

## Wichita and Affiliated Tribes (Keechi, Waco and Tawakonic), Oklahoma

*(Oklahoma Social Studies Standards, OSDE)*

### **Tribe: Wichita & Affiliated Tribes (Wichita, Keechi, Waco, and Tawakoni)**

(wih-chih-taw)

**Tribal website(s):** [www.wichitatribe.com](http://www.wichitatribe.com)

### **1. Migration/movement/forced removal**

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 2.3** *“Integrate visual and textual evidence to explain the reasons for and trace the migrations of Native American peoples including the Five Tribes into present-day Oklahoma, the Indian Removal Act of 1830, and tribal resistance to the forced relocations.”*

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 2.7** *“Compare and contrast multiple points of view to evaluate the impact of the Dawes Act which resulted in the loss of tribal communal lands and the redistribution of lands by various means including land runs as typified by the Unassigned Lands and the Cherokee Outlet, lotteries, and tribal allotments.”*

- Original Homeland- Indigenous to Oklahoma; South Central Kansas, Northern Texas
- Location In Oklahoma- Anadarko, OK

### **In the Beginning: 1540-1750**

"Wichita Memories" portrays the culture and history of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, whose ancestors have lived in the Central and Southern Plains since prehistoric times. These once numerous people are known to historians as the Wichitas, Wacos, Taovayas, Tawakonis, and Kichais.

"After the man and woman were made they dreamed that things were made for them, and when they woke they had the things of which they had dreamed . . . The woman was given an ear of corn . . . It was to be the food of the people that should exist in the future, to be used generation after generation." - Tawakoni Jim in *The Mythology of the Wichita*, 1904

Wichita legends tell us that the history of their people forms a cycle. With the world's creation, the gifts of corn and the bow and arrow were bestowed upon the people by the

spirits of the first man and woman, Morning Star and the Moon. The cycle is complete with the days of darkness, when the earth becomes barren. Just as disaster seems eminent, the cycle begins again and the world is renewed through the new creation.

Archaeologists believe that the heritage of the Wichitas may be traced back at least 800 years to the Washita River culture of central and western Oklahoma. Living along fertile valleys, these people resided in small villages of rectangular, mud plastered houses. Nearby were small gardens where women tilled and weeded corn, beans, and squash with hoes of buffalo leg and shoulder bones. Buffalo, elk, deer, and small game were hunted. Wild plants were collected for foods, medicines, and rituals. Tools were made from readily available stone, wood, bone, and antler. Between A.D. 1350 and 1450, some Washita River people began to build larger villages with circular grass houses, some of which were fortified. Others apparently moved northward to the Great Bend of the Arkansas, a land known to later Spanish explorers as Quivira.

When first encountered by Francisco Vasquez de Coronado in 1541, the Quiviran ancestors of the Wichitas were following a way of life that continued into the eighteenth century. Near their large grass house villages, women tilled their gardens while the men hunted buffalo and other game. Trade was extensive and included commodities such as glazed paint pottery, turquoise pendants, and shell beads from the Puebloan villages of New Mexico as well as bois d'arc and engraved pottery from Caddo settlements of northeastern Texas. The Coronado expedition traveled through this settlement of contiguous villages that was several miles long and contained upwards of 50,000 people.

With the Spanish settlement of New Mexico and the arrival of French hunters and traders in the Mississippi Valley, the lives of the Wichita were profoundly affected. By acquiring horses from the Spanish colonies, the Wichitas were to follow herds of buffalo over a much wider range and to hunt them more efficiently. From the French towns in Louisiana, metal hoes, guns, and buckets reached the Wichitas. In some cases, these goods were used by the Wichitas in their own daily tasks. However, others were used to maintain or establish trading ties with such recently arrived Southern Plains peoples as the Comanches.

### **People of the Grass House: 1750-1820**

"Here they lived the woman fixing up the place, building their grass lodge and shed to dry meat, Man-Fond-of-Deer-Meat doing all the hunting . . . They lived here a good long while, the woman remaining at home, the man going out hunting every day. They always had plenty of meat, and the woman raised corn, so they had plenty to eat." - Niastor in *The Mythology of the Wichita*, 1904

The Southern Plains is a land of seasonal changes with spring thunderstorms, hot summer days, and cool but dry winter months. The Wichitas adapted to this

environment and reaped abundant harvests from the land by farming and hunting. During the spring, summer, and early fall they lived in grass house villages while the women cultivated nearby gardens. Crops were planted together in the gardens. Each summer, beans climbed the stalks of multicolored corn, and green leafed squash or "pumpkin" plants spread their vines over the ground.

As summer days shortened and crisp fall mornings dawned, women preserved their harvested corn by roasting and drying it in the sun. Pumpkins were cut into long strips and also sun-dried before being woven into mats which could be folded and stored for later use. The dried corn and pumpkin were used in meat soups or boiled for side dishes. Cornmeal was made by grinding dried corn with a wooden mortar or grinding stone. This cornmeal was then made into bread. Pumpkin mats were often traded to the Comanches or Kiowas for dried buffalo meat. Preserved foods were stored in buffalo-hide bags in underground cache pits until they were needed later in the year or when the harvest was poor and food was scarce.

During the late fall and winter, the Wichitas left their villages for extended buffalo hunts. Living in tipis with family members camping near one another, the men tried to bring in enough game to provide meat for later seasons. Women prepared the meat by thinly slicing it and hanging it to dry in the cool winter's sun. Afterwards, the meat could be transported and stored in buffalo-hide bags for future use. Through the cooperative efforts of both men and women, the annual economic cycle began as the people returned to their summer villages.

Their grass houses, vacant through the winter months, often needed repairs before they could be reoccupied comfortably. Working as a team, family members cut bundles of bluestem grass; women or boys climbed up the cedar frames to repair the walls. The houses could accommodate a family of 10 to 12 people, including a woman and her husband, their unmarried children, as well as their married daughters and sons-in-law, and their grandchildren. Most matters were decided within the individual families, although each village had leaders chosen by a council of outstanding warriors. These leaders were selected because of their demonstrated wisdom, bravery, and generosity.

Wichita ceremonial life closely followed the seasonal round of economic activities. The deer dance, a ceremony performed by the medicine men, was held when the first grass appeared, when corn ripened, and when corn was harvested. The calumet ceremony, involving the presentation of a feathered pipestem to a prominent individual, was believed to be of lasting benefit to the tribe. Other ceremonies were performed to ensure good harvests, the successful return of war parties, or the abundance of buffalo.

### **Days of Darkness: 1820-1934**

"Generation after generation the corn was to be used. And if the time should come that they planted corn and something else than corn came up, it would be a sign that the end of the world was at hand." - Tawakoni Jim in *The Mythology of the Wichita*, 1904

Although European settlements introduced new types of goods to the Wichitas, they also brought highly contagious diseases. At the same time, hostilities increased as eastern tribes were removed to Indian Territory. As such turmoil cast a lengthening shadow over the land, the Wichitas lost many people. In 1820, the once populous Wichitas, Wacos, Tawakonis, Taovayas, and Kichais were estimated at no more than 1400 persons. Truly the "days of darkness" had begun.

This trend continued even with the signing of the first American-Wichita treaty at Camp Holmes in 1835. There can be no doubt about the sincerity of the Wichitas who persuaded their Comanche allies to attend and sign this agreement which recognized their right to their traditional homeland. This treaty also contains the first official usage of the name "Wichita" for the Wichita, Waco, and Tawakoni people.

After the Texas Republic was established in 1836, the Wichitas were forced to defend their lands against the intrusions of white settlers. Not until 1855, after Texas joined the United States, was a reservation for the Wichitas established on the Brazos River. However, continued hostilities from neighboring settlers led to the Wichita removal from Texas to lands on the Washita River. There they joined their northern relatives in what is now west-central Oklahoma.

Although a reservation and agency were established, the Wichita people were not able to remain in this land. In 1863, they were forced by Confederate troops to leave their reservation and flee north to Kansas. While in Kansas from 1863 to 1867, the Wichitas had no land to farm and few friends to help them in their time of trouble. Many people starved. Others suffered from smallpox and cholera epidemics that swept through their villages. Only 822 people returned to Indian Territory in 1867.

Traditional Wichita religion encompassed a belief in the supernatural powers of elements of the earth and the sky. Animals often appeared to men in dreams or revelations to become lifelong guardian spirits.

Once settled on the reservation, some became members of the churches established by Christian missionaries. Others turned to the peyote religion, later chartered as the Native American Church, which combined elements of traditional and Christian beliefs. Many Wichitas took up the Ghost Dance religion of the 1890's. They believed in the prophecy of Wovoka, a Paiute from Walker Lake, Nevada. According to Wovoka, people would be reunited with their dead friends and relatives in a land of plentiful game where there would be neither sickness nor death.

Government agents worked to destroy the Ghost Dance religion as well as other elements of Wichita culture. Children were placed in boarding schools where they were forbidden to speak their own language. Even the reservation established in 1872 was not to remain theirs. Led by Tawakoni Jim, the Wichita resisted the breaking up of their assigned lands. However, in 1900 their reservation was divided into allotments of 160 acres per person with the remainder declared "surplus lands" and opened to settlement. Allotment brought about the final destruction of the Wichitas' grass house villages and their communal way of life.

## **A New Beginning: 1934-Present**

"When they awoke the next morning they found beside them a stalk of corn that had already grown. A voice said to them that this was Mother Corn; that they should use it again ... It was promised further on that they would have their grass lodge built and would be given plenty of things to use; and there would be corn planted by the lodge which they were to eat." - Tawakoni Jim in *The Mythology of the Wichita*, 1904

Wichita history has been one of endurance and survival despite overwhelming adversity. Although village and communal life was destroyed with the loss of reservation land in 1900 and the grass lodges were replaced by frame houses by the 1930's, the Wichita people have preserved many elements of their culture for the present and future generations. These descendants of the Wichita, Waco, Tawakoni, Taovaya, and Kichai people survive as a group perhaps because of their shared memories of the past as well as common experiences of the present and their faith in the future.

Organized as the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, the center of activity is at Anadarko, Oklahoma, where the tribal park and office buildings are located. The tribal government, established under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and the Oklahoma Welfare Act of 1935, consists of a President and Executive Committee who are elected to four-year terms by the enrolled tribal members. The Wichitas have joined also with the Caddo and Delaware tribes to form WCD Enterprises, an organization that promotes business development. The Tribe owns and operates the Sugar Creek Casino, the Sugar Creek Smokeshop, Wichita Travel Plaza, Anadarko Industries LLC, and Wichita Tribal Enterprises, LLC. The LLCs are information technology companies that are primarily involved in federal contracting throughout the United States. These companies have employed as many as 500 employees working mainly outside of Oklahoma. Locally, the Tribe operates various federal, state and tribal programs. In combination with the for-profit businesses, the Tribe has in excess of 200 employees near the towns of Hinton and Anadarko, OK.

While developing new skills at technical institutions, colleges, and universities, Wichita people attempt to maintain their identities and links with the past. Some young people attend college during the week, returning home on weekends and holidays to participate in family and community gatherings. Here, memories of the past are shared with the younger generation by relating stories of life in the grass house villages of the Southern Plains or of growing up on farms and in rural communities in early Oklahoma. Memories to share with future generations are also being formed at contemporary tribal and intertribal dances and gatherings that take place in Anadarko, Gracemont, Pawnee, and other communities. Because of the active presence of grandparents in the daily lives of children, some of the most vital elements of traditional culture, knowledge, and skills are transferred to the younger generation.

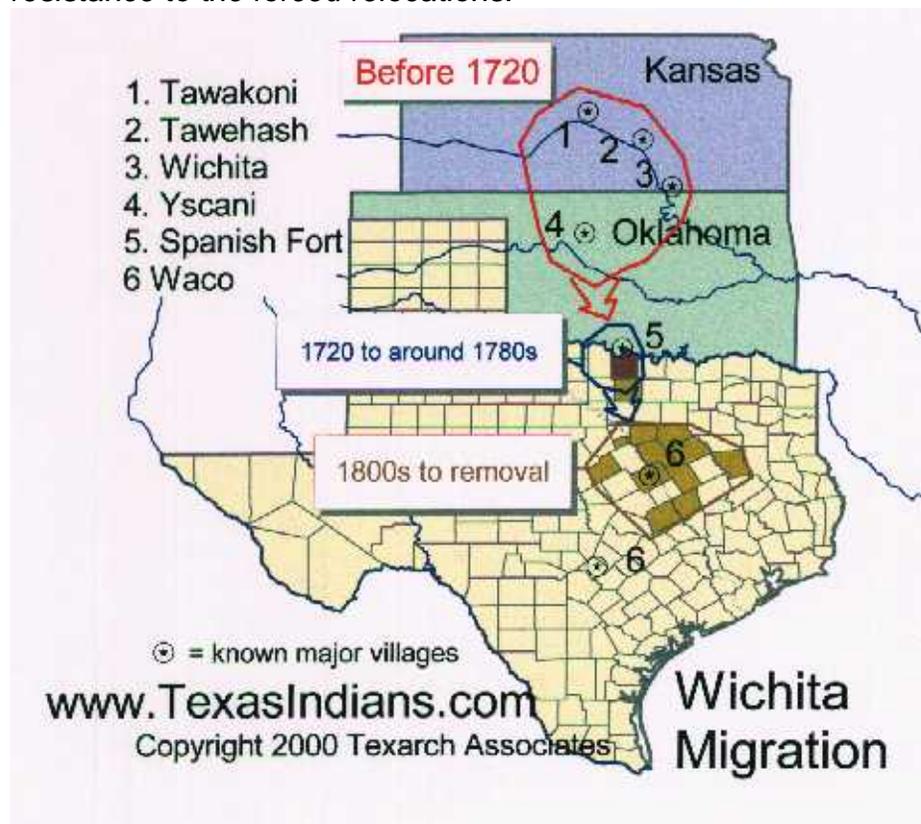
Over the years, the Wichita Mission and the Rock Springs Baptist Church have been the locations of Wichita services, dinners, and camp meetings. Both churches continue to have active members who often sing hymns in the Wichita language. The Native American Church, with its emphasis upon gaining spiritual knowledge through personal revelation, also continues to be a focus of Wichita religious life.

Another continuing tradition is the yearly summer visitation which takes place between the Wichita and Pawnee people. These visits, in which each tribe alternates as host, consist of two-week encampments during which friendships and family ties are recognized through a ceremonial exchange of gifts. Individuals have the opportunity to visit, remember the stories and songs of the past, and to recall the longstanding relationship that has existed between these two groups.

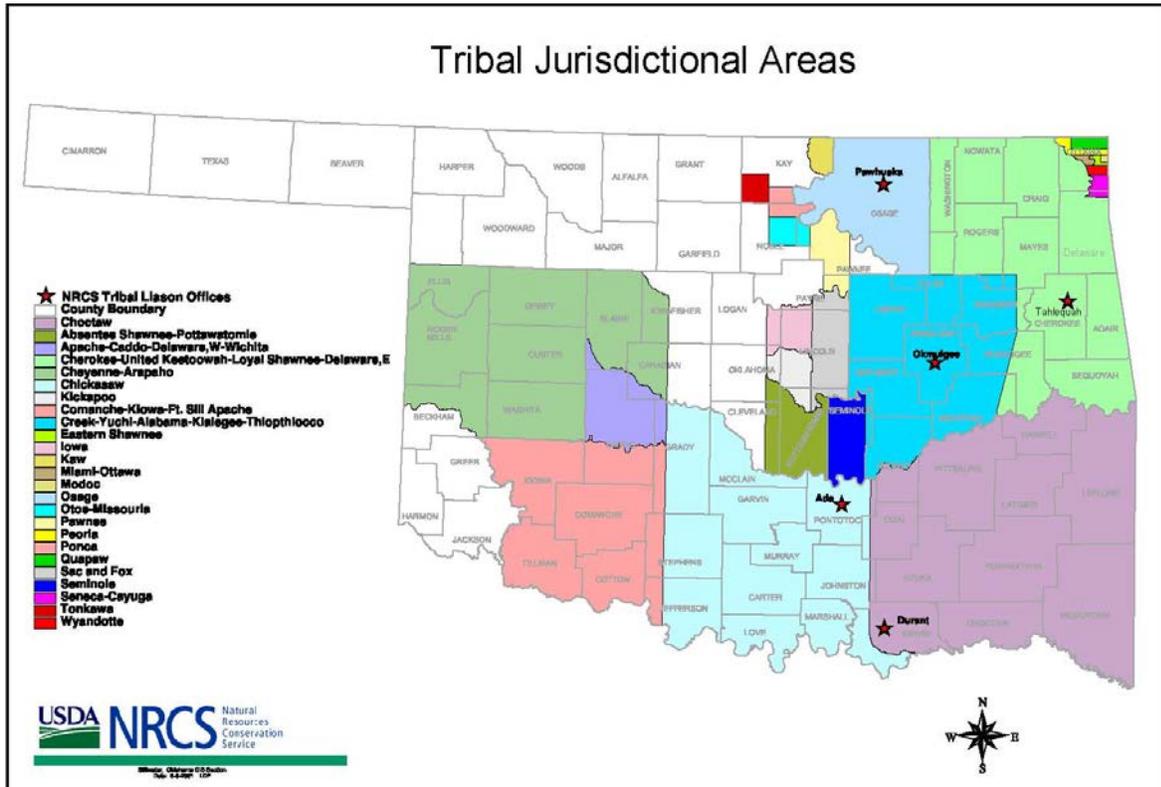
Tribal website: <http://www.wichitatribe.com> Wichita & Affiliated Tribes (Wichita, Keechi, Waco, and Tawakoni)

## 2. Maps

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 2.3** *“Integrate visual and textual evidence to explain the reasons for and trace the migrations of Native American peoples including the Five Tribes into present-day Oklahoma, the Indian Removal Act of 1830, and tribal resistance to the forced relocations.”*



Present location in Oklahoma:



### 3. Population Past/Present

- Total tribal enrollment: 2,717
- Tribal enrollment in Oklahoma: 1945
- Membership criteria requires a blood quantum of 1/8.

Source: *Oklahoma Indian Country Guide*

#### 4. Government; Chiefs vs Chairman; Elected or Paternal

**US Government C3 Standard 3.4** “Summarize and explain the relationships and the responsibilities between national and state governments including tribal and local governments.

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard** “The student will analyze the formation and development of constitutional government in Oklahoma. 1) Compare and contrast the development of governments among the Native American tribes, the movement for the state of Sequoyah . . . 2) Describe and summarize attempts to create a state constitution joining Indian and Oklahoma Territories including the impact of the Progressive and Labor Movements resulting in statehood on November 16, 1907.”

Tribal government leadership: Seven member executive committee and a president. In addition to the seven member Executive Committee, the Tribe has created five other governmental agencies: Wichita Housing Authority, Wichita Tribal Industrial Development Commission, Wichita Tax Commission, Wichita Gaming Commission and the Wichita Sports Commission.

[http://www.wichitatribe.com/media/19524/governing\\_resolution.pdf](http://www.wichitatribe.com/media/19524/governing_resolution.pdf)

copy of Wichita Governing Resolution

#### 5. Language Group

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 4.1** “Compare and contrast the successes and failures of the United States policy of assimilation of the Native Americans in Oklahoma including the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and the effects of the Indian Boarding Schools (1880s-1940s) upon Native Americans’ identity, culture, traditions, and tribal government and sovereignty.”

Language family: Caddoan

- Wichita Language (select word for oral pronunciation)  
<http://www.wichitatribe.com/dictionary.aspx?firstLetter=A>

#### About the Wichita Language

There are many ways in which Wichita is a very special language, compared with other languages from around the world. The sound system is extraordinarily simple; almost no other language has so few different sounds. But the way in which words change their pronunciation in different sentences is exceptionally complex, and the internal structure of individual words (what they are made of, and how those pieces fit together) is more complex than that of any other language.

Wichita is closely related historically to Pawnee, Arikara, and Kitsai. That means that some time in the past-- probably on the order of 800 to 1200 years ago-- the ancestors of these four tribes lived together and spoke one language, which then developed differently among the different groups after they were no longer living together. Some time even earlier than that, the ancestors of these groups and those of the Caddo also formed one group. Linguists have given the name Caddoan Family to this set of languages, but there is no sense in which any of the modern languages is older than any other-- they all go back to a single group, much as all the branches of a tree go back to the trunk, with no main branch being the source of any other branch, but rather all deriving from the trunk.

(The above description description was written by Dr. David Rood in the Introduction to Wichita Language Lessons, 1993.)

## 6. Cultural Identifiers – i.e. Mound Builders; Plains

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 4.1** *“Compare and contrast the successes and failures of the United States policy of assimilation of the Native Americans in Oklahoma including the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and the effects of the Indian Boarding Schools (1880s-2013) upon Native Americans’ identity, culture, traditions, and tribal government and sovereignty.” Oklahoma schools only.*

- Plains
- Traditions; Wichita - Pawnee Visitation (one of the longest traditions)  
<http://www.wichitatribe.com/culture/wichita-pawnee-visitation.aspx>

## 7. Fine arts

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 4.1** *“Compare and contrast the successes and failures of the United States policy of assimilation of the Native Americans in Oklahoma including the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and the effects of the Indian Boarding Schools (1880s-1940s) upon Native Americans’ identity, culture, traditions, and tribal government and sovereignty.”*

### Music

Historically, the Wichita had many songs for many purposes, such as healing songs, prayer songs, lullabies, war dance songs, morning star songs, and ceremonial rain dance songs. Field recordings of Wichita music were first made in 1902 making the tribe's singers some of the first recording artists in the pre-statehood history. Ethnomusicologists visited the tribe again in the 1930s and 1950s with some of those

recordings being released on vinyl by the Smithsonian Institution. Contemporarily, the Wichita celebrate their music each year in August at the Annual Wichita Tribal Dance where one hears ancient songs in a modern context, songs that celebrate their country, veterans, their young people and elders, and the tribe's long association with the Pawnee, as well as songs related to the long tradition of Wichita tradition of ceremonial dance.

Source: <http://www.omhof.com/Inductees/BYYEAR/tabid/86/ItemID/56/Default.aspx>

## Art

The Wichita were known for their beadwork and tattoos around the eyes.

## 8. Significant events (ie. Massacres, Battles, Supreme Court cases...)

**Oklahoma History C3 Standard 2.4C** “Summarize the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction Treaties on Native American peoples, territories, and tribal sovereignty including the a) Required enrollment of the Freedmen, b) Second Indian Removal and the role of the Buffalo Soldiers, c) Significance of the Massacre at the Washita, d) Reasons for the reservation system, and e) Establishment of the western military posts of Fort Sill, Fort Supply, and Fort Reno.”

- Treaties <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/vol2/toc.htm#W>

## 9. Current Information on tribe

### Kitikiti'sh Little Sisters

The Kitikiti'sh Little Sisters, now more commonly known as the Wichita Little Sisters, began as a dream of Eva Cozad, Cleta Ataddlety and Ardiina McAdams. It became a reality on March 15, 1993 when the Kitikiti'sh Little Sisters was officially organized. The group started out iwth six young ladies and has had more than 200 young ladies participate in the organization since it began.

This organization was formed to give young girls a sense of pride in their tribe(s) and themselves. The best way to accomplish this deed is to teach the girls how to dance and conduct themselves in a positive manner in and out of the dance arena. The girls are also taught cultural activities, beadwork, sign language, and traditions of the Tribe. Many of the girls have become tribal princesses of various organizations. The girls have been invited to and participate in numerous activities throughout the year.

Cassandra McAdams carries on the organization in honor of her mother, Ardiina McAdams. The girls and their families work hard throughout the year to represent the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes.

2013-2014

Wichita Little Sisters Princess: Trudie Spybuck Taylor

**10. Other information (ie. Elder testimonials; Guest speakers; Literature; Famous Tribal members...)**

- University of Oklahoma Western History Collection: Doris Duke Collection; Indian Pioneer Papers; Native American Manuscripts;  
<http://digital.libraries.ou.edu/homehistory.php>

References/Sources:

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- Wedel, Mildred Mott. The Deer Creek Site, Oklahoma: A Wichita Village Sometimes Called Ferdinandina, An Ethnohistorian's View. Oklahoma Historical Society, Series in Anthropology No. 5, 1981.
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- "Wichita Memories" is presented through the cooperative efforts of the Stovall Museum of Science and History, the Oklahoma Archaeological Survey, and the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes. The exhibit is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the University of Oklahoma.