

Comanches on the Southern High Plains

Traveling Discovery Trunk

Teacher's Manual

This Teacher's Manual and the accompanying trunk,
were made possible by grants and volunteers from the
Junior League of Lubbock

Committee members

Lisa Barte, Suzanne Burgess, Carol Evans, DeeAnn Holder,
Cheryl Kulbeth, Kim Kimbrough, and Gail Bentley,
Museum of Texas Tech University, 1995

Lubbock, TX 79409

Reviewed in 2003

Comanches on the Southern High Plains

Dear Teacher,

The Museum of Texas Tech University is proud to offer you this traveling trunk filled with exciting games, objects, and lesson ideas. The Teacher's Manual and the trunk were made possible by grants and volunteers from the **Junior League of Lubbock**. The Manual was prepared in 1995 and revised in 2003 by the Museum's Education Division.

We are making every effort to have this trunk delivered to you in the most timely and efficient manner possible. We are also trying to keep this trunk filled with its original objects and ideas.

To assist us in this effort, please review the check-list below when you receive your trunk, as well as when you are ready to send the trunk back. If there are any items missing, or if one of the items has been damaged, please let us know so we can quickly replace it. Please call **(806)742-2432** or email to museum.education@ttu.edu if you have any problems, questions or suggestions regarding this trunk.

Also, if you could take a moment to fill out the evaluation mailed to you, it would assist us in serving you better in the future.

Thank you and enjoy,

Education Division
Museum of Texas Tech University

Visit the Museum website at <http://www.museum.ttu.edu>

Discovery Traveling Trunk Inventory Comanches on the Southern High Plains

Artifacts

#	✓		#	✓	
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Peace pipe - ash stem and "pipestone" bowl	12	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bison tail
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cradleboard	13	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bison beard
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leather beaded bag	14	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bison incisor teeth
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tipi model	15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bison calfhide
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Elk antler dice	16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bison hair
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bison Phalange "Bone Horse"	17	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bison horn
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	Doll	18	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bison bladder
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	Double ball	19	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bison hair pouch
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hoop	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hoof sheath
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child's Dress	21	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bison scapula
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child's Leggings	22	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bison ribs

BOOKS

#	✓		
23	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Dress Clothing of the Plains Indians</u>	Ronald P. Koch
22	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Comanche Bondage</u>	Carl Coke Rister
25	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Panhandle-Plains Historical Review 1986</u>	Vol. LIX
26	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Indian Homes</u>	Troll Associates
27	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Indians of the Plains</u>	Troll Associates
28	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Quanah Parker - Comanche Chief</u>	Rosemary K. Kissinger
29	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>The Comanches - Lords of the South Plains</u>	Ernest Wallace
30	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Buffalo ... and Indians on the Great Plains</u>	Noel Grisham
31	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Teacher's Manual</u>	Junior League of Lubbock
32	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>The Comanche Indians</u>	

Introduction

The name Comanche comes from the Ute word Komantcia which means "anyone who wants to fight me all the time." However, the Comanches call themselves "The People." As the settlement of America expanded west, the Comanche escaped the pressure by moving southward in the early 1700's into the relatively unsettled area of the vast Southern Plains. For 150 years the Comanches ruled the Southern Plains defeating Utes, Pawnees, Osages, Tonkawas, Apaches, and Navahos. From Kansas through Colorado and south a thousand miles into Old México, the Comanche made the Southern Plains unsafe for those groups trying to take over this territory, including pioneer settlers from the East. This made settlement and travel dangerous and undesirable to many pioneer settlers.

With the acquisition of the horse the Comanche were able to build and improve on the buffalo-based economy of the Apaches on the Southern Plains, where the buffalo were ever present. The Comanche moved with the buffalo herds that were following water sources across the plains, as that was their primary source of food, clothing, and shelter. Tipis, being easy to move, suited the nomadic lifestyle required of a buffalo-based economy. By the early 1800's their land, the Comanchería, was more than 600 miles from north to south and 400 miles from east to west and was perfectly suited to the nomadic warrior people. The Comanche tribe was the largest tribe that lived in and around the area of the Llano Estacado and Lubbock, Texas.

Purpose

This trunk is designed to share with Lubbock students what life was like for the Comanches in the Lubbock area. The materials and activities have been divided into categories to facilitate your classroom lessons. Areas of focus are:

- Customs
- Lifestyles
- Housing
- Clothing
- Buffalo
- Children
- Games

Essays of information, activity sheets and worksheets have been interspersed to facilitate the learning experience. Please call the Education Division at the Museum of Texas Tech University if you have any questions or comments.

The trunk artifacts are new, but made by traditional, documented Comanche methods. A special thank you to the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, Texas for all their help, support and information. We sincerely hope that this trunk adds dimension to your Texas History classroom experience. We have enjoyed producing it!

Artifacts

The trunk artifacts are new, but made by traditional, documented Comanche methods.

Please touch!

1. The **peace pipe** is an ash stem and “black pipestone” bowl (type of shape rock).
2. The **Comanche cradle** or cradleboard, used a drawstring attachment to secure the baby. The wooden slats allowed the mother to prop the baby against a tipi, put the infant to her back or hang the child from a tree limb (this one is doll size).
3. The **beaded bag** uses beads over 150 years old. The leather is brain tanned and smoked with oak.
4. The **child's Tipi** is brain tanned and colored with ochre (colored earth or dirt) and has Comanche detail.
5. The **dice** are made of elk antler and were marked in a way to make several possible combinations.
6. The **bone horse** is bone from the bison’s hoof. Girls attached miniature travois to the horse, and boys pretended to chase the bison.
7. The **doll** is stuffed with bison wool. The hair is from bison legs. All is sinew muscle sewn, on brain tanned buckskin.
8. The **double ball** was a game played by women, consisting of two balls joined by a thong and used with a stick. The double ball is brain tanned and stuffed with bison wool. (see page 28 for complete description of rules)
9. The **hoop and spear** are made of ash. The game was to skewer the red center. The thrower put his index finger in the "y" at the end to give thrust, trying to have his spear catch the center while rolling.
10. The **youth dress** is colored with ochre, as the Comanches were fond of doing (rather than beading an area as many Plains tribes did). It is brain tanned and sinew-muscle sewn.
11. The **leggings** were for modesty for girls and to protect the legs from brush.
12. The **Bison tail** was used as a fly swatter or to dispense water onto rocks during a sweat bath.

13. The **Bison beard** was tied to the lefting pole of the tipi or to the corners of the flaps. It was symbolic of a scalp.
14. **Bison incisor teeth** are the front lower teeth of bison. They were often made into necklaces.
15. **Bison calf hides** were worn by youth just as large robes were by the adults. The head and legs are intact. Yellow ochre is on the inner surface of this hide.
16. **Bison hair** is really wool and can be spun to make ropes or stuffed in dolls, balls, or pillows.
17. The **Bison horn** are from the bulls only, and are hollow. The porcupine quill handle is plated between two threads.
18. The **Bison bladder** served as a food bag (the top was cut open then), water bag (a skewer held it in place) or quill storage pouch.
19. The **Bison hair pouch** stored arrowheads for the men or sinew and awl for women.
20. The **Bison hoof sheath** was a pretend bison or stored quills or beads.
21. The **Bison shoulder blade** was used as a hoe or a knife (when cut down).
22. The **Bison ribs** were tied together for sleds or were cut to make awls for poking holes in hides for sewing.
23. The **Bison Shoulder Blade** was a hoe or a knife. The hoe is a horticultural implement and not a typical Comanche tool, since Comanche were not an agricultural group.

Comanche Vocabulary / Spelling List

Arrow - A wooden shaft with a sharp projectile point on one end and feather on the opposite end. Arrows are shot from a bow.

Breechcloth - A cloth that wraps around the hips and between the legs, the breechcloth is short in length and perfect for warm weather. Worn by young women and men.

Buckskin - Any animal hide that has been tanned.

Buffalo - The common name of the American Bison; a large mammal that lived on the Plains.

Cactus - Any of a family of plants that have fleshy stems and branches with scales or spines instead of leaves and are found in a dry desert environment.

Ceremony - A formal act or service established by custom or authority.

Comanche - The name of the largest Native American group that lived in the Southern Plains. The name was given to the group by one of their enemies, the Ute, it means “anyone who wants to fight me all the time.”

Cradleboard – An Indian mother’s baby carrier.

Double ball - A game played by teams of women with sticks and two balls attached to each other.

Drum - A percussion instrument traditionally made from animal skin.

Feathers - Certain feathers were used as decorations, considered sacred, used in ceremonies, and in dances. Example: Eagle feathers.

Hide - The skin of an animal.

Hoop and Pole - A men's game used to improve marksmanship.

Fringe - Loose hanging strips of tanned-leather that creates a border used to decorate clothing.

Leggings - Usually made of leather, used by men and women.

Medicine Man - A non-Native American term for a priestly healer.

Moccasins - Shoes usually made of tanned leather and rawhide.

Pipe - A tube, generally made of wood, with a small bowl on the end to hold sweet grass for smoking.

Pouch - A small bag, generally made of tanned leather, used for carrying tobacco or other items.

Rawhide - An untanned animal hide that is very hard and stiff.

Rituals - The established form for a ceremony, any formal and customarily repeated act or series of acts.

Tilting - A horsemanship skills game.

Tipi - A portable, cone shaped dwelling made primarily of animal skins (usually buffalo) and used on the Plains from Montana to Texas. One tipi used 14-20 hides sewn together with sinew. The “lifespan” of a tipi was 10 years.

Tribe - A general word used to describe a social group comprised of numerous families, clans, or generations together. Often used to describe Native American culture groups.

Tattoo - An indelible mark or figure fixed upon the body by the insertion of pigment under the skin or by the production of scars.

War Paint - Decorations painted usually with ochre on men and horses before battle.

Warrior - A specialized individual prepared and ready for battle.

Comanches

Customs, Religion, Lifestyles, and Food

To the Western Indians everything in the world about them was filled with spirits and powers that controlled or otherwise affected the lives of the tribe. The sun, the mountains, the beaver, the snake, the eagle, each had its mysterious force, or medicine. To survive and prosper, the American Indians believed they must perform a constant round of ceremonies - called making medicine that would appease the spirits and solicit their aid. To survive properly in such a world the Native Americans felt a need for some powerful assistance. They received it from a host of spirits that inhabited the natural world. The spirits were thought to be literally everywhere and were almost always identified with some visible object, animal or phenomenon. They were said to dwell in the sun and earth, in rivers and hills, in thunderstorms and rainbows, and within creatures from the dragonfly to the buffalo. These sacred beings had power to bring success in the hunt and war, protect the young, heal the sick, and assure the welfare of the tribe. These religious rituals took many forms. When sitting down to eat a formal meal, a Comanche often cut off a tiny morsel of food, held it up toward the sky as a symbolic offering to a heavenly deity and then buried the morsel in the earth.

The American Indians most useful, and frequently called upon spirits, dwelt within animals. The Comanches relied on some animal helpers in the hunt. They would ask a horned toad to tell them where the prey was located. They thought the horned toad would answer their request by running in the direction of the buffalo. They also believed that if a raven circled their camp four times and cawed, it would then fly toward the buffalo in order to help its friends get meat.

As visual symbols of their beliefs, native peoples created a colorful variety of religious clothes and sacred objects. Most articles were inspired by a vision, which the people believed to be a contract with the spiritual world. All were treated with elaborate care so as not to jeopardize their good medicine.

Within every tribe, certain individuals were considered to have exceptional abilities for dealing with the spirits. These were the shaman or medicine men. The shaman might use their powers to foretell the future, cast love spells, find lost animals or bring about good weather. Some functioned as tribal physicians, and they might even have specialties, such as curing blood diseases, broken bones or battle wounds. The spiritual

power of a shaman would come from a dream or trance. Many were intelligent and had strong, persuasive personalities.

Their personal aura helped to convince other people of the values and reliability of their aid. If spirits failed, the shaman was regarded as no good and their livelihood might disappear.

The Art of Cooking, Plains Style

The American Indians varied their diet by hunting and trapping deer, antelope, quail and jackrabbits and gathering wild plants, fruits, and nuts. The Comanche Indians regarded fish as taboo. When food was plentiful the tribes ate three meals a day, but they were seldom wasteful. In a course of a year women would pick more than a dozen kinds of wild fruits. They peeled fresh sweet thistle stalks that tasted like bananas. They sliced the fruit of the prickly-pear cactus, adding them to buffalo soup and stews.

The traditional cooking pouch was made from the lining of a buffalo's stomach, lasting for three or four days, when it became soggy and soft from the heat. They disposed of the pouch by eating it. When boiling meat, women hung the skewered chunks on a rawhide strip moistened to keep the leather from burning through. The women would drop a hot fist-sized stone in the pouch to make water boil.

Lifestyles

American Indian names were descriptive, allusive or even had magical meaning. A baby was named soon after birth, usually by a shaman or a paternal relation, and the entire village participated in the occasion. A woman generally kept the name she received at birth, but a man often replaced his original name with a new one that celebrated a personal act of valor.

Proper behavior among the Native Americans was governed by extensive, strict and often subtle rules. The tipi etiquette when paying a social call was important. For example, if the door is open, a friend may enter the tipi directly, but if it is closed, the visitor announces their presence and wait for the owner to invite them to come in. When a male visitor entered the tipi he would go to the right and wait for the host to invite him to sit in the guest place to the left of the owner at the rear. A woman entered after the man and went to the left. Women should never sit cross-legged like men. They could sit on their heels or with their legs to one side. In a group of men only, the older

ones initiated the conversation. The younger men remained silent unless invited to speak by an elder. When the host cleaned his pipe everyone was to leave.

Pipes of Prayer and Friendship

Native Americans widely practiced smoking. The smoke that was exhaled was seen as a breath of prayer, and the pipe itself was regarded as an intimate channel of communication to the spirit world. Pipes were also used to sanctify communication between men. Careful, patient labor went into the making of a ceremonial pipe. Pipe bowls were shaped from soft stone of varying colors, with red considered the most beautiful. The tobacco smoked by the aboriginal peoples grew wild, and the mixture was often carried in a beaded buckskin pouch.

ACTIVITY:

Have a Native American feast in your classroom to let the students experience firsthand what kinds of foods they ate.

Recipes:**Jerky**

Jerky is one of the easiest foods to prepare. In fact, only fresh meat and fresh air are required. For those who like to satisfy the taste buds as well as the stomach, a little imagination and some standard kitchen ingredients can impart a marvelous range of flavors. Just follow three cardinal rules:

- 1) Trim all fat from the meat (and skin from fowl or fish) and do not use oils or fats in seasoning. These hinder drying and may cause a rancid taste.
- 2) Dissolve seasoning in some liquid. If food is rubbed (rather than soaked) with seasoning, it will become excessively tough.
- 3) Soak the meat with dissolved seasoning.
- 4) Pork and game must be steamed first to kill any parasites.

Cut one flank steak into very thin strips, cutting against the grain.

Marinate for two hours or more.

Spread on racks set on cookie sheets.

Heat in oven at 150 - 170 degrees overnight.

Let cool then pack in airtight plastic bags.

Marinades:

Oriental: 1/2 cup water

1/3 cup soy sauce

1 split garlic clove

1 tsp. ginger

Herbed: 1/2 cup water

1/4 cup red wine

1/2 med. onion, sliced

2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper

1/2 tsp. basil

1/2 tsp. marjoram

Baked Meat Pies

1-1/2 pounds ground meat

Salt and Pepper to taste

2 tablespoons water

Make dough of

2 cups of flour

1 teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 level tablespoon shortening

1 cup milk

Roll mixture in small rounds and place a bit of meat in one half or round, then fold over and crimp edges together. Place in well-greased pan and bake in moderate oven.

Mohawk Corn

1 can whole kernel corn

1 small package of black walnuts

1/2 teaspoon black walnut flavoring

2 tablespoons butter

Empty can of corn packed in water (not creamed corn) into a pot. Add a sufficient amount of water and heat, also adding a small package of black walnuts. Then add about 1/2 teaspoon of black walnut flavoring. Heat with 2 tablespoons butter and serve.

Cherokee Huckleberry Bread

2 cups self-rising flour

1 cup of sugar

2 cups berries (blueberries)

1 egg

1 stick butter

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Cream eggs, butter and sugar together. Add flour, milk, and vanilla. Sprinkle flour on berries to prevent them from going to the bottom. Add berries to mixture. Put in baking pan and bake in oven at 350 degrees for approximately 40 minutes or until done.

The Tipi: Housing of the Comanche

Comanches on the Southern Plains lived in cone-shaped dwellings called tipis. These dwellings offered a wonderful combination of utility and portability. They dispelled water and were warm and well ventilated. Tipis could be raised and lowered within minutes. Two women alone could erect a tipi in less than an hour. Tipis were more desirable as shelter than the shack of the people.

Comanche tipis were constructed of tanned buffalo hides sewn together with sinew and stretched over a conical framework of 12 - 30 poles. The typical number of poles was 22. The poles, usually pine or cedar, were peeled and seasoned. They varied in length from 10 - 20 feet.

The foundations for Comanche tipis were made of four poles. Various other tribes used a three-pole foundation. It appears that the Comanches first used tipis while still in their northern environment since northern tribes such as the Shoshones and Utes used a four-pole foundation. The Kiowas, Pawnees and other southern neighbors used a three-poles foundation.

During tipi construction, four poles were tied together near the top and set upright. The remaining poles were stacked against the foundation. Thongs of buffalo hide were used to tie the poles together. The poles were set diagonally into the ground 3-4 feet apart in a circle.

Fourteen to twenty buffalo hides were needed to cover a typical tipi. The hides were sewn together with sinew. Hides of old buffalo cows just shedding their winter coat in April or May were preferred by the Comanches. These hides were the thickest and the easiest to tan.

The average tipi was 12 - 15 feet in diameter. The floor diameter was approximately the same as the height from the center of the floor to the peak.

The tipi frame was slightly tilted. This asymmetry served several functions. It provided more headroom at the rear of the dwelling. The tilt also permitted better ventilation with an off center smoke hole. The door of the tipi always faced the rising sun. The greater slant on the front side helped brace against the prevailing west winds on the back. The entrance to the tipi was 3 - 4 feet high. It was covered by an extra pelt tanned stiff and fastened with a weight attached to the bottom.

Tipi furnishings were simple and adapted to mobility. A round hole, approximately 15" in diameter, was dug in the center of the tipi for a fire. The owner's bed was placed

at the back of the tipi directly opposite the entrance. Other beds were placed on one or both sides. The beds were elevated 4-6" from the ground with poles and rawhide slats. Robes were spread on top to form the bedding. Buffalo skins partitions were sometimes stretched between the beds for privacy. Skins from small animals were stuffed with grass or straw and used for pillows.

Comanche tipis were equipped with a supply of utensils or receptacles. Water receptacles needed to be light and easy to pack. Both requirements were met by the buffalo paunch. Deer skins were made into containers that were used to carry water. Drinking cups were made from buffalo horns and terrapin shells. A few baskets, stone and bone knives, digging sticks and a few bone needles completed the furnishing for tipis.

Comanche Indians often erected brush arbors in their permanent camps. These arbors provided excellent refuge from the heat during the summer months. The roof was flat and made of leafy boughs supported by 7 - 8 ft. posts. The sides were left open to permit a good breeze. Many Comanches today still build brush arbors in their yards. Etiquette was important when paying social calls to friend's tipi. If the tipi door was open, entering was acceptable. If the door was closed, visitors were expected to announce their presence and wait to be invited in. Male visitors entered and went to the right. Women entered after the men and went to the left. When invited to eat, guests brought their own bowls and spoons. They were expected to eat all they ere given. Visitors were never to walk between the fire and another person. Women were never to sit cross legged. They were to sit on their heels or with their legs to one side. Only the elder men were to initiate conversation in a group. The younger men remained silent unless invited to speak by an elder. The last social rule was to leave when the host cleaned his pipe.

ACTIVITY:

Divide class into small groups. Have each group role play different tipi etiquette rules for the class.



ACTIVITY:

Discuss some of the items found inside a tipi. Have students research items that we use in our everyday lives that reflects their use..



ACTIVITY:

Have students design a tipi and decorate it with symbols. Follow up with a discussion of the tipi and how it provided the American Indians with great mobility and was the best home for them.



ACTIVITY:

Using pictures discuss the design of the tipi and the construction process. Discuss the pros and cons of tipi living.



Clothing of the Comanches

Boys younger than 8 or 9 often did not wear any clothing at all, except in cold weather. Everyday clothing for men included a breechcloth, leggings, and moccasins. A breechcloth is a wide piece of buckskin or material that is drawn up between the legs and belted in front and back. The ends -both front and back- would hang over the belt in flaps almost to the knees. The leggings were buckskin and covered from the foot to the hip and attached to the belt. The leggings were usually fringed and sometimes beaded with metal, beads, shells or teeth. The moccasins were made of a buckskin upper and a sole of stiff tanned buffalo hide (rawhide). They were fringed or decorated with the tail of a small animal and beaded. In the winter they wore boots of buffalo hide that reached to the knee. The winter boots were loose, so in extreme weather, they could wrap their feet with cloth.

Men's shirts worn in cold weather were made from deer or antelope skins. The shirt was fringed at the collar and sleeves and decorated with beads, metal and scalps of enemies.

The buffalo robe was also an important item. Some robes had the hair left on for very cold weather and others had the hair removed. The robes were basically the same for men and women except the wives of chiefs or great warriors, whose were painted. The painting was very special with a geometric figure of a buffalo in the center. The women's robes also had a geometric border. Most of the time both men and women went without head coverings, except occasionally a fur cap of buffalo or coyote skin. For special occasions, feathers were worn as plumes or woven into a hood or war bonnet. The Comanches wore a cap with feathers placed around it to droop and spread backward. A war bonnet was not regularly worn, but a buffalo horn headdress was. Eagle feathers were also sometimes worn in warriors' hair.

The young girls always wore clothing. A breechcloth was worn until puberty, when they began to dress the same as the women. The women wore buckskin dresses with fringe on the sleeves and hems and beaded designs. The skirt was made with an uneven hem reaching to the ankles with a heavy fringe. There was beading and fringe above the knee and beading above the hem. The blouse was made like a pouch and was high necked with beading across the shoulders to the sleeves. The blouse and skirt were laced together with buckskin. Medallions were beaded across the front and back of the blouse, along with beads hanging from long leather thongs. The sleeves were

also fringed and beaded. The wives of great warriors also wore an appendage that hung from the neck and was fringed in front and painted in the back in dark blue for each war honor.

The women wore their hair cropped short. They traced the part line with vermilion. The women put more time into their makeup than their hair. Red and yellow lines were painted above and below the eye lids. The ears were painted red inside and both cheeks were painted with a red-orange circle or triangle. Necklaces and bracelets were also worn.

The men were proud of their hair and would daily comb, grease and braid it. It was parted in the center and braided. A streak of yellow, white, or red was applied along the part. Braids were tied or wrapped with beaver fur or bright cloth. Men also wore a scale lock braided from the top of the head with a single feather. When women were in mourning, they would cut off the hair and give it to the men who would braid it into their own. Hair was cared for with brushes made from porcupine tails.

The men plucked all hair from the face and eyebrows with tweezers made from animal bone.

Paint was very important to both men and women. Paint was made from clays, and plant and berry juices. Vermilion was acquired from white traders. Black was war paint - it symbolized death. Red, yellow, olive green and blue were favorite colors.

Both men and women also tattooed the chest and face. Warriors were very proud of their battle scars and tattooed around them.

Warriors also wore bands of rawhide or cooper on the left wrist to protect from the bow string. The Comanche men also would wear earrings of shell, brass or silver.

The Comanches had a case made of rawhide to carry their dress clothes. It was shaped like an envelope with a fold over flap that tied. This traditional suitcase was called a parfleche. Feathers or war bonnets were carried in a tubular bag with war paint and a brush. These were worn around the waist when riding a horse.

Buffalo Hunt

The buffalo was by far the most important animal to the Comanche. This great animal was more than just meat; it supplied virtually everything the Comanche needed to stay alive, from spoons to housing.

The buffalo hunt of the Comanche followed a fairly regular routine. In certain seasons the hunt became a tribal affair. These great communal hunts occurred in the summer and the winter months. In the summer, the buffalo were sought because the skins were thinner. These skins made good tipi covers and clothes because they were easier to tan. In the winter the buffalo hides were very thick. These hides made luxurious robes and blankets for winter use. The exact time the hunts began was determined in an assembly where everyone was welcome to listen, but in which the war leaders made the important decisions.

Everyone became involved in the hunt. Runners were sent to seek locations for hunting camps. Scaffolds were erected for drying meat. There was plenty of hard work for all concerned but it was spiced by anticipation of great feasts and gay social activity.

Group discipline prevailed and the rules of the hunt were known and respected. Each hunt had a leader who was a respected warrior and man of good judgment. His was the power to signal the attack. The hunters moved against the wind in a great semicircle remaining quietly on horseback out of sight of the buffalo. The buffalo have a keen sense of smell but their hair obscures their sight; their sense of hearing is poor. The herd was encircled except on the windward side. The leader gave the signal and the whole circle closed in around the herd, forming it into a compact mass. The bulls presented themselves broadside to the hunters as they forced the cows and calves to the center of the packs. In the surround, the buffalo often were bewildered and ceased to run. As a result killing them was easy.

At certain times, if the topography of the land was unfavorable for a close surround, the hunters stalked the herd against the wind to get as close as possible. At a given signal all hunters charged the animals. This simultaneous charge prevented the scattering of the herd.

Another early method of killing the buffalo was with the lance. The rider approached the buffalo from behind and held the lance across his body. When the buffalo was slightly ahead of the horse, the hunter, using both hands, thrust his lance

down-ward and forward, aiming for the heart. When the buffalo attempted to turn and charge, the hunter pressed the lance firmly into its side until the buffalo fell. Most hunting methods employed by the Indians required the use of a well trained horse.

Other methods were occasionally employed. One was to drive the buffalo over a precipice or sometimes into a river. One young hunter disguised with a buffalo skin fastened about his body with horns and ears secured to deceive the buffalo, placed himself at a convenient distance between the buffalo and the river precipices. The other hunters positioned themselves in the rear and flanks of the herd and showing themselves at a given signal advanced upon the herd. The decoy secured himself in some crevice of the cliff previously selected, leaving the herd on the brink. Impossible for the foremost of the herd to retreat or to turn aside and being pressed on by those behind, they tumble headlong off the cliff.

Some hunters employed yet another unique method. A young man wrap himself with a buffalo or wolf hide and creep on “all fours” within shooting distance of the unsuspecting buffalo. The hunter had to take care to approach toward the wind always. Then it was possible to kill a number of animals with a bow and arrow before the herd realized the source of its danger.

When the hunt ended, each dead buffalo was the property of the hunter who killed it. A hunter could easily identify his kill by the location of the animal, its appearance, the position of the wounds and his own marked arrow.

Every member of the family made use of the buffalo. Children played with tops made from the horn. They also used the hide to slide down hills. They rolled and kicked balls made of buffalo skin and stuffed with buffalo hair. The adults stuffed saddles with buffalo hair, and the horns were used as cups. All parts of the buffalo were used as tools, clothing, food, implements, or toys.

ACTIVITY:

Nomadic peoples, like the Comanches and other native Americans had no books or wall paintings to record their history. Extra “baggage”, such as decorative items, were not easily moved from place to place. Discuss alternative ways of keeping historical records and passing them on to future generations (such as oral histories).

Discuss how we use oral histories in our homes today –those stories that get repeated when families get together.

Another way of recording an important event was the Buffalo Robe. The robe could be rolled up and carried when the group moved.

Make your own buffalo robes:

- provide each child with a piece of brown butcher paper or a paper grocery bag cut into one long piece.
- paint a story using symbols and lines on the paper. The “story” can flow like text, from left to right or in a clockwise circle.
- have children share their stories



ACTIVITY:

Draw a buffalo on a posterboard. Outline some major organs and buffalo parts such as the bladder, stomach, and tendons, skin, hair, horns, etc. Make cards to pin on the buffalo that depict ways the buffalo were used by the Plains Indians and their use. Ex: Hide for tipis, tendons for string, rope, and thread.



The American Buffalo

The Southern Plains Indians were dependent upon the buffalo for many uses. See if you can match which part of the buffalo provided them with the following things. Place a letter in the blank from the second list.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| _____ 1. tipi | A. buffalo head |
| _____ 2. digging tool | B. buffalo tail |
| _____ 3. boiling pot | B. 12 buffalo hides |
| _____ 4. food | C. buffalo stomach |
| _____ 5. soles of moccasins | D. buffalo sinew |
| _____ 6. bow strings | E. shoulder bone |
| _____ 7. shield | F. buffalo hide |
| _____ 8. ceremonial mask | G. buffalo bladder |
| _____ 9. fly swatter | H. buffalo meat |
| _____ 10. storage for water | I. scraped rawhide |

Answers: 1-C; 2-F; 3-D; 4-I; 5-G; 6-E; 7-J; 8-A; 9-B, 10-H

Children

The birth of a Comanche infant signified an important addition to the tribe. Although all babies were cherished, the birth of a boy meant a time of celebration. The tribe was suddenly strengthened with much needed help for hunting and warfare. From birth, babies thrived in the women's world. They received constant care in the home during their first few days until it was time for the mother to return to her tasks. At that time, the baby was placed in a cradleboard which could be carried on the mother's back, strapped to the back of a horse, or leaned against a rock, tree or side of a tipi.

The cradleboard or “papoose board” consisted of lavishly decorated soft skins sewn to a framework of sticks or a flat angular board. Secure in the pouch, the baby could observe the activity of the tribe through the opening at the top. In the event of cold weather, the baby was swaddled with blankets in the cradle with only a small opening left for the eyes and nose.

Muscular activity was very restricted during the first months of life. The Comanche child was well into the eighth or ninth month before spending any significant time out of the cradleboard. Then the child could begin to physically enjoy and explore the surroundings by crawling and playing about on the ground. From this point on, the child was carried on the mother's back without the cradleboard. Children were perfectly content to eat and sleep in this manner as the mother continued about her daily tasks.

The naming of a child came at no set time. Sometimes a father would name the child, but generally, a name was bestowed by an important member of the group. A name given by the Shaman during a public ceremony guaranteed a longer and more productive life. The Comanche associated names with individual makeup. (Therefore, a sick child could be strengthened with a new name or a name describing a brave deed of a warrior; for example, He Runs Directly Against The Enemy). Names were also connected with an event or experience of a godparent, an expression of pride by the father or simply named after another relative in the family. Nicknames were commonly used. They were haphazardly chosen and could change at any time depending on the circumstance. They were commonly associated with physical traits such as Face Wrinkles Like An Old Man. Grayfoot was named as a result of gray clay covering her feet while she crossed a creek.

In their young years, girls imitated the lives of their mothers while the boys pretended to be brave warriors and hunters. Much like children today, Comanche

children played with toys. Little girls played with small tipis and dolls made from buffalo skins and hair. As they became older, they learned to make doll clothes and tiny cradleboards with scraps. There existed a very close relationship between girls and their aunts. This was also true with the maternal grandmother. These bonds were likely to be less formal than that between the daughter and her mother.

The games of boys prepared them for the role of a hunter and warrior. Their toys consisted of skin dolls which resembled buffaloes, horses, and other animals. When they reached the age of 5 or 6, their toys became weapons of war and hunting - bows and arrows (blunt ends at first), shields and spears. Because the father was often engaged in hunting and war, the grandfather was the one who taught a boy to ride, make bows and arrows, shoot, and secrets of the hunt and trails. A boy would learn to be silent and listen as the grandfather shared stories of his boyhood and passed on the tribal history, traditions, legends and rituals. As a result, a strong relationship usually developed between the two.

Both boys and girls became proficient in horseback riding because they began their training as soon as they could sit astride a horse and hold the reins. The boys spent a greater amount of time in practice because expertise was more important for them. In some cases, however, it was difficult to distinguish the men from the women in terms of skills.

Life began to be more serious for both boys and girls by the time they were eight years old. As they grew and acquired more responsibilities, their games quickly became realities. At this age, the girls were given small tasks such as carrying water and getting wood. Usually groups of girls with a few women would go out of the camp to gather nuts, roots, fruit and wood. At the age of twelve, the girls were taught all the essential skills needed to become a wife, including cutting out moccasins, cooking, dressing hides and constructing a tipi.

A boy of eight spent a great deal of time in practice with his bow and began hunting small birds with his friends. As he grew older, he began to hunt larger game farther from camp. His first great kill was heralded as a very important event in his life. During this time a boy would learn valuable lessons which would later aid him in real hunts, such as patience, quietness and caution. He learned to take advantage of different aspects of nature, to learn its signs, and to observe wild animals and how they reacted under different conditions. A young Comanche learned very early that hunting

was not simply a game but that his skills could mean the difference between food and clothes or hunger and exposure.

ACTIVITY:

Have a round table discussion about the differences and similarities of how pioneer children were raised and how the Plains Native American children were raised.

**ACTIVITY:**

Cultures operate within different belief systems and rules that govern behavior and communication.

One method of communication used by many Native American groups that was not used by Western cultures was the Talking Circle. This communication device was used so that all people's viewpoints could be heard.

Prior to using the Talking Circle, choose a relevant topic for discussion –something of interest to students, or a current news item.

All participants (students) sit in a circle. An item such as a stone or feather is passed from one person to the next around the circle in a clockwise direction. The person holding the item speaks and then passes it to the next person. This continues until all participants have had a chance to speak. Those who do not wish to talk may pass.

Talking Circles are effective for open – ended discussions, sharing feeling and responses, developing empathy, building trust, and ensuring that all participants have an opportunity to participate.



Games

Although the Comanches led a physically demanding life-style, they always found time for entertainment. During the times when they were not at war or hunting, and between planting and harvesting, their leisure time was spent in games, sports and storytelling.

The Comanches were a very social people and spent a great deal of time visiting and feasting. These evening social gatherings allowed for the discussion of news and tribal welfare. A portion of the evening was devoted to singing and storytelling, which helped to perpetuate tribal history, legends, traditions and ideals by frequent repetition. The older members of the tribe never tired of repeating their stories, thus both educating and entertaining the young members.

All ages participated in games. The Comanche people rarely had an opportunity to be bored because of their broad spectrum of games ranging from very physically competitive games to quiet games that could be played inside the tipi during winter or bad weather.

The outdoor games required speed, skill and physical endurance. Although the object of the games was fun, winning was taken with seriously. Winning a game was as important to a Comanche as a successful hunt or a victorious battle. However, simply participating in the games helped to strengthen hunting and warfare skills.

Double Ball, played almost exclusively by the women, was a strenuous pastime. The goals were formed by securing a stake at each end of a quarter of a mile field. Two balls, stuffed with hair and covered with buckskin, were joined by a thong around seven or eight inches in length. The balls were flattened to a diameter of about three to four inches. Each player had a stick which was about 45 inches long and slightly tapered and curved on one end. The game began much like basketball, with a referee tossing the ball up between two centers. The player who caught the ball would then use her stick to throw it to a teammate, who then would run with it toward her goal. If the runner was blocked, she would toss the balls over her opponent and catch it coming down on the other side or pass to a teammate. The object of the game was to move the ball to the opponent's goal without letting the balls touch the ground and to throw the thong at the stake in such a way that it wrapped around the stake and a point was scored.

One of the most popular games for the men was the **hoop and pole** game. The hoop was made of limber sticks bent into a five to twelve inch circle and wrapped with

rawhide string. Rawhide spokes radiated from a rawhide circle, one to two inches large in the center. A special throwing arrow measuring three to five feet long was used. The hoop game called for four players, two to a side, who stood facing each other. A starter rolled the hoop down a line between the two teams and the players threw their arrows simultaneously. A player scored if the arrow went through the center hoop as it was rolling. This game was excellent practice for accuracy.

Lacrosse, a game popular with a great many Native American peoples, was never taken up by the Comanches. They did, however, enjoy a very fast version of kickball, played by two teams. Each team had their own ball which was kicked as hard and fast as possible to a designated goal and then back to the starting point. The game became very rough because they could use whatever means they wished to prohibit their opponent's progress.

Because skill in the use of a bow and arrow was critical in the livelihood of the Comanche, informal **archery contests** occurred frequently. One variation of this sport involved taking a certain number of arrows which they held with their bow. The contestant would discharge his first arrow upward as high as possible and then shoot the remaining arrows as fast as possible. The winner was the one who had the greatest number of arrows in the air at once. Another variation was "Shooting for the Mark" which required each player to shoot their four arrows closest to where the first arrow landed.

Comanches loved showing off their expert **riding skills in races and games**. These events helped to keep them fit for riding in the midst of stampeding buffalo herds and in making raids. One of the most spectacular games was called "**Tilting**", which was played by either two individuals or two teams of riders. The riders carried a three to four foot pole which was padded with hides on one end. The object of the game was to push the opponent off the horse with a pole. In order to avoid being hit, the player would slide far over to the side of the horse so that almost none of the body was visible to the opponent. This trick was useful during battle because they were able to shoot arrows from over or under their horses' necks while their body remained out of sight.

When the weather became too hot, or after nightfall, **indoor games** were played, nearly all of which involved guessing. In a moccasin guessing game, two or more players removed a moccasin and put it in the circle. A designated player placed a small stone in each moccasin. One of the stones had a mark on it and the player attempted to

prevent the others from seeing which moccasin contained the marked stone. The one who guessed which moccasin contained the marked stone won.

Stick games were very popular. In one particular game, twelve or more sticks were used. All were the same except one, which was painted and was clearly different from the others. The player would close their eyes and divide the sticks into two groups and hand one portion to the opponent. The player who received the odd stick received a point. Stones were used to keep track of the score and were counted in the end to determine the winner. Another stick game involved a large number of sticks. Forty to sixty sticks were dropped onto the ground. Each contestant tried to divide the pile exactly in half with one move using a long pointed stick. The player only received a point if the division was exact.

A game that was very popular with the women was played with a shallow bowl and six plum stones or flat pieces of bone. The basket was usually six to eight inches in diameter and the stones or bones were marked in a way to make several combinations of colors. To make a throw of the "dice" the basket was raised as to toss the dice only a few inches high. Before the dice fell, the basket was brought sharply to the ground. The players took turns throwing while joking and chatting continually throughout the game.

ACTIVITY: GAMES WITH SEEDS OR STONES

For each of the following activities, color one side of each of six peach seeds, nut, stones or buttons.

1. Tossing Game: Place a shoe box or coffee can on the ground. Mark a line about five feet from the container. The player stands behind the line and tries to toss the objects into the container. The player scores one point for each object that lands in the container. The player scores a bonus point for each object that lands with the colored side up. When everyone has had a turn, the player with the most points is the winner.

2. Seed Shake: A player puts the seeds or stones in a shoe box or coffee can, raises the container above their head and shakes it vigorously. The player then checks the seeds. If all of the seeds are facing the same way (colored side up or down) he or she scores 5 points. If 5 out of 6 are facing the same way, he or she scores 1 point. No points are scored if fewer than 5 seeds are facing the same way. The players take turns until someone scores a designated number of points or time is called.

3. Bowl: This game requires 5 small containers, six seeds or stones and a coffee can or shoe box. Six players can play at a time. One player holds the large container with the seeds. Each of the other players holds a small container. At the signal to go, the player holding the large container tosses the seeds high in the air and the other players try to catch them in their containers. A player receives one point for each seed that is caught and a bonus point for each seed with the colored side up.

Note: For each of these games, children can use small seeds or stones as counters to keep track of their own score.



ACTIVITY: KICKBALL

To play this game, you will need a rubber ball for every team of 3 to 6 players. Mark off a course, as long and winding as possible. Before the game begins, tell the players that this is a cooperative sport. Everyone should help to advance the ball and no player can kick the ball twice in a row. All teams place their balls at the starting line. At the signal, the teams kick their balls and race toward the finish line. The first team to complete the course is the winning team.



ACTIVITY: KICKAPOO

Divide the players into two teams. Give each team 7 sticks. Each team chooses a player to represent them in the contest. These two players stand face to face. One player is given a small stone to hide in his or her hand. With hands behind their back, the player carefully hides the stone. Then, bringing both hands to the front, the player moves them to the rhythm of a **musical instrument** or singing. When the music stops, the other player tries to guess which hand holds the stone. If the player guesses correctly, he or she takes a stick from the other team. If incorrect, one of the sticks is given to the opposing team. The team with the most sticks when time is called is the winner.



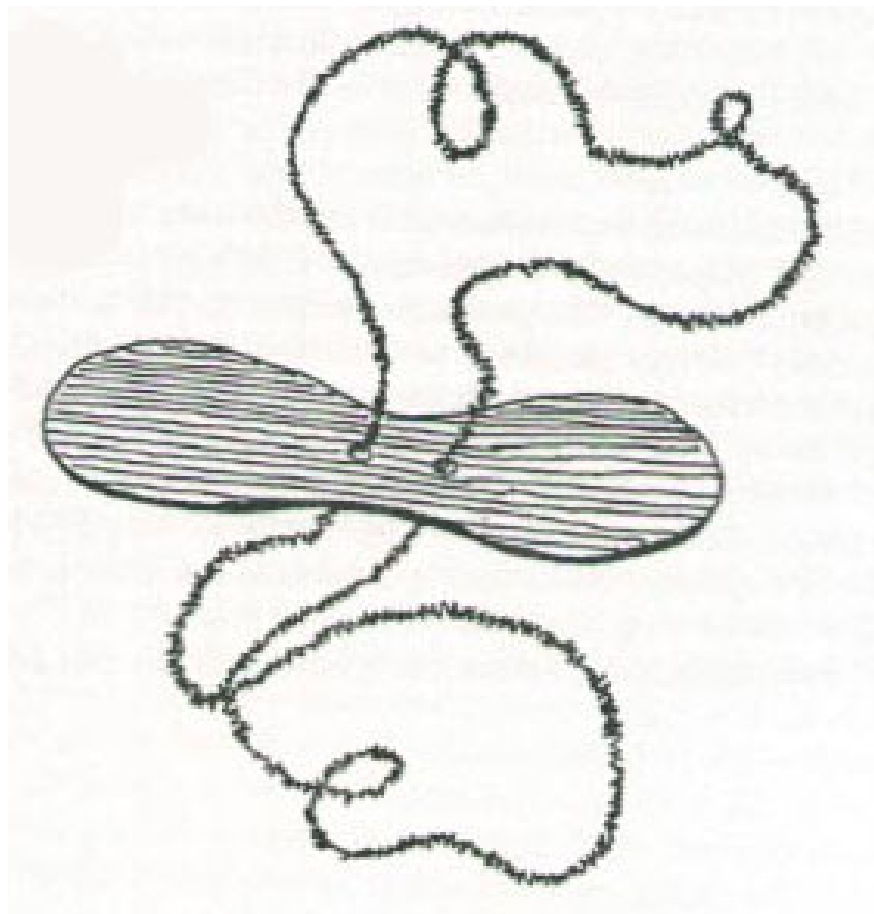
ACTIVITY: BUZZ TOYS***What you need:***

1-1/2 by 3 inch piece of gourd, shell, leather, wood, or other hard material; 3 feet heavy twine, hand drill, sandpaper

Procedure:

1. Use the sandpaper to smooth any rough edges on the material.
2. An adult should drill two holes in the middle of the object (see illustration).
3. Thread the twine through the holes and tie the ends of the twine together.

By twisting and pulling on the twine, you can make the object spin. If you pull the twine tight, relax it, then pull it tight again, the toy will make a buzzing sound.



ACTIVITY:

Students may wish to research into the lives of the famous Native Americans to find more interesting facts that they can share with the rest of the group.



ACTIVITY:

Research famous Southern High Plains Native American Tribes. Complete one of the following activities after your research:

1. Make a timeline of your tribe. Identify famous leaders and events. Mount on posterboard.
2. Report on a famous Native American leader. Do this by having an interview, pictorial review or video tape presentation.



Comanche Word Search

T	Q	D	F	L	P	H	S	K	V	E	H	C	N	A	M	O	C	G	M
Y	Y	M	E	D	I	C	I	N	E	M	A	N	Y	G	K	T	E	A	E
E	O	A	F	D	P	L	E	G	G	I	N	G	S	P	C	K	H	T	H
L	X	B	E	S	E	U	A	E	R	Q	S	L	T	A	Q	G	P	I	D
O	Y	E	Y	T	N	I	A	P	R	A	W	A	C	S	H	B	E	L	N
P	N	D	X	U	W	A	R	R	I	O	R	T	A	L	U	V	D	T	I
D	O	U	T	E	C	F	H	S	R	M	U	E	A	F	V	K	I	I	K
N	M	U	R	D	B	R	D	R	C	S	R	R	F	T	M	H	H	N	S
A	E	T	C	H	A	I	A	E	L	P	I	A	E	K	O	E	W	G	K
P	R	R	Q	H	E	N	R	H	L	T	L	U	U	N	F	O	A	W	C
O	E	K	I	I	T	G	K	T	U	O	L	C	H	C	E	E	R	B	U
O	C	Q	I	J	I	E	E	A	D	O	U	B	L	E	B	A	L	L	B
H	R	H	I	H	P	T	L	E	C	R	A	D	L	E	B	O	A	R	D
Y	U	N	G	P	I	S	F	F	R	B	M	O	C	C	A	S	I	N	S

MEDICINEMAN
BREECHCLOUT
DOUBLEBALL
CRADLEBOARD
MOCCASINS
HOOPANDPOLE
FRINGE

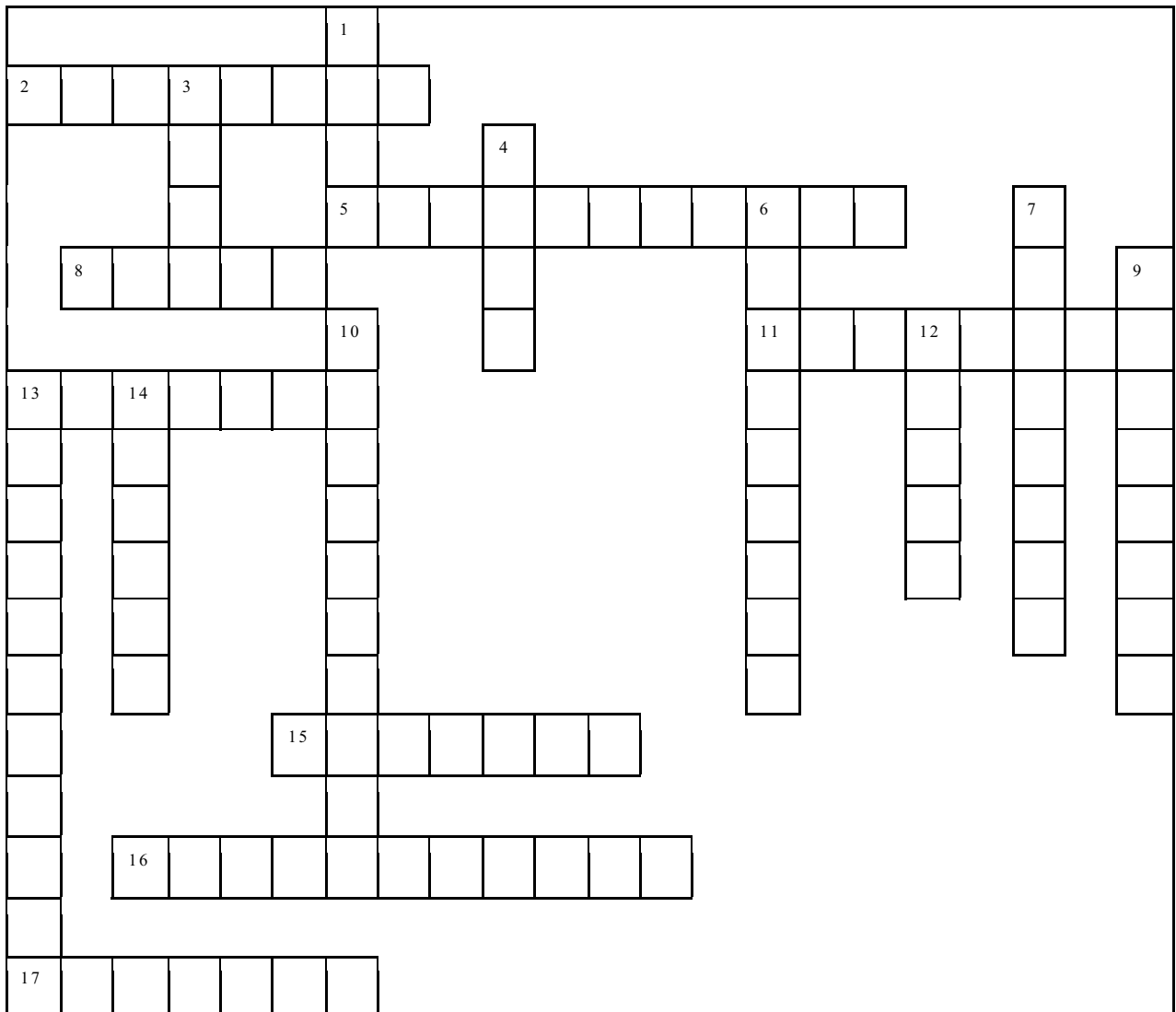
RITUALS
WARPAINT
HIDE
BUCKSKIN
CACTUS
FEATHERS
WARRIOR

CEREMONY
TRIBE
TATOO
TIPI
LEGGINGS
COMANCHE
POUCH

ARROW
DRUM
TILTING
RAWHIDE
BUFFALO
PIPE



Comanche Crossword Puzzle



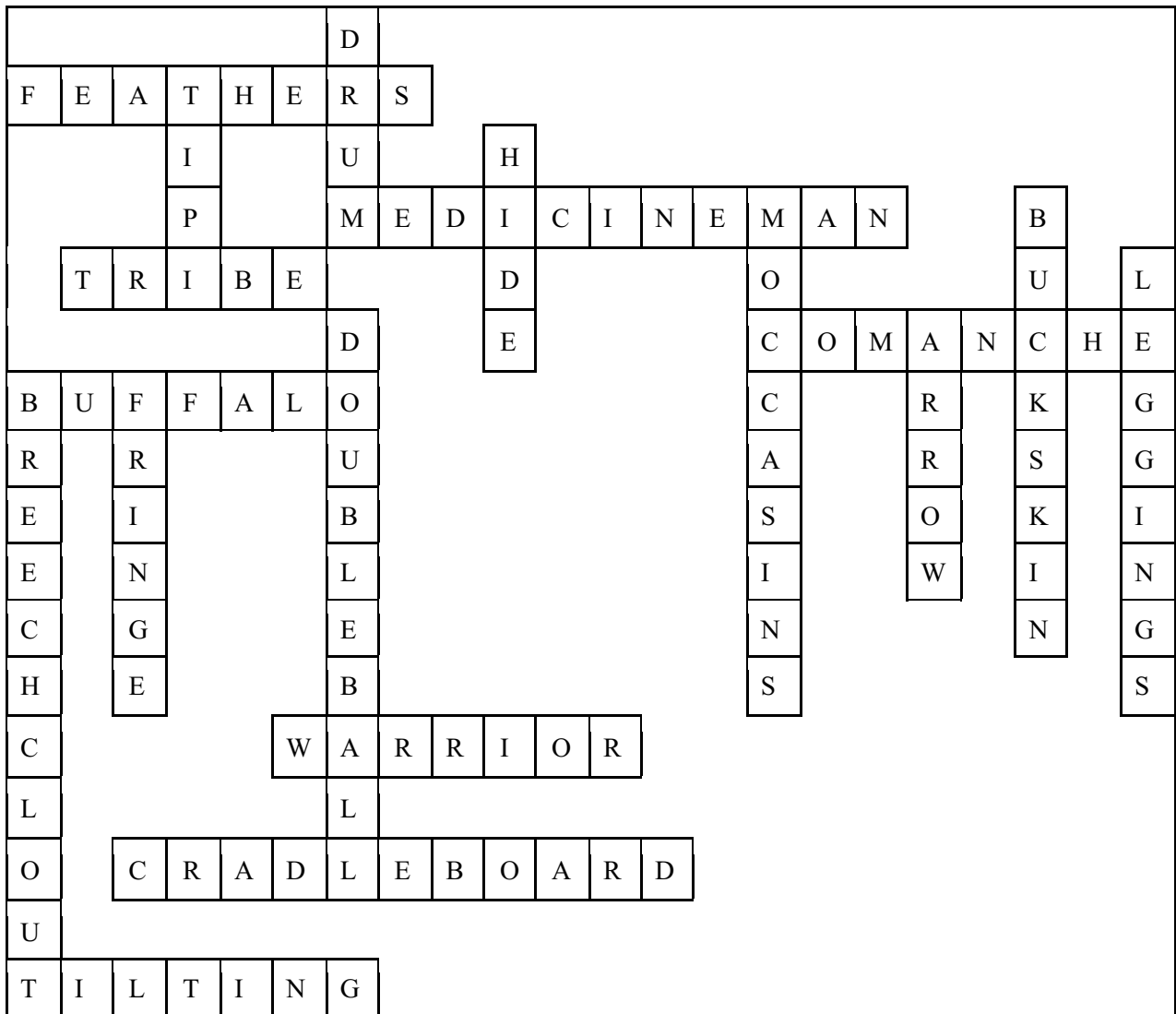
ACROSS

- 2. Decorations considered sacred
- 5. Tribe doctor
- 8. Indian community
- 11. Plains Indian tribe
- 13. Primary source of food and supplies for the tribe
- 15. A male ready for battle
- 16. An Indian mother's baby carrier
- 17. A horsemanship skills game

DOWN

- 1. Percussion instrument made from buffalo skin
- 3. Comanche Indian house
- 4. Buffalo skin
- 6. Indian shoes
- 7. Any hide that has been tanned
- 9. A male's pants
- 10. A team game played by women
- 12. A wooden shat shot from a bow
- 14. A male's warm weather clothing
- 15. Decoration on clothing

Comanche Crossword Puzzle (solution)

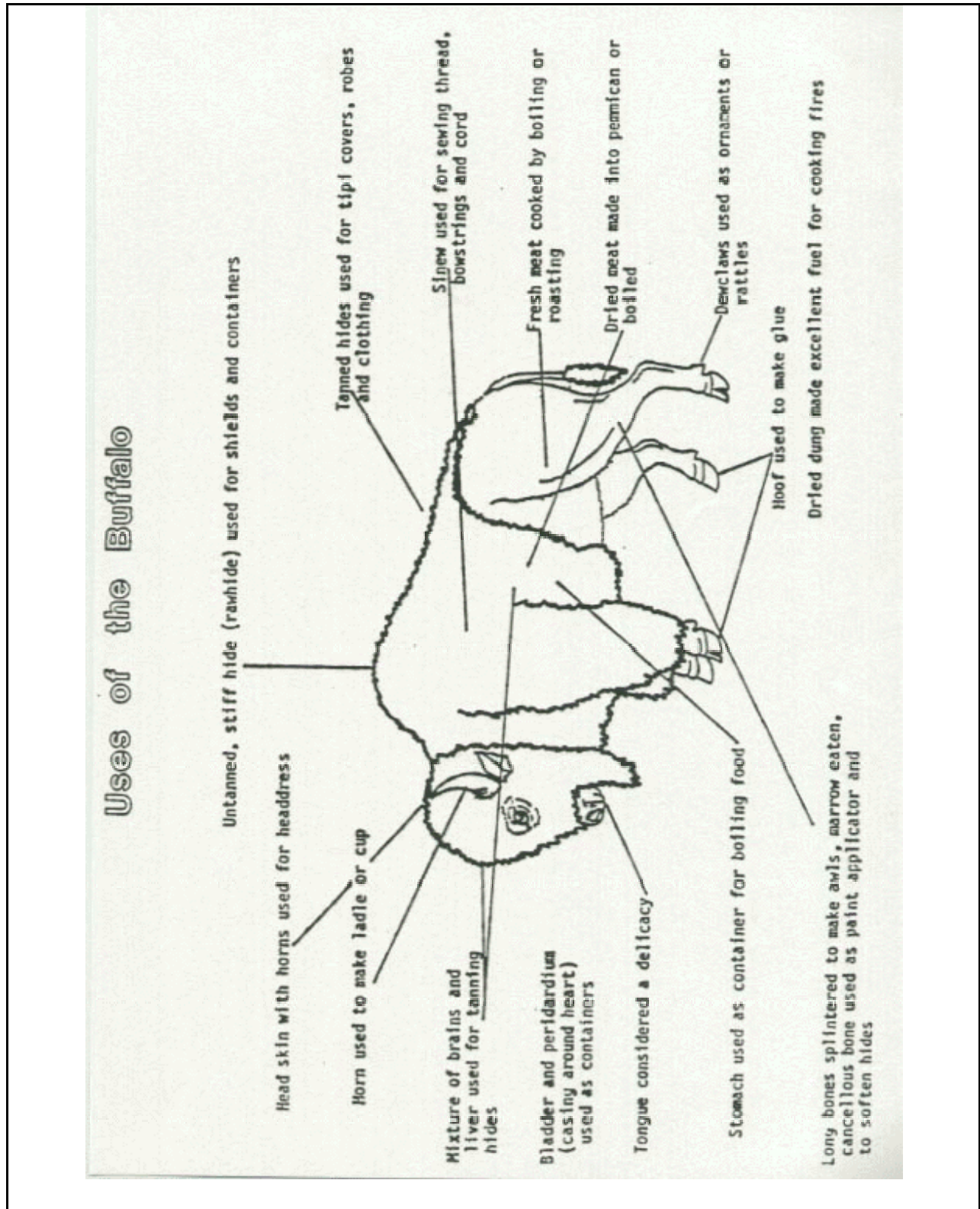


ACROSS


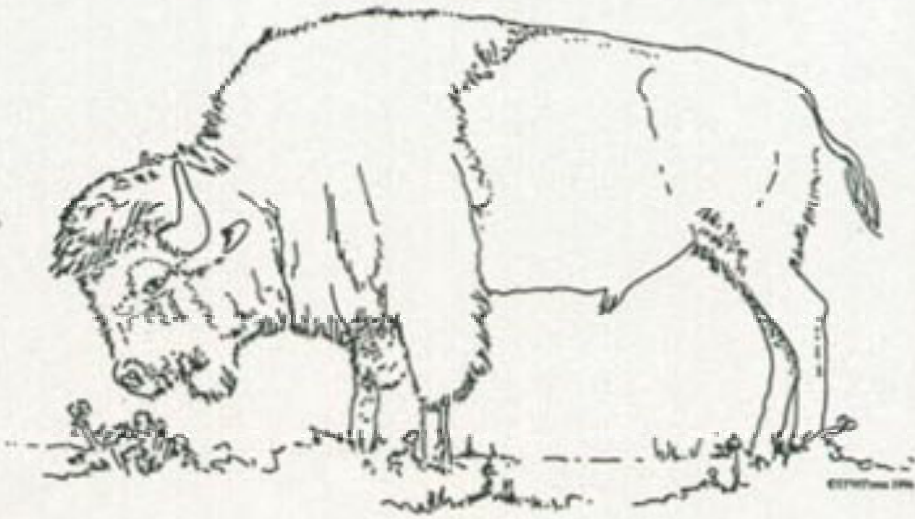
- 2. Decorations considered sacred
- 5. Tribe doctor
- 8. Indian community
- 11. Plains Indian tribe
- 13. Primary source of food and supplies for the tribe
- 15. A male ready for battle
- 16. An Indian mother's baby carrier
- 17. A horsemanship skills game

DOWN

- 1. Percussion instrument made from buffalo skin
- 3. Comanche Indian house
- 4. Buffalo skin
- 6. Indian shoes
- 7. Any bide that has been tanned
- 9. A male's pants
- 10. A team game played by women
- 12. A wooden shat shot from a bow
- 14. A male's warm weather clothing
- 15. Decoration on clothing



Uses of the Bison among Historic Indians

HIDE
Tanned:
bedding
belts
breechcloths
cradles
dolls
dresses
gun cases
lance covers
leggings
moccasin tops
paint bags
pipe bags
pouches
quivers
shirts
tepee covers
winter robes

Untanned:
armbands
belts
buckets
bull boats
bullet pouches
cinches, ropes
containers, small and large
drums
drumsticks
headdresses
horses forehead ornaments
horse masks
knife cases
lance cases
medicine bags
moccasin soles
quirts
rattles
saddles
shields
splints
stirrups
thongs

HORNS
cups
headdresses
ladies
powder horns
spoons
toys

SKULL
ceremonies
prayer objects

HAIR
halters
headdresses
medicine balls
ornaments
pillows
ropes
saddle-pad fillers

BEARD
ornamentation of clothing and weapons

MEAT
best parts — tongue, inner parts (organs), rump and ribs—eaten on the spot; the rest of the meat was made into jerky and pemmican (a paste of meat, fat and berries).

SINEW (tendons)
glue
bows
thread
cinches

PAUNCH (stomach)
lining used for:
basins
buckets
cups
dishes

BUFFALO CHIPS
ceremonial smoking
fuel
signals

HOOVES AND FEET
glue
rattles

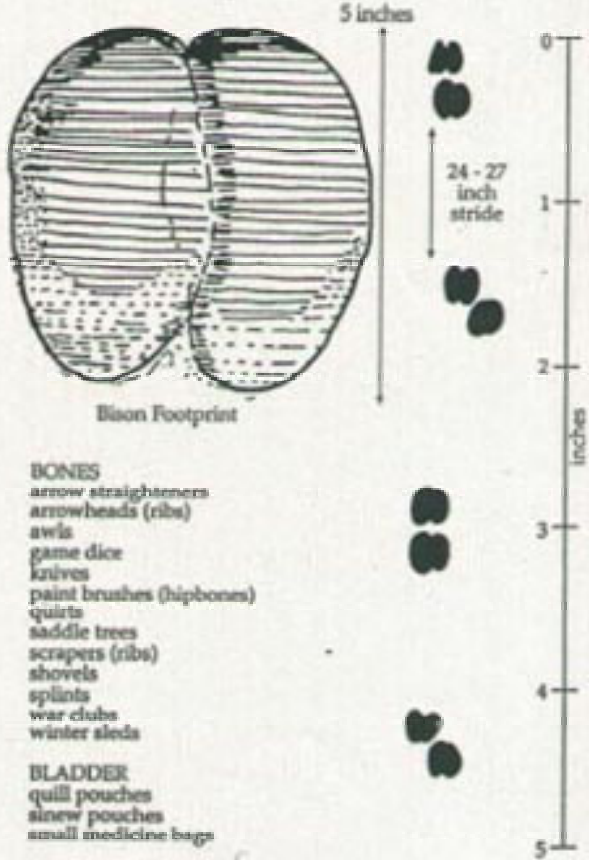
SKIN OF HIND LEGS
moccasins or boots (preshaped)

TAIL
medicine switches
fly brushes
tepee decorations
whips

BRAINS
hide preparation (tanning)

BONES
arrow straighteners
arrowheads (ribs)
awls
game dice
knives
paint brushes (hipbones)
quirts
saddle trees
scrapers (ribs)
shovels
splints
war clubs
winter sleds

BLADDER
quill pouches
sinew pouches
small medicine bags



Bison Footprint

ACTIVITY

NAME: _____



**Make the buffalo a “ruff” with glue and cereal flake
Make the buffalo an eye with glue and a sequin
Take the buffalo home with you and color him brown**

Bibliography

Branson, Mary Kinney, A Carousel of Countries, 1986, Birmingham, Alabama: New Hope Press.

Branson, Mary Kinney, Fun Around the World, 1992, Birmingham, Alabama: New Hope Press.

Capps, Benjamin, 1973, The Old West - The Indians, New York: Time Life Books.

Fichter, George S., How the Plains Indians Lived, 1980, New York: David McKay Company, Inc.

Harston, J. Emmor, Comanche Land, 1963, The Naylor Co.

MacFarlan, Allan A., Book of American Indian Games. 1958, New York: Association Press.

Newcornb, W. W. Jr., The Indians of Texas from Prehistoric to Modern Times, 1961, University of Texas Press.

Wallace, Ernest and Hoebel E. Adamson, The Comanches: Lords of the South Plains, University of Oklahoma Press, 1986.