

The Caddo

Collaboration and Community

Independent but United

While the Caddo are often referred to as if they were a single, unified group, they actually considered themselves a collection of many named extended family groups who shared a common culture of strict social rank. The scattered Caddo came together at mound centers like Caddoan Mounds during sacred and festive times.

✘ **Xinesi** — This head of the larger alliance of family groups was born into his job, lived at the mound center and served as an intermediary with God (Caddi Ayo).

✘ **Caddi** — Each village had a head man called a caddi who was also born into his job.

✘ **Canahas** — These village elders advised the caddi.

✘ **Tmmas** — Tmmas were enforcers who made sure people obeyed the caddi and behaved properly.

✘ **Connas** — As village priests, connas cured the sick and performed daily rituals.

✘ **Common People** — Farmers and craftspeople, commoners also provided the labor to build the sacred mounds.



This depiction of a mound center and village shows a xinesi living on a mound made for important people.

The complex Caddo society of social rank was held together by kinship, expectation and custom. Roles were defined by age, sex and clan.

Adaptability in the Face of Crisis

Caddo tribes maintained an adaptable political organization in order to meet the demands of a shifting local economy. For example, in the 1780s the Hasinai Caddo changed their social structure to eliminate the xinesi position as it was more advantageous for each village caddi to negotiate separately with the locally powerful Spanish and Comanches.



As diplomats and negotiators, the Caddo attempted to work within the framework of white society to ensure their survival and prosperity. Here, the Caddo Business Committee visits the Oklahoma State Capitol in 1929 to negotiate for a better future.



This photo shows a working council at Tribal Headquarters in Binger, Oklahoma. The Tribal Council is made up of elected officials who help make decisions for the entire tribe.

Modern Tribal Government

In the late 1800s, the remnants of the many named Caddo tribes united to save their shared culture, consolidating into one group for the first time. In 1936, Caddo leaders wrote a tribal charter and elected a formal government.



Sho-We-Tit
(Billy Thomas)

TEXAS
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