



# Texas

## 4 Studies Weekly

### OUR STATE



## Changes for the American Indian Tribes of Texas

Archaeologists and historians estimate that American Indians have lived in Texas for about 30,000 years. Over time, the indigenous inhabitants of Texas formed tribes and communities. Many American Indian tribes immigrated to Texas following European colonization. These tribes left their homelands due to an influx of American settlers, wars, and government policies that forced them from their homes. The Alabama-Coushatta, Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, Kickapoo, Yaqui, and Kiowa tribes are from other areas.

The Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo migrated from New Mexico in the 1600s. During the 1700s, the Alabama-Coushatta migrated from Alabama to eastern Texas. The Kickapoo traveled from the Great Lakes area and settled in Texas during the 1800s. Some of the Kickapoo tribe went further south, into present-day Mexico, to find a safe place to live. Some of the Yaqui migrated north into Texas from Mexico to escape hostile Mexican forces. During the early 1800s, the

Kiowa migrated from their ancestral homes in Montana and Colorado to northern Texas.

Each tribe was different. Tribes formed their own governments. They engaged in many economic activities, such as hunting, farming, and trading. The tribes of Texas found different ways to use the resources in their environment. American Indian tribes also modified their environment for survival and ceremonial purposes. Tribes were very resourceful and found ways to irrigate farmland. They gathered water from rivers and underground water sources to grow crops. Many tribes constructed large settlements and ceremonial sites around the state.

The American Indian tribes of Texas experienced many changes following the arrival of European explorers and settlers. American Indians did not share the same cultural, religious, political, or economic beliefs as Europeans. This caused tension between the tribes of Texas and European settlers and often resulted in armed conflicts. Europeans also brought many diseases to the Americas. Native peoples had no immunity to these diseases, so they spread very quickly and easily in their communities. Millions of American Indians died from these diseases.

Issues between settlers and American Indian tribes continued for

hundreds of years. The influx of white settlers in the 1800s resulted in the forced removal of thousands of native people from Texas. Many tribes native to Texas were forcibly removed to Oklahoma. The remaining tribes, such as the Comanche, Caddo, and Apache, faced economic hardship as Texas grew. The tribes lost their lands and access to the natural resources they needed to survive. Trade networks used by the tribes in the plains area changed or ended with the arrival of settlers.

Despite many struggles and hardships, several American Indian tribes still call Texas their home and have created vibrant communities that preserve their cultural traditions. Today, the Alabama-Coushatta, Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, and Kickapoo Traditional tribes are federally recognized by the United States government. **Federally recognized** tribes have an official relationship with the U.S. government. They have certain rights, responsibilities, and powers. They are able to access some benefits, services, and protections from the U.S. government. Texas acknowledges the Lipan Apache of Texas and the Texas Band of Yaqui Indians as state-recognized tribes. **State-recognized** tribes have a relationship with state governments, but they do not have sovereignty like federally recognized tribes.



## Alabama-Coushatta Tribe

The modern-day Alabama-Coushatta Tribe began as two separate tribes. The Alabama and Coushatta Tribes were originally located in what is now the state of Alabama. They migrated to what is now Texas in the late 1700s. They found a home in the heavily forested area of Southeast Texas.

Despite their beginnings as two separate tribes, the Alabama and Coushatta tribes had many similarities. Their languages were very similar. Speakers of one language could communicate with speakers of the other with few differences. Because they lived so close, members of one tribe would marry members of the other. This ensured the two tribes remained close.

The two tribes stayed allies when they arrived in Texas. They settled near rivers and created trails between villages. Farming and hunting provided their food. Both tribes fought with the Mexican revolutionaries during the Mexican War of Independence against Spain. The tribes also provided food and assistance to Sam Houston and his efforts during the Texas War of Independence from Mexico.

The Alabama-Coushatta Tribe became one tribe in the mid 1800s. The Alabama Tribe officially asked the Texas government for land to create a reservation in 1853. Alabama Chief Antone, along with other tribal leaders and citizens in the community, secured a reservation of just over 1000 acres. The Coushatta were never able to get their own reservation. The Alabama Tribe allowed members of the Coushatta tribe to move onto and live on their reservation in 1859. This united the two tribes, who had been closely linked for a long time. In 1987, the Alabama-Coushatta tribe received recognition from the federal government.

The Alabama-Coushatta Reservation is located in Polk County northeast of Houston. Today, the tribe has more than 1,300 members. Around half of those members live on the reservation. The tribe is led by a chief, as both tribes were before they became one. The first chief of the combined Alabama and Coushatta tribes was John Scott. He served as chief from 1871-1913. Today, the chief provides guidance to the Tribal Council. They can also cast the deciding vote when the Tribal Council vote is tied.



Alabama-Coushatta Pow Wow

## Kickapoo Traditional Tribe

The Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas is part of the larger Kickapoo tribal groups that spread throughout the middle parts of the United States. The original Kickapoo tribe was located near the Great Lakes in the northern part of the country.

The early Kickapoo tribal groups spent part of the year farming and the other part hunting and gathering. Their environment provided them with everything they needed to survive. The fertile area was also appealing to others as well. The Kickapoo often found themselves at odds with settlers moving westward in the United States. These conflicts forced the Kickapoo to move south through the current states of Kansas, Oklahoma, and into Texas.

In the early 1800s, Spanish authorities invited the Kickapoo to settle in Texas. During this time, they were able to avoid most contact with Spanish or white settlers in the area. This allowed them to maintain most of their cultural traditions without interference during this time.

Unfortunately, they were not able to avoid all contact with outside groups. After Texas became a part of the United States, most members of the Kickapoo tribe migrated across the border



Kickapoo Indians, 1909

## Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo

The Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, also known as the Tigua, have lived in Ysleta, Texas for about 300 years.

The ancestors of the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo lived in present day New Mexico. The relationship between the Pueblo tribes of New Mexico and the Spanish settlers was often tense and hostile. In 1680, members from 12 Pueblo tribes rebelled against Spanish rule. The Tigua did not join the rebellion and ultimately retreated with the Spanish settlers to present-day El Paso.

In 1682, the Tigua constructed a pueblo and mission at Ysleta. The Ysleta Mission is the oldest church in Texas. Following its construction, settlers began to refer to the American Indians living there at the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo. The community flourished and continued to grow. An estimated 500 members of the tribe lived at Ysleta in 1750. In 1751, King Ferdinand VI of Spain granted the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo 36 square miles of land surrounding the pueblo and mission.

As settlement in Texas increased in the 1800s, the government took all of the land promised to the Tigua away. In 1871, the Texas Legislature provided land to the tribe for a reservation. The tribe was officially recognized by the state of Texas in 1967. In 1987, the United States government federally recognized the tribe. This act officially recognized the tribe as the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo.

The Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo has their own tribal government led by a tribal council. The tribal council includes a cacique, the religious leader of the tribe, war captain, governor, lieutenant governor, an alguacil, the traditional sheriff of the tribe, and four council members. Each member of the tribal council is elected by the members of the tribe. The council works to preserve the traditions and culture of the tribe.



Ysleta Mission, built 1682

## Lipan Apache

The Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas is one of several bands of the larger Apache people. The name "Lipan" means "The Light Gray People" and comes from the word for light gray in the Lipan language. The Apache people associate a color with each cardinal direction. In their culture, white represents north and east is black. The Lipan people migrated east into Texas from as far north as Canada. Combining the white of the north and the black of the east makes them "The Light Gray People."

By the early 1800s, the Lipan Apache Tribe had been living in Texas for hundreds of years. As American settlers began moving into the area, the Lipan took the opportunity to trade with them. They provided the settlers with food and goods. They hunted bison and stole horses and goods during raids into Mexico.

The early peaceful relationships with American settlers did not last. The Lipan Apache people eventually came into conflict with the U.S. Army. Following a defeat in 1873, many tribal members were forced onto the Mescalero Reservation in New Mexico. The following years featured more fighting between U.S. military forces and the Lipan Apache. The history of the tribe during this time is one of conflict and loss.

The modern Lipan Apache Tribe has around 3,400 registered members. Unregistered family members put the tribe's population at around 8,000 people. The tribe is made up of several different bands. They include people from the Poca Ropas, the Tall Grass, and the Sea Otters bands, among others.

Their tribal leadership includes a chairman and tribal council. Their goals include maintaining unity and community within the tribe. They also strive to keep their culture and traditions alive, including their language. In recent years, they have earned official recognition as a tribe by the state of Texas.



Lipan Warrior by Sarony & Co., 1854

Below are two participant of Lipan Apache heritage at the Celebrations of Traditions Pow Wow, a Native American Pow Wow that is part of the annual, month-long Fiesta San Antonio in Texas.



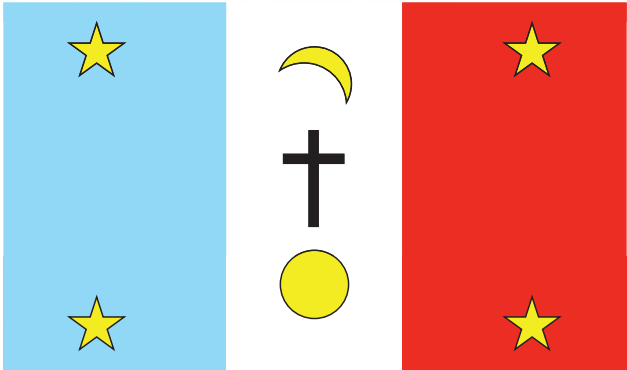
Emma Ortega



Tony Castaneda



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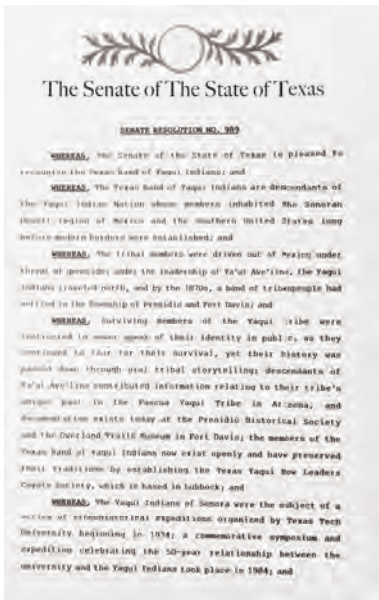
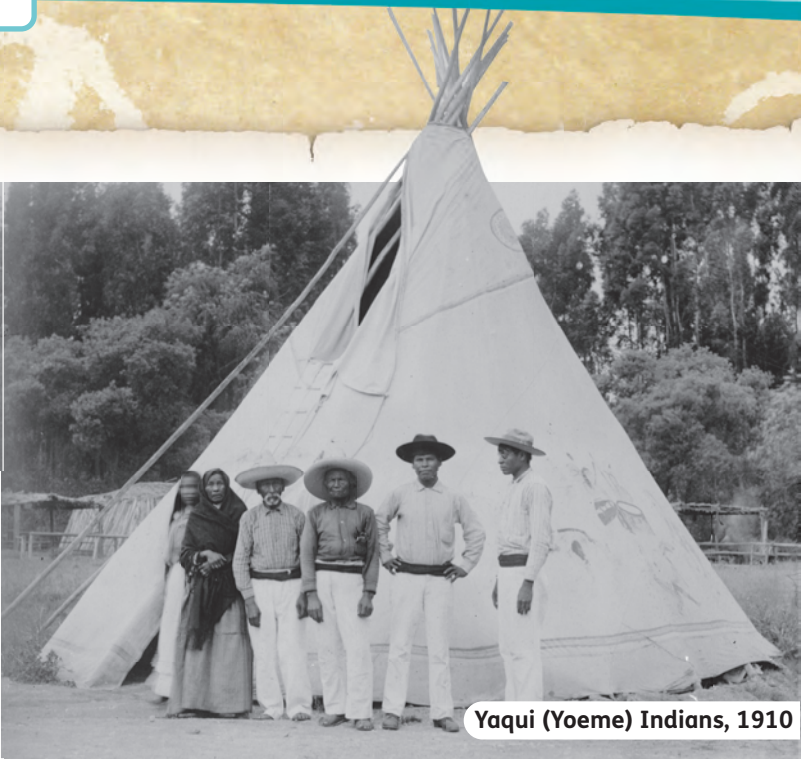


## Texas Band of Yaqui Indians

The Texas Band of Yaqui American Indians comes from the larger Yaqui tribe. The Yaqui tribe are from an area of Mexico called Sonora. The Yaqui tribe in Mexico lived in the Rio Yaqui river valley. The river provided fertile farmland. They also hunted and fished in that area as well.

The Yaqui tribe in Mexico often fought Mexican forces. They did not recognize Mexican authority. Wars against Mexico forced many Yaqui into the mountains and eventually to other places. The Mexican government often conquered and took over Yaqui lands, leaving them no place to stay. The largest group crossed the border into Arizona. Smaller bands went to other states, including Texas.

The modern Texas Band of Yaqui Indians has roughly 1,500 members. The tribe received official recognition from the state of Texas in 2015. Leadership is provided by the Tribal Council. Their conflict with Mexico forced many Yaqui to hide their heritage and identities as members of the tribe. The tribe organized the Texas Yaqui Bow Leaders Coyote Society to preserve and promote their traditions and language for future generations.



## American Indian Life Today

Today, the state of Texas has the fifth-largest population of American Indians in the United States. More than 170,000 individuals that live in Texas identify as American Indian. About 7,300 of these individuals are registered members of the Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo Traditional, Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, Lipan Apache, and the Texas Band of Yaqui tribes. These tribes continue to preserve their cultural beliefs and customs.

Each year, tribes across Texas celebrate their culture through large festivals and powwows. A **powwow** is a cultural event where tribal members gather together to perform traditional songs and dances. It is also a meeting place where people can display and purchase American Indian art, jewelry, pottery, and many other items. Powwows are often open to the public and are a wonderful way for people to learn about the customs and history of different tribes.

Several powwows are held throughout Texas each year. Each November, about 5,000 members from various tribes

meet in Dallas for the Texas Red Nations Powwow. The Alabama-Coushatta tribe sponsors an annual powwow at their tribal reservation in Polk County. American Indians from around the country travel to this powwow to participate in dance and drum competitions. The Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo tribe hosts the St. Anthony Festival in El Paso each year in honor of the tribe's patron saint. This festival is open to the public and includes dances, a feast, and a bazaar for shopping.

There are many museums and historic sites across the state that preserve the history and culture of the American Indian tribes of Texas. Many tourists visit the Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument in Fritch each year. Here, you can learn about the ancient American Indians who produced tools from the rich deposits of flint and hunted mammoths in the area. The Bullock Museum, located in Austin, has many exhibits and artifacts on display that chronicle the history of various tribes throughout the state.

