

# Archeology Tour



Introduction - Archaeologists are concerned with both space and time—where and when.

When are we living? It's more than 180 years or 7 generations after Texas Independence. How many generations of your family do you know? The last Caddo lived here ~25 generations ago. ~20 generations of Caddo lived on/near the site—almost three times as long as the time between Today and Texas Independence.



Where are we now? North America, USA, Texas, Cherokee County, Highway 21? Where are we in the Caddo World? These Caddo shared a language and culture that reached to Louisiana and Arkansas. In the east lived family and in the west were trading partners: the opportunity for exotic goods—and danger!

Village life - The Caddo Mounds area has been occupied by a series of people groups during Paleoindian, Archaic, and Early Ceramic or Woodland periods. The Caddo people lived here from AD 800-1300. Archaeologists estimate that 200-300 people were living in the village at any one time. After the ruling class abandoned the mounds, smaller groups of Caddo lived nearby, but chose not to inhabit the old village site.



Mound A (The High Temple Mound)— was built in three stages. Caddo people burned and buried buildings on the ground level, then built new structures on top of the old, creating the mound. Those structures were burned, and more dirt was added to approximately the current height. “Renewal”—burying earlier buildings and using them as a foundation for future ones—is common across the Caddo area.



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Beginning in 1939, several teams of archaeologists excavated the Mound A area, uncovering more structures than any other Caddo site at the time. All the structures on Mound A are circular, except one: Feature 45. Early archaeologists called it “the Maze,” because of its intricate design. Others theorized that it was the outline of a turkey, its wings extending east and west and tail pointing south. Can you find Feature 45 on the [diagram]?

Scooter’s house - An experimental grass house was built at this spot in 1981, based on the pattern of house remains found in Excavation Unit 10 (between Mounds B and C). When the house began to decay, it was burned in a ceremony attended by [Caddo representatives]. Can you spot the outline of the house in the grass?



Borrow pit - The Caddo dug out dirt from this “borrow pit” to build Mound B. Because scientists can identify the origin of the soil in the mound by its color and type, we know the Caddo used yellow sand and clay from this pit, as well as gray and green soils from the floodplain to build mounds.

During excavations, archaeologists found Caddo artifacts, discovered the area had been used as a trash dump, and, most surprising of all, uncovered the remains of a 35 - 45-year-old man. The skeleton was found face down without grave offerings or a burial pit, suggesting that his internment was either accidental or purposefully non-ceremonial.



Mound B (The Low Platform Mound)- The first layer of Mound B was built at roughly the same time as Mound A ceased to be used. Like A, B is a ceremonial mound with at least three cycles of use. Mound B has eroded and been plowed, so we cannot be sure how high it once stood. Archaeologists have found evidence of three ramps leading up the mound.

Mound C (The Burial Mound)- Unlike the other two ceremonial mounds, Mound C is a burial mound. Archaeologists have only excavated 11 of the burial features but estimate that as many as 90 people were buried in Mound C over a period of 400 years. They have identified six stages of burials, each built on top of the previous.

