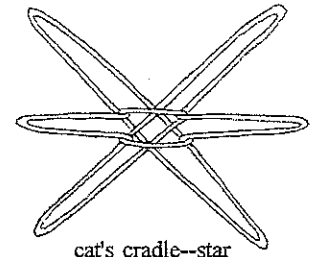


AMUSEMENTS



cat's cradle--star
string figure

INTRODUCTION

When all their work was done, Texas Indians liked to have fun. Indian children's play usually had the purpose of preparing them for the work they would do someday as adults.

Little boys used miniature bows and blunt arrows to shoot at targets. As their aim improved, they were given larger bows and pointed arrows to hunt small game. When they had gained enough skill, they were given man-sized weapons and allowed to go along on a buffalo hunt or raiding party.

Little girls played with dolls made from deerskin stuffed with dried grass or buffalo hair. When these girls got older, they took care of younger brothers and sisters. They also learned to weave and helped the women make baskets and pottery, cook, and tan hides. Both boys and girls helped their mothers gather nuts and berries.

SPORTS

Indians called races and contests the "little brothers of war" because they were the perfect training ground for future warriors and hunters.

Races were very popular. A tribe sent a messenger to a neighboring village to challenge them. On the day of the races, spectators from both villages stood on the sidelines, cheering the fast runners and jeering the slow ones. The winner in one race was not allowed to enter another race. The Apaches even gave prizes to the winners.

Hasinai warriors used races to train their youth to run fast. Those runners who lagged behind or did not finish were howled at by their relatives and friends who knew that, during war, slowpokes would be captured or killed.

GAMES

Games often were based on folk tales. For instance, if a ball was used, it symbolized the earth, the sun, or the moon. If a woven hoop was used, it symbolized a spider web, a sign of the Earth Mother.

Objects used in games were made from common materials -- balls from buckskin-covered wood or buffalo hair, arrows and playing sticks from strong branches, string from animal sinew, dice from stones, corn, or wood.

Shinny

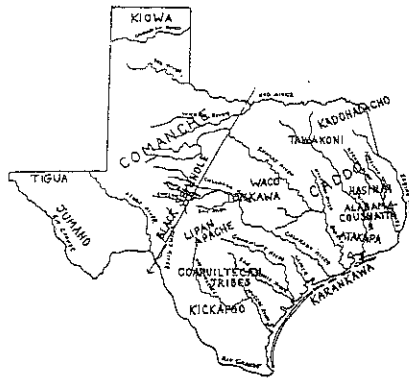
The Indians believed the god Darkness brought the game of shinny to them. Play was begun in the early evening and ended when it got dark. Only women could play. Points were scored by driving a ball between the opponent's goalposts. This was one of the favorite games of Indian women.



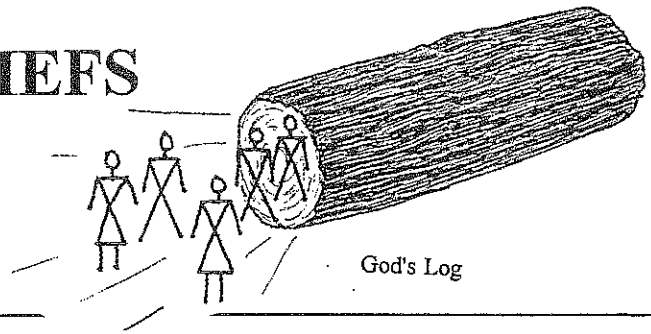
Thimble and Button

The Apaches liked to play this game. One person hid a small painted stone or bean (button) under one of several wooden cups (thimbles) and then quickly moved them around. The watchers tried to guess which thimble covered the button.

A similar game was played by the Comanches, using hands instead of thimbles. One person switched a painted bean or colorful stone rapidly from hand to hand. This was accompanied by a rhythmic song sung by the watchers. The player with the object suddenly stopped and held out both closed fists. The watchers would try to guess which hand contained the object.



BELIEFS



SPIRITS AND MAGIC

Many Indians believed in a supreme being who created everything, including good and evil spirits. The purpose of rituals and festivals was to keep him happy, since he could bless or curse.

Indians believed there was magic in thunder (symbolized by the thunderbird), in deer and buffalo, and in coyotes (considered to be Comanche brothers). The eagle brought strength and courage in war, and the elk brought strength and endurance during a hunt. Bears, skunks, or beavers were believed to cure disease and wounds. Spirits controlled the weather, wind, fire, the flow of water, even the path of an arrow.

Religion was expressed in many ways. For the Karankawas, dances were a type of prayer for victory in war, good luck in hunting and fishing, or to celebrate and thank a supreme being for success. Kickapoos believed that a spirit existed before it came into its physical body and would exist after the body died, that illnesses affected one's body, mind, and spirit, and that each person was responsible for staying healthy. Like all Indians, the Kickapoos had a code of behavior. They must not commit suicide, kill another Indian or Mexican, steal, lie, or gossip.

SHAMAN

A wise elder warrior of the tribe was the spiritual leader or shaman. Sometimes the position of shaman was passed from father to son. A shaman was the go-between between the tribe and the spirit world. If a shaman's prayer was not answered in the way the tribe wanted, they assumed he did not ask properly. The prayers were repeated until there was a pleasing answer.

A shaman blessed the planting of crops and the construction of houses. He was in charge of feasts and ceremonies. His word was law. The tribe believed the shaman could appear as an owl, a good sign. A shaman usually knew about herbs, bark, and wild plants for treating illness.

rites and Ceremonies

Religious celebrations and festivals often revolved around the growing season and major events of a person's life -- birth, growing up, marriage, war, and death.

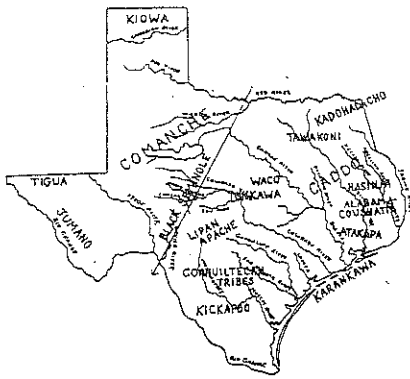
Prayers were said when the ground was broken, the seed planted, while crops were growing, to bring rain, and during the harvest. Dances and festivals assured a good food supply.

Indians believed that everything created had a spirit and was to be treated with respect. They had ceremonies and prayers before a hunt to ask for success, and ceremonies and prayers afterwards to appease the spirits of the hunted animals.

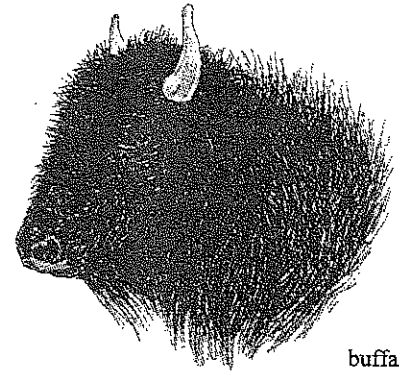
RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Vision Quest

Many Indians believed that, to be a warrior, one had to receive a vision. Dressed only in breechcloth and moccasins, a young man went out into the desert alone, usually for four days, to receive his vision from the spirits. He carried four things with him -- a buffalo robe, a pipe, tobacco, and materials to light the pipe. He fasted and prayed, waiting for a vision. An animal appearing in the vision would become the man's source of power for hunting, for war, for curing illness, and for seeking revenge.



BUFFALO



buffalo

INTRODUCTION

The American bison, commonly known as the buffalo, was the largest of the North American big game animals. The Great Plains grasslands, extending south from Canada to the central part of Texas and east from the Rocky Mountains to the Mississippi River, was the home of 30-50 million buffalo before white settlers began to arrive in the 1700s. Then buffalo were slaughtered by the millions -- some to feed the incoming settlers and the rest simply to keep them from the Indians who needed them to survive. By the beginning of the 1900s, there were fewer than a thousand left.

APPEARANCE AND BEHAVIOR

A buffalo bull can weigh as much as 2,000 pounds and stands more than six feet high at the shoulders. His massive head and forequarters are covered with long, shaggy hair. His body slims down toward the hindquarters, which are covered with shorter hair. The female buffalo is somewhat smaller. Both have horns, but bull horns are larger.

The buffalo is sluggish, has poor eyesight, and can be incredibly stubborn. Ordinarily a buffalo herd moves at a slow, leisurely pace when grazing. If frightened or angry, buffalo can move rapidly and be extremely dangerous and unpredictable. Any sudden fright, such as the shadow of a cloud or the bark of a prairie dog, could cause a terrifying stampede, with the earth shaking as they thunder over it.

LIFE ON THE PLAINS

Buffalo were constantly on the move as they grazed their way across the plains. About every third day they needed to find water. Buffalo migration was merely a moderate movement

northward or southward as the seasons changed, as when they left the hot plains in summer for the cooler north.

Buffalo had a habit of wallowing or rolling in mud or dust. This helped get rid of old hair that came off in patches, and disturbed flies and other biting insects that settled on the bare spots. Buffalo wallows were low spots on the land that caught and held rain. If someone said the "wallows are full," that meant there had been a good, soaking rain. If a wallow spot was not available, buffalo liked to rub their bodies against trees. This destroyed many trees and twisted others out of shape.

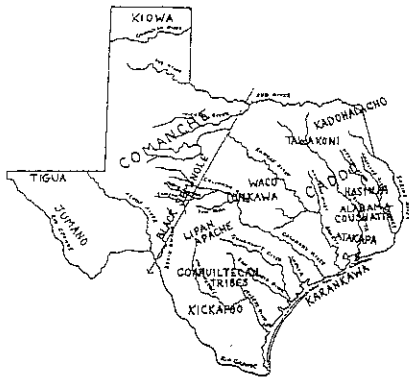
Wolves and coyotes were the main enemies of the buffalo. They attacked stray calves or old bulls weakened by disease or wounds. Other enemies were the grizzly bear and mountain lion.

A wind-driven prairie fire could race quickly across the plains. Sometimes a buffalo herd could not escape, and buffalo would be burned to death or trampled in the rush to get away.

HUNTING BUFFALO

Before the Indians had horses, they had to hunt buffalo on foot. Sometimes the Indians would chase the buffalo and try to shoot arrows at them while running. Since that was exhausting and not always successful, the Indians tried to sneak up on grazing buffalo by crawling quietly through the high grass while disguised in buffalo robes or deerskins.

Another possibility was to create a "surround." Indians would set the grass on fire on three sides of the herd and shoot them as they tried to escape. A variation of this was to build a three-sided brush or wooden pen near a herd, drive the



DWELLINGS I

TIPI

A tipi was a windowless pole-frame cone covered with animal skins. This type of dwelling was used by the Plains Indians of Texas (Comanches, Kiowas, and Lipans) for at least part of the year. A tipi was carried from camp to camp by horse-drawn travois. The chief's tipi was the largest because council meetings were held in it.

Construction

Women made the tipis, and put them up and took them down whenever the band moved. A large tipi could stand 12-14 feet high and require as many as thirty buffalo skins.

Three main poles were set into the ground in a circle. A leather rope was tied around the poles where they crossed overhead. Support stakes were lashed to the poles at the bottom.

Once the basic frame was secure enough to withstand high winds, the women fastened 16-18 more poles vertically around the cone. Buffalo hides that had been tanned, trimmed, and sewn together with strong buffalo sinew were stretched and tied across this frame. A flap opening was made at the peak as a vent for cook-fire smoke.

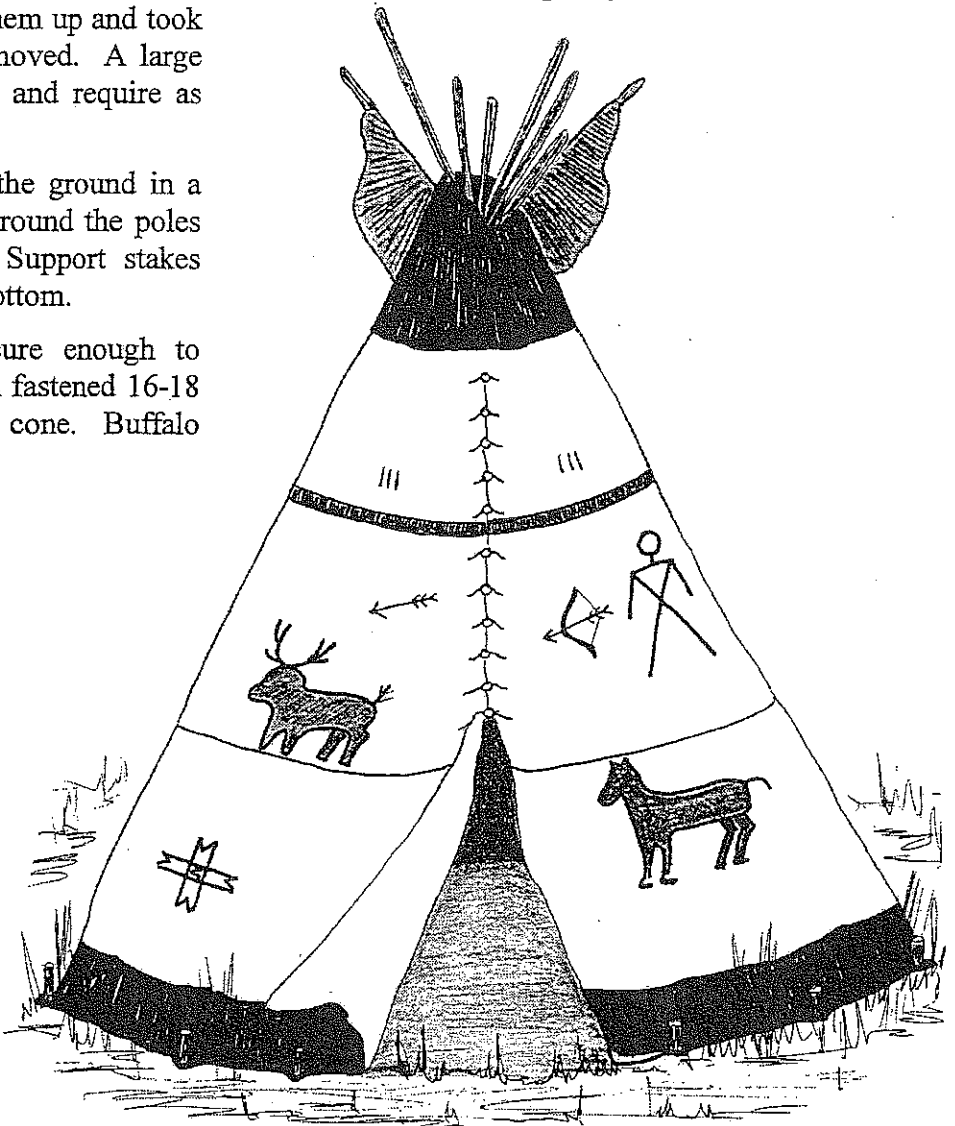
Entrance

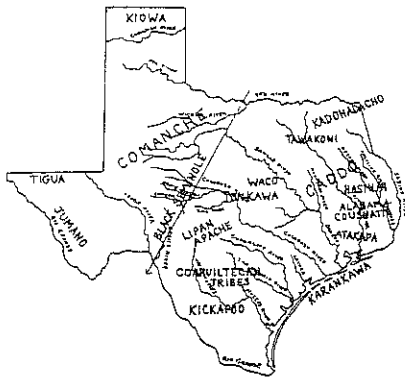
The entrance was a small opening about three or four feet high, facing east. The door was a stiff skin painted with war or hunting scenes. It was attached to the tipi with cords made of buckskin. To make the door

self-closing, it was fastened facing away from the prevailing winds.

Interior

A tipi's interior was very simple. There was a fire-hole in the center of the floor. Most of the space was taken up by sleeping platforms, four to six inches off the ground, covered with piles of skins. The remaining space inside the tipi was used as a kitchen, pantry, and storeroom.





DWELLINGS II

GRASS LODGE

The Texas Indians who lived in grass lodges were sedentary (settled) farmers -- the Caddos and their neighbors, the Wichitas. A village of grass lodges looked like a farmer's field filled with giant beehives or haystacks.

Since building a grass lodge was a lot of hard work, the entire community got together to build it. They worked from dawn until noon, before the sun made the day too hot. The families that were to live in the lodge prepared a feast of corn and venison (deer meat) for the workers.

Construction

Grass lodges were 40-50 feet high with one circular room about 15-30 feet in diameter. Workers dug 15-20 holes in a circle and pushed strong cedar poles as thick as a man's thigh into the holes. A single post with a crosspiece at the top was placed in the middle to act as a brace.

The tops of the poles were tied together with wet leather straps. Walls were made by lacing the frame with saplings and grapevines. The women plastered the walls with mud. The roof was thatched with mats made of straw and cornstalks. There was a smoke hole in the ceiling.

Entrance

There were two narrow doorways in the grass lodge, one facing east and the other west, but no windows. The doors were reed or cane mats.

Interior

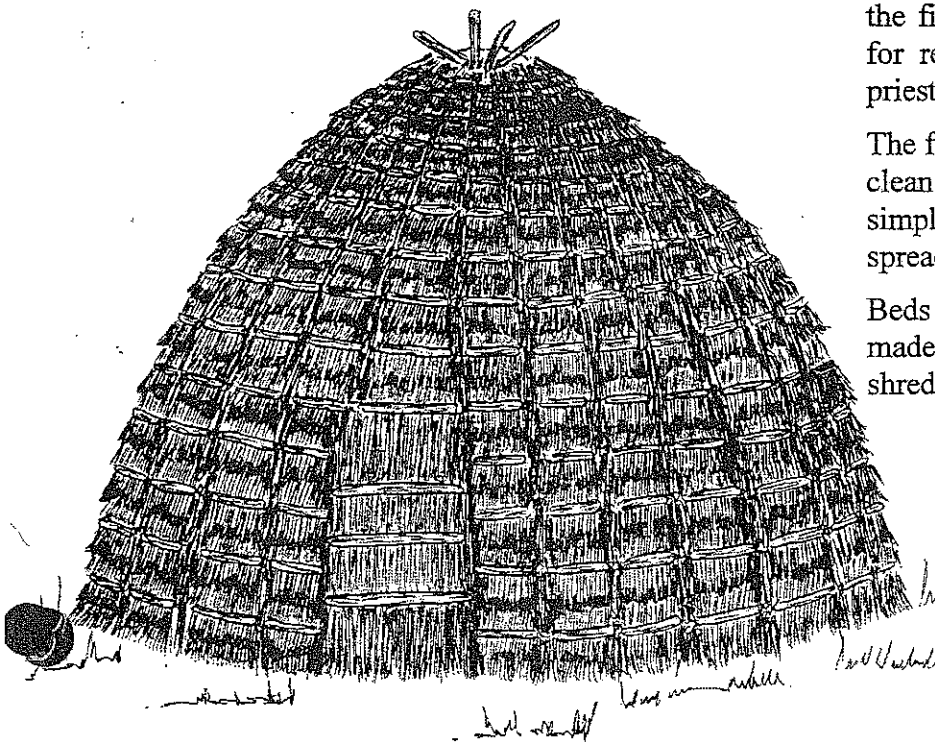
A lodge was occupied by at least two or three families. Each family had a special area that contained their beds and kitchen utensils. One woman was in charge of keeping track of the food and sharing it with everyone in that lodge. Each family did its own cooking.

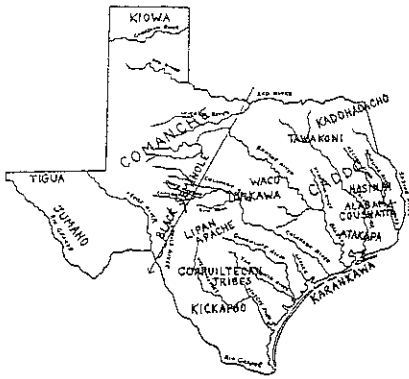
A fire was kept burning in the middle of the lodge. If it ever went out, it was relighted from the fire in the temple (a larger grass lodge used for religious ceremonies), that was guarded by priests so that it was never allowed to go out.

The floor of hard-packed dirt was regularly swept clean with branches tied together to make a short, simple broom. Tightly-woven grass mats were spread out on the floor.

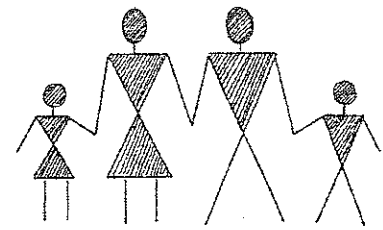
Beds took up much of the floor space. Mattresses made of deer skins stuffed with Spanish moss or shredded corn husks were laid across high wooden platforms. Sometimes fires were built under the platforms to keep the sleepers warm.

Shelves held reed baskets filled with corn, nuts, acorns, and beans, mortars for grinding corn, and pottery. There was no table, only low stools to sit on while eating.





FAMILY LIFE



family symbol

MARRIAGE

Most Texas Indians lived in small groups called bands. A band might be an extended family group made up of a husband and wife, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Usually each family unit had its own dwelling, but they clustered their homes near each other. The band members cooperated with each other in work and during hunts.

If a young man and woman from two bands were attracted to each other, their feelings were respected and encouraged by their families. The relatives of the young man gave gifts to the family of the young woman. They were divided among her relatives. The two bands built a new home for the couple near her parents' home.

In most of the settled tribes, women were lifetime members of a band. A man entered his wife's band when they married. Among the more nomadic tribes, the opposite might occur, with the new couple joining the band of the husband. After a Karankawa couple wed, the man could not enter the home of his in-laws, nor they his. They never spoke to one another. If they happened to come face to face, both parties turned away to avoid eye contact.

Some tribes allowed divorce, and others did not. A Caddo man was allowed to marry one woman at a time, but he could have many girlfriends. After his wife's death, the Caddo man could remarry.

An Apache man whose wife died was expected to continue to help provide for her relatives and mourn for her as long as a year. After the year passed, he was expected to marry an eligible sister or female cousin of his deceased wife. When an Apache man died, his widow was under

the authority of his brothers. A Tonkawa woman was expected to marry an eligible brother or male cousin of her deceased husband. These rules were made to keep the band together.

If a Karankawa couple had no children and were not getting along, they were allowed to divorce. If they had children, divorce was not permitted. Occasionally a Karankawa husband would trade his wife for a horse or other prized objects.

DIVISION OF LABOR

In most Texas Indian tribes, men and women divided the chores between them. Women cared for the home, gathered nuts and berries, cooked the food, and cared for the children. Men made weapons and went on hunting trips. Sometimes it looked like the women did more work than the men, but men's share of the work was often dangerous (war and hunting).



Caddo women also made saddles, tanned the skins, fetched the water and wood for campfires, pitched and took down the tipis, and even helped with some of the hunting.

The Apaches shared the work. Though gathering was usually women's work, the men joined them in collecting the fruit of the agave. When Apache women tanned hides, the men helped with large,