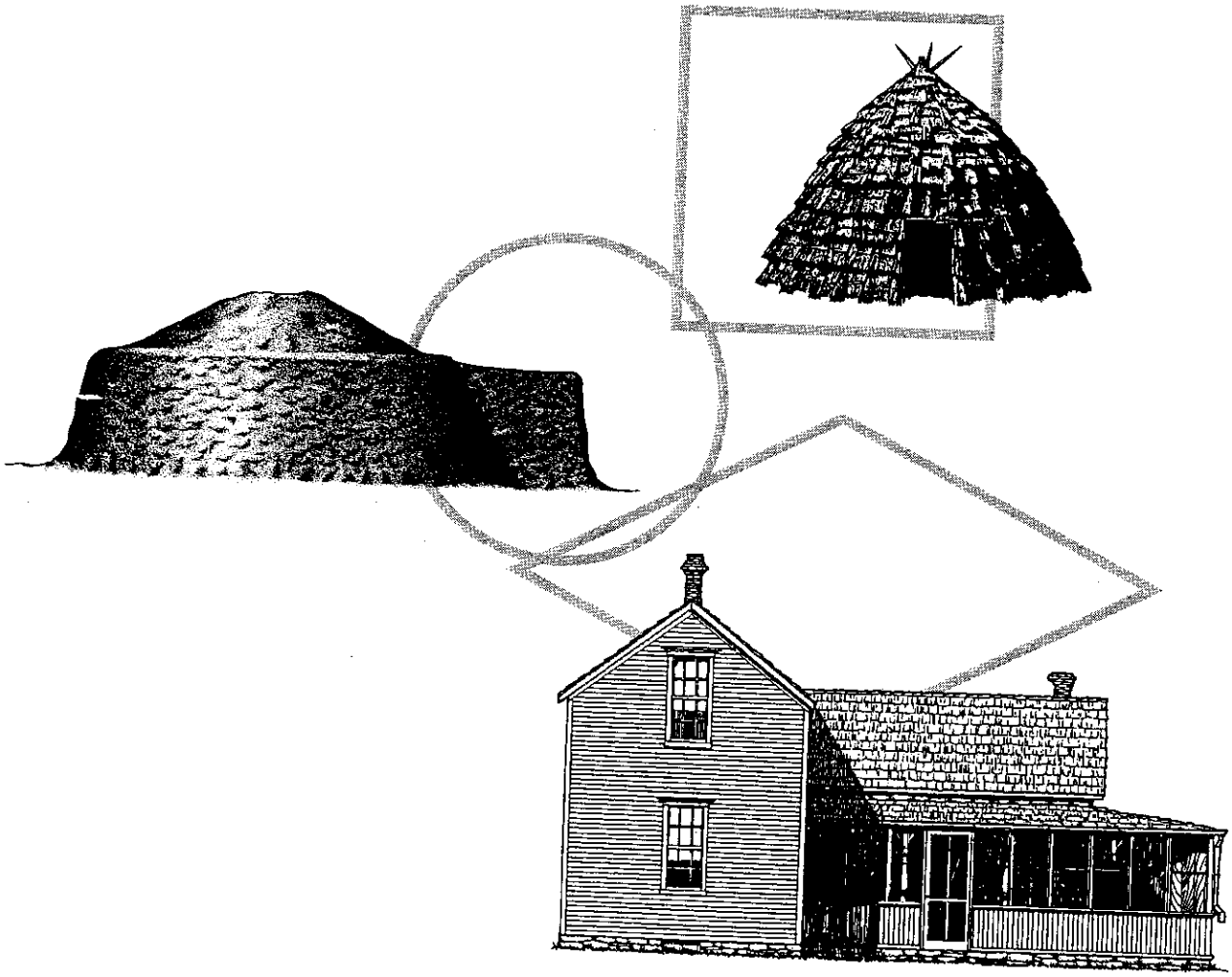
A Place to Call Home

Ramona J. Willits



Anthropological Curriculum for Middle School Educators

Kansas State Historical Society
Archeology Popular Report Number 3

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

RAMONA J. WILLITS

Archeology Popular Report Number 3
Kansas State Historical Society
Topeka, Kansas
1997

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Louis W. and Dolpha Baehr Charitable Foundation Trust
Paola, Kansas.

"Their greatest joy came from helping people—especially young people."

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To

John D. Reynolds

1943-1997

John D. Reynolds, State Archeologist of Kansas from 1993 to 1997, served as technical advisor for the Kansas Archeology Week curriculum materials. He believed in this project.

CONTENTS

EVALUATION

Feedback from you will help us develop new materials best suited for classroom use.

Name (optional) _____

School and location _____

Grade Level(s) _____

Number of students who studied unit _____

I am a _____ regular classroom teacher
_____ teacher of one subject area: _____
_____ social studies team leader
_____ librarian
_____ media specialist
_____ parent volunteer
_____ other volunteer (explain): _____

Please evaluate from 1 (not at all, no) to 10 (always, yes)
_____ Information presented was valuable.
_____ Information was presented in a logical way.
_____ Information presented was adequate.
_____ Information presented was suitable to my students' abilities.
_____ Arrangement of study unit was manageable.
_____ Activity suggestions were helpful.
_____ Activity suggestions were complete.

Number of activities used _____

Students' favorite activity _____

My favorite activity _____

Did you test? _____ How? _____

Did you use the vocabulary words for spelling or dictionary skills? _____

Was the "Stand Guard" message effective in teaching "Do Not Dig?" _____

What would be useful for inclusion in future teaching materials?

_____

_____

Do you celebrate Kansas Archeology Week in the classroom? For details contact Virginia A. Wulfkuhle, Public Archeologist, Kansas State Historical Society, 6425 SW 6th Ave., Topeka, KS 66615-1099; e-mail: vwulf@hspo.wpo.state.ks.us.

Additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

NOTE: We'd love copies of some of your students' work or photographs of their projects for possible publication.

PREFACE

Connections—between the sciences, the arts, and the humanities—between times and places—between one human being and all others—make learning an integrative and lifelong process. Studying archeology promotes the joy of discovering these connections and the thrill of possibilities in exploring our differences. *A Place to Call Home* introduces cultural building traditions within an environmental context. Houses built by agrarian peoples of the Kansas prairies over many centuries highlight the universal process of people creating structures within specific physical settings, guided by the technical idea of "house" and the cultural blueprint of "home."

The four units that follow contain enough material to cover an academic year (or more) of study. Any of the units can be presented as a week-long study. Alternatives abound; the handouts plus supplemental material from each unit can be tailored to your students' needs and level(s) of ability.

NOTE: This material was originally created over four years, each unit serving as a companion study guide to an educational poster promoting Kansas archeology and the annual celebration of Kansas Archeology Week. Each state's observance of archeology awareness differs. Check with your state archeology office and/or historical society for specific materials and events for your state.

Unit One: Grass House
Spend five days exploring what we have learned about the Wichita Indians and their ancestors during their time in the place we now call Kansas. The emphasis throughout is fourfold: environment, process, knowledge-building, and preservation.

Unit Two: Earthlodge
Spend five days exploring what we have learned about the Pawnee Indians and their ancestors during their time in prehistoric and historic Kansas. The unit focuses on the Pawnee earthlodge building tradition, emphasizing environment, process, knowledge-building, and preservation.

Unit Three: Martin Farmstead
Spend five days learning about a Kansas farmstead from 1875 to 1947. Learn some of the ways archeology and history can be combined to show us the recent past in new and meaningful ways.

Unit Four: Prairie Farmhouses
Put it all together with a week-long unit covering a broad theme—vernacular architecture. Find some answers to questions archeologists ask: Which comes first, the physical structure or the cultural idea? How does environment influence the final form of a building? The unit introduces some common archeological, architectural, and environmental terms and asks students to investigate their own time and place.

CAUTION: Preservation and stewardship of archeological resources require a simple rule: DO NOT DIG! Excavation is part of the scientific study of a site and should be conducted by trained scientists only! Appreciation of the diversity of past and present peoples calls for a simple guideline: TEACH RESPECT. Some of the ceremonial, religious, and personal material presented here is sacred to the cultures from which it comes.

A place to call home is a universal human need. People around the world and throughout time have found many ways to create a dwelling space using the materials at hand. Shelter from heat or cold and protection from animals or enemies has taken various shapes. The one constant in all human efforts to adapt their dwellings is the search for that unique sense of security and belonging reflected by a place we call "home."

A house is the most concrete expression of "home." Many factors contribute to a house's final shape:

▲ What lifeway does a group follow? Do they move from camp to camp, tending flocks or wandering with herds of animals? Should the house be lightweight and portable or built to stand for a long time?

▲ What natural materials are available for human adaptation? What technology does the group share to help in building? Does the climate remain constant, or does it shift from hot to cold and back again?

▲ Does the group organize itself by kinship ties of blood or marriage, by age or gender, or by levels of life experience and achievement?

▲ How people view themselves within the environment is essential too. Do they consider themselves as components in a great flowing continuum or as special beings intent upon dominating the natural world around them?

▲ Are they physical, emotional, social, and spiritual beings all the time, or do they divide the days of their lives into separate expressions and activities for each aspect of humanness?

Anthropologists seek answers to these and other questions. The anthropological science of **archeology is the study of fragments of human culture that remain**. Through material culture, archeologists can glimpse a shadow of what once was and will never be again.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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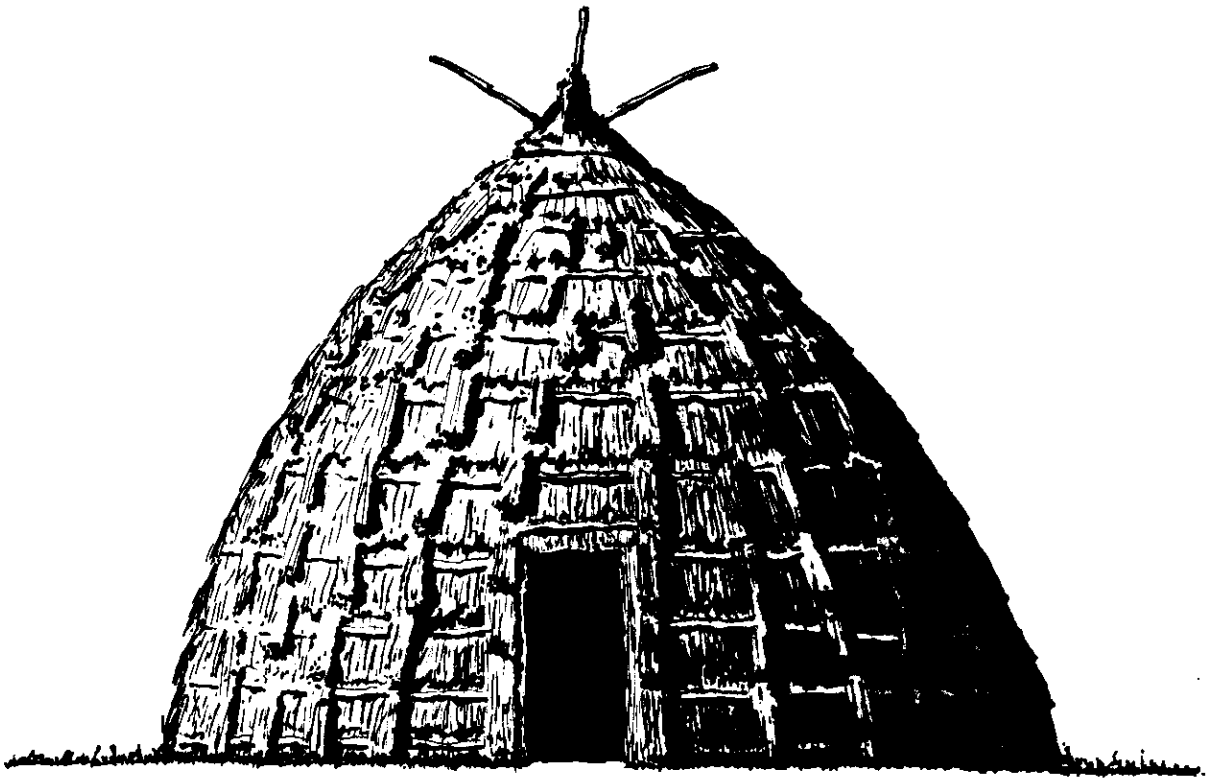
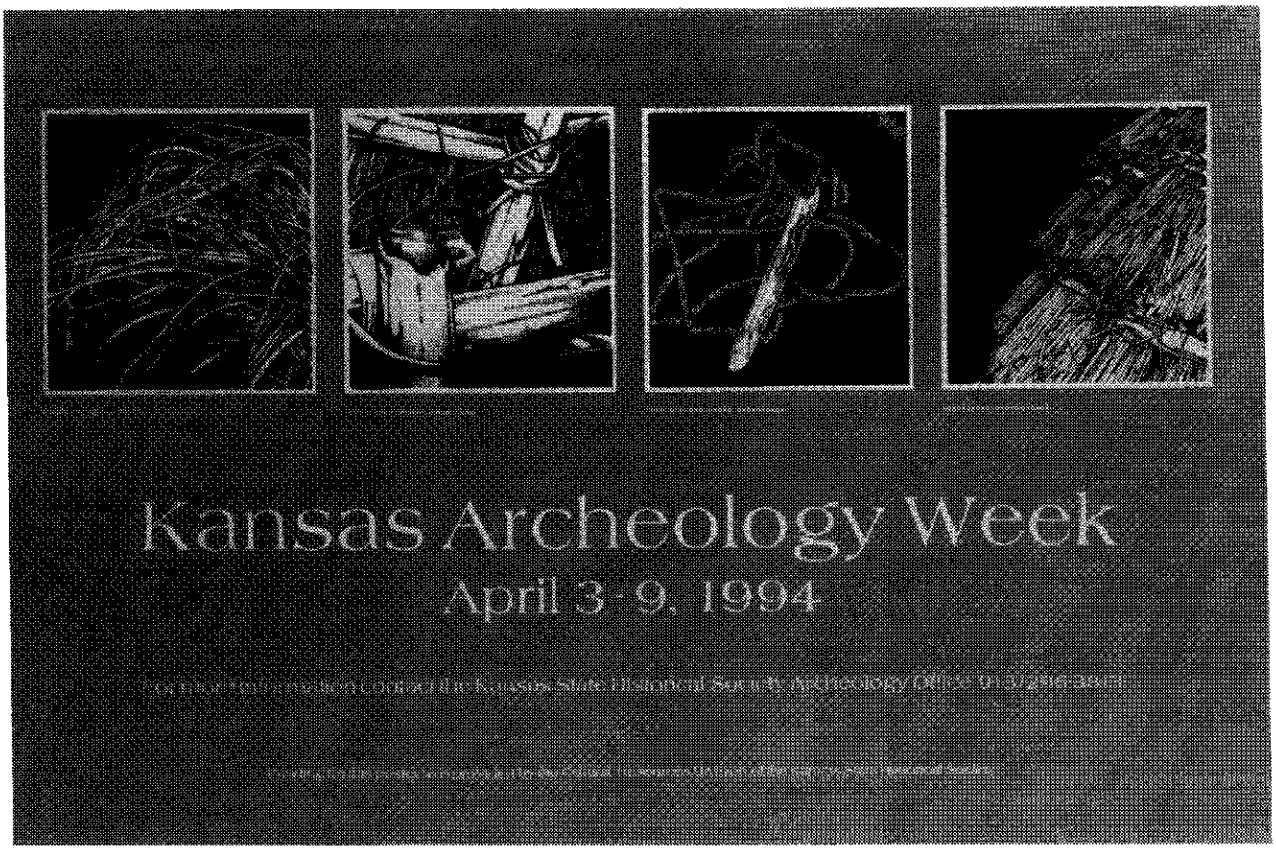
Classroom trials by Karen McConnell
Design of cover and handouts by Linda Greatorex
Final proofreading by Marilyn Holt

UNIT ONE

GRASS HOUSE



UNIT ONE: GRASS HOUSE



INTRODUCTION

We invite you and your class to spend five days exploring what we have learned about the Wichita Indians and their ancestors during their time in the place we now call Kansas. The emphasis throughout is fourfold: environment, process, knowledge-building, and preservation.

The material for each day is organized into:

- Learning Objectives
- Information about a grass house building tradition, the historic Wichita Indians and their ancestors
- An example of a Great Bend Aspect site, showing location
- Activity suggestions, including materials needed and teacher preparation required
- Vocabulary

The bookmark template and Handout #1: The New Baby in the House follow on pages 2-5. Some explorers who encountered the Wichita are listed on page 38. Sources and a glossary are located at the end of the book.

Prairie Cordgrass

(Spartina pectinata)

is a tall wetland plant that still flourishes in the grasslands of central Kansas. Cordgrass could be used as a covering for grass houses.

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Grass House Frame

Long slender saplings formed the frame of the grass house. Rawhide held the pieces together.

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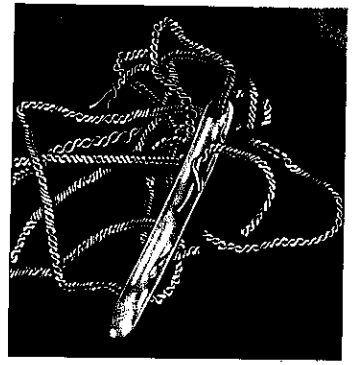

Bone Grassing Needle and Cordage

Wichita women used a needle made of animal bone to pull the cordage through the grass that formed the covering of the house.

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Wichita Grass House

A grass house belonged to the oldest woman in the family. Inside, the people shared a fireplace. They slept in beds built around the walls.

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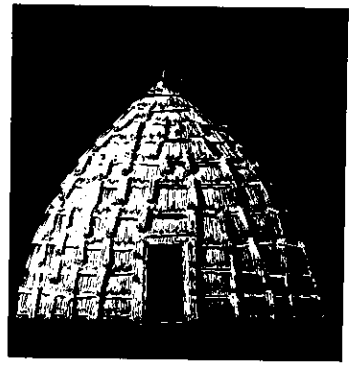

(Name)

is a partner in preserving the archeology of Kansas....

...and knows that our state's sites are unique, our past cannot be replaced, and

every Kansan must STAND GUARD!

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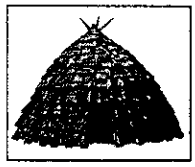


Vocabulary Bright-Shining-Woman, cradleboard, ethnographers, hearth, oral tradition, written tradition

Wichita Storytelling

Through stories, Wichita children learned their culture. Storytelling could be entertainment—part of a long winter's evening in the grass house, where the family gathered around the ***hearth***. A story could be part of the children's education—a lesson to teach them about the Wichita way of life or to explain the world. A story could also be a prayer—reminding the listeners of sacred duties or the powers of the Universe. Rules for who could tell a story, and the proper manners for listening, were part of the storytelling, too.

Wichita people did not have written language. Their system of teaching and remembering through songs, stories, and prayers was based on spoken words. This is an ***oral tradition.*** Since spoken language leaves no written records, archeologists have to look for information in the artifacts, house remains, and other features of a prehistoric site. Using our ***written tradition***, specialists called ***ethnographers*** wrote down the words of Wichita people who still remembered the traditions.

Here is a story made up to teach you about newborn babies in Wichita culture.

New Baby in the Grass House

A newborn baby cries loudly in the grass house. Everyone wakes up! What a racket! But nobody minds at all. The new baby is a good addition to the family. Her sisters and brothers are glad to help with the extra work she causes.

The baby's father has come home after four days away. He left before the birth, believing that this would assure good health to the baby and her mother. Now he has returned, bringing a **cradleboard** with him. It once belonged to another baby, who is now healthy and strong, running and jumping with the other children of the neighborhood. By using this cradleboard, the family hopes for the same good fortune for their own baby daughter.

So far the tiny girl has no name; she is simply called New Girl Baby. If her mother or grandmother had learned a name in a dream before the baby's birth, she would be called that. Since a dream did not happen, she will get a name later, when the family knows her better. Names are important, and no one wants to rush in learning this one's name.

The new baby has already been to the river for her first blessing. The wise woman several houses away came to the house soon after the birth to perform a special ceremony. She carried the baby to the river, where she bathed her and prayed to **Bright-Shining-Woman** and Man-Never-Known-On-Earth. Bright-Shining-Woman grows fast from a tiny sliver of light in the sky to a round full moon, so the wise woman prayed that the little baby would grow fast, too, just like the moon. The woman sprinkled water on the baby's head, quickly dipped her in the river, and prayed to Woman-Who-Has-Powers-In-The-Water.

When the next moon comes, the baby will be shown to the moon again. More prayers will be made for the health and rapid growth of this newest little member of the family. Babies are important in the life of the Wichita people.

Names could be dreamed, given as a gift, or purchased. Parents might buy a name from a healthy or respected elder person. The good health or wisdom of the elder went with the name to the baby. Parents might choose an animal name or the name of a force in Nature, hoping for a transfer of special power. A dream might reveal a baby's name before it was born.

Phases of the Moon. Bright-Shining-Woman is the Moon. The month-long cycle of the moon and the health of the new baby were connected in the Wichita belief system. The Moon and other Beings, such as Woman-Who-Has-Powers-In-The-Water, watched over the grass house village. The Supreme Being over all was Man-Never-Known-On-Earth. Find out more about the phases of the moon from an almanac and encyclopedia. Why does the moon appear to "wax" (grow bigger and brighter) and "wane" (grow smaller)?

Vocabulary. On a separate sheet of paper, write a sentence correctly using each of the vocabulary words.

Wichita Storytelling. How can a story teach children about their culture? _____

_____

_____

_____

New Baby in the Grass House. Who does the wise woman ask for a blessing? For what is she asking?

_____

_____

_____

Names. Describe an event in the baby's young life that might suggest a name. _____

_____

_____

_____

What name would you choose for yourself? _____

Phases of the Moon. Draw a picture of tonight's moon phase.

Figure how many times the moon has completed its phases (waxed and waned once per month) since your birth.

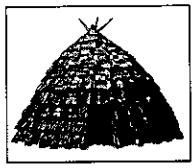
One thing I have learned about Wichita culture: _____

_____

_____

_____

Extra Credit. How do you think Bright-Shining-Woman looked to the Wichita? Design a storyboard (a series of pictures like a comic strip) that shows her changing face through the phases.



Activity: Wichita Storytelling

Materials: Almanac or calendar showing phases of the moon, drawing paper, markers

Teacher preparation: Create a chart showing the phases of the moon.

Use the phases of the moon chart you create to introduce the class to the lesson. Students might draw their ideas about the ceremony described or what Bright-Shining-Woman looks like or a series of four detail pictures showing the process of making a cradleboard (from raw materials through human modification to finished product). They might enjoy drawing the baby as a toddler, doing something that could suggest a good name for the child.

The story "New Baby in the Grass House" can introduce students to the importance of Wichita storytelling, which was entertainment, education, and prayer all at once. Ask students to identify various aspects of the story that entertain, teach, and honor/beseech in addressing Wichita deities.

Wichita Social Customs Related to Childbirth

Birth, giving of names, marriage, and death were important social customs or rites of passage in Wichita society. When a woman was about to give birth, her husband left the house for four or more days, as his presence at the birth was potentially a cause for illness in the woman and baby. The father was responsible for having a cradleboard made. He looked for a healthy woman to do the job. Cradleboards that carried healthy children were carefully preserved and in demand.

A midwife helped with the delivery. Very soon after birth, a woman, who was very knowledgeable in the beliefs about the moon, took the baby to the river and bathed it. She prayed to Bright-Shining-Woman (the moon) and Man-Never-Known-On-Earth (the supreme being) for the child to grow rapidly as the moon in its monthly cycle. She sprinkled water on the baby's head, immersed the baby, and prayed to the spirit of the water (Newcomb 1961:259). When the next moon came, the baby was taken outside, held up, and shown to the moon with a prayer to grow as fast as the moon.

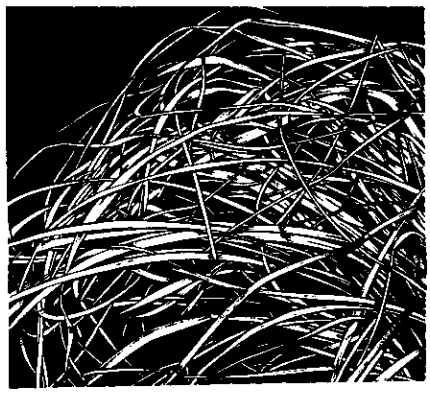
A ritual was also followed with the placenta, which was wrapped up and placed in a straight young elm tree in the hope the child would grow as straight as the elm. The Wichita belief system involved "hopeful imitative magic"—that is, the attributes or power of an object in nature, a phenomenon, an animal, or another person can be conferred or transferred. The ceremonial showing of newborns to the moon goddess is one example. The purchase of a name for good fortune, good health, and long life is another.

Related Activity: Moon Journal

Have students keep track of the moon's phases for a month in a Moon Journal. Ask them to record thoughts about the night sky, reflections on the scientific explanation of what they see happening, and the Wichita belief system, which assigned power to the celestial bodies. Remind them that the sky (day and night) was the constant "companion" of people who spent much of their lives outdoors. Their whole world view placed humans inside of Nature rather than separate from or above it.

Day One The Environment

Learning Objectives



1. Identify the Wichita people as a tribe of American Indians who occupied the central prairie region of "Kansas."
2. List some elements of a prairie environment, including a native grass and some of the prairie animals.
3. List practical and cultural factors that determine house form and use.
4. Place the Wichita people within a temporal and spatial context.

The Environment

"Home" for the Wichita people was the Kansas prairie. They lived in the central part of this grassland for more than two centuries (A.D. 1500-1700). The houses they built were beehive or dome-shaped structures, covered with prairie grass. All the materials to build a grass house came from the environment—wood and bark from trees, rawhide from animals, and, of course, prairie grass—lots and lots of prairie grass.

To learn about the Wichita people, we must first study the place in which they lived. Before any people lived in the place we now call Kansas, there was the prairie. Before the prairie, there were many millions of years of change. Sometimes the land was covered with a great sea of water. Then for centuries at a time, the weather would stay very cold. The climate would shift, and for centuries it would be hot and dry.

By A.D. 1500, when the Wichita people were living here, the land looked much the same as it does now: rolling prairie with tree-lined streams and rivers. The weather followed an annual cycle of four seasons, just as it does today. Rainfall then and now averaged more than 20 inches per year.

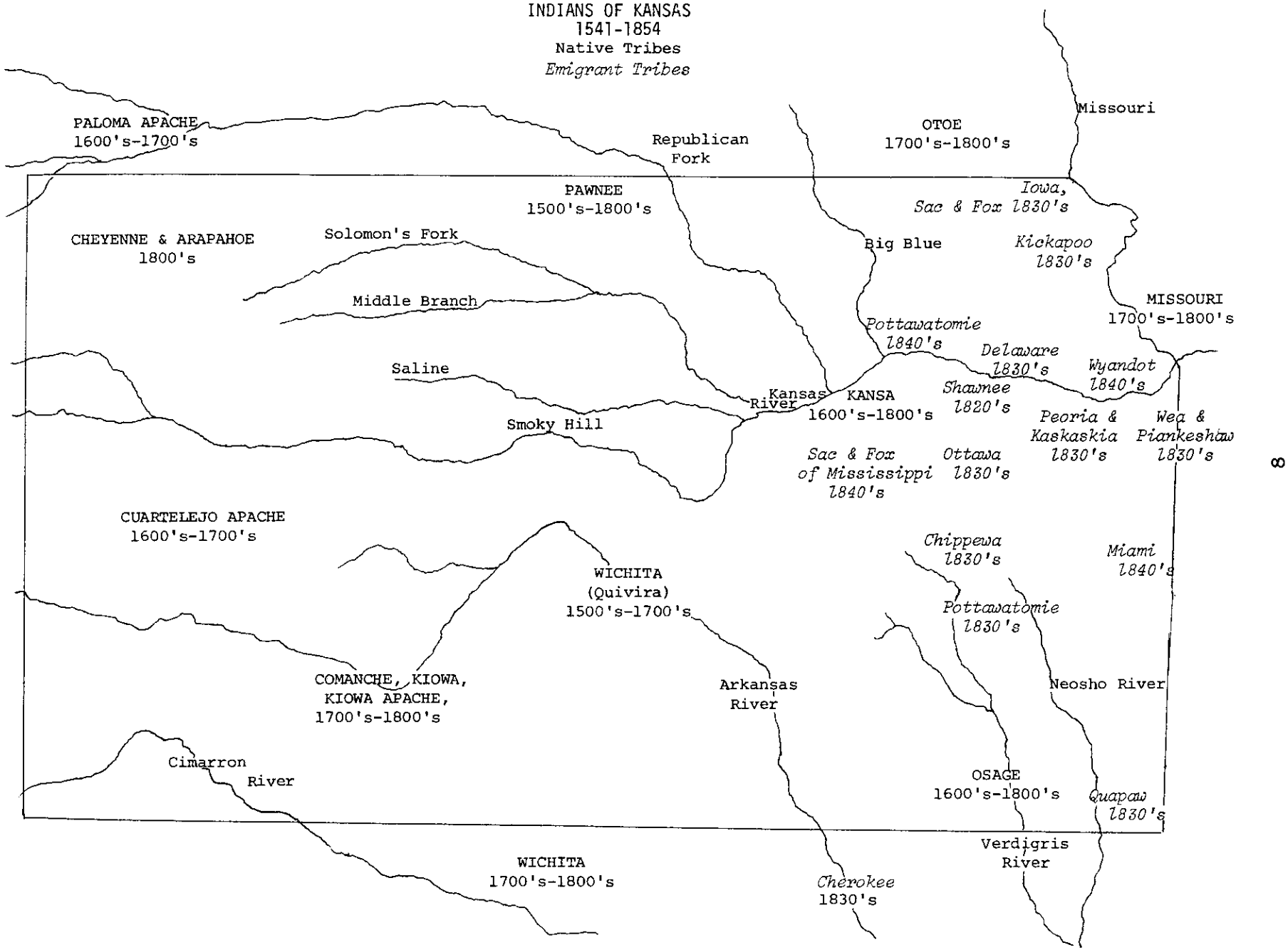
Prairie plants supported a fantastic web of life. All depended in some way upon the abundant grasses. Burrowing animals found shelter below the surface. Birds hollowed out hidden homes or wove their nests among the grasses. The vast herds of bison grazed here, followed by wolves and other predators.

When this prairie way of life was already ancient, the ancestors of the Wichita people came here. They, too, depended upon the grassland for both food and shelter. Generation upon generation, they cut the trees along the waterways and harvested the prairie to build their houses of grass.

Grasses were a logical choice of building material. Tall prairie bunch grasses such as the bluestems and wetland grasses such as prairie cordgrass still flourish in central Kansas. Prairie cordgrass (shown in the first drawing on the poster picture on page 1) grows 5 to 8 feet tall and matures in late summer. Once harvested, cordgrass can be dried and stored for months.

Additional Information

What does "Wichita" mean? The people referred to as the Wichita Indians were once semi-autonomous bands, each speaking a slightly different dialect of a common language, which is part of the Caddoan linguistic family. Because of their tradition of tattooing around the men's eyes, the people called themselves *Kitikiti'sh*, which means "Raccoon Eyes." Both men and women were heavily tattooed. Although other Plains tribes tattooed themselves, the Wichita became known as the Tattooed People. The tattoos were created by the skillful use of tattooing needles that pierced the skin. Charcoal or natural dyes could then be rubbed into the broken skin, leaving blue and pink tattoos. For more on the Wichita practice of tattooing, see the Additional Information section of Day Two on page 15.


INDIANS OF KANSAS
1541-1854
Native Tribes
Emigrant Tribes
PALOMA APACHE
1600's-1700's
Republican
Fork
OTOE
1700's-1800's
Missouri
PAWNEE
1500's-1800's
Iowa,
Sac & Fox 1830's
CHEYENNE & ARAPAHOE
1800's
Solomon's Fork
Big Blue
Kickapoo
1830's
Middle Branch
MISSOURI
1700's-1800's
Pottawatomie
1840's
Delaware
1830's
Wyandot
1840's
Saline
Kansas
River
KANSA
1600's-1800's
Shawnee
1820's
Smoky Hill
Peoria &
Kaskaskia
1830's
Wea &
Piankeshaw
1830's
Sac & Fox
of Mississippi
1840's
Ottawa
1830's
CUARTELEJO APACHE
1600's-1700's
Chippewa
1830's
Miami
1840's
WICHITA
(Quivira)
1500's-1700's
Pottawatomie
1830's
COMANCHE, KIOWA,
KIOWA APACHE,
1700's-1800's
Arkansas
River
Neosho River
Cimarron
River
OSAGE
1600's-1800's
Quapaw
1830's
Verdigris
River
WICHITA
1700's-1800's
Cherokee
1830's

The name "Wichita" is most likely derived from archaic words and is a term applied to various related bands by other people outside the culture. The name could be a combination of two words in the Wichita language—*Wits* (man) and *ita* (a band name)—or may have derived from the Osage *wi tsi ta*, meaning "people with scattered camps," or from the Choctaw term *wia chitah*, meaning "big arbor." Over the past five centuries, many names have been used to refer to various bands and the combinations of bands that at last in the nineteenth century came to be known collectively as "the Wichita." Included in this long and confusing list are Tawehash, Taovayas, (Plains) Jumanos, Paniouassas, and Quiviran (all names the Spanish used), plus the Siouian Paniwasaba, which means Black Pawnee and was translated as Paniouassa (and other variations such as La Salle's Paneas) by the French explorers. Others called the Wichita "Pawnee Picts" (Elam 1972:15-16).

The word "Wichita" has several meanings. It describes an individual band of Indians, the Wichita proper. It also describes a group or band composed of the Wacos, Taovayas, Wichita proper, and others. It describes the language spoken by the four groups. Anthropologists use linguistic affiliations as a method of classifying people.

How did the Wichita come to live in Kansas? Wichita oral history describes the migration from the Red River area of southwestern Arkansas and northwestern Louisiana. Near the Platte River the people decided to separate into two groups. Their journey companions and relatives, the Pawnee, would stay along the Platte, while the Wichita would turn southward. There on the central plains of Kansas, the Wichita found fertile, tillable soil along the smaller waterways. They adapted their lifeway to the unique set of conditions on the prairie, where an abundance of meat protein was available "on the hoof" and where conditions were favorable for vegetable production. We are unsure of exactly when this migration took place; we do know it was sometime during the 1400s. Scientists suggest an earlier origin from the southwestern part of North America and several centuries of temporary settlement in various places before the "permanent" settlements in Kansas (Newcomb 1961:248).

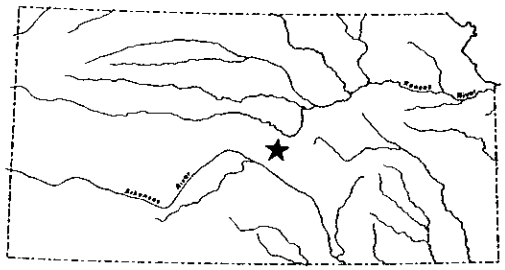
Where did the Wichita settle in Kansas? The Wichita have been identified historically with the Quivirans that the Coronado expedition encountered in central Kansas in 1541 near the great bend of the Arkansas River. Archeological sites of the ancestral Wichita are collectively labeled Great Bend Aspect. Sites have been found in an area between the Arkansas and Smoky Hill rivers, particularly in Rice and McPherson counties. They continue southeastward down the Arkansas-Walnut drainage to the Oklahoma line. Most are found on smaller streams such as Cow Creek, Paint Creek, and the Little Arkansas River rather than in the larger river valleys. Sites vary in size, and some were inhabited longer than others (Wedel 1959:371).

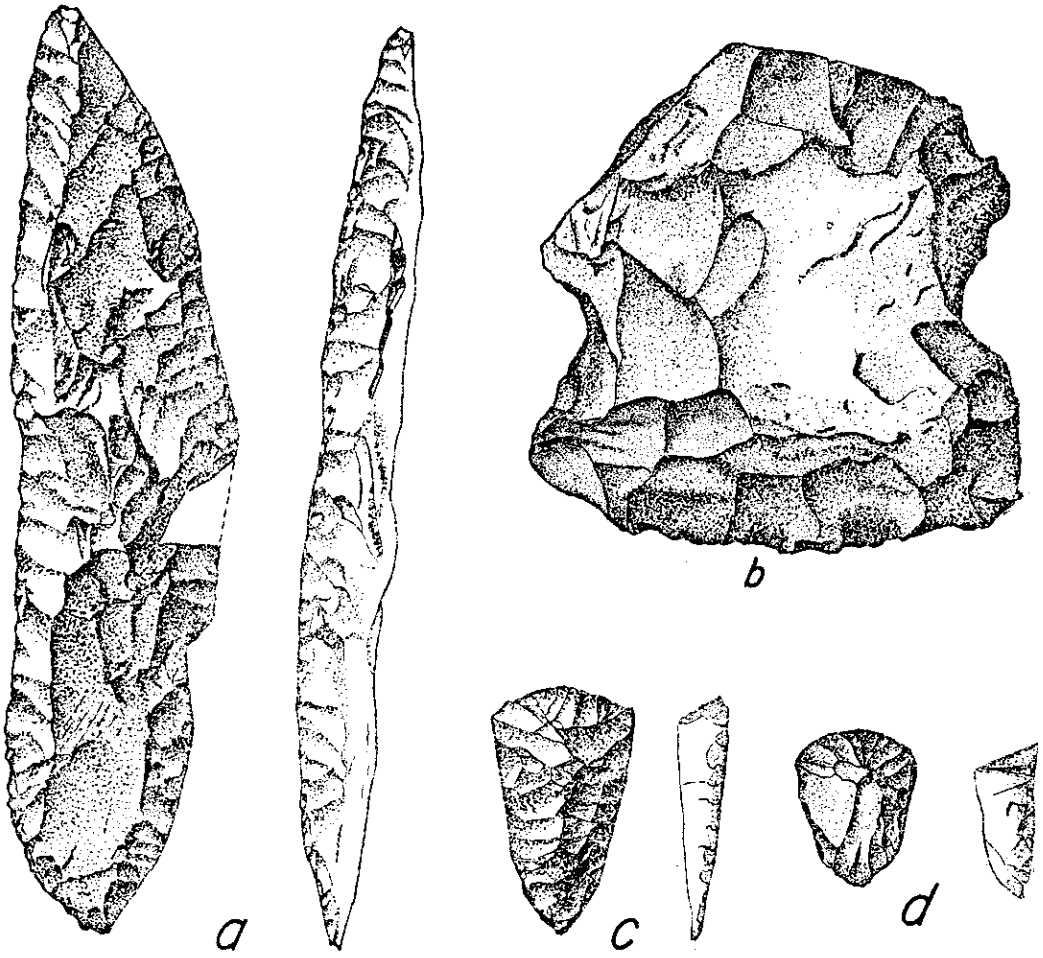
How do we know about the Wichita people and their ancestors? Because the Wichita had no written language, information about the ancestors of this Native American culture has depended upon historical records of explorers, ethnographic research, and archeological studies. The first written records describing the Wichita people came from Spanish explorers, beginning in A.D. 1541. While looking for the fabled land of Quivira, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and his troops found the Wichita in the vicinity of the great bend of the Arkansas River. Referring to the people as "Quivirans," the explorers estimated a population of between 15,000 and 30,000 (Elam 1972:34).

Ethnographers (scientists who describe and categorize cultures) interviewed Wichita people in Oklahoma in the early twentieth century. Ethnohistorians (anthropologists who study historical documents) have studied the diaries, maps, letters, and official records of explorers and of other European and American settlers. Archeologists have excavated and researched the clusters of similar Great Bend Aspect sites, where the ancestors of the Wichita lived.

Great Bend Aspect Site 14RC8: The Tobias Site

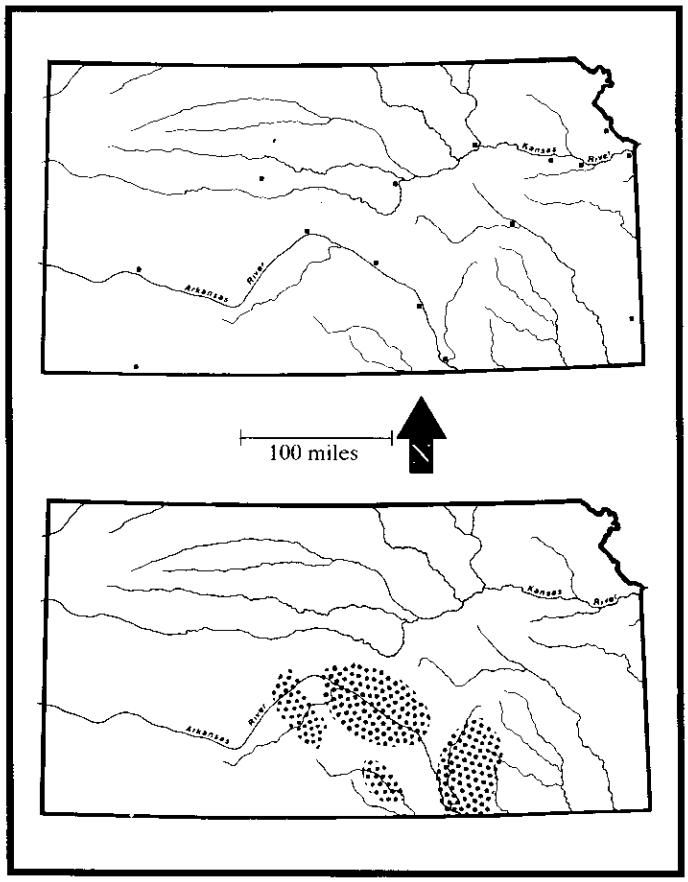
Waldo Wedel, an anthropologist from the Smithsonian Institution, excavated here. The numbering system for a site includes three parts: the state code (Kansas is 14), the county code (Rice County is RC), and a unique number for the specific site (8 is the 8th recorded site in Rice County). Wedel found, among many other artifacts and features, stone axes. They are large and thick, with sharp edges, except where the cutting edge is chipped or crumbled, suggesting heavy or long use.





Chipped stone tools from a Great Bend Aspect site in Rice County: a) knife, b) notched ax, c-d) end scrapers (Wedel 1959:316). Artifacts are shown at about 80% actual size.

Activities
Day One: Use poster picture #1 (Prairie Cordgrass), bookmark #1 (Prairie Cordgrass), and "Great Bend Aspect Sites in Kansas/Kansas Map" worksheet.



Activity: Map Skills, Use of Local Environment, Place Names
Materials: Worksheet
Teacher Preparation: None
Map Skills: Discuss directions, scale, drainage systems, boundaries (natural and those established by traditions and laws). Help students understand that the shaded areas on the lower map indicate locations of Great Bend Aspect sites. Compare the location of modern Kansas cities in relationship with river systems. Discuss similarities with Great Bend Aspect sites.
Use of Local Environment: The Wichita lived in the tall grass region of the prairie. Discuss other types of prairie environments, including determining factors such as rainfall. Encourage students to learn about other features of the Kansas environment that influence how people use their local area (such as minerals/mining).
Place Names: Place names of modern towns sometimes reflect a specific aspect of the landscape, such as an unusual geological formation, or represent a desired quality of life or the name of a powerful person or group in the settlement. Place names are also chosen as a connection with a previous place. After naming the cities in modern Kansas and locating your local area, students could create some place names based on what they have learned so far about Wichita culture. The influences that humans and their environment have upon one another is emphasized throughout the information presented here.

Activity: Home Range
Materials: Tissue paper, "other" maps (see below)
Teacher Preparation: Prepare a simple outline map of the town or county in which your school is located. Keep it as simple and clear as possible. Check telephone books or Zip Code directories. Your school should be able to supply a map of the school district. Be sure to leave

enough space for rural students to plot their routes to town. Be sure to include scales. Prepare the tissue paper for each student or each team. If all this seems daunting, try a map of the school and grounds for a "school range," with students plotting their movements during the school day.
Ask students to plot their typical "home range." If done on tissue paper, a student could overlay the ranges of classmates for comparison. Discuss the difference in home range for children in our society compared with adults. Talk with students about the dramatic increase in home range when horses for transportation are added; cars, buses, etc.

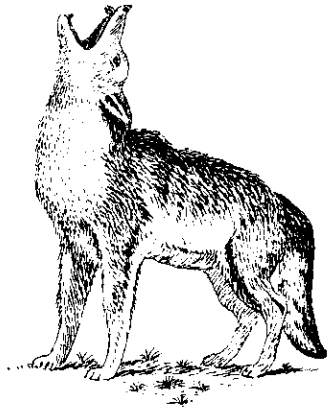
Activity: Time Line
Materials: Colored or masking tape, time line sheet for each student
Teacher Preparation: Prepare a master for use as a "personal time line." For older students, draw a simple heavy line with a definite left-hand starting point and an arrow at the right side with plenty of space to write. For younger students, draw a heavy line same as above, and add a mark for each year of a student's life plus several more.
Placing the Wichita people into a temporal context can be made easier by using a time line. First, ask students to create their own personal time line—or together as a class, create on the chalkboard a school year time line, noting major events (grade reports, holidays, major exams, sports events, etc.) and identifying clearly where the class is today in relation to the whole school year. The time line for placing the Wichita people's stay in Kansas can be used individually, drawn on the board, or laid out on the classroom floor with colored tape. A 24-foot time line allows 4 feet for each of 6 centuries. Once the line is established, marked, and labeled by century, ask students to locate the key events (Coronado's Entrada, the current year, etc.) as the week progresses.

Activity: Your Environment
Materials: Students will collect
Teacher Preparation: Clear space for display of items students collect. Provide charts or identification books on trees, shrubs, rocks, etc.
A mini-field trip to the area around your school to collect samples of plants that occur naturally or have been planted will heighten students' awareness of their immediate environment. Ask students to label, identify, and display. Label should indicate if the plant material is native or introduced, for what purposes people might use it, and whether it provides food or shelter for wildlife.

Activity: Prairie Environment
Materials: Nature magazines, animal stickers, colored markers and crayons, poster board
Teacher Preparation: None
Prairie cordgrass is (and was) a favorite nesting site for red-winged blackbirds and other marsh birds. It grows in wet areas of the prairie. Using magazines, stickers, and students' own drawings, the class could assemble an A.D. 1500 prairie plants and animals poster. Don't forget some insects, reptiles, and amphibians! Be sure to include animals that are no longer found naturally in Kansas: bison, wolves, elk, etc. Identify how the animals used the prairie: seed-eaters, grazers, browsers, meat-eaters, etc. Emphasize the kinds of homes they made or used: nests, burrows, dens, etc.

Activity: Prairie Chorus (This activity appears for each day of the study unit.)
Materials: Recordings of prairie animals (if available from school or public library). Students will devise their own noisemakers from materials at hand.
Teacher Preparation: Obtain library tapes (if available) and tape player. Otherwise, no preparation necessary, unless you wish to record your students' best performance for each day. Organize the class into a prairie chorus. Decide on a season and a time of day. (Today's chorus is a summer evening on the prairie.) Assign simple bird and insect sounds to groups of students. They will devise ways to make clicks and scraping sounds! Add a bobwhite quail, a mourning dove, a screech owl, the whine of mosquitoes, and the buzz of a swarm of gnats. Does someone

know the cheer-o-keeee of a red-winged blackbird or the scream of a redtailed hawk? Add a few coyotes and then some wolves in the distance. Include the sound of wind through the long grass. Let students take turns as "conductor" of the chorus, which should swell and eventually fade as darkness falls with only the crickets, an occasional mosquito, and an owl along the river. Is a mouse scurrying through the grass house in search of food? Emphasize that these are the sounds of the prairie—sounds central to the lives of Wichita children when they went to bed each night.



Vocabulary

archeology	ethnography	ethnohistory	environment
grass house	Great Bend Aspect	Quivira	Wichita

Day Two Grass Houses

Learning Objectives

1. List the materials required to construct a grass house frame.
2. Translate or read a grass house posthole pattern by drawing the "missing" elements.
3. Describe the wooden framework of a Wichita grass house.
4. Describe three branches of anthropology that have contributed to our knowledge of the Wichita/ Quiviran/Great Bend Aspect people.
5. Read a scale drawing.
6. List natural and human factors that affect the long-term survival of artifacts in a site.

Grass Houses

The Wichita built beehive-shaped dwellings covered with grass. These served as permanent homes for most of the year. According to accounts from the Coronado expedition, "The houses are of grass differing in sizes and shape. Dwellings are round, the grass hanging to the ground like a wall" (Bolton 1949:282). The Spanish explorers reported the size of the houses as 70 to 80 feet in circumference, indicating a diameter of 22 to 24 feet; they were "two spears" in height, or about 25 feet (Bolton 1916:260).

A house of grass was very durable, lasting 10 to 15 years with proper maintenance. The whole family shared in collecting posts, poles, and grasses, the materials needed to build a house. The actual construction was performed by the women and children.

Young willow and cottonwood trees were felled with sharp stone tools to make a sturdy house frame. The long, slender saplings offered ideal raw material from which to build a wickerwork frame, since they can reach 40 feet in length while measuring only about 4½ inches at the stump ends. Stripped of bark to discourage burrowing insects, the poles were best used when still green with sap. If dried out, the poles could be soaked in water for a day or two to restore their resiliency. By butting the ends of the poles into the ground, great tension could be achieved by arching them inward to a central point, where they were tied together. Smaller houses had self-supporting walls; large structures of 15 feet or more in diameter had a central core of upright posts for more support. Rows of horizontal stringers tied to the vertical poles created the crosspieces. Attached both inside and outside the vertical poles, stringers served as clamps to help hold the grass covering in place. Cordage for the framework ties was usually of rawhide, since it is very strong and would be protected from moisture by the grass covering.

Prior to the nineteenth century some houses had four doors, those at the north and south being for ceremonial use. In more recent times the Wichita built only east and west openings. They were closed by moveable, unattached doors of rods and grass. Doorways were so low that the Spaniards had to enter on their knees. The east and west doors and the opening on the roof allowed light into the grass house in the morning, at midday, and in the evening.

A smokehole was placed on the east side below the peak. On top of the house was a peak of grass surrounded by the tips of four poles pointing in the four directions. The poles represented the four world quarters or gods (North, South, East, and West) and provided paths by which the people could receive power from the gods. The center upward peak was symbolic of Man-Never-Known-On-Earth (*Kinnekasus*), the Wichita creator.

Inside there was a central fire pit shared by all the residents of the house. The fireplace was considered sacred. Offerings were made here, and food was cooked. Platforms or beds, made of a framework of wooden poles 2 or 3 feet from the ground, were arranged around the wall. Upright support posts served to mark the position of the beds. The number of beds varied according to

made for them, and when they woke, there were all the things! The woman was given an ear of corn, whose use she did not know. Its use was revealed to her in her heart. Corn was to be her food—it was Mother Corn. It was to be food for the people of the future, to be used generation after generation. From Mother Corn the people should be nursed.

Still they were in darkness, not knowing what was better than darkness.

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Where else did we get information about the Wichita? The rest of what we know about the early Wichita comes from several branches of science. Ethnohistory and archeology are major contributors to the knowledge we have. When all the scientists put together what they have learned, a story of great importance emerges, a story that spans many centuries and documents great changes in the way people have learned to live on the prairie.

For many years ethnohistorians studied maps, diaries, letters, and old court records. Most of these documents were 300 or more years old. The maps were made by Spanish and French explorers. The other documents were in Spanish or French, too. These records all told of explorations, trading parties, trials, and meetings with people who lived on the Plains. The scientists read descriptions of Native Americans, all describing either the same people or close relatives from different bands. Again and again, from both the Spanish and the French accounts, ethnohistorians read of the grass houses and large gardens of settlements in the central area between the great bend of the Arkansas River and south of the Smoky Hill River.

Ethnohistorians focusing on the ancestors of the Wichita are working under difficult conditions. The events they study are in the distant past. The early written records are in other languages. For example, records from the southwestern part of the United States are in Spanish. Over time the meanings of some words have changed. Some of the information was lost through the centuries. Other parts of the story were based on hearsay. What the Indians said was recorded, not by the speakers themselves, but by the Spanish. Most of this information was from conversations in sign language, a few words of Spanish, and some words in "Mexican," which at the time was probably the Nahuatl language. The listeners came from a culture very different from the Indian informants. When the Spanish, who were in search of gold, understood one Indian's description of a place to the east where people had "yellow metal," they formed an exploration party to travel there. They were in search of a place called Quivira, where they hoped to find gold and other riches.

While the ethnohistorians were trying to make sense of the Spanish, French, and American explorers' written records, archeologists were seeking information using their special methods. Archeology depends on the evidence left after people have used a place. The charcoal and burned earth from a hearth or house fire, the discarded bits of bone, stone, and shell, the way the land looks and what plants it produces are all evidence that can tell the story of a place and the people who once lived there. Sometimes the first clue is a piece of broken pottery (sherd) that turns up on the surface of a plowed field. Floods can wash away soil to reveal a stone arrow or dart point. Finding some "surface evidence" can lead to a carefully planned scientific investigation of a site. The information the archeologists seek must be uncovered in a precise way, or it becomes just a jumble of artifacts that offer only a little information.

In the case of trying to learn more about the Quivirans encountered by Coronado, archeological evidence led to the discovery of Spanish chain mail at some of the sites excavated in the central region of Kansas. It was a link, but archeology is a science, and more information was needed. Using scientific methods, a trained team of archeologists and their assistants can gather valuable data that can add to our knowledge of past peoples. As they excavate carefully, layer by layer, they use trowels and shovels, small brushes, and measuring equipment. The artifacts and features, such as stained earth and charred bits of wood, all relate to one another. An object found "in situ" (in place just where it was left) is studied in association with all the other clues.

The posthole patterns found at these sites were circular, usually between 15 and 30 feet in diameter. Evidence, including an indoor hearth and one or more bell-shaped pits that had once been used for food storage but were now filled with soil and cultural trash, such as pottery sherds and broken stone and bone tools, began to reveal similarities. Each piece of evidence at a

family size. Mattresses were reed or willow mats covered with buffalo robes. Hide curtains served as privacy barriers for the beds. Curtains could be raised or lowered and often were painted with war scenes.

Additional Information

Physical appearance. Physically, the Wichita people present a contrast to other Plains tribes. The people were shorter, stockier, and darker than their Plains neighbors, the Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, and Arapahoe people. The Wichita wore their black hair long and loose.

Although other Plains tribes tattooed themselves, the Wichita became identified as the Tattooed People. The most noticeable feature of Wichita appearance was their tattoos, which were created by the skillful use of tattooing needles that pierced the skin. Charcoal or natural dyes could then be rubbed into the broken skin.

Wichita men were tattooed on the upper and lower eyelids. A line about ½ inch in length extended out from the corner of each eye. These marks were applied when a boy was young, at which time he was told the tattooing would prevent him from having sore eyes. Since the tattooed eyes resembled those of a raccoon, the Wichita called themselves *Kitikiti'sh* (Raccoon Eyes). After he killed his first bird, a boy received a tattoo, resembling a bird's foot, on the back of his hand. Men also adorned themselves with short lines down from each corner of the mouth. Up and down the arms and across the chest were additional marks in the form of small crosses. Each mark indicated the number of times a man had been part of a successful war party. These crosses were symbols of the stars and represented a mythical hero of the Wichita called *Tahanetskihadidia* (Flint-Stone-Lying-Down-Above), who was one of the guardians of the warriors.

Women's tattoos differed from those of the men. Designs varied also among individual women. Wichita women were tattooed on the face, arms, and breasts. Girls were told that, by receiving these marks, they would enjoy a more perfect life. A woman's tattoos made her more beautiful, and a man's tattoos symbolized his acts of bravery and good works. The practice of tattooing disappeared from Wichita society before the twentieth century.

Wichita, Quiviran, Great Bend Aspect—who were all these people? And how do we know? What we know about the early Wichita comes partially from the old stories handed down generation to generation as part of the Wichita oral tradition. Some information is about the way life used to be, how the people came to live in various regions, and other "historical" traditions of the tribe. Other stories tell of the beginning of the world, how the Wichita were taught to build grass houses, the names and origins of celestial beings, etc. Ethnographers recorded the stories as part of their research at the end of the nineteenth and early in the twentieth centuries, when Wichita people were interviewed in Oklahoma, the "final" home of the tribe. The story that follows is an adaptation from George Dorsey's *The Mythology of the Wichita*, which was published in 1904 and contains all four eras of Wichita creation, destruction, transformation, and "end of the world" stories. This portion of a story from the first cycle is given here to underscore that the Wichita's supreme being, *Kinnekasus* (Man-Never-Known-on-Earth), provided the means and the method for food, houses, tools, weapons, and all the other things the people needed. See Day Four for more information about the Wichita belief system. The story also leaves much unknown—a familiar situation to any professionals who investigate the past.

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In the times of the beginning there was no sun, no stars, nor anything else as it is now. Time passed on. Kinnekasus, Man-Never-Known-on-Earth, was the only one that existed, and he it was who created all things.

When the earth was created, it was composed of land and water, but they were not yet separated. The land was floating on the water, and darkness was everywhere.

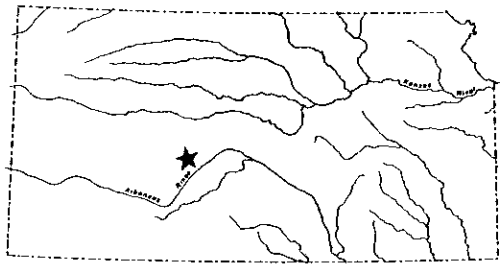
After the earth was formed, Kinnekasus made a man whose name was Kiarsidia, Having-Power-to-Carry-Light. He also made a woman, and her name was Kashatskihakatidise, Bright-Shining-Woman. After the man and woman were made, they dreamed that things were

site is carefully bagged and numbered. Much of the soil is sifted to recover small items. Some of the soil is washed, so that tiny seeds and other material float out of the dirt and can be recovered.

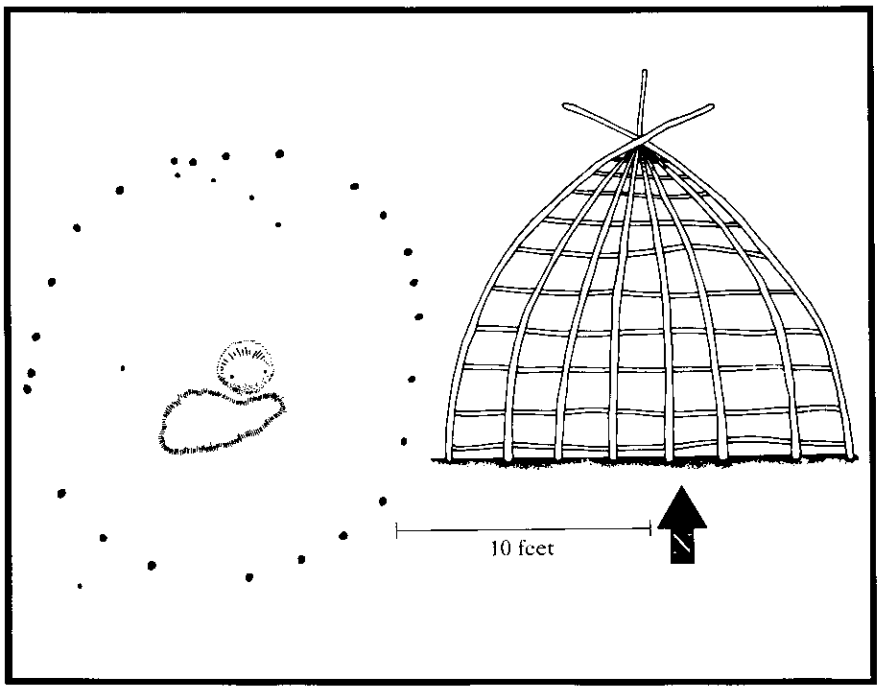
A map of the site shows exactly where each piece of evidence was found. Photographs and drawings help preserve the way the site was arranged. All this work must be done precisely because the excavation destroys the site. The information and artifacts will all end up in the laboratory, where they are numbered, recorded, and studied. A written report that explains the findings adds to the volume of knowledge.

When the scientists began to compare their research results, it was clear that they were all studying the same group of people. Historically called the Wichita, archeologists refer to the sites the ancestral Wichita once occupied as Great Bend Aspect.

Great Bend Aspect Site 14PA307: The Lewis Site
Excavated evidence shows that Great Bend Aspect settlement occurred in Pawnee County. The archeological evidence included posthole patterns and other indications of 11 houses represented as round, oval, and slightly oval. Central hearths and middens (trash mounds) containing cultural debris were also recorded.



Activities
Day Two: Use poster picture #2 (Grass House Interior Detail), bookmark #2 (Wichita House Frame), and "Posthole Pattern/Grass House Frame" worksheet.



Activity: Durability
Materials: Strips of cloth (cotton, wool, polyester, etc.), string, twine, leather boot lace, two sticks for each kind of material. If students make their own cordage later in the week, include it, too. Garbage from the school lunchroom, some meat bones from home garbage, feathers, stones, etc.
Teacher Preparation: For the experiment locate an outdoor space where materials will be undisturbed.

This activity will allow students to observe the varying durability of different materials. Use strips of cotton cloth, string, etc. to tie sticks together. Erect the sticks outside, and examine each week for the rest of the school year. Students should record the signs of fading, fraying, weakening of knots, etc. Help students draw conclusions about durability of various materials. You might also use small squares in which to observe short-term durability of other materials. Collect some garbage from the lunchroom, and watch the decaying process. Hang the bones in a nearby tree to keep them secure from animals. Discuss durability over longer periods of time. Emphasize that stone and bone last longer than plant materials, such as cordage, grass, and wood. Ask students to consider other factors for survivability besides the material itself and weather and soil conditions: new settlement, agriculture, road building, rodents, insects, etc. Discuss what remains if a grass house burns, reemphasizing posthole patterns and burned earth found archeologically.

Activity: Posthole Patterns
Materials: Worksheet
Teacher Preparation: None
When the Archeology Team excavates a site, the wooden poles have either disintegrated or burned. Often the only evidence that a structure once stood is a pattern of dark circles as the soil is scraped away layer by layer. These dark stains indicate disturbed soil or may be the charred remains of house frame support posts. The position, size, and number of these circles is called a posthole pattern and provides important information about the structure. The pattern shown on the worksheet corresponds with the frame. Students can use the scale to determine the diameter of the house.

Activity: Floor Plan
Materials: Worksheet
Teacher Preparation: None
Encourage students to produce drawings that show floor plan, elevation, and cross-section views of this grass house as the week progresses and they gain more knowledge.

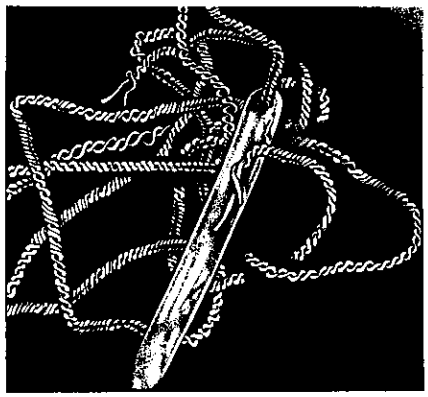
Activity: Impact on the Environment
Materials: Worksheet
Teacher Preparation: None
An important concept is the dramatic impact building a grass house village had on the local environment. Discuss the number of saplings required to construct a single frame (as shown in the posthole pattern). Remember to include "stringers" that were required over each layer of grass to clamp it firmly in place. Estimate the amount of grass required for a single house, then consider the amount needed for a village of 200 houses with outbuildings for each. Add a hearth for each of the 200 dwellings to the assessment. Over a period of 15 years, what impact might the village have on the local environment?

Activity: Prairie Chorus
Materials: Tape and recorder, if desired. Students can collect some stones and twigs.
Teacher Preparation: None
Today's prairie chorus represents a spring afternoon. To the various animal sounds appropriate for an afternoon, such as insects buzzing (remember, coyotes would not be singing!), add some sounds from a Wichita village. A toolmaker striking stone on stone, a woman adding wood to a cooking fire, a group of men playing a game of chance, a baby crying, dogs barking, two sisters working a hide with scrapers of stone, some children laughing. The wind blows through the grass. Discuss the activities and objects represented by these sounds.

Vocabulary cordage durability hearth posthole pattern rawhide wickerwork

Day Three Work and Play

Learning Objectives



1. List ways the Wichita used cordage.
2. Identify the use of a grassing needle.
3. List the work roles of Wichita women and men.
4. Identify vegetables grown by the Wichita and describe methods of preserving foods.
5. Describe the Wichita annual cycle of seasonal work.
6. List two gardening tools used by the Wichita and identify the sources of material for each.

Work and Play

Wichita women worked in pairs to attach the grass to the house frame. Using a bone needle threaded with strong cord, the women stitched the heavy grass in place. One builder outside the frame forced the needle through the grass to her partner inside the frame. Tightening the cordage, they clamped the grass between the double row of horizontal stringers, passed the cordage around the poles, and forced the needle back through the grass to the outside. The ends of the cord were then knotted securely. Later, a portion of grass from the row above was pulled down to cover the knot to protect it from weather damage. These are the "tufts" that make such a beautiful pattern on the finished grass house. Row by row, the builders moved around the frame, working their way upward. The siding became thicker as it overlapped, from about 6 inches on the bottom row to more than a foot thick at the top. The walls were as solidly packed as the thatched roof of an English country house. The grassing needle was made from a long, thin animal bone (bison or elk rib, bison scapula spine). The toolmaker shaped the bone, tapering it to a dull point at the tip. The eye of the needle was drilled with a stone tool at the other end. As the needle passed back and forth through the grass, its surface became polished.

From the cradleboard to the grave, much of Wichita life was held together by cordage. The grass house, tipi, clothing, weapons, gardening tools, traveling gear—all required cordage of either animal (rawhide, sinew) or plant material. Although rawhide was the toughest cordage, it was vulnerable to moisture, so it probably was used only on the wooden house frame. Inner bark, particularly from elm trees, provided durable cordage for the exterior ties. A grass house with a floor diameter of 15 feet required at least 1,500 feet of cordage. For a double twisted cord, two separate strands of moistened inner bark fiber are twisted (as on the maker's leg). They are then overlapped at the end and twisted together in the opposite direction.

NOTE: The grassing needle picture on page 1 was made from bison rib bone by a Kansas archeologist who studies grass houses. The needle measures 9½ inches. A team of specialists and volunteers used this needle in 1985 when they built the grass house on exhibit at the Kansas Museum of History. The cordage of inner elm bark was made recently by an archeologist to demonstrate the process. He can make 10 feet of cordage in about 30 minutes.

Additional Information

Other Structures:

Summer Arbor. Like the house, the summer arbor was built with poles and grass. It was constructed in an elongated shape with open sides to a height of about 4 feet. These arbors were various sizes; some had a platform a foot above the ground. Here the people worked or rested in the shade during the summer months.

Corn Drying Arbor. The drying arbor was made of poles. The structures ranged in size from 10 to 12 feet square. The drying rack of poles was placed high enough off the ground so dogs could not reach it to get food. A ladder made from a single notched tree was used to climb to the top. Corn and other food were placed on top. Pumpkin strips were hung underneath.

Sleeping Arbor. The sleeping arbor was very similar to the corn arbor but usually smaller. In warmer weather young unmarried girls slept on these raised platforms.

Wichita villages were home to 1,000-2,000 people. The villages were located near smaller rivers and streams, near the rich bottom land required to grow crops of corn, beans, squash, and pumpkin. Growing, harvesting, and processing these vegetables represented much of the work in spring, summer, and early fall. Each October the Wichita packed their gear and left their villages for an extended winter bison hunt. During the hunt they resided in tipis and lived as other nomadic Plains tribes. They processed the meat and used the raw materials from other parts of the bison. They returned to their villages in time to prepare fields and plant crops.

The prairie environment was the source of everything the Wichita people used. Shelter, food, water, clothing, tools, containers, ornaments, weapons, sacred objects—all came from the prairie. Natural materials that are used and shaped by humans are all part of material culture.

Work Roles. The roles of men and women were clearly defined. Working in groups, women planted and harvested garden crops, tilled the soil, prepared and preserved food, skinned animals, and tanned hides for clothing and tipis. The mother and female relatives assumed responsibility for the upbringing of young children. Mothers kept the young children close by while they worked. Discipline was not enforced until age three or four, when a child was old enough to understand. Sometimes punishment of an unruly child was administered by a male relative or friend. Boys were thrown in a creek or got their legs scratched with a knife. After a bad experience with a non-relative "bogeyman," just the threat of his reappearance produced the desired behavior in a child.

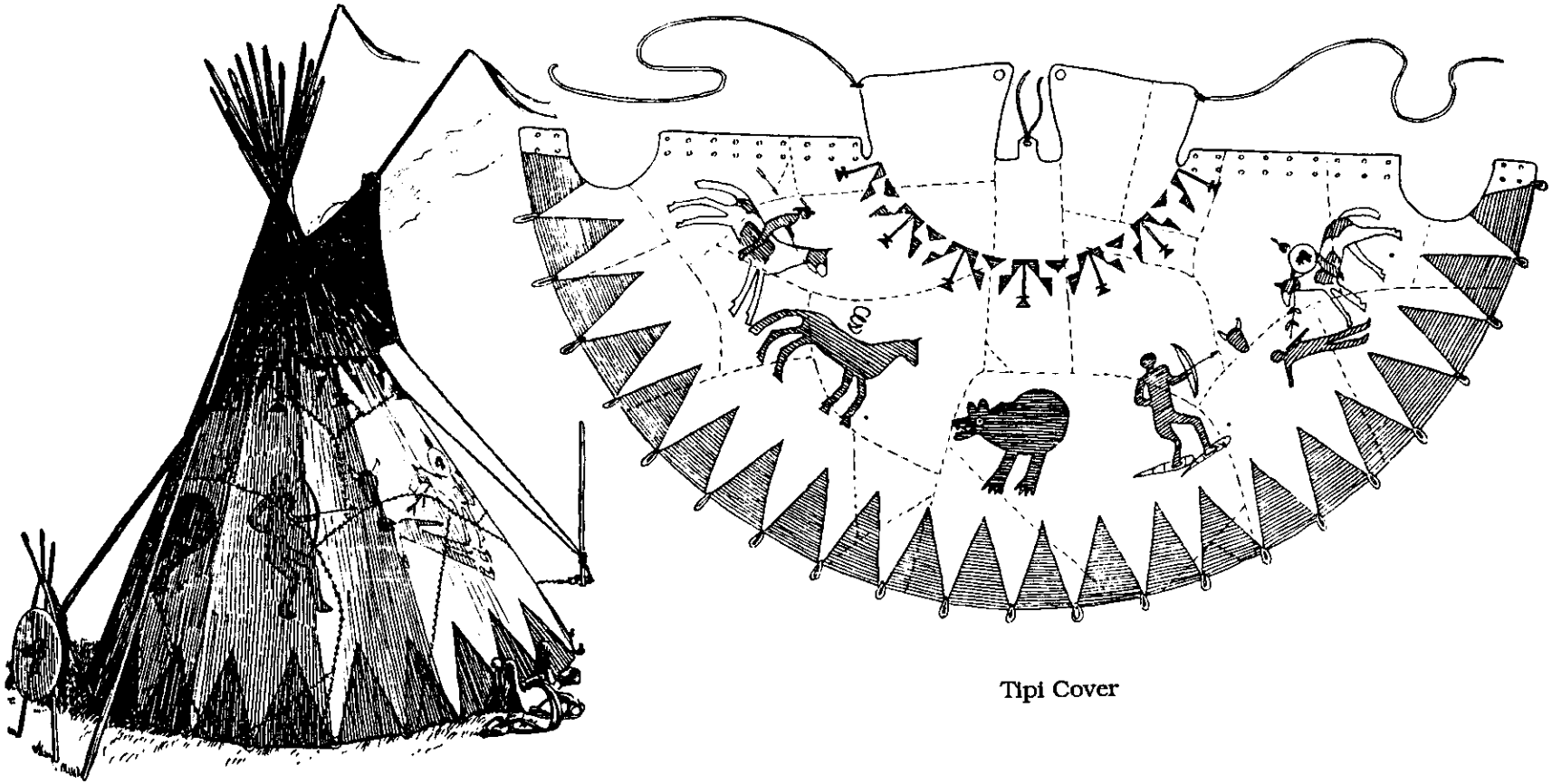
Mothers taught their daughters the duties of a woman. Well-tanned hides, well-preserved and prepared foods, productive fields, and an orderly household were signs of a properly reared Wichita woman.

The men also worked in groups. They hunted, made weapons, defended the villages, performed ceremonies and dances, conducted village business, and played games to develop skills needed for war and hunting. A father assumed responsibility for training his sons, when they were old enough to learn the duties of men. Boys learned the skills to become hunters and warriors. They were taught to be brave, truthful, peaceful, and kind. A man was expected to control his emotions, especially anger. Cold baths were enforced in order to toughen boys up. A father gave his personal supernatural power and magic medicine bundles to his son. The honor of death in battle was instilled in boys through stories, songs, and ceremonies.

Making a house. (See the Grass Houses section of Day Two on pages 14 and 15 for information about grass houses.) Women made the grass houses and the winter houses too. The Wichita lived in tipis while on the annual bison hunt. The tipi was a tent made of brain-tanned bison hides, sewn together with sinew. Each tipi required 15 to 20 hides. The Wichita used a three-pole frame. It was not symmetrical, but a tilted cone, steeper at the back. The smokehole was located in the front on the sloping side. Two flaps flanked the smokehole, each supported by a pole outside that could be moved to regulate the draft, ventilate the tent, and carry out the smoke. Painted symbols and histories of important hunts and battles were painted on the tipis.

The tipi was an ideal shelter for the hunt. It was warm, lightweight, and could withstand the wind and winter storms on the prairie. It could be assembled in a few minutes and dismantled just as quickly. Dogs transported the tipis and other equipment. Dogs either carried loads on their backs or were trained to pull a travois. (See Handout #2: The Boy and the Mud Pony on pages 41-43 for more information about horses.)

Clothing. Women made all the clothing, too, using tanned animal skins and various ornaments, such as animal teeth. Wichita clothing was well-suited to the Plains environment. Before European influence the people wore very little during warm weather. A man wore a loin cloth, moccasins, and occasionally a pair of leggings. His ears were each pierced in four places, from which he wore numerous ornaments (Newcomb 1961:251).



Tipi Cover

A woman wore a skirt, generally of buckskin or young buffalo hide, tanned on both sides, wound around the waist and reaching below the knees. Leggings and moccasins completed her attire. In cold weather warm buffalo robes were worn by both men and women.

Once they left toddlerhood, children wore clothing similar to that of adults.

NOTE: When George Catlin painted Wichita women's portraits in the 1830s, he noted that they wore a "Gown or slip" of "deer or elk skins; often garnished very prettily, and ornamented with long fringes of elk's teeth, which are fastened ... in rows" (Newcomb 1961:253).

Foodgetting. The work of foodgetting was divided between men and women. Because the Wichita were hunters, gatherers, and farmers, their lifestyle required various skills. They depended for survival on their vegetable crops (women's work), supplemented by wild game (men's work), especially the bison. Their diet was enriched by plums, berries, and nuts (women's gathering work). Other wild plants provided medicines and seasonings. The Wichita depended extensively on native plants and animals; they did not, however, eat fish. Fish were believed to be people experiencing a transformation, who built their houses under water.

Gardens. A woman's gardening tools included a digging stick with a pointed end, made of bison or deer bone. It was used to loosen and break up the soil. She cultivated the crops with a hoe, fashioned from a bison scapula (shoulder blade).

Harvest, Processing, Storage, and Use of Vegetables. Corn, a main staple, was prepared for eating in several ways. It could be eaten immediately after harvest by roasting or boiling. Usually it was roasted, then placed on a specially constructed arbor to dry. The dried corn was shelled and used in meat and corn soups or ground into cornmeal for bread. Shelled corn was also placed in hide bags and stored for future consumption.

Cornmeal was made by grinding the corn on a grinding stone. Circular loaves of bread made from the corn flour were baked under the ashes of a fire. The women also used a wooden mortar for grinding corn. It was placed between the west door and the hearth and was fashioned out of a tree trunk about 1½ feet in diameter and 4 feet in length. A pestle with a heavy end was used by two women to pound the corn into meal (Dorsey 1904a:5).

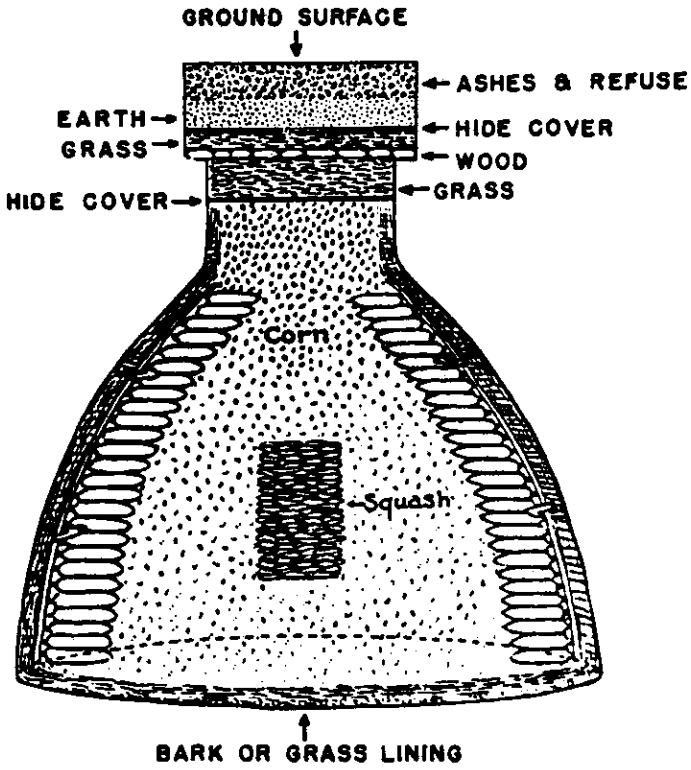
Squash and pumpkin were cut into long strips and hung to dry. After drying for a day or two, the strips were taken down and pounded flat with a wooden mallet. The strips were then woven into mats, folded, and stored for later use. Pieces of the mat were torn off to flavor soups and other dishes. These mats were an excellent trade item. The Kiowa and Comanches exchanged bison meat for them.

The Wichita stored their dried food in rawhide bags, and parfleches (rawhide containers made from large animal hides and folded into portfolio-like cases) were filled with dried meat and other dried food. The bags and parfleches were then placed in an underground storage pit located in the floor of the grass house. The bell-shaped storage or cache pit was dug and prepared by the women. Pits varied in size from 6 to 8 feet deep and from 6 to 8 feet in diameter at the bottom. A wooden ladder was used to enter and exit the pit, which was usually lined with grass or bark to keep it dry. Pits were covered over and concealed, so enemies could not raid the food supply. After the pit could no longer serve as a storage area for food, due to water leakage or other reasons, it became a trash receptacle. A house occupied for a long time boasted several pits.

Hunting, Processing, and Preparing Meat. After the harvest, when the vegetables had been dried and stored, the village prepared for the winter hunt. They packed supplies, left their grass houses, and changed to a Plains nomad lifestyle. Although the men hunted locally year round (Coronado found some of them hunting buffalo in July), from October to March life focused on the extended main hunt.

Because bison migrated, the Wichita needed to preserve and store meat for times when the buffalo herd was out of range. Plains Indian groups that hunted large game developed a nearly perfect way of processing meat.

Woman hoeing corn with bison scapula hoe.

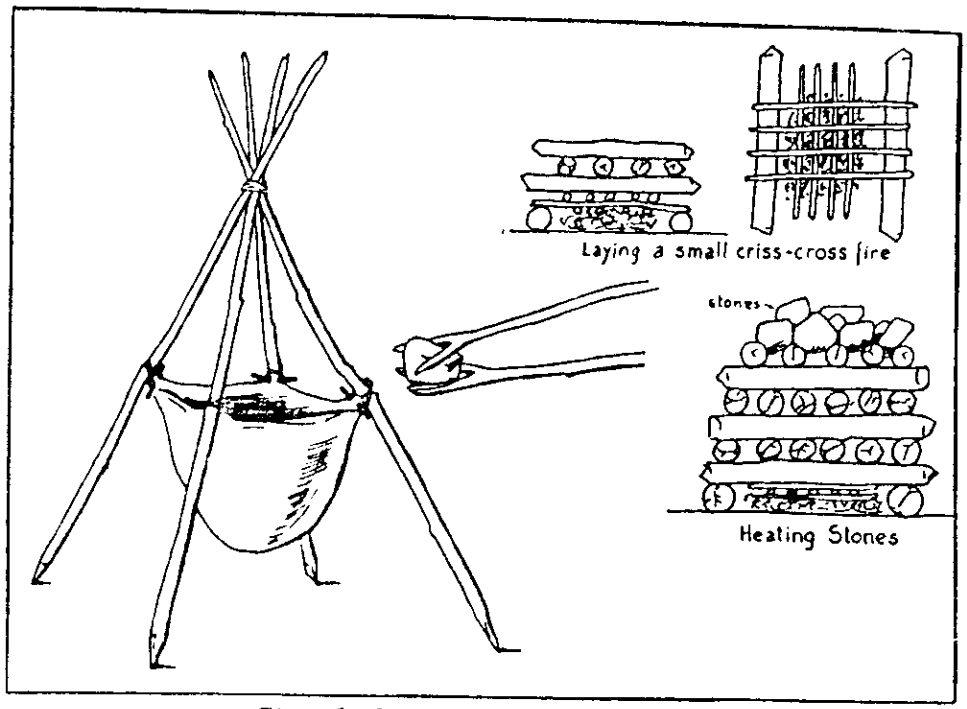


Filled and sealed cache pit.

On the hunt the women, working in groups, skinned the bison killed by the men and carried the meat and hides back to camp for processing. The Indian method of butchering followed the natural contours and muscle layers. They did not cut cross-grain or saw through bones. The meat was cut with sharp flint or bone knives into thin slices, which were hung separately to dry in the sun. Meat was cut so thin that it took only a couple of days to dry and harden. "Jerky" (sun-dried meat) was made from almost any piece of meat. The dried meat was cooked in soups or pounded into a course meal for easy storage. One buffalo could provide as much as 26 pounds of dried meat.

Bison meat was eaten fresh or dried for year-round consumption. The liver was eaten raw. The blood was also drunk fresh. Buffalo fat was collected and preserved in large balls or bags to be used when needed for cooking or in the making of pemmican. To make pemmican the dried meat was pounded until fluffy and light. It could be mixed with dried pounded chokecherries and fat or left plain. The intestines were cleaned and eaten raw or baked in the fire or used for food storage.

The stomach could be used for a cooking pot. It was mounted on three or four sticks and filled with water. Selected stones that could withstand temperature extremes were heated, then placed in the water to bring it to a boil. The stones were heated above the fire to keep them clean and free from ashes. Meat was added and cooked. The "pot" itself was eaten after use.
NOTE: Food such as soup was eaten with a spoon made from bison horn. Each person had one of these scoop-like spoons.

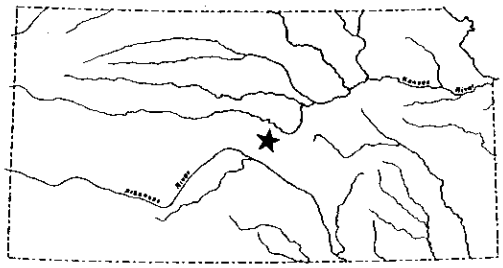


Stone boiling in buffalo stomach pot.

Recreation. The Wichita, like other Plains Indians, had a range of amusements. They enjoyed guessing games, athletic games, games of chance, and games of dexterity, all accompanied by gambling. Shinny, hoop and pole, archery, and double ball or stick ball were some of the more strenuous sports. The outdoor games were fast and required physical endurance and skill. Guessing games were a favorite of all.

The children played games and had toys. The girls had dolls and little tipis. They imitated their mother's work, preparing them for adulthood. The games and pastimes of the boys also prepared them for adulthood. Bows and arrows, shields, and spears were some of their playthings. Toys made from bone and wood resembled bison and other animals, including horses when those animals became important to the Wichita.

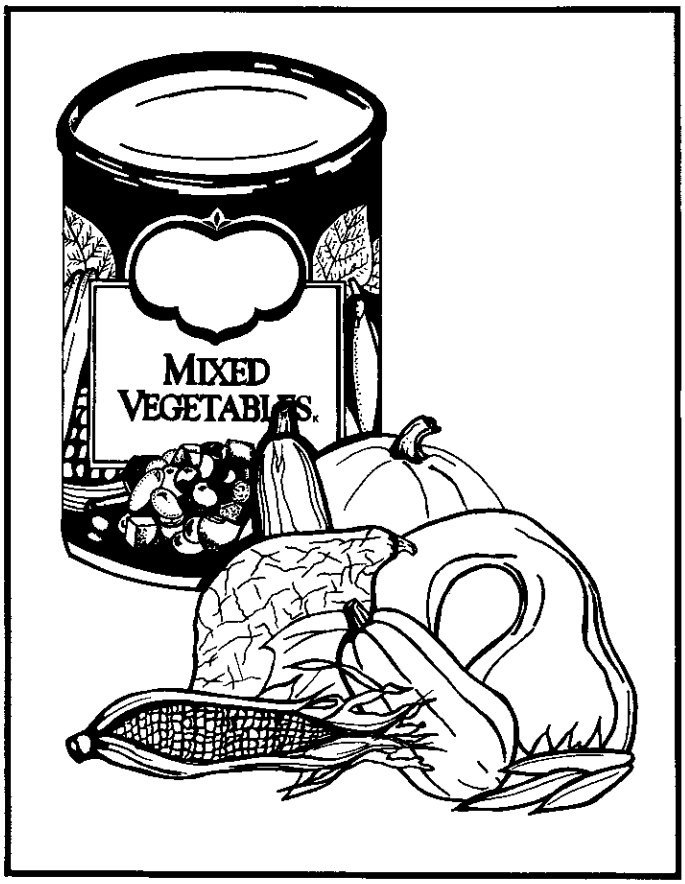
Great Bend Aspect Site 14RC306: The Hayes Site



Site 14RC306 is located near a complex of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Indian village sites that comprise the Tobias-Thompson National Historic Landmark. Two "pithouses" were excavated there. The larger had a prepared clay floor. "Pithouse" means the builders dug down to form a shallow bank against which to butt the house frame's poles. Bone objects found at the Hayes Site included tools similar to the grassing needle shown on page 1.

Activities

Day Three: Use poster picture #3 (Bone Grassing Needle and Cordage), bookmark #3 (Bone Grassing Needle and Cordage), and "Vegetables" worksheet.



Activity: Creative Writing

Materials: Worksheet, pumpkin, squash, dried beans (any dark, medium-sized variety), cornmeal

Teacher Preparation: Arrange materials where students can see, touch, lift, smell, and taste. Cut slices from the pumpkin and squash. See individual activities below for preparation.

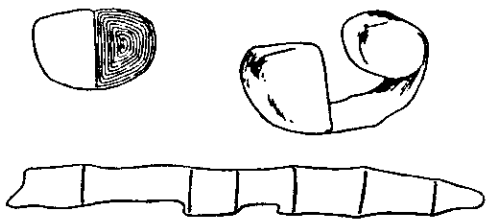
Dialogue: No preparation needed. Archeology can recover only a small part of any culture. The voices of the people (especially when a group does not have its own written record) are gone. Ask students to create a dialogue between two Wichita children hoeing corn. Maybe one half of the class could write about modern Kansas children in a similar situation. Discuss the differences and similarities.

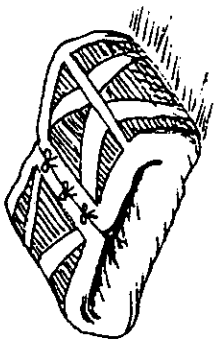
Adjectives: No preparation needed. List adjectives that describe the vegetables as they grow and ripen, emphasizing use of the five senses.
Song, riddle, poem: No preparation needed. Wichita women tied the grass covering to the frame by passing a bone needle from outside to inside to outside again. The rhythm of this work may suggest a meter for a "grassing song," poem, or riddle.
Outline: Preparation: Review building process. Students could use what they have learned to describe the process of building a grass house. An outline will help them organize information. Once completed, ask students to write accurate sentences that lead the reader step by step through the process. Younger students might try a 1-2-3 list of steps for growing a plant or for opening a can of vegetables.
Dictionary skills: No preparation needed. The unit contains many unfamiliar words that can be used for building dictionary skills and vocabulary, including spelling lists, etc. Encourage students to explore the "Biographical Names" section of the dictionary (example: What was Coronado's full name?) and the "Pronouncing Gazetteer" section (example: How many miles long is the Arkansas River?).

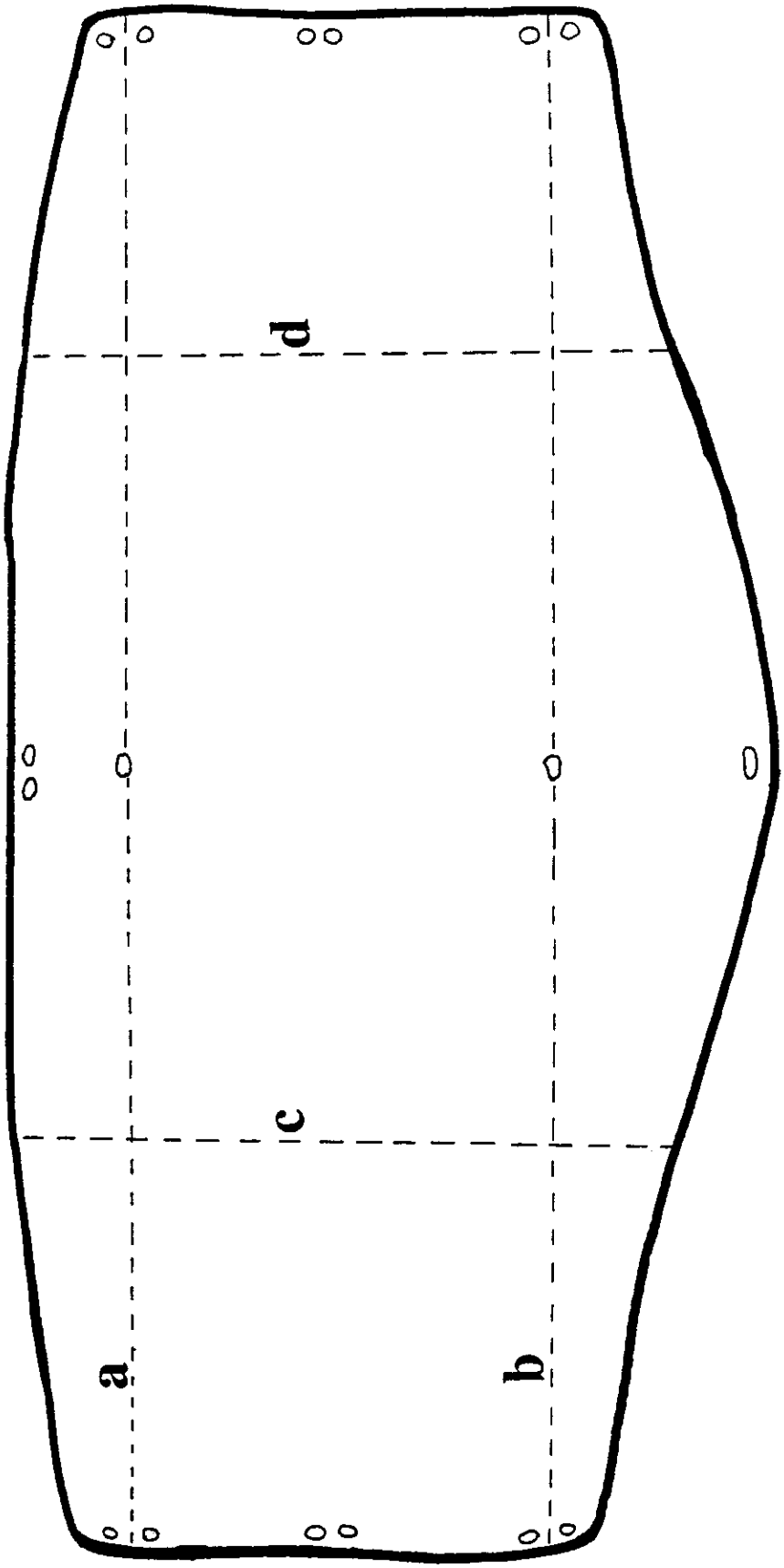
Activity: Cordage
Materials: Inner elm bark or cotton string, pan or bucket with water to moisten
Teacher Preparation: Gather bark, if using natural materials, or cut six lengths of string for each student.
Cordage held many items together. Ask students to search for items we use today that are held in place with modern cordage. Encourage students to look beyond the obvious answers. Discuss other materials modern Kansans use to hold their buildings and objects together, and compare the methods of acquiring these materials with Wichita methods. Let students experiment with making their own cordage. If string is used, experiment with two-ply, three-ply, etc., and test the increasing strength. Instructions for making cordage: 1) Twist two separate strands of moistened inner bark on your leg in the same direction. 2) Overlap them at the end and twist together in the opposite direction.

Activity: Parfleche
Materials: Parfleche template on page 27, heavy paper, string for each "parfleche," hole punch. Large drawing paper will give students enough space to fold and decorate.
Teacher Preparation: Transfer parfleche outline to paper for each student, and cut string for each.
Parfleche is a French term, meaning "for meat," for the rawhide storage containers made by many Plains Indians. Parfleches usually had painted decoration and were beautiful as well as useful. Students should cut out and decorate their "parfleches," using geometric designs, a widespread form of decoration for many Plains tribes. Fold in a-b-c-d order. Use a hole punch to make holes for simplified lacing. Lace with heavy string or light cord.

Activity: Butchering Method
Materials: Modeling clay, sharp knife. Thick cut of beef could be used but is costly and messy. Jerky for each student.
Teacher Preparation: Practice with clay beforehand. Demonstrate one method Plains Indians used to cut strips of meat by following the illustration at right. Start with firmly packed ball of modeling clay. Cut straight through the center as to half it, but stop within a quarter of an inch of cutting into two separate pieces. Cut around and around one side of meat (clay); then do the same for the other side. The meat (clay) unrolls to several feet in length. Another method used by the women was to cut the meat into large thin sheets. Help students understand that the thinner the strip or sheet, the faster it will dry and thereby not spoil. Give each student a piece of jerky.



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Activity: Cornbread
Materials: Cornmeal
Teacher Preparation: Add small amount of water to 2 cups cornmeal to make a very stiff batter. It must be stiff enough to retain shape. Shape into round flat loaf in center of greased cookie sheet. Bake in preheated 425-degree oven for about 20 to 25 minutes. Bread should be brown all over and sound hollow when thumped.
Let students break off and taste a small portion. This could be part of the writing exercise. Be sure they understand that real Wichita corn was not bright yellow and that it was cooked under the ashes (not in an oven). Ask students to imagine what these differences would mean in appearance and flavor.

Activity: Time Circle
Materials: Colored or masking tape
Teacher Preparation: Use tape to mark a large circle on the classroom floor. Mark 12 equal spaces around the circle (like a clock) to represent our 12 months.
To underscore the cyclical nature of the Wichita concept of time, a time circle (rather than a time line) can be effective. Ask students to stand in various spaces around the circle, associated with specific activities (example: September/vegetable harvest). Remind class that the Wichita did not use our month names nor view time in the same way we do (linearly). Students could create banners or signs to show the activities of various times of the year.

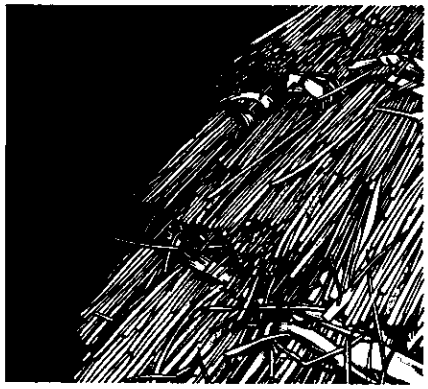
Activity: Prairie Chorus
Materials: None
Teacher Preparation: None
Today's chorus is a summer morning in a Wichita vegetable field. The cardinals, blue jays, robins, wrens, etc. are all singing. The flies and bees are warming up from the night's cool air. Moccassined feet make padding sounds in the dry dust of the pathway to the field. Buckskin skirts and leggings make a soft leather sound. Children and their mothers, big sisters, and grandmothers are all on their way to hoe. What is the sound of bison scapula hoes biting into the soil? What is the sound of weeds being pulled? Make the sound of wind rustling the corn leaves. Some of them are already drying. Grasshoppers click and buzz. Mosquitoes and flies are annoying. Did a little snake just whisper through the grass at the field's edge? What is the sound of ears of corn being snapped off the stalk? As the sun goes higher and higher, the heat of the day quiets most of the birds.

Vocabulary cache pit parfleche scapula hoe

Day Four Wichita Society

Learning Objectives

1. Describe Wichita grass house interior.
2. Describe Wichita hearth location and hearth activities.
3. Draw a familiar object to scale.
4. List two important Wichita deities.
5. Evaluate the importance of Wichita children to the society.
6. Compare the way Wichita children learned history with children today.



Wichita Society

A Wichita grass house was home to an extended family of 10 or more people. Although everyone helped collect and prepare building materials, it was the women who built the house, which was considered the property of the oldest female family member. Beehive or dome-shaped, the grass houses were circular in floor plan. Size in diameter ranged from 10 feet (less than 100 square feet) to 30 feet (approximately 800 square feet). The area around the hearth was a shared working and living space. Just east of center, a fireplace served for cooking and for warmth. Smoke escaped through a smokehole cut high on the roof of the structure's east side.

Two doorways, one on the east and the other on the west, could be covered by portable, unattached doors. Each was constructed of a pole frame covered with grass. Some large houses had an additional pair of doorways, one north and one south, used only during specific ceremonies. Bed frames encircled the inner walls. They were equipped with hide or mat covers for comfort and curtains for privacy. Personal belongings were stored above and beneath the beds.

House placement within a village was determined by marital and kinship ties. Arrangements followed no formal road or trail system. Outbuildings included oval, open-sided work arbors, square platforms for sleeping or food storage, and temporary platforms used to dry meat and crops. Once dried, food was stored in deep bell-shaped pits dug in the ground.

Additional Information

Social Organization. The family formed the basic unit of Wichita society. Each grass house lodged an extended family—usually a woman, her husband, her dependent children, and her eldest (and sometimes more) married daughters and their spouses and children. The home belonged to this woman. Together the family owned tipis, cookware, and tools. Individual possessions included horses, clothing, weapons, robes, and saddles.

A family lived in the grass house village most of the year. Communities ranged from 1,000 to 2,000 members, living in 100 to 200 dwellings. Shared space, work, leisure time, belief system, experiences, and kinship ties all enhanced the sense of community in a Wichita village. The Wichita did not own the land as we think of land ownership today. They simply used or borrowed it for awhile. Prior occupancy established rights for land use.

The village formed the political unit of Wichita society. The village governing society (the council) included everyone, but the chiefs, shamans, and warriors had the real authority. Rank and status in the village was determined by wealth, which came to mean the number of horses in the 1700s and afterward, and by an impressive war record. A chief and a sub-chief headed the village unit. The chief's position was not automatically inherited by his son. The son had to show ability, bravery, and generosity equal to his father's. He needed the love and respect of the community members, who judged him by the generosity and kindnesses he had shown over his entire lifetime.

The principal chief, elected by the head warriors, served as moderator, parliamentarian, and judge at council meetings. The sub-chief, titled The-One-Who-Locates (*Okonitsa*), was

responsible for finding better village sites. It was his job to lay out the new village and relocate the people (Dorsey 1904a:6).

Next in rank were the shamans, knowledgeable in the beliefs and traditions of the people. They pointed out the activities, manners, and morals most likely to receive the blessings of the gods. Directing ceremonies and dances was also part of their duties.

A town "crier" was assigned to keep the people informed of current events. "Servants" were selected from the village to do the bidding of chiefs and shamans during ceremonials. After years of apprenticeship, the servants might become holy men themselves.

The warriors formed the base for Wichita social order. They made and unmade chiefs, waged war, formed new bands, led the annual hunt, and, under the leadership of the chiefs in council, made all important decisions for the village.

At a council meeting anyone, including women, could speak. Meetings were held as often as needed. Problems were discussed in a democratic manner, and solutions were reached in consensus. If the council decided to move to a new location, objectors could remain behind or go elsewhere. The same was true for a war party; if a warrior did not want to fight, he was not compelled to go.

Marriage. Marriage was arranged by the parents. A young man's parents initiated negotiations with the girl's family by sending a messenger to talk to them. If the go-between received a favorable response, the prospective bridegroom went to the girl's home the next evening. If the girl's family approved, he stayed, and the marriage began. Girls married after their sixteenth birthdays, by which time they could keep house, cook, and grow crops. Boys were older when they married because they had to be proven hunters, able to support a family.

Until the marriage took place, the girls were guarded from other men. If the bride-to-be was unfaithful to her fiance, she could be punished. The marriage was formalized by the groom's relatives presenting horses and buffalo robes to the bride's parents, a feast for the bride's family, and gifts of clothing for the bride. Occasionally, this practice was reversed, and the bride's parents began negotiations. Marriage outside the village was not forbidden, but the Wichita preferred marriages within the village to strengthen group solidarity (Newcomb 1961:261).

Generally, Wichita people only had one spouse at a time, but sometimes a man married all of his wife's sisters, too. It was a man's duty to marry his brother's widow, especially if she were pregnant or had children.

Separation and divorce were common. If a marriage was not working out, a woman could leave the house and live with her parents or grandparents, thereby constituting a divorce. Both spouses were then free to remarry. It was common for both women and men to have two or more mates during their lifetimes.

Traditionally, a newly married couple lived with a family of the bride (matrilocal residence system). The new son-in-law was required to perform certain duties for his wife's family, such as supplying meat and taking care of their horses. His esteem in his wife's family depended on how well he performed these duties and his success as a warrior. Brides were not obligated to their in-laws; however, a woman might prepare a special dish for her mother-in-law or help her with chores occasionally.

Death and Burial. Burial rites were basically the same for all the people but might vary somewhat, depending on the rank of the family. A person thought to be dying was moved to a tipi, so he/she would not die in the sacred grass house. A friend of the deceased was asked to take charge of the last rites.

When death occurred, the relatives came and paid their respects. Each cut off a lock of his/her hair, and the hair clippings were stacked in a pile and thrown away in a stream. A four-day mourning period was observed by the whole village, during which time dancing, playing, and gambling were forbidden. A family's mourning state was obvious by their unkempt hair and ragged clothing. Village members came to express their sympathy.

The family prepared the body. It was bathed and dressed, and the face was painted with the symbols representing the special property of the individual. Some personal items were placed

with the body. When a man died, his shield was given to a friend who understood its power, or it was placed in a tree away from the village. The shield was never buried.

A friend or relative was designated to take charge of the funeral. The friend and helpers were responsible for digging a grave, usually on a hillside or high ground. The grave was about 4 feet deep and long enough for the extended body.

When the body was taken to the grave site, the family stayed home. The friend or relative conducted the ceremony, during which the following prayer to the earth was offered:

> From you all things come
> You have taught us to care for all things
> Which spring from your bosom.
> You have taught us that
> All which springs from your bosom returns to you.
> From you this man came.
> To you this man returns. (Elam 1972:53)

The body was placed full length in the grave with the head to the east, so the spirit might rise quickly to the land of spirits. A few personal articles were added, and the body was covered with dirt. The friends built a frame to protect the filled grave. A crossbar rested on two forked poles, one at each end of the grave. The master of the ceremony returned to the family when he had finished the rites. The family might then offer to take him into their family as a son or brother, replacing the one who died.

After the burial the relatives returned to the village, smoked the grass house with cedar to purify the air, and bathed in special water prepared by the shaman to prevent the death spirit from returning.

Death on the battlefield was preferred by men. The Wichita would rather die in good health and in an open space. To take one's own life was dishonorable. The spirit would not be able to enter the spiritual realm and share in the pleasures of the village.

Religion. The Wichita believed in many gods and goddesses of the sky and earth. These beings were the universal powers, the social deities that controlled everything and everyone. The people also had personal gods, which might appear as animal spirits.

The supreme power *Kirnekasus* (Man-Never-Known-On-Earth) was responsible for the creation of the universe. The sun god Man-Reflecting-Light was also identified with *Kirnekasus*.

The male gods included the sun and stars. Morning Star symbolized the spirit of the first man, who brought daylight and ruled other stars. North Star (Light-Which-Stands-Still) gave people direction and shamans their powers. Warriors looked to South Star as their guardian.

Bright-Shining-Woman, the moon deity, was one of the central figures in Wichita mythology. She was the first woman created, wife of Morning Star, and mother of the universe. Bright-Shining-Woman controlled the forces of reproduction and procreation. The women relied on her to bless their new infants.

The water goddess Woman-Having-Powers-In-The-Water was responsible for the cleansing and healing properties of water. She provided water for drinking and other uses. She also guarded the virtue of women while their husbands were on a hunt or at war. When husbands were away, the women went daily to the river in the morning and evening to bathe and pray.

Earth Mother, another goddess, was believed to have given birth to everything. She provided roots and plants for medical purposes. The wind was thought to be the breath of the spirit of Earth.

The Wichita believed all animate and inanimate things possessed a spirit or soul and that all things contained more than natural attributes. Animals assumed supernatural powers and appeared in dreams to give knowledge and guidance.

One of the most important ceremonies was the Deer Dance. In this ceremony the shamans sang the story of how they received their magical powers. A young man's initiation as a shaman took place at a Deer Dance ceremony. He swallowed a small red bean that produced spasms and unconsciousness. The jaw of a gar was scraped over his body to show he was beyond feeling pain. In this unconscious state he communicated with an animal that told him how to use the supernatural world and gave him power to use for healing. This guardian animal provided the

basis for his songs and magic practice. Other features of the Deer Dance included offerings to gods, a feast, and a ceremonial foot race for the whole tribe to ensure endurance during war. The Deer Dance ceremony was conducted to remove all evil influences from the village and to promote good health, long life, and prosperity.

The pipe ceremony (in late historical times called the Calumet) was the next most important special ritual. The feathered pipe stems were carried to a chief, a prominent member of the community, or someone from a neighboring group. Performance of this ritual, whose origins are part of the tribe's early mythology, gave lasting benefit to the tribe.

The village had both tribal and individual sacred bundles. The bundle was a religious device used among native peoples to remind the owner and outsiders of the supernatural powers controlled by the bundle's owner. The objects within the bundle symbolized the complex elements of religious ideology and ritual. Power came to people through the bundle by virtue of the intercession of the priests/shamans and hereditary chiefs.

Rain bundle ceremonies were held to ensure the maturation of the corn and the propagation of the bison. The chanting of the rituals was the main feature in both ceremonies. Both had their origin in animal gods. "Surround-Fire" and "Small-Robes" were ceremonies devoted to obtaining supernatural power from certain animals. Other ceremonies and dances were performed by women to ensure the successful return of war parties.

Dancing was the accepted method for requesting the supernatural forces. Games and dances were held in a ceremonial manner with religious overtones (Newcomb 1961:274).

There were semi-secret religious societies for men and women, which anyone could join. These societies performed certain ceremonies and dances to ask for supernatural aid in matters of general concern, especially war.

The Wichita also believed every facet of life reflected the influence of good and evil. They valued the individual traits of bravery, honesty, truthfulness, faithfulness, and responsibility. They believed the gods looked favorably on people with these attributes. Tribal members who did not show these traits were thought to be controlled by evil forces.

The belief in the forces of good and evil explained why the Wichita were so cruel to their enemies and prisoners. Enemies of the tribe were categorized as evil. The Wichita captured enemies, tortured, and ate them. Cannibalism was ceremonial and reserved for their enemies only. "It was a ceremony of triumph, giving the enemy the lowest possible degradation and signifying the ultimate in hatred, contempt and vengeance" (Elam 1972:4).

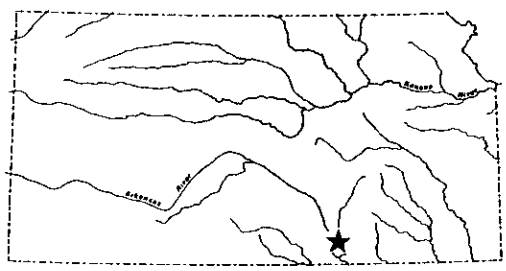
Mythology. The myths of the Wichita are divided into four eras, each with its own set or cycle of stories. The Wichita people referred to myths of the first two eras as "old" or "true" tales. They called the myths of the last two eras "new."

The first era tells of the creation of the universe, man, and woman. The second era describes the transformation of the people. This transformation period ends with a flood, which destroys all but two people. The Present Existence explains how people learned how to build houses and about death. The fourth era is known as The End because of the belief in the end of the world. After the end a new cycle of four eras will begin.

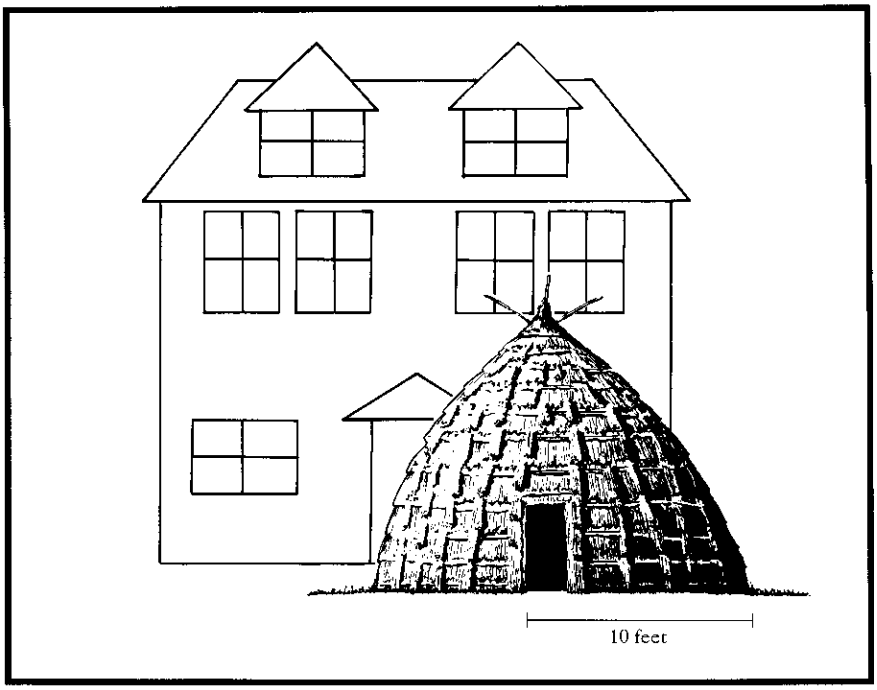
Wichita children learned these stories from an elderly man, who was invited to their home to teach them. His recitation of the tales of the ancient world and its heroes was a form of prayer.

Great Bend Aspect Site 14CO1: The Larcom-Haggard Site

Near the former stream bed of the Walnut River in Cowley County, this site contained many cache pits. Among abundant stone and bone tools found in the pits were many bone digging tools. In one pit were found 19 more or less complete bison scapula hoes (minus the handles, of course). The hoe blades varied from short, stubby, square, or slightly concave-bladed implements 20 cm long to large round-bladed forms as much as 38 cm long.



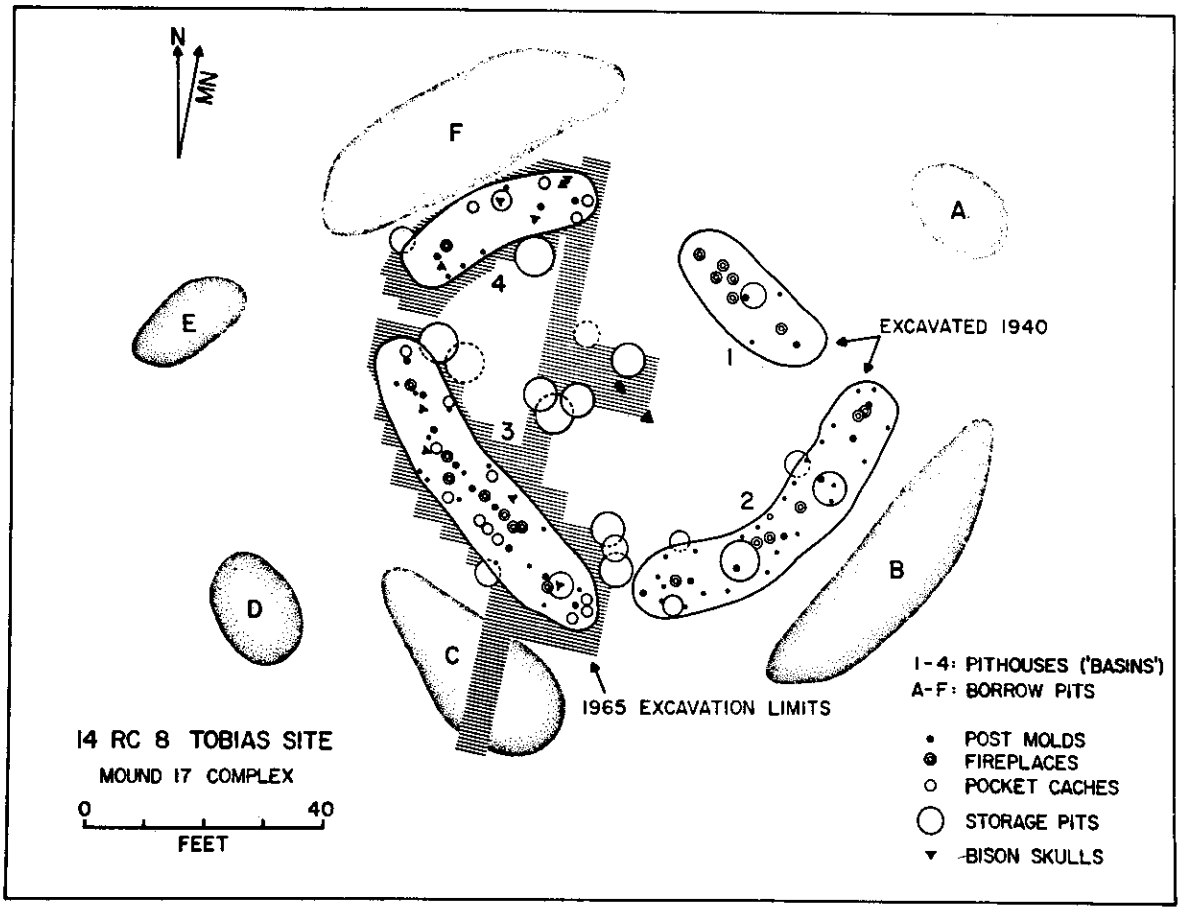
Activities
Day Four: Use poster picture #4 (Grass House Exterior Detail), bookmark #4 (Grass House Exterior Detail), and "Wichita Grass House/Modern House" worksheet. NOTE: The other worksheets lend themselves to math activities as well.



Activity: Math
Materials: Worksheet, stick, string, chalk
Teacher Preparation: None
Scale: Using the scale shown, ask students to determine the height of both houses, etc. The worksheet includes a modern two-story house to provide a size reference. Students might take measurements of an everyday object and draw it to scale.
Metric System: Archeologists use the metric system of measurement. Students could convert any of the English measurements given to the metric system.
Cordage: An experimental archeologist can produce 10 feet of cordage from the inner bark of an elm tree in about 30 minutes, although Wichita craftpersons were probably much more proficient. A grass house with a floor diameter of 15 feet required a minimum of 1,500 feet of cordage. Ask students how long it would take an experimental archeologist to produce enough cordage for a 15-foot (floor diameter) house, a 30-foot house, etc.
Population: The current accepted estimate of the population of Wichita in Kansas in the mid-1500s is 15,000 to 33,000. Village size ranged from 1,000 to 2,000 people. Ten or more people lived in a medium-sized grass house. Using these figures, ask students to find the number of medium-sized houses it would take to shelter 1,000 (15,000, etc.) people, if 10 people lived in each house. Discuss ranges, estimates, averages, etc.
Fractions, Diameters, Etc.: Wichita grass houses ranged in size from 10 to 30 feet in diameter. Because a grass house is circular in floor plan, it lends itself readily to various math problems involving radius, diameter, and circumference. Students might use a stick, chalk, and string to draw circles of varying sizes on the playground or other surface. More advanced students might calculate the square footage of several sizes of grass house. Younger students could work with the circular floor plan on fractions or percentages.

Activity: Government, Religion, and Science
Materials: None
Teacher Preparation: None
At 14RC8 Waldo Wedel, an anthropologist from the Smithsonian Institution, excavated kidney-shaped (irregular) depressions around a raised central mound at a Great Bend Aspect village site. He proposed the term "council circle," believing that the area's use may have been

part of the council-system of governing, ceremonial, and associated with the alignment of celestial bodies. Discuss why it could be important for an agricultural group to know where the sun is in its annual journey north and south across the horizon. Help students compare government, religion, and science as distinct categories in a modern society with the overlapping duties of various Wichita "officials."

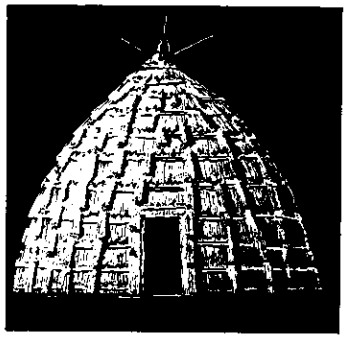


Map of excavations at council circle at 14RC8 (Wedel 1968:Figure 4).

Activity: Prairie Chorus
Materials: None
Teacher Preparation: None
Today's chorus is composed of the sounds of an autumn afternoon in a Wichita grass house village. The pumpkin and squash strips are being pounded with wooden mallets in preparation for weaving them into mats for storage. Add the heavy wooden thumping of two women grinding corn into meal in a large mortar in a grass house. Harvest and food processing are in full swing. Add the sounds of chopping, husking, corn shelling, conversation and laughter, children playing a game of shinny (like stick ball—someone will know the sound of a hard ball and a wooden "bat" coming together!). The sounds of the outside world are beginning to be heard in the village. The sounds of the prairie are still dominant. The Wichita village is much the same as it has been ... with two exceptions. The sound of metal can now be heard occasionally; someone has a new metal cooking pot. [NOTE: The Wichita were quick to adopt the metal pans Europeans offered in trade.] The other new sound is of great significance to the whole culture and to the Great Plains. Through trade, the Wichita now have horses. Add the sounds of unshod hooves as several villagers ride in after a local hunt. Nickers, whickers, neighs, and whinnies can all be added to the standard sounds of the chorus' "song." Add the sound of younger horses—the Wichita are now involved in the rearing of large animals. Fade slowly.

Day Five Non-renewable Resources

Learning Objectives



1. State why archeological sites and artifacts are non-renewable resources.
2. Define "stewardship," "in situ," and "in association."
3. Describe the correct (and lawful) reporting of archeological artifacts, sites, etc.
4. Accept individual responsibility for stewardship of the state's archeological heritage.

Non-renewable Resources

Archeologists are scientists who work as a team to investigate the past. They search for meaning in the way each clue relates to others. They patch together an idea, using artifacts as big as a house or as tiny as a seed. They read a people's story from the charcoal of a long-dead fire or the shadows of a circle of stone.

When the Archeology Team arrives to study a site where people once lived in grass houses, the buildings are long gone. All is quiet except the wind blowing through the prairie grasses. A meadowlark calls to her mate. Not a sound remains of the village: no barking dogs, no laughing children, no scrape-scrape-scrape of bone hoes in the gardens, no click of stones struck by a toolmaker, no snap and crackle of cooking fires. The voices of the people are gone. But the Archeology Team is trained to discover the echo of a people's past through the evidence they left behind.

Only with the cooperation of the citizens of Kansas—young, old, and everyone in the middle—can we guard the precious archeological record of our state's long history of human occupation. Stewardship, the purposeful managing and protecting of a place, is a job that requires the cooperation of everyone.

Archeologists depend on each person to share the responsibility of preserving the archeological heritage of Kansas. As a partner in that work, here's what you can do: Read about Kansas' unique cultural heritage. Visit your local museums and libraries. Ask questions! Teachers, librarians, parents, and members of the local Kansas Anthropological Association will help you learn more. Keep your eyes open! If you notice an artifact or clue, guard it! Leave it in place until archeologists can investigate. Here's the number to call: 785/272-8681, extension 268. Remember: Archeology is a science that depends on the help of people everywhere. Because each piece of information fits next to the pieces around it, moving a clue would confuse its meaning.

Stand guard!

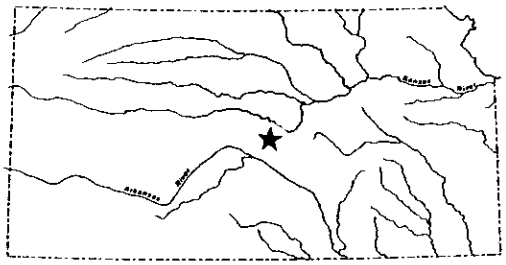
Additional Information

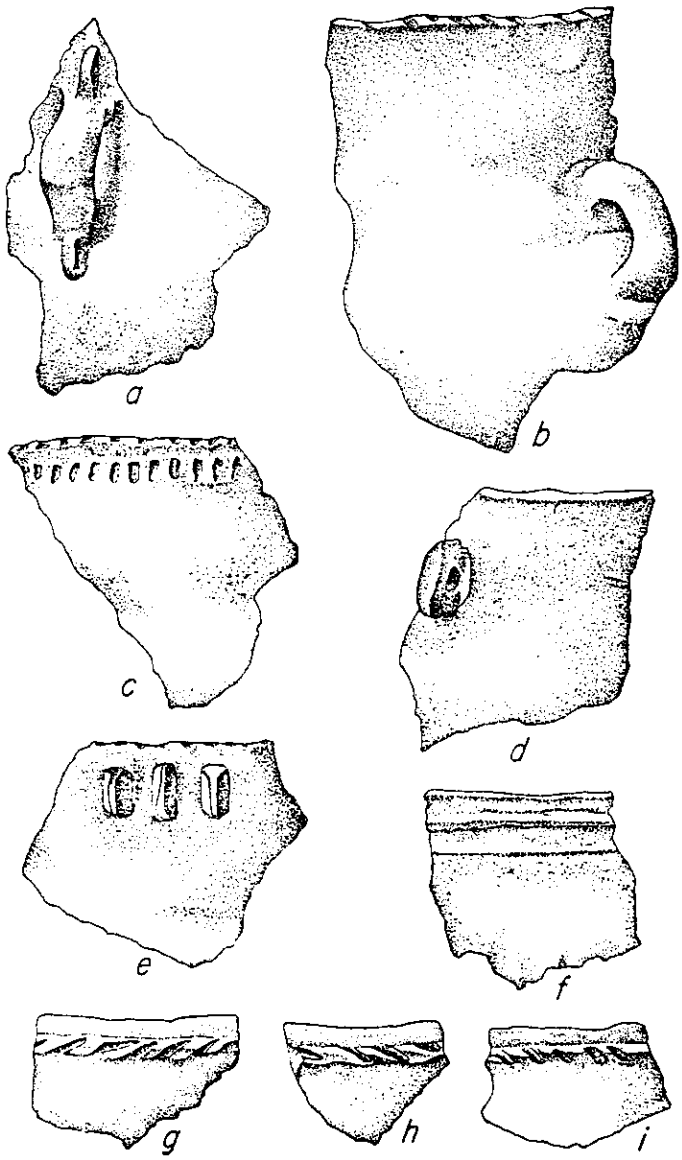
The Wichita stayed in Kansas until the 1700s, when they moved south into Oklahoma and Texas. They left Kansas for several reasons, including pressure from the Osage and other warring Indian tribes. Attacks by Comanches forced the Wichita to band together in larger villages for protection. Also, a more southerly location may have been more desirable for obtaining horses. When the Civil War began, the Wichita returned to Kansas for a brief period, staying near the junction of the Arkansas and Little Arkansas rivers. In 1867 they again moved south. Today most Wichita people live on a reservation in Oklahoma. Their numbers diminished severely in the last half of the nineteenth century, due in part to epidemics of smallpox and other introduced diseases.

As late as 1864, when the Wichita returned to Kansas, agriculture was still quite important. An American trader and early settler of the town of Wichita named Mead wrote that "the women, with great industry, cleared grounds and planted fine gardens. They grew an abundance of their native corn, pumpkins, melons and Mexican beans."

Great Bend Aspect Sites: Little River Archeological District

Early in 1992 a family in Rice County notified the state archeologist of a plan to lay a pipeline through the Little River Archeological District, a National Historic Landmark. Working cooperatively with the Mid-America Pipeline Company, the state surveyed the area and suggested an alternative route. The pipeline was rerouted to avoid damage to the National Register sites. The state, the local landowners, and the construction company worked cooperatively with one another, acting individually and collectively in their responsibility to protect and preserve the archeological heritage of Kansas.





Rim and handle pottery sherds from a Great Bend Aspect site in Rice County (Wedel 1959:306). Artifacts are shown at about 35% actual size.

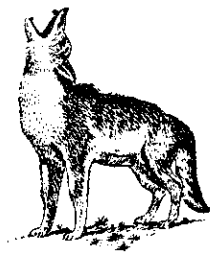
Activities

Day Five: Use the poster picture on page 1 and bookmark #5 (Stand Guard).

Activity: Process
Material: Poster picture on page 1
Teacher Preparation: None
Review the drawings on the poster picture with the class. Emphasize natural environment, ways people adapt natural materials for human use, impact of human occupation of a place, process, how we know what we know about the Wichita and their ancestors, and the responsibilities of all citizens to help protect non-renewable resources.

Activity: Puzzle
Material: Two pieces from a 1,000-piece or larger puzzle, puzzle lid showing completed picture
Teacher Preparation: None
Using the two puzzle pieces, ask students to guess what the finished puzzle is supposed to be. Discuss a parallel situation in which a collector finds two arrow points and adds them to his/her collection. The artifacts are no longer "in association" with other clues that could add to the body of knowledge about the people who made the points. Left "in situ," the pieces have contextual meaning.

Activity: Prairie Chorus
Material: None
Teacher Preparation: None
In its final performance use the sounds of a modern highway running adjacent to a Great Bend Aspect site. Cars, pickups, semitrailers whiz by. Some of them honk. When there are no vehicles, you can hear meadowlarks. A snake slips through the grass, and grasshoppers click and jump. A redtailed hawk screams high above, and a meadow vole scurries to shelter. Add a tractor in a nearby field, or a combine. Cattle in the next pasture call to their calves. A horse neighs in the distance. Night falls, and the occasional vehicle passes on the road. Faintly, a phone rings in the farmhouse across the hill. The night sounds of the modern prairie grow more evident. Add all the animal sounds of creatures stirring at night (no wolves now sing on the Kansas prairie!). The wind blows through the grass. Wichita people considered the wind the breath of Earth Mother. Very, very, VERY faintly there is an echo of children of long ago calling to one another; the scrape of a scapula hoe in a long-gone garden; the crackle of a hearth fire. What remains of the grass house village is safe for now, a resource to be investigated in the future under carefully controlled conditions. Fade to the wind in the grass ... .



Activity: Certificate
Material: Bookmark #5 (Stand Guard)
Teacher Preparation: Add the name of each student (or let students add their own names). The final bookmark may be distributed at the end of this unit of study as a recognition that students have learned a great deal about the Wichita and their ancestors, about archeology, and about their responsibilities in helping to preserve the cultural resources of the state. Add each student's name before presentation, or let students do this themselves as a "signing ceremony" to formalize their commitment. If you chose to write names, students could accept one by one by stating facts they have learned in this unit, or (just as important in the learning process) by posing questions about the prairie environment, the process of building a grass house, Wichita society, etc.

SOME EXPLORERS WHO ENCOUNTERED THE WICHITA

Much of what we know about the Wichita people comes from the work of ethnohistorians, who have studied the documents of the early European explorers.

1541 Spanish explorer Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and an exploration party traveled from New Mexico to "Quivira."

1542 Spanish Franciscan missionary Juan de Padilla, accompanied by a Portuguese, Andres de Campo, and two Mexican Indians, Lucas and Sebastian, traveled from New Mexico to "Quivira."

1593 Spanish explorers Francisco Leyva de Bonilla and Antonio Gutiérrez de Humaña plus a small force of Mexicans traveled from New Mexico to "Quivira."

1601 Spanish explorer Juan de Oñate traveled from Mexico to found the Province of New Mexico.

"Having traveled half a league we came to a settlement containing more than twelve hundred houses, all established along the bank of another good-sized river. They were all round, built of forked poles and bound with rods, and on the outside covered to the ground with dry grass. Within, on the sides, they had frameworks or platforms which served them as beds on which they slept. Most of them were large enough to hold eight or ten persons. They were two lance-lengths high and all had granaries or platforms, an *estado* [from five to six feet] high, which they must have used in summer, and which would hold three or four persons, being most appropriate for enjoying the fresh air. They entered them through a small grass door. They ascended to the platform by means of a movable wooden ladder. Not a house lacked these platforms.

"... We remained here for one day in this pleasant spot surrounded on all sides by fields of maize and crops of the Indians. The stalks of the maize were as high as that of New Spain and in many places higher. The land was so rich that, having harvested the maize, a new growth of a span in height had sprung up over a large portion of the same ground, without any cultivation or labor other than the removal of the weeds and making of holes where they planted the maize. There were many beans, some gourds, and, between the fields, some plum trees. The crops were not irrigated but dependent on the rains ... . Like other settled Indians they utilize cattle in large numbers. It is incredible how many there are in that land" (Bolton 1916:260-261).

1673 French Father Jacques Marquette's map showed the "Paneas" (Wichita) south of the Pawnee.

1679-1682 French explorer Réne Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle's maps listed the "Paneas" in the area we now call Kansas.

1718 Frenchman William Delisle's map called the Wichita people "Paniassa."

1719 Frenchman Bérnard de La Harpe established friendly relations with the Wichita, hoping to maintain a French outpost (and thereby a French claim) in the area inhabited by the Wichita.