**CADDO INDIANS**. Before the middle of the nineteenth century the term *Caddo* denoted only one of at least twenty-five distinct but closely affiliated groups centered around the Red River in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. The term derives from the French abbreviation of *Kadohadacho*, a word meaning "real chief" or "real Caddo" in the Kadohadacho dialect. European chroniclers referred to the Caddo groups as the Hasinai, Kadohadacho, and Natchitoches confederacies, although the "confederacies" are better interpreted as kin-based affiliated groups or bands of Caddo communities. The Hasinai groups lived in the Neches and Angelina River valleys in East Texas, the Kadohadacho groups on the Red River in the Great Bend area, and the Natchitoches groups on the Red River in the vicinity of the French post of Natchitoches (Fort St. Jean Baptiste aux Natchitos), established in 1714. The first European description of the Caddo peoples came in 1542 from diarists traveling with the De Soto entrada, then led by [Luis de Moscoso Alvarado](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fmo71) (Hernando De Soto had died in the spring of 1542). The Spanish described several of the Caddo groups as having dense populations living in scattered settlements and having abundant food reserves of corn. Twentieth-century archeological investigations of many prehistoric Caddoan sites indicate that Caddo communities were widely dispersed throughout the major and minor stream valleys of the Caddoan area by around A.D. 800. The roots of these peoples can be traced to Fourche Maline or Woodland Period culture groups that began to settle down in small communities, to manufacture ceramics for cooking and storage of foodstuffs, and to develop a horticultural way of life based on the raising of tropical cultigens (corn, squash, and later beans) and certain native plants.

The development of prehistoric Caddo culture may have been the result of several factors, including: (a) the rise, elaboration, and maintenance of complex social and political symbols of authority, ritual, and ceremony (centering on the construction, dismantling, remodeling, and use of earthen temple and burial mounds); (b) the development of elite status positions within certain Caddo communities; (c) increased sedentary life; and (d) the expanding reliance on tropical cultigens in the economy, with an intensification in the use of maize agriculture after about A.D. 1200. Regardless of the processes involved, it is clear that after about A.D. 900, the Caddo groups were complex and socially ranked societies with well-planned civic-ceremonial centers, conducted elaborate mortuary rituals and ceremonial practices, and engaged in extensive interregional trade. Caddoan societies shared much with their Mississippian neighbors, particularly the adoption of maize and the development of maize agricultural economies, as well as systems of social authority and ceremony.

In prehistoric times, the Caddos lived in dispersed communities of grass and cane covered houses, with the communities composed of isolated farmsteads, small hamlets, a few larger villages, and the civic-ceremonial centers. These centers had earthen mounds used as platforms for temple structures for civic and religious functions, for burials of the social and political elite, and for ceremonial fire mounds. The largest communities and the most important civic-ceremonial centers were primarily located along the major streams-the Red, Arkansas, Little, Ouachita, and Sabine rivers. The Caddo peoples developed a successful horticultural economy based on the cultivation of maize, beans, and squash, as well as such native cultigens as maygrass, amaranth, chenopods, and sunflowers. By about A.D. 1300 most Caddoan groups were consuming large amounts of maize, and this plant was clearly the most important food source for them after that time. Several varieties of corn were cultivated, an early or "little corn," harvested in July, and the "flour corn," harvested in September at the harvest of the Great Corn. Deer was the most important source of meat to the Caddos, who exploited bison and bear for their furs and meat. After the introduction of the horse in the late seventeenth century, the Caddos began to participate in winter communal bison hunts on the prairies to the west of their settlements.

They developed long-distance trade networks in prehistoric times. Important items of trade were bison hides, salt, and bois d'arc bows, along with copper, stone, turquoise, and marine shell used for gorgets, cups, and dippers, as well as finished objects such as pottery vessels and large ceremonial bifaces. Many of the more important trade items were obtained from great distances (e.g., turquoise from New Mexico, copper from the Great Lakes, and marine shell from the Gulf Coast), and these items were often placed as grave goods in the burials of the social and political elite. The Caddo peoples had a sophisticated technology based on the use of clay, stone, bone, wood, shell, and other media for the manufacture of tools, clothing, ceramic vessels, basketry, ornaments, and other material items. The Caddos are particularly well known for the beautiful artistic and functional ceramic wares they made of many forms and functions, and the ceramics are considered some of the finest aboriginal pottery manufactured in North America. Stone was fashioned into arrowheads, and the Caddos also made ground stone celts and axes for use in removing trees and turning over the soil. They made bone into awls, beamers, digging implements, and hoes, as well as ornaments, beads, and whistles. Hoes and digging tools were also made of freshwater mussel shells, while marine shells obtained through trade were used in the production of shell pendants, gorgets, beads, and cups.

The Caddos traced descent through the maternal line rather than the paternal. Matrilineality was reflected in kinship terms, as the father and father's brothers were called by the same term as the mother and the mother's sisters. The Caddos recognized and ranked clans. Marriage typically occurred between members of different clans. Religious and political authority in historic Caddoan society rested in a hierarchy of key positions within and between the various affiliated communities and groups. The *xinesi* inherited a position of spiritual leadership, the *caddi* the position of principal headman of a community (also a hereditary leadership position), and the *canahas* the position of subordinate headmen or village elders. The Caddo people turned to the *xinesi* for mediation and communication with the supreme god, the *Caddi Ayo*, for religious leadership and decision-making influence between allied villages and in leading certain special rites, including first-fruits, harvest, and naming ceremonies. The *xinesi* imbued everyday life with the supernatural. The *caddi* was primarily responsible for making the important political decisions for the community, sponsoring important ceremonies, leading councils for war expeditions, and conducting the calumet (or peace pipe) ceremony with visitors to the communities. The most influential and politically astute Caddo leaders or *caddices* in historic times were Tinhiouen (from ca. 1760 to 1789) and Dehahuit (from ca. 1800 to 1833) of the Kadohadachos, and Iesh or José María (from about 1842 to 1862) of the Anadarko or Nadaco tribe.

At the time of sustained European (Spanish and French) contact with the Caddo groups in the late seventeenth century, Caddo peoples lived on the Red River and in East Texas. European populations-living in missions, ranches, and trading posts-increased throughout the eighteenth and into the early nineteenth century in the Red River valley and in the vicinity of Natchitoches and Nacogdoches, important fur trading centers, while epidemics between 1691 and 1816 greatly reduced Caddo populations. At the same time, the Caddo peoples participated in the fur trade, traded guns, horses, and other items to Europeans and other Indians, and developed new trade and economic networks. The resulting economic symbiosis between the Caddo groups and Europeans was an important means of acculturation because great quantities of European goods became available to the Caddo. While the Hasinai Caddo groups continued to live through the 1830s in their traditional East Texas homeland in the Neches and Angelina River valleys, the Kadohadacho groups moved off the Red River in the 1790s to get away from Osage depredations and slave-raiding. Their new settlements were between the Sabine River and [Caddo Lake](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/roc01), generally along the boundary between the territory of Louisiana and the province of Texas. Most of the Kadohadachos remained in the Caddo Lake area until about 1842, although with the cession of Caddoan lands in Louisiana in 1835 and increased Texas settlement, other Kadohadacho moved to the Brazos River in north central Texas. By the early 1840s, all Caddo groups had moved to the Brazos River area to remove themselves from Anglo-American repressive measures and colonization efforts. They remained there until they were placed on the [Brazos Indian Reservation](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/bpb03) in 1855, and then in 1859 the Caddos (about 1,050 people) were removed to the Washita River in Indian Territory (now western Oklahoma) with the help of [Robert S. Neighbors](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fne08), superintendent of Indian affairs in Texas.

During the [Civil War](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qdc02) most of the Caddo groups abandoned the Indian Territory and resettled in southern and eastern Kansas, but they moved back to the Wichita Reservation in 1867. By 1874 the boundaries of the Caddo reservation were defined, and the separate Caddo tribes agreed to unite as the unified Caddo Indian Tribe. Under the terms of the General Allotment Act of 1887, the Caddo reservation was partitioned in 1902 a 160-acre allotment for each enrolled Caddo, and the remaining lands were opened for white settlement. The Caddo peoples continue to live in western Oklahoma, primarily in Caddo County near the Caddo Indian Tribe's Tribal Complex, outside Binger, Oklahoma.

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