

THE TONKAWA PEOPLE

A RETRACING OF STEPS

FROM

TEXAS TO OKLAHOMA

by Tyler Brooks

LESSON PLAN 3

HISTORY, 9–12



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These lesson plans are created with Farina King and the History Department at Northeastern State University. Students of the program – most of them active schoolteachers – study areas of the political and cultural history of Native American individuals and tribes and create thorough, engaging lesson plans based on their research. It is through the generosity of Farina King and her students that the Museum of Native American History is able to share this wonderful material with the Education community, with the hope of creating a broader and more inclusive understanding of Native American history and culture.

This lesson plan was created by Tyler Brooks



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How To Use This File

This file is designed to give you all the resources necessary to create a compelling lesson plan using whichever program or lesson planning style you are most comfortable with. All of the text can be easily copied and pasted, and the images can be dragged and dropped into any program, showing up in high quality. All videos and websites referenced can be reached directly using their hyperlinks.

Overview

MATERIALS INCLUDED

- Introduction (p. 4)
- Narrative (p. 5)
- Conclusion (p. 8)
- Lesson Plans (p. 9)
- Quizzes and Activities (p. 10)
- Works Cited (p. 12)

KEYWORDS

Forced Removal
Native Americans in the U.S. Military
Land Rights

Introduction

INCLUDED WITHIN THIS NARRATIVE is a glimpse into three distinct periods of Tonkawa history. As a result, the purpose of such research is in educating on these eras while also reflecting on their importance in shaping both the states of Texas and Oklahoma. To start, we will take the reader onto the lands of central Texas to outline daily life in Tonkawa society. After that, events will shift directly into some of the notable battles which the tribe participated in alongside settlers, Texas Rangers, and other tribal allies. Once the aforementioned topics are explored, the historical narrative will introduce the removal process which created a migration pattern that was experienced eleven times within just the Tonkawa story alone.¹ Since all forced relocations are not touched on, the narrative will focus on the two formative transitions which include Fort Griffin and the final homeland within Indian Territory.

NOTES

1. Deborah Lamont Newlin, *The Tonkawa People: a Tribal History from Earliest Times to 1893*. (Lubbock, TX: West Texas Museum Association, 1982), Pg. 7.

Narrative: *Tonkawa Daily Life in Texas*

WITHIN THE TRIBE, a daily overview of being Tonkawa in Texas would have likely incorporated multiple things. First, until the middle of the nineteenth century, buffalo would have been the primary food source which accompanied a hunting society.² However, certain types of plant life were also implemented into the Tonkawa food regime and later on reservations, would transform into agriculture surrounded by production of corn, beans, and wheat.³ Also prevalent to the tribe was trade relations between themselves and the newly created Texans, originally devised by Stephen F. Austin and continued under Sam Houston as first president of the republic. During Tonkawa residence in the state, many settlers became frightened by a misperceived notion of cannibalism within the culture. Though some flesh-eating was practiced, it was nonetheless more related to ceremonies protecting the preservation of souls and body than daily routine.⁴ As for the dialect spoken within Tonkawa villages, it was entirely unique and is currently no longer spoken.⁵ Additionally, members of the tribe usually donned little clothing, while children oftentimes ran nude completely. While this was apparent, it is important to note that many within both sexes also emphasized tattoos onto their body. For housing, the diminishing buffalo population attributed towards a shift in structure, with brush tipi look-alikes, followed by huts enclosed by a roof made of the resource as well.⁶ In documenting weaponry of the period that Tonkawas frequented, the primary devices were the bow and arrow, lances, and shields with

fire arms being introduced to the tribe later upon settler contact. Besides these weapons, Tonkawa warriors coupled this with horseback riding that rivaled that of even the Comanche in some instances.⁷

NOTES

2. Robert A Hasskarl Jr. "The Culture and History of the Tonkawa Indians." *Plains Anthropologist* 7, no. 18 (November 1962): 217–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2052546.1962.11908304>.
3. Deborah Lamont Newlin, *The Tonkawa People: a Tribal History from Earliest Times to 1893*. (Lubbock, TX: West Texas Museum Association, 1982), Pg. 24-25.
4. Deborah Lamont Newlin, *The Tonkawa People: a Tribal History from Earliest Times to 1893*. (Lubbock, TX: West Texas Museum Association, 1982), Pg. 23-24.
5. Jon D May, "Tonkawa (Tribe): The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture," Tonkawa (tribe) | The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=TO003>.
6. Jeffrey Carlisle, "Tonkawa Indians," TSHA, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/tonkawa-indians>.
7. Robert A. Hasskarl Jr. "The Culture and History of the Tonkawa Indians." *Plains Anthropologist* 7, no. 18 (November 1962): 217–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2052546.1962.11908304>.

Narrative: *Tonkawa Prowess in Military Operations*

LIVING IN TEXAS PUSHED TONKAWA MEMBERS into continual threats from an enemy, Comanches, that had haunted them for generations. To reinforce their positions in the state, the leaders of the Tonkawa such as Placido pushed for friendships with settlers, Texas Rangers, and tribes who had been both peaceful and violent towards them before. One such group were the Lipan Apache, who had pushed the tribe out of Oklahoma and northern Texas many years before.⁸

Because of their strenuous placement within Texas, conflict was inevitable and the first encounter where Tonkawas favored the side of the settlers was in the Cherokee War in 1839.⁹ Later, during the Civil War, scouts from the tribe assisted the Texas Rangers and Confederate Army mainly in dislodging tribes such as the Comanche out of the state which allowed achievement to be acknowledged on part of whites who fought alongside them. Due to siding with whites over their own ethnicity, hatred began to build regarding Tonkawas from a number of tribes, including the Comanche, Wichita, and Kiowa.

With leaders of the Tonkawa pushing to join the Confederacy in the hopes of securing resources which the Union promised but never delivered, this dream was short-lived. After a Union victory, hardships returned, but Tonkawa allegiance to Texas especially continued as they lent tracking and fighting services to the cavalry and ranger units. Two subsequent battles enforced further the resolve of Tonkawa in defending Texas as the Battles of Antelope

Hill's and Palo Duro Canyon both served to also weaken Comanche presence. For the latter, Ranald S. MacKenzie who led the effort was so impressed by Tonkawa war prowess that he allowed these men to select horses from the Comanche camp to keep and use.¹⁰ To counterbalance threats from tribes who jeopardized Tonkawa land and members, the group used Texas and Lipan Apache alliances to cement and safeguard their homes and property.

NOTES

8. Jeffrey Carlisle, "Tonkawa Indians," TSHA, accessed May 4, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/tonkawa-indians>.
9. Deborah Lamont Newlin, *The Tonkawa People: a Tribal History from Earliest Times to 1893*. (Lubbock, TX: West Texas Museum Association, 1982), Pg. 29.
10. Deborah Lamont Newlin, *The Tonkawa People: a Tribal History from Earliest Times to 1893*. (Lubbock, TX: West Texas Museum Association, 1982), Pg. 85.

Narrative: *Tonkawa Removal from Texas to Oklahoma*

ALTHOUGH THE TONKAWA had already moved into Oklahoma once, their tribal enemies pushed them back into Texas during the Civil War. During this time, the tribe utilized their reliable reputation as scouts to improve standing and solidify positive sentiment among settlers who once had distrusted the Tonkawa heavily due to continued depredations in the state. However, removal was considered once again as many members of the tribe began to starve or pursue alcohol outside of the warriors tied to helping the military. Upon figuring out a potential solution in providing a reservation home for the Tonkawa, the first step was in being moved to Fort Griffin. To be transported there meant taking a train which is where a Tonkawa boy named "Railroad Cisco"¹¹ was born. His wife would later verify this during interviews in the 1960s about the Native American experience, but had little to disclose regarding Tonkawa culture and society itself.

By looking at a letter from Secretary of War W.M. Belknap dated 1876, it is apparent that the Tonkawa situation was desperate, as Belknap pleads for Congress recognition in providing support to the members of the tribe left there. Furthermore, it was stated that only 126 Tonkawa remained with only 24 being employed as scouts.¹² While assistance was mounted by means of supplies and livestock to complement and sustain Tonkawa there, the final solution was in relocating the tribe into Oklahoma. Doing so meant journeying there on foot and horse, which ultimately was completed at the Iowa Reserve where they became stationed.¹³ As the reserve composed of tribes who disliked Tonkawas on account

of their influence in helping the United States suppress other groups, the last removal took place after Nez Perce peoples left the reservation of Indian Territory, opening the location to Tonkawa settlement.¹⁴ Many years later, in 1938, Tonkawa sovereignty was reinforced with a constitution for the Tonkawa Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma which represents the formal recognition of their people as they are today.¹⁵

NOTES

11. Julia A. Jordan, "Cisco, Molly," ed. Linda Butler, Cisco, Molly :: (Western History - Doris Duke Collection, February 8, 1968), <https://digital.libraries.ou.edu/cdm/ref/collection/dorisduke/id/4123>.
12. W. M. Belknap, "Tonkawa Indians at Fort Griffin, Texas. Letter from the Secretary of War, Transmitting, in Response to House Resolution of the 20th Instant, a Brief and Copies of Papers Touching the Number and Condition of the Tonkawa Indians at Fort Griffin, Tex.," University of Oklahoma College of Law, accessed May 3, 2021, <https://digital-commons.law.ou.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3384&context=indianserialset>
13. Deborah Lamont Newlin, *The Tonkawa People: a Tribal History from Earliest Times to 1893*. (Lubbock, TX: West Texas Museum Association, 1982), Pg. 86.
14. Deborah Lamont Newlin, *The Tonkawa People: a Tribal History from Earliest Times to 1893*. (Lubbock, TX: West Texas Museum Association, 1982), Pg. 86.
15. "Constitution and By-Laws of the Tonkawa Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma," Loc.gov, accessed May 3, 2021, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/american-indian-consts/PDF/38026883.pdf>.

Conclusion

THROUGHOUT THE NARRATIVE, the goal has been in representing three eras of Tonkawa history and the impact each had on their future. With reflecting on daily life, analyzing the conflicts they took part in, while outlining the removal efforts, this research is aimed at documenting and showing how such events shaped new standpoints on the tribe as well as helped them constantly evolve their identities and sovereignty. By reviewing this material, the second portion will briefly outline a couple of tools that may be useful in teaching the lessons to any student. While incorporating examples of a quiz, discussion, and map activity, the goal is situated in using each of these as devices towards understanding the narrative. To close is to understand that Tonkawa resilience is reflected in these three periods and has shaped their people into the proud nation that they are today. Attached below is a lesson plan outline as well as practice copies of a five question quiz, 5 question discussion, and map activity which details the removal routes and movements for the Tonkawas.

Lesson Plans

Week 1: Introductions

1. Discuss expectations for Tonkawa studies and what to consider going into the lessons.
2. Briefly introduce the tribe and analyze the three topics which will be covered over their history
3. Have class openly discuss with teacher their opening thoughts on what to expect moving into the curriculum

Week 2: Daily Life and Settlement in Central Texas

1. Talk about housing, weaponry, and location of Tonkawa people during the 1800's in Texas
2. Also discuss the sentiments surrounding the tribe with settler perceptions and how viewing cannibalism shifted Texan assessment of them
3. Document the trading patterns and treaties established between Tonkawa and Texas
4. Quiz students over the first two weeks of material

Week 3: Tonkawa Involvement in American Indian and Texas Indian Wars

1. Discuss Tonkawa importance in scouting and providing information needed on Comanche war parties
2. Briefly outline the major conflicts Tonkawas engaged in, such as the Battle of Antelope Hills and Palo Duro Canyon
3. Overview Confederate impact on Tonkawa tribe and aftermath of war on them
4. Hand out discussion question assignment over this week for students to creatively engage and show their thoughts

Week 4: Tonkawa Removal and Concluding Remarks

1. Document Tonkawa relocation to Fort Griffin
2. Briefly outline their experiences there and W.M. Belknap's pivotal letter pushing for supplies
3. Detail the remaining migration effort to the Iowa Reserve into the final Nez Perce reservation area and close with Tonkawa Constitution assessment
4. Map Activity which will have students responsibly follow the removal routes and accurately map them in correct order

Practice Quiz

- 1 Who was one of the most important Tonkawa leaders during these periods in their history?
 - A. Placido
 - B. Squanto
 - C. W.M. Belknap
 - D. Ranald MacKenzie
- 2 What did the settlers believe Tonkawas did that made them negatively view them?
 - A. Help the Texas Rangers
 - B. Raid against the Comanche
 - C. Cannibalism
 - D. Grow Crops
- 3 Name one battle which Tonkawa members took part in.
 - A. Battle of Antietam
 - B. Battle of Palo Duro Canyon
 - C. Battle of Little Bighorn
 - D. Battle of Waterloo
- 4 What Fort did Tonkawas reside at before being moved to Indian Territory?
 - A. Fort Williams
 - B. Fort Ticonderoga
 - C. Fort Pickett
 - D. Fort Griffin
- 5 Which reserve were the Tonkawas placed on before being moved into the abandoned Nez Perce reservation area?
 - A. Pawnee Reserve
 - B. Cherokee Reservation
 - C. Iowa Reserve
 - D. Mohican Nation

Discussion Questions

- 1 In what ways did Tonkawas survive in central Texas? Name two critical food sources.
- 2 Did Tonkawa alliances with settlers and the Texas Rangers help or harm them? Explain.
- 3 During what battle did Ranald MacKenzie praise the Tonkawa assistance? What was their reward?
- 4 In what year was the Tonkawa Constitution ratified? How do you think this might have benefitted them as a sovereign people?
- 5 Briefly describe the two styles of housing that Tonkawas created within these eras.

Map Activity

Find images of Texas and Oklahoma and have students map out the relocation routes starting at Cisco to Fort Griffin, then from there to the Iowa Reserve before allowing them to map the final movement into their home reservation. This is primarily an exercise in allowing students to visualize the migrations from place to place, while leaving some routes to the imagination of each student.

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