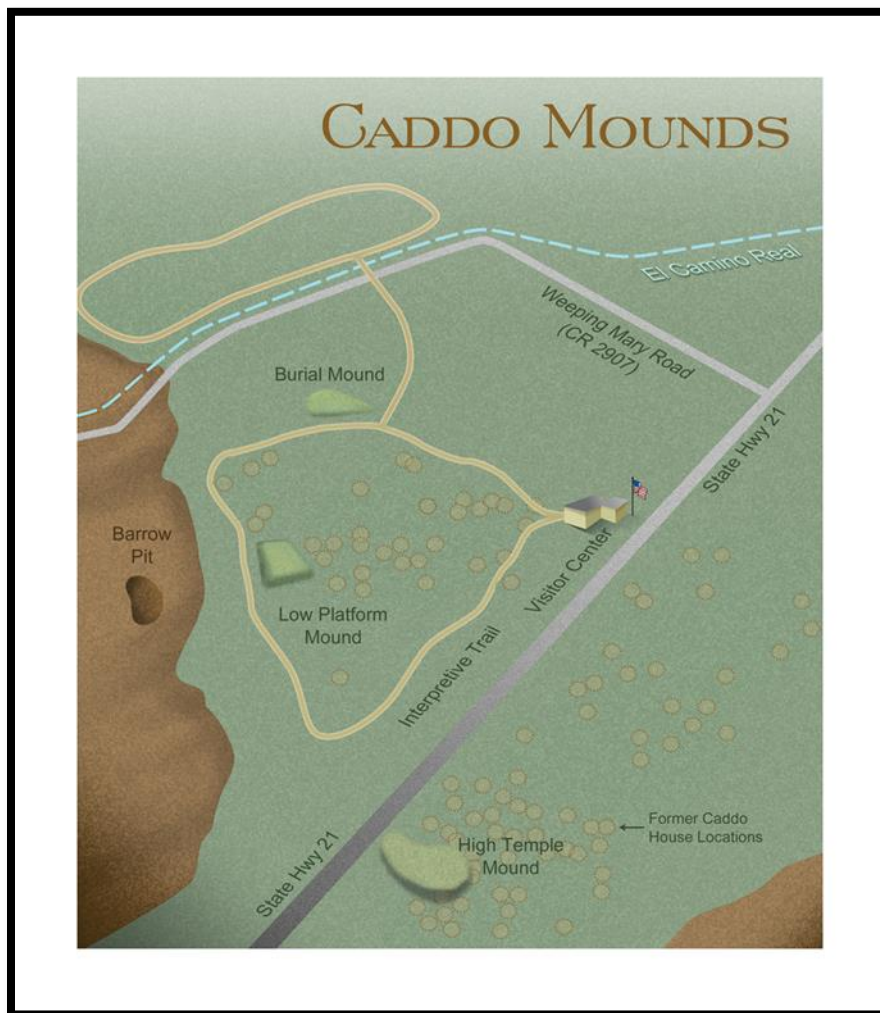
Page numbers reference this edition <https://archive.org/details/joutelsjournalof00joutrich>

Questions for Document 1

1. What archeological evidence found at Caddo Mounds supports Henri Joutel's descriptions of the Caddo? What are the differences between his written account and the archeological record and why might they exist?
2. What are some of the responsibilities of Caddo women? How does this differ from the men? What does this tell us about the role of men and women in Caddo culture?
3. How were the Caddo able to till such large tracts of land without today's technology? What does this tell us about Caddo social structure? How is this reflected at Caddo Mounds?

Visual Evidence

Map 3: Caddo Mounds State Historic Site



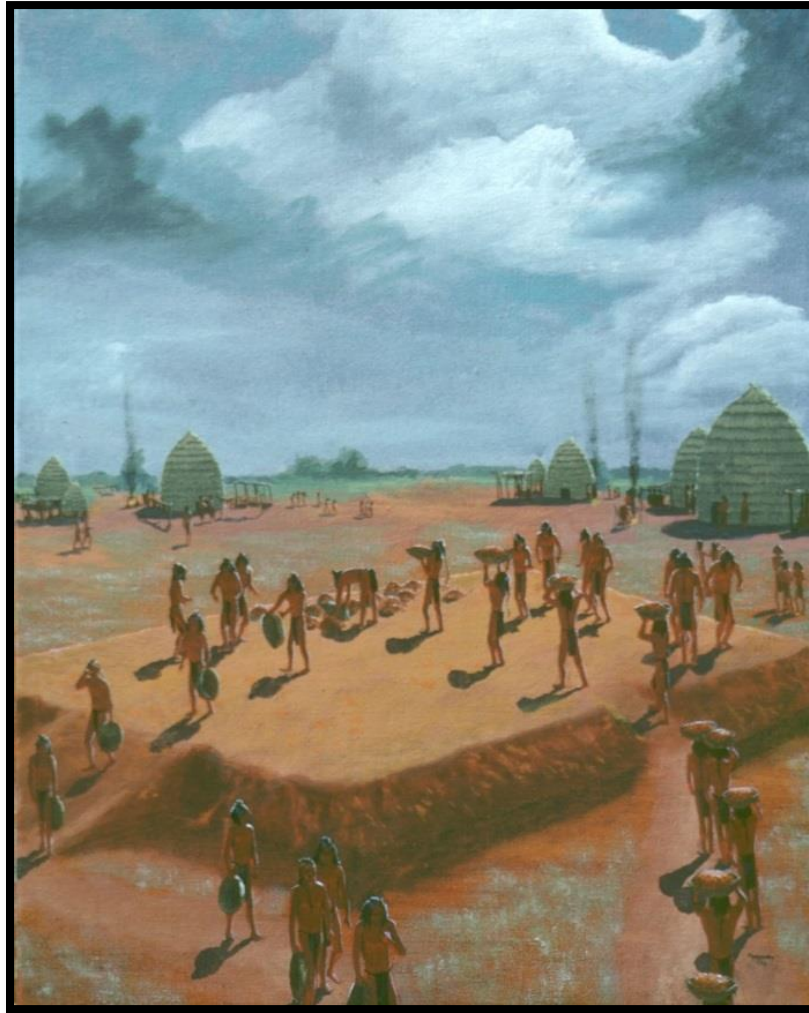
(Map of the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site depicting the three mounds and the location of a former Caddo house. Courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission).

The barrow pit shown on the map is one of the many quarry pits where the Caddo would have obtained the soil needed to build their mounds.

Questions for Map 3:

1. What does the archaeological evidence tell us about the differences between a temple platform mound and a burial mound?
2. Where are the village houses in relation to the mounds? What does this tell you about the social status of the people who lived in them?
3. Locate the Camino Real and State Highway 21. What do their locations tell you about this site's regional importance both today and during Caddo occupation?

Painting 1: Building the Mounds



(An artist's depiction of a Caddo work party building the mounds. Painting courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission).

Soil for mound construction came from borrow pits, such as the one found at the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site. Basketry impressions found in the soil of the mounds during archeological excavations indicate that the soil was carried and deposited on the mounds in 30-40 pound basket loads.

Questions for Painting 1

1. What does the location and size of the mound tell you about its function within the community?
2. Describe what is happening in the painting. What does the number of Caddo helping to build the mound indicate about Caddo social structure?

Photo 1: 1930's Archaeological Excavations



(1930's Archeological Excavations near the High Temple Mound at Caddo Mounds. Photo courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission).

The Caddo Mounds were first recorded by professional archeologists in the early twentieth century, but it was not until 1939 that the first systematic excavations were conducted. The High Temple Mound was first of the three mounds to be excavated. Excavations of the Low Temple Mound, the Burial Mound, and portions of the surrounding village site were not conducted until the 1960's.

Questions for Photo 1

1. What is archeology? Why is archeology important? Why would it have been excavated? And How? Is that how archeologists excavate today?
2. Locate this mound on Map 3. Where is it in relation to the other mounds? Is its location significant? Why or why not? What does the location tell us about its role within the Caddo community?
3. What types of artifacts might have been recovered during the archeological excavation of the High Temple Mound? What do these artifacts tell us about the types of activities occurring at the mound?
4. How does its use and location support the idea of Caddo Mounds as a Civic and Ceremonial site?

Photo 2: Caddo Ceramics



(An example of a Caddo Holly Fine Engraved pottery bottle. It was included as a burial artifact by the Caddo. Its shape and decoration are typical of ceramics used by the Caddo in daily life. Courtesy of The Texas Historical Commission Agency Files).

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Caddo culture was their pottery which encompassed many different styles and form over a span of about 1,000 years. The pottery bearing the distinctive marks of Caddo potters began to appear in the archeological record around 800 A.D. Based on the locations of the pottery found during excavations, archeologists learned that, as in many other cultures, Caddo pottery had both utilitarian uses and ceremonial significance. The most common shapes were jars and carinated vessels (a shape defined by the joining of a rounded base to the sides of an inward sloping vessel). Pottery was fired in an open fire rather than a kiln. It varied in color from grays and blacks to oranges and reds, depending on the temperature of the fire the type of clay used and whether the potter applied a clay slip (a coating applied to the ceramic). The addition of bone and grog temper (pulverized pottery sherds) helps define Caddo pottery.

Questions for Photos 2

1. What resources were needed to create this pottery bottle? How do you think the Caddo acquired these resources?
2. Do you think the designs on the pottery bottle are significant? Where did archeologists find this pottery bottle?
3. What does the location and design of the pottery bottle tell us about how it was used by the Caddo? How does this type of artifact support Caddo Mounds as a Civic and Ceremonial center?

4. Consider the intricate design of the pottery bottle. Would everyone in Caddo society have been capable of creating this type of vessel? Why or why not? What does this tell you about Caddo social structure?

Painting 2: Early Caddo Village Life



(Artist's depiction of an early Caddo village about 900 years ago. Courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission).

Questions for Painting 2

1. Describe the structures shown in the painting. How are they different from the mounds? What does this tell us about their purpose within the Caddo community?
2. Describe what kinds of activities are occurring in the painting. Which activities do you think are the most important to the Caddo? Why?
3. Which activities are being completed by men? Women? Children? What does this tell you about Caddo gender roles?
4. How can the archeological evidence found at Caddo Mounds help you determine if this is ceremonial site?

Photo 3: The Contemporary Caddo



(Children of the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma—whose ancestors were part of the mound building culture—come together for dancing and storytelling during Caddo Culture Day at the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site. Courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission).

Today, Caddo culture lives on through their descendants who celebrate Caddo culture through the teaching of songs, dances, stories, and traditional crafts. One of the most important preserved Caddo dances is the Turkey Dance. This dance is performed in the afternoon and must be completed by sunset (when turkeys come home to roost). The various songs of the Turkey Dance describe the accomplishments of Caddo warriors. Many Caddo artists produce a variety of traditional works, including pottery, regalia, jewelry, and beadwork.

Questions for Photo 3

1. Describe what you see in this photograph. Why do you think these children from the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma are standing in front of the Burial Mound at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site? Does the site hold the same significance for the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma as it did for their ancestors?
2. Why is it important for the children to learn about their Caddo ancestors and carry on their traditions? How have the Caddo in Oklahoma honored the traditions of their ancestors?
3. How does the archaeological evidence found at Caddo Mounds support the traditions practiced by the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma?

Putting it all Together

Caddo Mounds' sphere of influence was only a small portion of the broader Caddo cultural domain encompassing northeast Texas, northwest Louisiana, western Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma. The Caddo dominated life in this region for approximately 500 years. They drew local native groups into economic and social dependence through trade and a sophisticated ceremonial and political system. They traded with other native groups in Central Texas and as far away as present-day Illinois and Florida. Today the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site remains a sacred place for many Caddo, most of whom reside in western Oklahoma near the Caddo Nation Headquarters.

Activity 1: Visualizing Caddo Language

The Caddo language is an integral part of preserving and maintaining oral traditions. Oral traditions are utilized by the Caddo as a vehicle for transferring messages about their history and culture to younger generations. Unfortunately there are only about 30 fluent Caddo speakers. This has greatly impacted the continuation of oral tradition amongst the present-day Caddo people. Students will use the [Caddo dictionary](#) website to explore the Caddo language. Using the Caddo word set or Caddo picture dictionaries found on the website, have students label objects in their classroom (using the provided word list) or have them identify the pictures (using the Caddo picture dictionaries). After the students have labeled the objects/pictures have them do a gallery walk of the classroom to view what items/pictures have been labeled. Ask students to assess the accuracy of each translation, discussing what clues they used to identify the objects/pictures.

Activity 2: Illustrating Caddo Creation Myths

Storytelling is an important way to communicate both traditional Caddo stories and the personal histories of earlier generations. In many native cultures stories are born on the breath of the storyteller at a particular time and place. They provide a means for individuals to understand and make sense of the world around them. Lead a discussion on the importance of myths in the Caddo culture. Have students read one of the myths found on the [Caddo Creation Story website](#) and identify and discuss the theme(s) and how it relates to Caddo culture. Working in teams or individually, have students chose one of the identified themes and create a storyboard either using pencil and paper or [Storyboardthat.com](#). When finished, students should present their project to the class discussing the reasons behind their illustrations.

Activity 3: Comparing the Community to Caddo Mounds

Each community has a unique history of its own. Have students conduct research on their own community to discover how contemporary regional centers, such as their community, differ from Caddo Mounds. Students should look at the types of civic and ceremonial structures within their community, noting their function and location. They should also examine the community's geographic position and access to natural resources, as well as local businesses. Using both the lesson plan materials and community research, have students create a graphic using the app [Easel.ly](#) to discuss the similarities and differences between Caddo Mounds and their own community.

Activity 4: Caddo Ceramics

Caddo pottery is one of the most distinctive characteristics of Caddo Culture. It is a tradition that has spanned over 1000 years and persists today through the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma. Caddo pottery has provided archeologists with a means to better understand the varied aspects of Caddo life. Through the forms of the vessels, whose often rounded or rotund shapes reflect the mounds protruding from the landscapes, and the surface designs that adept Caddo artisans created, the story for the Caddo emerge. Have students examine the different types of [Caddo pottery](#) noting their shape, form and design and ask students to identify the use of each ceramic type and explain what clues they used to determine their answer. Lead a discussion with the students using the following questions as a guide: 1) what types of things does Caddo Pottery communicate to its recipients? 2) How are these things translated onto the ceramic? 3) How does Caddo Pottery inform archeologists about Caddo culture? Following this discussion, have students create their own 3-D replica of Caddo pottery using this [website](#).

Supplementary Resources

The Caddo Mounds: A Regional Center of Mississippian Culture (800-1300 A.D.) lesson plan examines the significant role the Caddo placed in early Texas history as a regional trade center in the American Southwest. For those interested in learning more about Caddo culture, The Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, and the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma will find a variety of materials on the Internet.

Texas Beyond History, Tejas: Life and Times of the Caddo

Tejas: Life and Times of the Caddo is an online exhibit developed by The University of Texas at Austin that provides information on all aspects of Caddo culture including the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma. <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/tejas/index.html>

Texas Historical Commission: Caddo Mounds

This informational website includes a brief history of the Caddo, information about *El Camino Real de los Tejas*, information about how to visit the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, events at the site, and educator resources and lesson plans. <http://www.visitcaddomounds.com>

Caddo Mounds State Historic Site Informational Video

This 9-minute video provides an introduction to the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site and the Caddo culture at its height. The video is hosted on YouTube, and is available on YouTube or through the Texas Historical Commission website.

<http://www.visitcaddomounds.com/index.aspx?page=388>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rU4_w3Nin3k#t=37

National Museum of the American Indian

The National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian holds a wide variety of artifacts from the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma and photographic portraits of Caddo leaders from the <http://www.nmai.si.edu/searchcollections/results.aspx?catid=0&cultxt=caddo&src=1-1>

Native Languages of the Americas: Caddo Legends and Traditional Stories

This site provides definitions of some important Caddo words and terms, and links to stories from the Caddo oral tradition elsewhere on the web.

<http://www.native-languages.org/caddo-legends.htm>

Native Languages of the Americas: Caddo Words

The page gives a list of some Caddo words and their English translations.

http://www.native-languages.org/caddo_words.htm

Native Language of the Americas: Caddo Language Resources

This page provides a variety of classroom resources for teaching the Caddo language, including worksheets showing Caddo words for colors, animals, and parts of the body.

<http://www.native-languages.org/caddo.htm>

Caddo Creation Stories

This page provides the entry point to a number of Caddo creation stories on the Indians of Arkansas website. The first story is the story of Creation and Early Migration, from the version told by Caddo historian and story teller, Cecile Elkins Carter. The other stories on the site are selected from George A. Dorsey's 1905 book *Traditions of the Caddo*.

Click on the "fast forward" or "rewind" arrows at the bottom right-hand of each entry to move between stories, or use the menu bar at the left of the page.

<http://arkarcheology.uark.edu/indiansofarkansas/index.html?pageName=Caddo%20Creation%20Stories>

Caddo Indians on Texas Indians

This website provides basic information about the Caddo and re-tells some of their stories. This would be a useful alternative background resource for students who find the Texas Beyond History site too complex or difficult to read.

<http://www.texasindians.com/caddo.htm>

Center for Regional Heritage Research at Stephen F. Austin State University: Caddo Vessel Documentation

This website provides many photographs of Caddo potter from the Vessel Documentation project, which is an effort to catalog Caddo ceramics. The website is arranged by the archaeological site where the pottery was found. Click on the "view" button below each pot to view the many varieties of pots found at each archeological site.

<http://digital.sfasu.edu/cdm/vessel/collection/CRHR>

3D Models of Caddo Pottery

This site is maintained by a research associate at Stephen F. Austin State University. It allows access to the three-dimensional scans of Caddo pottery that are being done by the Center for Regional Heritage Research at Stephen F. Austin State University. Click on each pot to manipulate the 3D images of each pot.

https://sketchfab.com/zac_selden/models

Geometric Morphometrics Project Description

This site explains the reasons for and goals of the Geometric Morphometrics project of the Center for Regional Heritage Research. This is the project that is producing the 3D scans of Caddo pottery referenced above. The site is written by and for professional archeologists, and is recommended only for advanced high school students or for the teacher to gather background information.

<https://crhrarchaeology.wordpress.com/home/morphometrics/>

Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site

This website is the official website of the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site. It provides a wide array about the Cahokia Mounds and Mississippian culture. Under the Explore tab there is an interactive map of the Cahokia mounds, a timeline, information on the archeology of the

Cahokia mounds, and video features. Under the Learn tab, the site provides tips and resources for teachers.

<http://cahokiamounds.org/>

Caddo Nation of Oklahoma Facebook Page

The Caddo Nation of Oklahoma maintains a Facebook page that gives basic information about the organization and announces events and information of interest to the Caddo Nation.

<https://www.facebook.com/CaddoNationofOklahoma>

Museumlink: Mississippian Culture

This website from the Illinois State Museum provides basic information about the Mississippian life and artifacts from Illinois. The site was created in collaboration with teachers to provide resources for students and educators. Use the choices on left-hand menu to explore Mississippian Identity, Environment, Economy, Technology, Society, Beliefs, and Archaeological Sites.

http://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/pre/htmls/miss.html