



SECTION



Native American Groups in Texas

Why It Matters Now

Learning about the ways Native Texans adapted to their environment may help us preserve and adapt to our own environment.

TERMS & NAMES

Coahuiltecas, Karankawas, **nomad**, Caddoes, Atakapans, Alabama-Coushattas, Apaches, Lipan Apaches, Comanches, Kiowas, Tonkawas, Wichitas, Jumanos, Tiguas, **adobe**, Cherokees, Kickapoos

OBJECTIVES

1. Compare the cultures of Native Americans in Texas prior to European colonization.
2. Identify ways in which Texans have adapted to and modified the environment.
3. Compare types and uses of technology past and present.

MAIN IDEA

Native Texans began to develop their own distinct cultures. They developed different languages, skills, customs, beliefs, and attitudes toward outsiders. Each group's lifestyle and practices were uniquely suited to its environment and specific needs.

INTERACT WITH HISTORY

Imagine that you are a Native Texan during the 1600s. You have always traveled around on foot, using spears, bows and arrows, and your bare hands to survive. Lately, however, you have heard about strangers who ride swiftly across the plains on beasts they call horses. They also carry powerful weapons that seem to shoot fire. How do you think you would feel about these unusual sights? How might they change your life?

WHAT Would You Do?

Write your response to *Interact with History* in your Texas Notebook.



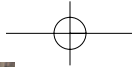
Native Texans of the Gulf Coast

Native Texans (Native Americans who lived in Texas) developed lifestyles that made the most of the plants and wildlife in their areas. The Coahuiltecas (ko•ah•WEEL•tay•cunz) and the Karankawas (ka•RAN•keh•wahs) were the two major groups of Native Texans who lived in this region. The Coahuiltecas were actually several native groups who lived on the southern coast. This area extended south along the Gulf Coast past the Rio Grande and inland to present-day San Antonio. The terrain was hot, semi-arid brush country that yielded little food or shelter.

The game of the region was limited to deer and smaller animals such as rabbits. An occasional buffalo was a treat. Otherwise, Native Texans lived on food gathered nearby, often by the women. This food included mesquite beans, nuts, berries, cacti, worms, lizards, insects, and roots.

The Coahuiltecas lived as **nomads**. When the limited food supply ran out in one place, they moved their camp to another area. Their temporary dwellings were made of mud, animal skins, and brush. Living such a harsh lifestyle built the Coahuiltecas' toughness and endurance. Upon encountering the Coahuiltecan men, the Europeans were amazed at their ability to run all day without tiring.

nomad *one who moves from place to place with no permanent home*



▲ A dugout canoe was made by hollowing out a large log. This exhibit from the Bob Bullock State History Museum shows a Karankawa canoe with pottery and a rolled woven mat. ● **Why might a Karankawa family have these belongings with them in a canoe?**

TEXAS VOICES

The people there are tall and well built. Their only weapons are bows and arrows, with which they are very skillful. The men have their lower lip pierced and wear a piece of cane in it half a finger in diameter. Their women do the hard work.

*Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca,
Journey of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*

The women made clothing from deerskin and moss. They also tattooed and painted their bodies. The Karankawas were very gentle with their children, and they loved dogs.



Hoe made from a buffalo or deer shoulder blade



Karankawa arrowheads



▲ Many Native American groups migrated to Texas at different periods of time. ● **Which region had the greatest number of Native Texan groups? Why?**



◀ The rich soil of East Texas made it possible to grow crops. Agriculture led to the establishment of permanent villages like this Caddo community. ● **How did permanent villages change the lives of East Texas natives?**

Native Texans of East Texas

The Piney Woods of East Texas had plenty of rainfall and fertile soil. The Native Texans of this region lived in a food-rich environment. They learned to clear the forests and plant crops such as pumpkins, beans, and corn. They also hunted game such as deer, bears, and an occasional buffalo. The forests provided timber, which the people used to build permanent dwellings. Having secured food and shelter, these Native Texans created colorful crafts such as rugs, baskets, and pottery. Their success as farmers and craftspeople helped them develop trade networks as far west as New Mexico. The East Texas farming groups developed complex societies.

The Caddoes were the largest East Texas native group. They built sturdy grass lodges up to fifty feet high and lived in large villages. The Caddoes were ruled by a major chief called the *caddi*, assisted by other chiefs who were appointed as helpers. The *caddi* made the important political decisions for the village and led war councils. Women also played important roles in Caddoan society. The oldest woman in each family controlled the entire family, even if the men were chiefs or warriors.

The Caddoes built huge temple and burial mounds. A head priest kept the temple fire and directed the ceremonies. Most Caddoes lived along the Angelina and Neches Rivers. Groups of Caddoes joined together to form federations such as the Hasinai Confederacy.

Other, smaller bands of Native Texans also lived in East Texas. The Atakapans (ah•TAK•uh•pans) lived in southeastern Texas and southwestern Louisiana. They lived in the marshy wetlands, hunting small animals and deer and fishing from dugout canoes. They also gathered roots, berries, and shellfish as the Karankawas did. Some of the Atakapas who lived farther inland also raised some crops.

The Alabama and Coushatta groups came from Alabama in the 1700s and settled along the Trinity River. Because the two groups were closely tied, they became known as one group, the Alabama-Coushattas. In the 1780s, some moved into the Big Thicket area, which had fewer settlers and plenty of deer and other game, fish, berries, and other food. They lived in cabins surrounded by fields of vegetables and fruit trees. They were skilled in making baskets and other crafts.

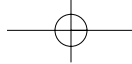


Early Alabama-Coushatta drum



Angelina

Angelina County and the Angelina River in East Texas were both named for a Caddoan woman. Around 1700, Angelina was captured, renamed, and taught by Spanish priests near the Rio Grande. She used her knowledge of the Spanish language to serve as a translator for many years. Angelina was well respected by her people and is the only woman for whom a Texas county is named. ● **Why do you think Angelina was well respected by her people?**



Multicultural Connections

Resourcefulness of the Apaches

The buffalo was more than a source of food for many Native Texan groups. It provided for almost all their needs. A member of Coronado's group in 1541 was impressed with the group's efficient use of all parts of the animal: "With the skins they build their houses; with the skins they clothe and shoe themselves, from the skins they make ropes and also obtain wool. From the sinews [tendons] they make thread, with which they sew their clothing and likewise their tents. From the bones they shape awls and the dung they use for firewood, since there is no other fuel in all that land." • **Why do you think the Apaches developed so many uses for the buffalo?**

Native Texans of the Plains

Large parts of North, West, and Central Texas were a sea of grass that provided a plentiful food supply for millions of buffalo. The Native Texans who lived there based their lives and cultures on the buffalo. They relied on buffalo to provide them with all of their living essentials—food, shelter, clothing, weapons, and tools. In the spring and fall, the entire group would set out on the prairies to hunt buffalo. Before horses were introduced to the region by the Spaniards, the buffalo had to be hunted on foot. Groups of hunters ran the huge animals into streams or over cliffs for the kill. After the Native Texans obtained horses, they were able to hunt and kill the buffalo more efficiently. Some groups on the Texas plains also hunted elk, deer, antelope, or rabbits. They also gathered plants for food.

Once a buffalo was killed, members of the group removed and ate some of the animal's organs immediately. They roasted most of the meat and preserved some by setting it out to dry into a form of jerky. The women pounded the dried meat and mixed it with nuts and berries to make *pemmican*. Bones were made into tools, and the hide was used to make tepees, clothing, shoes, and blankets. Women did much of this work as well.

Buffalo herds in Texas were constantly migrating. The Native Texan groups who followed the herds were nomads. Their dwellings had to be easy to take apart and carry on long journeys. Before horses were brought to Texas, these native groups domesticated dogs to drag their belongings from one place to another using small wooden sleds. Later, horses became their primary beasts of burden.

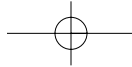
Families formed the basis of social organization on the Texas plains. Groups of families banded together under the leadership of a chief. These groups were self-sufficient and independent. The warriors often held high status because of their bravery. Their dangerous hunting lives constantly tested the survival skills of these Native Texans.



Kiowa fan

- ▶ Native Americans of the plains were extremely skilled at using the bow and arrow. • **In what ways did horses make hunting easier?**





The Apaches moved south into Texas in the 1600s or earlier. They quickly learned to hunt the plentiful game on the plains. The Apaches wore high boots of soft leather to protect themselves from thorns and brush. The men wore headbands that absorbed sweat in the hot desert sun. Women held a central place within the group.

The Mescalero Apaches were mainly nomadic hunters known for raiding other groups in West Texas and northern Mexico. The Lipan Apaches hunted and farmed. For part of the year they lived in farming communities along rivers or streams called *rancherías* by Spaniards. They grew beans, maize (corn), squash, and pumpkins and traded with neighboring groups. To avoid their enemies, the Comanches, the Lipan Apaches later moved into South Texas.

The Comanches migrated from the harsh, cold mountains of Canada in the 1700s. Fierce warriors, the Comanches became so skilled at riding horses that the Europeans called them the “lords of the plains.” The Comanches were also skilled traders. Both the Comanches and the Apaches depended on horses to hunt and to raid other groups, taking goods and captives. The women wore finely decorated buckskin dresses.

The Kiowas (KEE•uh•was), according to their oral history, moved into Texas in the late 1700s from the mountains of South Dakota and Montana. On the High Plains they often joined the Comanches to drive the Apaches from their territories. The Kiowas painted pictures of important events on their tepees and made beautiful beaded crafts. They also developed a calendar. Kiowa warriors became master riders and were among the most feared native groups on the plains.

Natives of North Central Texas

Native groups in North Central Texas combined the lifestyles of some of their neighbors. The Tonkawas lived in Central Texas near present-day Austin. Like the plains groups, they often hunted buffalo. They also hunted deer and traded the hides. In addition, they fished the rivers and springs for fish, crawfish, and clams. Because there was plenty of food nearby, the



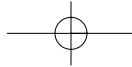
COMANCHE RIDERS

Comanche warriors were such skilled riders that they could ride a horse full speed while hanging by one leg over the horse's side. This shielded the warrior from enemy fire while he shot arrows from under the horse's neck. Warriors could shoot up to 20 arrows per minute. Comanche hunters also were extremely accurate, and some could shoot an arrow with enough force to send it all the way through a buffalo's body.



Kiowa cradleboard

- ◀ The Lipan Apaches hunted buffalo but also gathered plants and farmed. They traded meat, skins, and other animal products for blankets, maize, and other goods. ● **What impression of the Lipan Apaches do you think the artist, Theodore Gentilz, was trying to convey?**



Wichita game sticks and balls

Tonkawas did not have to migrate. Like the East Texas groups, they settled in villages and lived in grass houses. The Tonkawas later joined European settlers in fighting the Comanches.

The Wichitas migrated from Kansas and settled near present-day Waco, Dallas, and Corsicana. Like neighboring East Texas native groups, they obtained their food primarily through farming. They grew corn, beans, pumpkins, squash, and melons. They also hunted buffalo.

The Wichitas became skilled artisans, making clay pots and jars and leather bags. They lived in large villages of up to a thousand people. They built sturdy grass lodges that held eight to ten people each. Warriors in the group elected chiefs who enforced rules for daily living. The Wichitas also held the women of the group in high regard.

Native Texans of the Far West

The Jumanos and Tiguas made their homes in far West Texas. The Jumanos lived in farming villages of one-room houses along the Rio Grande from El Paso to the Big Bend area. Their square, flat-roofed houses were made of **adobe**, which helped keep the homes cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Inside, the homes were brightly painted. The Jumanos planted their crops beside rivers and streams to take advantage of the limited water supply. Some Jumanos hunted and traded farther east.

The Tiguas came to Texas in the late 1600s with Spanish settlers who were fleeing a revolt by native groups in Isleta, New Mexico. The Tiguas settled along the Rio Grande near El Paso and called their community Ysleta del Sur, or "Little Island of the South." Like the Jumanos, they lived in adobe houses, and they cooked food in round adobe ovens. In addition to some hunting and fishing, the Tiguas grew corn, tomatoes, squash, beans, and grapes. They made beautiful pottery for storing and cooking food. They also grew cotton and wove it into cloth.

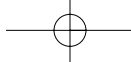
adobe *a brick or other building material made of sun-dried earth and straw*



A large stone metate and a small mano ("hand") used for grinding corn in West Texas

► Farming allowed Native Texans to be less dependent on hunting wild game. ● **In what other ways do you think farming benefited Native Texans?**





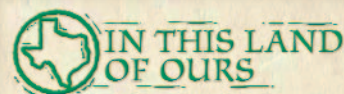
Latecomers

Some Native Americans moved to Texas in the early 1800s to flee from the pressures of settlers to the north and east. In 1819 and 1820 several hundred Cherokees settled along the Sabine, Neches, and Angelina Rivers. Like other East Texas groups, the Cherokees grew corn, beans, pumpkins, and squash. Even before the Europeans came, they had lived in log cabins in villages and used metal tools.

While some Cherokees maintained traditional ways of life, others intermarried with their southern neighbors and adopted their lifestyles. They owned large farms and plantations, and some even owned slaves. Those who moved to Texas hoped to obtain land grants and live in harmony with the Europeans. Although they arrived later than other Native Texans, the Cherokees became important in Texas history.

Another native group, the Kickapoos, arrived in Texas in the 1830s from the Great Lakes area, where they were being crowded out by settlers. The Kickapoos lived in villages and raised crops, but they also spent periods hunting on the plains. The women built their homes, which were round structures covered by woven mats. They also made baskets and buckskin clothing, and crafted fine beadwork.

Like the other Native Texan groups, the latecomers adapted their cultures to their environment. They learned to survive on the resources that were available. As more and more European settlers arrived, the Native Texans would face new challenges.



MOVEMENT

When European settlers arrived in Texas, many Native Texans were forced to move from their traditional homelands. Sometimes, these migrations led to serious conflicts with other Native American groups. Over time, these conflicts could lead to deadly wars, turning neighboring groups into dreaded enemies.

● **The Apaches, Comanches, and Kiowas came to Texas from the north. Why might groups like these leave their homelands and move somewhere else?**

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

Terms & Names

Identify:

- nomad
- adobe

Organizing Information

Use a chart like the one shown to compare the cultures of native groups in each area of Texas.

Area	Native Groups	Culture

In what ways are all the groups similar?

Critical Thinking

1. Which Native Texan group do you think had the most complex society? Which do you think was least complex? Explain your answers.
2. What is one way Native Texans in the Gulf Coast area of Texas adapted to or modified their environment? in East Texas? in West and Central Texas?
3. Identify four types of weapons or tools Native Texans used before obtaining guns from the

Europeans. Overall, do you think the gun was more helpful or harmful to these groups? Why?

Interact with History

Review your response to *Interact with History* in your Texas Notebook. Now imagine that one of the Spaniards has offered to trade a horse and gun to you in exchange for something of similar value. What do you think you might trade for these items? What do you have that the Spaniard might want?

ACTIVITY

History

Find out more about the history, lifestyle, and culture of one of the groups of Native Texans in this section. Use presentation software to compile and present your research.



Go to www.celebratingtexas.com to research the Activity topic.