

Cultural Conservation and Revival



The Caddo and Hasinai Post-Removal Era, 1860–1902

*By Howard Meredith**

The Caddo and Hasinai removal crisis of 1859 in Texas has drawn scholarly attention as a critical watershed in their history. However, the post-removal era has received less scrutiny, even as the Caddo and Hasinai people conserved the best elements of their culture and found new alternatives for revival of their heritage in the Southern Plains. Thus the native traditions carried forward the growth of the Caddoan community within the larger context of North American geopolitics and global economic issues. The Hasinai and Caddo peoples continued to develop civil governance

based on their societal differentiation, social and political solidarity, world view, institutional and economic traditions, as well as political culture and values. The most powerful condition for explaining the social and political continuity was the renewal of a unified political tribalism and an extremely differentiated traditional order.¹

The experiences in reforming structured government after removal are heavily influenced by the global market system and the immediate and long-range effects of their willingness to accept or reject United States hegemony.²

The period after removal proved to be difficult for the various Caddo communities. In 1860 drought descended upon the Southern Plains. The crops were stunted or destroyed by lack of water, as were the stands of native grasses—little bluestem, side oats grama, and buffalo. Despite those difficulties, several village communities managed to keep small acreages under cultivation near Fort Cobb, along the Washita in the vicinity of Anadarko, south along Sugar Creek, in White Bread Canyon, and around the community of White Bead in what was the Chickasaw Nation. The people constructed their houses, outbuildings, and arbors in close community. A portion of the houses were circular and thatched; others were upright log structures, and still others were frame construction covered with board lumber.³

In 1861 the American Civil War or War of the Rebellion became a disruptive episode for Caddos and Hasinai. The greater part of the Caddo communities remained in place while others moved north into Kansas as hostilities took their toll on the federal forces. In 1864 several hundred Caddos and Hasinai were reported living in Kansas. Some Caddo emigrants moved as far away as Colorado. In 1864 Fort Cobb and the agency building were burned to the ground. Additional violence grew as a Kiowa war party attacked the Sugar Creek community for revenge of the death of Bird Appearing, which had occurred in 1860.⁴

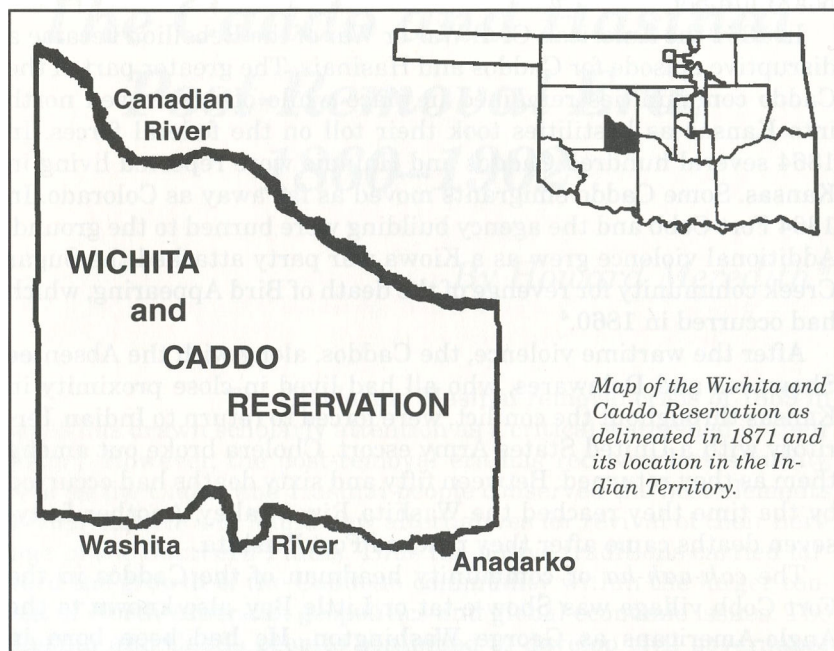
After the wartime violence, the Caddos, along with the Absentee Shawnees and Delawares, who all had lived in close proximity in Kansas throughout the conflict, were forced to return to Indian Territory with a United States Army escort. Cholera broke out among them as they returned. Between fifty and sixty deaths had occurred by the time they reached the Washita River valley. Another forty-seven deaths came after they reached Fort Washita.

The *cah-nah-ha* or community headman of the Caddos in the Fort Cobb village was Show-e-tat or Little Boy, also known to the Anglo-Americans as George Washington. He had been born in

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

Louisiana in 1816. He had made the migration into East Texas, then to the Brazos Reserve, and finally to Indian Territory. At the Fort Cobb village, he owned a trading store and farmed about 115 acres of land. During the War of the Rebellion, he served as a captain of a company of scouts and rangers in the service of the Confederate States. He was engaged in three skirmishes, one on Cache Creek against the Kiowas and Plains Apaches, one in the Wichita Mountains against the Cheyennes, and a third on the Washita near the Caddo village.

Guadalupe also served his people as a Caddo headman. His community was situated in the Washita River valley near what is now Anadarko. His village community farmed intensively and raised livestock including horses, cattle, fowl, and hogs. He was remembered as the first chief of the entire Caddo tribe in 1874. That came at the insistence of the federal authorities. White Bread served as *cah-nah-ha* in what is known as the White Bread community. He lived in a frame house with a breezeway through the structure with a guest room attached beyond it. Visitors often stayed for extended times. In the twentieth century, Squirrel, the famous spiritual figure among the Caddos, lived his final days





Caddo village (p. 278) in the Washita River valley, c. 1869–1874; Show-e-tat or Little Boy (r), also known as George Washington to the Anglo-Americans, c. 1868–1874 (Both courtesy Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries).

with the White Breads. Caddo George served as White Bread's close associate in the community.

Another prominent Caddo leader was White Deer or White Antelope, who served as a delegate to Washington, D.C., in 1872. That was the year the Caddo reservation boundaries were defined. The Caddos also agreed that a federally supported school should be opened on reserve lands in the Washita valley. The initial step in the creation of the school for the Caddo young people took place in the fall of 1871. That school became Riverside Indian School. Thomas C. Battey of the Society of Friends undertook the work of the school and missionary outreach to the Caddos.⁵

Amidst the change and confusion, the Caddo communities kept their sense of place and ritual of life. It was not as if this land was strange to them. They had hunted and traversed the Southern Plains for centuries. Every person participated in the community's cultural traditions. They lived as Hasinai, Caddos, and Hainai with a *cah-de* or tribal headman, *cah-nah-ha* or community headman, and *tum'mah* or village crier in their respective communities.

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

They lived and understood the purpose of *Ah-ah-ha'-yo* or the "Father Above." They constructed houses in traditional ways even as the people tested new ones. They raised corn, beans, and squash, even as they tried new varieties of seeds, carefully watching the progress of the crops, the play of the weather, and the cycle of the seasons. They preserved and maintained food in abundance by the 1870s. They made bows and arrows of bois d'arc and dogwood in the traditional ways, but purchased rifles, repeating handguns, and ammunition. The people danced the sequence of traditional dances through the night that gave pattern and shape to the world and life upon it—the Drum Dance that told of origins and past migrations, the Bear Dance, Corn Dance, Duck Dance, Alligator Dance, Woman's Dance, Stirrup Dance, Bell Dance, and Morning Dance. In the afternoon, each woman dancer was called into the arena in her own language—Hasinai, Neche, Hainai, Yona, or Keechi—to dance the history and methods of the Caddoan peoples in the Turkey Dance.⁶

In the 1870s the tribes increased their efforts to reach across cultural bounds. Even though the Caddo and Kiowa peoples had



Caddo Dancers and Singers, 1892: 1, Jack Taylor; 2, Frank Sargent; 3, Tay-winniw; 4, Louis Bedoka; 5, Thomas Wistler; 6, Isaac She-ma-my; 7, James Inkanish; 8, Sam Parton; 9, Choctaw; 10, Caddo George; 11, Little Dutchman; 12, Ponjo Guy; 13, Dah-tow; 14, Kickapoo; 15, Thomas Reynolds; 16, Diamond Williams; 17, John Inkanish; 18, Lawrie Dunlap; 19, Wild Horse; 20, Kickapoo; 21, Chepowey; 22, White Eyes; 23, Alice Inkanish Cussin; 24, Mary Inkanish; 25, Millie Edge; 26, Identified only as Whitebread's daughter; 27, Sallie Sturm (Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society, No. 627.A).

fought each other in the past, Guadalupe spoke up for the Kiowa chiefs Set'anta or White Bear and Big Tree at Fort Sill after their capture in their struggles with the Texans, stating, "I think that Satanta [*sic*] and Big Tree have been sufficiently punished."⁷ For the Caddos, Hasinai, Hainai, and others, mutual assistance, rather than meaningless competitive rivalries based upon revenge ethic, provided life paths attuned to the whole of nature and creation.

Each tribe learned by observation and by vision the various ecological and social systems; that solidarity made for meaningful existence. Growing alliances profited through tolerance. In language, ideas and concepts were shared across cultural boundaries. Each was an incorporative language, which affected the logic of understanding.⁸

In the latter quarter of the nineteenth century Anglo-American intrusions into the Southern Plains occurred on a dramatic scale. In 1871 the railroads began to open Indian Territory to larger numbers of non-Indians by reducing the time and difficulty of travel and communication in the region. By the late 1880s a telegraph network connected the growing number of towns.

Concessions were given by Indian Territory authorities to Anglo-held corporations for additional telegraph lines, railroad rights-of-way, toll roads, ferry and warehouse facilities, banks, mining leases, and oil development, and to unearth the remains of the Indian peoples' ancestors in controlled digs. Anglo shippers and merchants conducted all the import and export trade, displacing the Caddo, Wichita, and Comanche trade system. The Caddos and others resisted that displacement but to no avail.



Bar-cin-de-bar or Long Shanks (Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society, No. 623).



Moonhead or John Wilson (Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society, No. 8505).

The Anglo-American investments supported the raising of wheat and cotton to the exclusion of traditional crops raised in the bottomlands.

Between the late 1860s and 1905 the total trade in constant dollars more than quadrupled in the region. By 1905 the Anglo-American private and corporate interests, either directly or in trust through the United States government, controlled 100 percent of the commercial agriculture and manufacturing on the Southern Plains. Federal expenditures increased throughout that period, including construction and improvements of military and post roads connecting Fort Sill, Fort Reno, and the rail-

road towns. Added governmental expenditures covered the purchase of materials and construction of federal offices, support to telephone and telegraph concessionaires, and indemnities to merchants and manufacturing interests.

Through that period religious questions loomed ever closer to the Caddo people. Beside the Quaker mission and Riverside school, other missions were opened by the American Baptist Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1894 a Roman Catholic mission was opened among the Caddos for the first time since removal.

In the fall of 1890 the first Ghost Dance came to Indian Territory among the Cheyennes and Arapahos north of the South Canadian River valley north of the Methodist mission station. Numbers of Caddos and Western Delawares participated in the dances. One of the most famous of the Ghost Dance singers among the Caddo was John Wilson or Moonhead. Another was Squirrel, who carved the Ghost Dance Pole for the Caddos. That particular pole was last used in the Caddo Ghost Dance on July 14, 1946. Frank White Bead was at the first Ghost Dance in Indian Territory as a young man of thirteen. The Caddos and Delawares took the songs home to their own

country and danced in the Boggy Creek flatlands. The Wichitas and Keechis took the doctrine from the Caddos and danced together in the area around Sugar Creek. In 1891 the Caddo people sent their own petitioners to meet with Wovoka, the Ghost Dance prophet. The two Caddo delegates were Billy Wilson and Squirrel. They accompanied Nashtowi and Lawrie Tatum, both Wichita, and Jack Henry, who was Delaware. They returned impressed and reverent of Wovoka and his theology of peace and healing. The dance was continued among the Caddos through the twentieth century as one of healing for the community and individuals.

During the same period in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the spread of the Peyote Way took on significant developments. Peyote had been used by medicine people among the Hasinai for centuries. The most prominent Caddo to be connected with the Peyote Way in the late nineteenth century, John Wilson became known as a "Revealer of Peyote." The "Big Moon" sect of the Peyote Religion remains strong among the Osages and Quapaws, and Wilson is held in high esteem for bringing the Peyote Way to them. Frank Whitebead's son, Reuben Whitebead, remained a leader in the Peyote Religion, while Frank's other son Irving Whitebead remained faithful to the Ghost Dance throughout his life into the late twentieth century.

The ancient ways of medicine and traditional spiritual expression of being Caddo were challenged to some degree in the nineteenth century with three powerful religious expressions—the Christian in its protestant and Roman Catholic variants, the Ghost Dance, and the Peyote Religion. That occurred even as Anglo-American society brought its secular acculturation to bear in the form of the Allotment in Severalty Act of 1887 and its imposition upon the Caddo and other Indian tribes in the Wichita, Caddo, and Delaware tribal jurisdictional area and throughout Indian Territory. Allotments were made to every Caddo man, woman, and child under the terms of the Severalty Act in 1902.

Given the military subjugation as well as the economic and social repression, the Caddo people knew to turn to their own tribal traditions and Mother Earth, the *E'nah-wah'dut*. The trusted leadership of Caddo Jake from 1890 through 1902 provided continuity and insured that all perspectives were heard so that decisions could be made for the benefit of the tribal communities. The history-defining place of the woman Whitebead, who kept her community intact even as they moved out of Louisiana and across Texas and into Indian Territory, brought added stability to the families and com-

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

munities of the various Caddoan peoples. The Caddos, Hasinai, Hainai, and Neches, among the other Caddoan peoples, sought and found sustenance in their tribal tradition and dedicated labor. That allowed them to maintain their people through mutual support and solidarity in a time of change and danger.

The story of the post-removal period among the Caddos and Hasinai is one perspective among others in relation to the whole of tribal tradition. It invites exploration of the context in which it happened. At the same time, it is a means of reordering stored information about the tribal pursuits in the past and in the present. As the Caddo Tribe asserts itself, it must demand that its oral traditions be seen in a realistic light along with the theories arising from the study of material culture and historical interpretations that are all too dependent upon written documents produced largely by Anglo-American participants in the context of events and long-term change.⁹

ENDNOTES

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¹ For detailed information concerning the forced removal from Texas see Kenneth Neighbors, *Indian Exodus: Texas Indian Affairs, 1835-1859* (Quanah, Texas: Nortex, 1973); Kenneth Neighbors, "Robert S. Neighbors and the Founding of the Texas Indian Reservations," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, 31 (October, 1955): 65-74; Kenneth Neighbors, "Jose Maria: Anadarko Chief," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 46 (Fall, 1966): 254-274; Kenneth Neighbors, "Indian Exodus Out of Texas," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, 36 (1960): 84-85; Raymond Estep, ed., "Lieutenant William E. Burnet Letters: Removal of the Texas Indians and the Founding of Fort Cobb," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 38 (Autumn, 1960): 274-309, 38 (Winter, 1960-1961): 369-396, and 39 (Spring, 1961): 15-41; Berlin B. Chapman, "Establishment of the Wichita Reservation," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 11 (December, 1933): 1044-1055; John R. Swanton, *Source Material on the History and Ethnology of the Caddo Indians*, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 132 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1942); and Cecile Elkins Carter, *Caddo Indians: Where We Come From* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995).

² The experiences of the Caddos, Hasinai, Hainai, Neches, and others among the Caddoan peoples were conveyed to me in numerous conversations with Vynola Newkumet, Frank Whitebead, Irving Whitebead, Reathia Cussen, Melford Williams, Randelett Edmonds, Lowell "Wimpey" Edmonds, Lita Wilson, Donnie Frank, Vernon Hunter, and others including Phil Newkumet, Pete Gregory, and Wallace Chafe.

³ *Indian Affairs Report, 1860* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1861), 156.

⁴ *Indian Affairs Report, 1864* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1865), 319.

CADDO/HASINAI POST-REMOVAL

⁵ Thomas C. Battey, *The Life and Adventures of a Quaker Among the Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), 27–42; see also Ruby W. Shannon, “*Friends*” for the Indians: 100 Years of Education at Riverside Indian School (Anadarko, Oklahoma: Riverside Indian School, 1971).

⁶ See Eugene Heflin, “The Oashuns or Dances of the Caddo,” in *The Southern Caddo: An Anthology*, ed. H. F. Gregory (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986); Irving Whitebead and Howard Meredith, “Nuh-ka-oashun: Hasinai Turkey Dance Tradition,” *Songs of Indian Territory: Native American Music Traditions of Oklahoma*, ed. Willie Smyth (Oklahoma City: Center of the American Indian, 1989), 27–31; Cecile Carter, “Caddo Turkey Dance,” in *Remaining Ourselves: Music and Tribal Memory: Traditional Music in Contemporary Communities*, ed. Dayna Bowker Lee (Oklahoma City: State Arts Council of Oklahoma, 1995), 31–36; Vynola Beaver Newkumet and Howard Meredith, *Hasinai: A Traditional History of the Caddo Confederacy* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1988).

⁷ Quoted in Swanton, *History and Ethnology*, 116. For a historic overview of the period see Todd Smith, *The Caddoes, the Wichitas, and the United States, 1846–1901* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996).

⁸ For more detail concerning the interaction of the Southern Plains tribes see Howard Meredith, *Dancing on Common Ground: Tribal Cultures and Alliances on the Southern Plains* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

⁹ This article is a revised version of a paper delivered as part of the Caddoan History and Ethnology Symposium of the Forty-first Caddo Conference on March 13, 1999, at Jefferson, Texas.