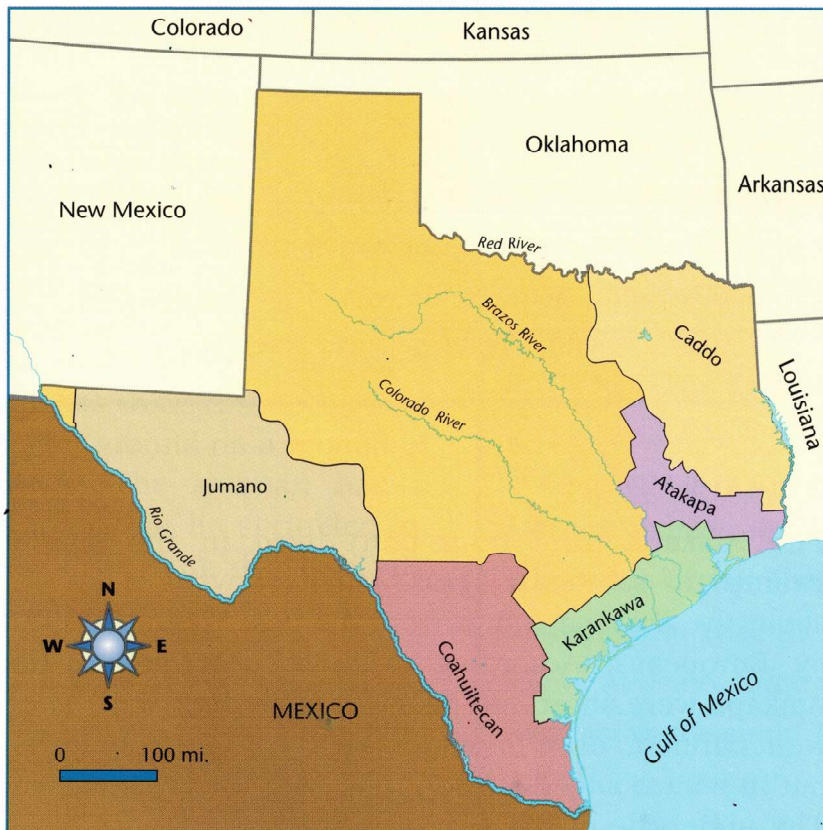


Texas's First Tribes

The first written records about American Indians began in the 1500s, at the time of the arrival of European explorers and settlers. The first records included tribes along the coast, where the explorers landed. These records included descriptions of the Indian tribes in Texas.

This map shows the rough location of the first tribes of Texas. The tribes did move around to hunt and trade however. They did not really recognize strict borders.

Texas's First Native Tribes



LATE CADDO

When Spanish explorers entered east Texas in 1542, three major Caddo groups lived in the area. The Natchitoches (NAK-uh-tish) lived in northwestern Louisiana. The Kadohadacho (kad-oh-hah-DAH-choh) were in northeast Texas near the bend of the Red River. The name *Caddo* comes from them. The Hasinai (hah-see-NEYE) lived near Caddo Mounds farther south.

After the United States bought the Louisiana Territory from the French in 1803, the Caddo moved west to get away from incoming settlers. In 1859, the United States government moved them to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma.

Tejas

The Hasinai greeted the Spaniards with a word that the Spaniards understood to be *Tejas* (TAY-hahs). The Spaniards thought it was the Hasinai's name, and they established Mission San Francisco de los Tejas near Caddo Mounds. Actually, the word *Tejas* is a greeting that means "friend." Texas gets its name from *Tejas*.

ATAKAPA

The Atakapa (uh-TAK-uh-puh) lived in the coastal swamps of southeast Texas. Much of what is known about the Atakapa comes from the descriptions written by Europeans. According to these descriptions, the Atakapa were short and heavyset with dark skin. They went barefoot, even in winter. Men wore **breechcloths**, but in winter added a bison robe with the tail attached. The underside of the robe was painted red with black

designs. Women cut a hole in the hides and slipped them over their heads.

Atakapa houses were made of poles covered with vines. Their pottery came from other tribes with whom they traded. They used dugout boats to travel to nearby islands. The Atakapa people were organized into small bands. Each band had a leader called a headman. There was no main chief. When groups met each other, they made loud wailing noises. The greeting was the same for both good and bad news.

Each band had a specific territory where they hunted deer and bear with bows and arrows. The Atakapa also speared fish. The spears had floats on them so that the owner could get the spear back. The Atakapa also ate shellfish and underwater roots. They gathered wild plants and bird eggs. Alligators provided meat, oil, and hides.

The Atakapa did not have temples. But the **shaman's** hut was sometimes placed on higher ground on a mound of shells. The shaman had a powder that he sprinkled on water to stun the fish and make them easy to catch.

French trade with the Atakapa led Spanish leaders to build **missions** in Texas in order to defend their territory. Contact



This is an example of the bison robes worn by Atakapa men during the winter. The tail is still attached, and the red and black designs are still visible.

Atakapa Creation Story

The Atakapa creation story says that the Atakapa people came out of a giant oyster shell in the ocean. They believed that a supreme being had given them rules to follow. At death, those who did good deeds went above the earth. Those who did evil went under the earth.

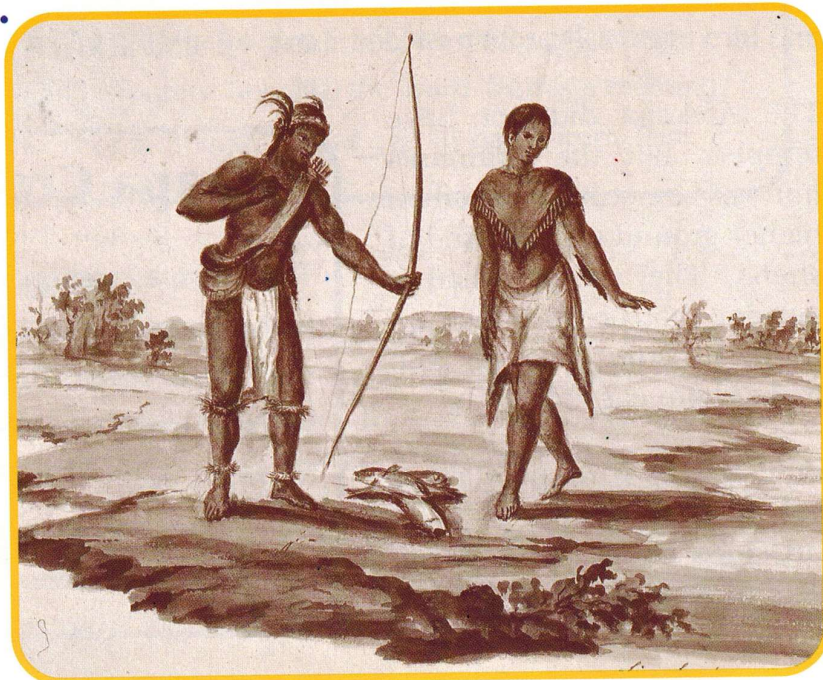
with Europeans brought many diseases, which destroyed the Atakapa. American Indians had no resistance to European diseases. So, thousands of American Indians died from exposure to diseases such as **smallpox**. By 1908, only nine known Atakapa were living.

KARANKAWA

The Karankawa (kuh-RAHN-kuh-wah) lived on the Texas coast from western Galveston Bay to Corpus Christi. Their name meant "dog lovers." The Karankawa raised and kept dogs that the Europeans thought looked like foxes.

Small bands of 30 or 40 Karankawa moved about looking for food. They ate fish, shellfish, and turtles. Hunters had red cedar bows that were almost as tall as they were. Karankawa men were tall and muscular. They wore **breechcloths** or nothing at all, painted and tattooed their bodies, and wore a piece of **cane** through the lower lip. They were powerful runners and expert swimmers,

.....
This is a drawing of a Karankawa man and woman. It gives an idea of the size of the bows hunters used and what their clothes looked like.



and they enjoyed contests. Wrestling was such a favorite that neighboring tribes called them "Wrestlers." Women painted and tattooed their bodies and wore skirts made of animal skin.

Karankawa houses were made of willow poles covered with skins or mats. The Karankawa also made dugout canoes big enough to carry a family and its goods. They waterproofed baskets and pottery with **asphalt** that washed ashore. Karankawa groups communicated with each other using smoke signals. The groups sometimes gathered together for dances.

The Karankawa's first contact with Europeans came when shipwrecked Spanish **conquistador** Cabeza de Vaca landed at Galveston in 1528. The Karankawa remained a hunter-fisher-gatherer society. They refused to stay at Spanish **missions**. Later, the Mexican government tried to keep them west of the Lavaca River, away from the white settlements, but they always returned. In the mid-1840s, the Karankawas moved into Mexico, then back to Rio Grande City. The Europeans in each place forced them to leave. By 1854, the Karankawa were all but wiped out.

COAHUILTECAN

Farther down the coast from the Karankawas, Coahuiltecan (Ko-uh-WEEL-tee-kan) groups hunted and fished from Corpus Christi to Mexico. Their name came from the language they spoke.

Coahuiltecan men plucked their hair back from the forehead. Tattooed lines ran from the nose up to the hair. Other tattooed lines decorated the face and body. The men sometimes wore breechcloths decorated with seeds and animal teeth. They went barefoot, but wore sandals when walking on thorny ground.

The State of Coahuila

The northern Mexican state of Coahuila was named after the Coahuilteicans. Before independence, Texas was joined with Coahuila as a state in Mexico.

The Coahuiltecan ate deer, rabbits, rats, birds, and snakes, but food was scarce. They hunted deer, antelope, and javelina (hah-vuh-LEE-nuh), a piglike animal, with bows

and arrows. They used a curved club as both a digging stick and weapon. Men ran long distances and could tire out a deer. On the coast, they forced animals into the water where they would drown or could be shot with arrows. When a hunter killed a deer, he marked a trail. Women then brought in the animal. The hunter received the hide, but the meat was given to others.

Coahuilteicans roasted bulbs from the maguey plants and gathered mesquite beans. They ate prickly pear cactus flowers and fruit and squeezed water from cactus pads. The women carried water in pouches made from the pads. They could carry twelve to fourteen of these in a woven netting with a **tumpline**.

Coahuiltecan bands resisted coming to Spanish **missions**. By the mid-1800s, they had disappeared. Some may have

The Coahuiltecan used pit traps to catch javelinas. They made pits about five feet wide and eight feet deep and covered them with leaves and twigs to hide them.



escaped to Mexico. Disease and hostile Apache and Comanche warriors killed many others.

JUMANO

The Jumano (hoo-MAHN-oh) are a mystery. They appear in Spanish records around 1500–1700 C.E., then disappear. Nothing remains of their language to tell where they came from or where they went.

Two Jumano groups in Texas were widely separated. One group farmed on the Rio Grande south of El Paso. They also went on hunting trips. These Jumano lived in **tepees** while hunting, but had **adobe** houses along the Rio Grande. The other Jumano group lived along the Red River. They may actually have been the same group, because the Jumano moved across the state on trading trips.

The horizontal stripes on their faces made the Jumano easy to recognize as they approached their trading partners. The Jumano carried corn, dried squashes, and beans from the farming areas. They traded these foods as well as mesquite beans, cloth, **turquoise**, unusual feathers, pigments, shells, and salt for hides, meat, and other bison products. Through trade, they also supplied Spanish goods and horses to other tribes.

In the 1700s, the Apache advanced south and cut off Jumano trade routes. Eventually, the Jumano had no land of their own. Some may have joined the Apache. The Jumano disappeared long before white settlers arrived.

NATIVE TRIBES TODAY

None of the groups living in Texas when Europeans arrived has a **reservation** in the state today. Many individuals died as the result of diseases brought by the Europeans. Only the Caddo in Oklahoma remain as a distinct tribe.