

This Land Was Made for You and Me

Keynote Address

by Cecile E. Carter

Caddo people were in Louisiana before anyone else - before the first Frenchmen set foot on the Gulf of Mexico, before the first Spaniard started riding horses across from the Mississippi, before any other non-native person got to what we now call

Louisiana, Caddo people were here. Red River was our homeland. As a Caddo, I am always happy to be invited to come to Louisiana because it's like coming home. What we talk about today though, Louisiana Studies, history of the Caddo people, I think needs to start at the beginning. That's what our Caddo grandmothers and grandfathers have done for many, many generations. The old ones--grandfathers and grandmothers--told how it was in long ago time.

In the beginning, they said, there was no sun, no moon, no stars--or earth like we see now. The earth was still green, which means it was not ripe yet. All of the people and all of the animals lived in darkness. After a while there came a person; there came a being. They didn't know who he was, but it seemed that he was everywhere they looked. Then came the time when this strange, unknown person disappeared. They thought nothing about it really. When he returned, he called all the people together, and he gave each one seeds that he had brought with him.

He told them, "Soon you will leave this old World of Darkness and go to a better world—a World of Light. These seeds will give you food when you get there. There will be a person called Sah-coo (Sun) who will be given power by the Great Father Above. Then you will see in a new World of Light. When that time comes I will be called away from my mother, from Great Mother Earth Below. I was the first being created." said the unknown man, "and I have been given power by the same Great Father Above. I know the way, and I

will lead you. But first, I must carry out my work. Listen now."

He told the people that they must select one man, the wisest and most able among them, to be their head man. He said they should call their headman Caddi (cah-de or cah-di), do whatever he commanded and look on him as a great father. "Go back to your homes," said the unknown man, "hold council among yourselves, and select your Caddi."

So the people all went back to their homes and had a great meeting together. The one called Ta-sha (Wolf) stood up and said, "The unknown man is powerful. We should call him Neesh (Moon) because he was the first created. He is surely the wisest, most able among us and he should be our Caddi." All agreed and so Moon, the first being created, became the first powerful leader of the people.

After Moon became Caddi, he chose a man to be his Tum-mah (Errand Man). A little while later he sent this Errand Man out to tell all the people to come together quickly. He had very important things to tell them. So the people all came as fast as they could gather.

Moon told them, "It is time to move away from this Old World in Darkness and go to a new world—a World of Light. First, you must divide into groups and choose a leader for each group. When you do that, those people will come back to me." This happened just the way he instructed. For each group, there was a chosen leader who came back to Moon. Moon gave each of these a drum and said, "When we start our walk up into the new World of Light, you must beat your drum and sing so that all of the people can hear and be led out of the darkness."

The time came to begin. The people started climbing up, moving with the drumbeat, following the song of their leaders. Up—Up—Up. Away from

the Old World in Darkness. Up—into the New World of Light. First was an old man carrying fire and a pipe in one hand, his drum in the other. Next came his wife bringing corn and pumpkin seeds. People and animals were still moving westward out of the Old World in Darkness into the New World of Light when Wolf stepped out. He looked around and called out, “But Moon, this world isn’t big enough for all of the people!”

Moon had given instructions to everyone before they started: “Whatever you do, do not look back. If you do the people will stop, and they will be lost forever in the old World of Darkness. Now, some say that Wolf saw a creature with horns and a tail and stopped to warn those behind him. However it was, he did turn to see how many were left to come out of the old World of Darkness. When he did, the people and animals still coming stopped. And, as the Caddi had warned, they lost the way out of the Old World of Darkness. The people already out in the New World of Light sat down and cried for the ones left in Darkness. We call that place Cha-cah-nee-nah, “The Place of Crying.”

No one knows for sure where the place of crying was. There are some people who claim that it was at the mouth of Red River where it meets the Mississippi that they came from a cave in the earth. Others say, “No. The place of crying was near the bend of Red River where they came out of a hole in the earth.”

The People kept on travelling west until Moon picked up some dirt and threw it in front of him making very high hills. He walked to the top of a hill so he could look around and see all the people who had come out. He discovered that some had gone in different directions. They scattered to different places. That is the reason why you have different people speaking different languages today.

Kee-oh-na-wah’-wah ha-ee-may’chee, the Old People, built their first houses in the valley of Red River and its uplands traced by tributaries draining into the River. They planted their seeds in this wonderful, wonderful, new land of light that

gave them everything they needed. There were fish, there were deer, there were rabbits and raccoons, and other small game. Buffalo and bear provided both meat and furs. Their homes were built sturdy and strong out of the materials that were there—cane, trees, and grass for thatch. And, they found an abundance of local clays to mold into ceramic utility ware and to shape into fine ceramic vessels decorated with intricate, artistic designs. That was the beginning of the Caddo people who grew and prospered and spread even farther on down Red River.

Archeologists have uncovered evidence of these Caddo Ancestors. When today’s maps are marked with black dots representing recorded archeological sites, there is a concentration along the Great Bend where Red River’s east-west flow turns south-southeast through Louisiana. It was there that the distinctive traits of Caddo culture developed around A.D. 800 and continued unbroken through historic time. Embracing traditions that established civic order and honored Ah-ah-hayo (Father or Great Leader Above, the Old People organized labor to carry basket loads of earth to create mounds used for special purposes. Maybe it was because of the earth thrown to make hills in the beginning. Maybe there’s some other reason we don’t know. The mounds grew higher as time went on. Some were built to be a platform for a very special house-- a house where the spiritual leader lived. He was called Chenesi (Tsa-neesh-ee). Other mounds were memorial monuments used for the burial of very important people. Mounds grew as they were capped with clay and covered with new earth following a burial or the burning of a scared house. Mounds served as markers for ceremonial centers for the villages that developed in the valleys of the Red River and its tributaries. Many of them are still in evidence today in the four state corners that are the old Caddo homeland.

While this civilization, a high social order, was being developed, there was, of course, only the history handed down orally from one generation to

the next, like the Beginning Story. It was not until much later, a thousand years, before the first written history was recorded. The old people, the Kee-onah-wah'-wah-ha-ee-may-chee, entered written history only when the first Europeans came into the Red River Valley area. In journals, letters, documents, reports, they wrote descriptions of the Caddo people, of what they looked like, of how their house looked, of what their activities were. That was the beginning of written history for the Caddo people.

By that time the Caddo people were geographically divided in three groups: the Cadohadacho communities around the great bend of Red River, the Hasinai, “our own people” living in northeast Texas, and the Nashitosh—Natchitoches—here where we are today. It was in the year 1700 that the Nashitosh had white people who came, first to visit and then to trade. I’m talking, of course, about the person all of you who are native Louisianans know, St. Denis. Think of what the year 1700 might have been like. It’s the month of March, rainy season here. There are 24 French Canadian men walking to find the Natchitoches village. The journal that was kept by one of the leaders of that group reads almost like a weather bulletin. It should sound familiar to you.

It rained all day on the 29th.

It rained until noon on the 30th, when I set out with a Nadchito [Natchitoches] to lead me to his village.

April 1st. It poured down all night and until ten o'clock this morning.

The 2nd. It rained all night, till two o'clock in the morning [. . .]bad roads through swamps, in water up to our bellies at least. We found six small streams that we had to cross on small trees lying 2 feet under water. The country was so thick with canes that we could not force our way through [. . .]we have spent the last two nights in the rain,

having found no big trees from which to rip bark for a shelter. Today we found some, on a very high hillside, where there appears to be good hunting. My men went off at once and killed a buffalo and a cow and the calf, which had lain down by its mother.

The 3rd. It poured down all night and thundered.

The 4th, Palm Sunday [. . .]we happened upon the road to the village, which we abandoned in order to avoid a big swamp, and proceeded down a dry creek bed.

The 5th [. . .]we found a swamp a third of a league wide, in which there was no bottom at 6 feet and which was partly filled with logs, from which we made rafts to support our clothes. We spent the whole day crossing it.

The 6th [. . .] we found a big lake, which we had to go around...we came upon two huts of Natchitoches [. . .] One cannot go to their village except in a canoe (they have only two canoes) because of the overflow of water from the river.

The 7th. Arrived at the village of the Souchitonys (Doustonis), where I was well received. The Natchitoches are about 1 league from here—all scattered in huts along the Marne River.¹

Many times I can recall, at least more than once, a Caddo elder has told me, “God gave special ways to the white man and special ways to the Indian—they are different. We don’t know why, but they are. The white man writes things down for others to read and learn; the Indian tells what has happened and expects his children to listen and remember. With Louisiana Studies, it really needs to be that way, too. That’s the reason I started today with telling you about “The Beginning” of the Caddo People, and now read to you from a journal of Bienville.

St. Denis, unlike many of our other interesting, historical personages, really wasn't much of a writer. So far as we know, he didn't keep a journal, although there were some rumors at one time that there was a lost manuscript someplace. I think that sounds like the hopeful thinking of some historian doing research. He did write reports for governmental use. He wrote very, very few letters. He did not keep a journal, so most of what we try to learn about St. Denis has to come from what other people have written about him. As it is with the Caddo or with St. Denis or anyone else, if individuals must depend upon others to write about their lives based on research, sometimes of nebulous nature and certainly affected by the writer's bias, then a reader must decide, on whose side was the writer?

Of the first visit that St. Denis made, Bienville wrote on the day when he finally got to the Natchitoches village, "It rained all day. At this village there are fifteen huts assembled in a cluster. In front of the village, the river is wide and full of uprooted trees. Now, the water is high. It is four fathoms deep." At that time, the Cane River was still the Red River. All of the flooding that St. Denis and Bienville and the other Canadians were wading through, sometimes armpit high, had Bienville envious of St. Denis because St. Denis was six feet tall, and Bienville was not that tall. While St. Denis was wading through water up to his waist, Bienville had it up to his shoulders.

As I said, the Cane River at that time was the main channel in 1700 when they arrived. The reason that all that area was so heavily swampy and flooded, was because the Great Raft was just above Natchitoches. It wasn't until the Raft was removed that the main channel changed and left you with Cane River, which, of course, gives you a beautiful world to live in here today.

St. Denis and Bienville were making their trip up Red River to the Natchitoches because they had heard about the Cadohadacho on up on Red River and they knew that Spain was trying to claim

territory up to where the Caddo lived on Red River. An earlier French group had walked through that territory. They were survivors of LaSalle's ill-fated attempt to build a colony on the Gulf Coast. Because of the rivalry between the Spanish, the French, the English, and finally the Americans in claiming the borderland between Louisiana and what became Texas, there were, even at this early time, people coming to the borderland area in order to try to establish possession.

Though St. Denis turned back before reaching the Caddo on his first trip, he was sent back a second time to visit with the Natchitoches and try to find his way up to the Caddo on the bend in Red River. Bienville decided it was necessary for them to turn back that first time because of the time of the year and the flooding. It was going to take longer to get on up to the Caddo than the time they had to be back on the Mississippi Gulf Coast where a French ship was supposed to be coming in with supplies for the colony established there. On his second trip, St. Denis did make it all the way up river to the Cadohadacho.

The records of that time period are really too scarce to tell us how long he stayed there or how much he traveled between the Natchitoches and the Cadohadacho or crossed over to Hasinai villages in what is now east Texas but was then thought of as Louisiana. He evidently spent quite some time in visiting many, if not all, of the Caddo Nation villages during that time period. He learned to speak the language and established a good trading relationship with all of them. That was mainly what the French were looking for - a good trading relationship - preferably with Mexico, but if they couldn't do that, the Indians were the second-best trading partners.

The Spaniards in Mexico sent word to the officials in Spain about hearing rumors that the French were invading Spanish territory. They had really not done much to come across the Rio Grande and establish any real possession in there. It was a vast area and they didn't have to worry about

it until they heard about these Frenchmen wandering around in land they considered a Spanish possession. That was when they tried a second time to establish missions among the Hasinai Caddo in east Texas. They had failed in a first attempt. This time, they managed to set up missions and keep them there a little bit longer. They also built their fort, Los Adaes.

It was the opening of Los Adaes as a military fort that really set off alarms for St. Denis and the French who were in possession of this borderland area. It goes like “tit for tat, tit for tat.” Los Adaes became the capital for the Spanish Province of Tejas. That jealousy between these two nations continued being built that way.

There had been a missionary in an earlier attempt to establish the missions among the Tejas Indians, the Hasinai. When the missions had been withdrawn that first time, he just didn't really want to give up. He wanted to continue his mission work with these Caddo Indians in Texas. He couldn't persuade the Spanish government that it would be a good idea to help establish possession by Christianizing all of these Caddos who, incidentally, had their own religion. They had worshiped one God for a thousand years or so before the first missionary was sent into the area. This Father Hidalgo just couldn't persuade the Spanish authorities that they should renew the missionary effort. He got a bright idea. He wrote a letter to the governor of Louisiana saying that he thought it was a good idea to re-establish his mission in order to earn an opportunity for French trade within Spanish territory. That letter sort of floated around for a couple of years before it ever found its way to the governor of Louisiana who at the time was Cadillac. When that letter did reach Cadillac, he didn't waste a minute because this was the great opportunity. The king and his council had sent him from France to establish trade relationships for France with the Spaniards. He immediately made plans to send a trading mission to Mexico.

What better man to do that, take charge of that, than St. Denis? He knew the Indians. He liked them; they liked him. He was an experienced trader. He was an experienced military man, and he had worked in the wilderness for many, many years now. He had experience in every area that he needed in order to be successful in establishing trade with Mexico.

The first thing St. Denis thought of was, I need to establish a base. That base could most fortunately be Natchitoches or, as we said then, Nashitosh. That was close to the route that St. Denis would need to take to go down into Mexico. He would perhaps have guides who knew the country and who could lead him down there. They were friendly. He brought the Nashitosh, called them all together. He knew that all of their gardens were completely flooded out--all their crops flooded last year. Just like Moon, he brought them seeds and told them they needed to plant. He said he was giving these seeds because the Natchitoches were going to have French people coming from now on; that there will always be Frenchmen here; part of the job will be to provide food for them.

The Nashitosh got busy and built a sort of warehouse to store all the supplies that St. Denis brought with him, and another little house to house about ten men that St. Denis was going to leave there. Essentially, this was the first Natchitoches Post; built by the Nashitosh people who cut the logs and erected the building because they had been doing that sort of building in that particular area for over a thousand years or more. They knew how to do it and could do it quickly. St. Denis left part of his supplies there and left about ten men to guard the supplies and take care of things while he started on his journey down to Mexico.

Much has been said about that trip he made to Mexico which makes a wonderful, romantic story about falling in love with a beautiful Spanish woman, marrying her, having all of his trade goods taken from him, spending a year or so in prison in Mexico. All wonderful stories, most probably

written in one book by a Frenchman by the name Penicaut. Penicaut claimed to be with St. Denis all the way through this trip. It has been pretty well established that he wasn't with him all the way through. He came as far as Nacogdoches and stayed there. St. Denis went on with three other men. It's a good read. If you happen to have students who are reluctant to read history and you are trying to get them into this sort of thing in Louisiana Studies, give them *Cavalier in the Wilderness* by Ross Phares. They'll probably want to read a chapter or two of it anyway.

While what has been said or written about that trip St. Denis made down there, certain writers can't find much more importance to give it other than a romantic story, a delightful escapade, and a bold romance. The real significance of that expedition is not that it didn't establish trade with Mexico as it was designed to do, but what it did do, indirectly or even directly, was to cause the Spanish to establish possession of what we now call Texas. They hadn't enough reason to be interested in doing so before then.

For the Natchitoches, the importance of St. Denis's adventure is that, beginning with his first visit in 1701 and continuing for years after that, trade important to the French was also important for the Caddo. The reason we can say that St. Denis's adventure caused the Spanish to establish their possession, is that when Spaniards came to the Hasinai, the Caddo in Texas, they found French guns, lots of beads of every color you could imagine, different trinkets, pocket knives, pieces of cloth, other goods, and hatchets. When asked, where did you get these things, the Hasinai answered that the Frenchman bought them to us. They have square houses that come on the water and bring these things up the river. They trade for hides and pelts.

The Caddo started to increasingly rely on those trade goods. They were experienced traders, the makers of wonderful bows out of bois d'arc wood that were a major trade item on a long distance trade route that they had from a very early

time. Osage Orange or bois d'arc wood grew only in the region of the upper Red River. It made such excellent bows that other tribes also wanted them. Caddo bows and salt made from the saline streams in their territory were major items along the trade route. As good as those bows were and as superior Caddo people were in the use of the bow and arrow, when enemies have guns, guns are wanted and needed, and found necessary to have. The English furnished tribes such as the Osage with guns and ammunition. To have French guns available was a real bonus for the Caddo, not only for hunting, but for defense.

That relationship established between St. Denis and the Caddo people was more than trade. He was, like I said, a tall man, a handsome man. He was a great leader, an asset that Caddo people found in their great hereditary leader. Also like Caddo leaders, when St. Denis held conferences or met them, he was always dressed to his finest, just as Caddo leaders always dressed in their finest when they had important engagements or appointments with other people. It was a show or sign of respect. St. Denis always kept his promises. That was something the Spanish didn't do very well. Caddos governed by "a promise made is a promise kept." That was the way to build allied relationships. It was a matter of trusting what you were told. Something like your mother telling you, "Don't go in the water after you eat" and trusting truth in her words. Trust in the truth was simply so strong among the Caddo, it had to be in order to establish a firm relationship.

St. Denis dressed in the current French fashion which included britches to the knee tied with a ribbon and hose. He seemed to favor either blue or red hose. He had long legs, and he had a strong, athletic body. The name that the Caddo gave him was "Beautiful Leg." Anytime he wanted to send a message, some sort of a written message, to the Caddo, he would draw on it the shape of a beautiful leg. When a Caddo leader received one of these pieces of paper with the beautiful leg drawn

on it, he would immediately organize his people and go to Natchitoches to see what it was that was so important that St. Denis had sent that message to him.

There came a time then in 1730-1731 when the Caddo on Red River and the Caddo in the Natchitoches villages here and the Caddo in the villages in northeast Texas, the Hasinai villages, each of those leaders received a piece of paper with the beautiful leg drawn on it. They knew that he needed help, and he really needed help because the Natchez Indians, who for a whole string of reasons that's another whole book, had decided to take revenge by attacking the Natchitoches settlement. The idea was to let all French people know that they were not welcomed.

St. Denis had gotten word that the Natchez were marching down to attack the Natchitoches Post. It wasn't a real fort. There were a few poles used as palisades. The Nashitosh, of course responded immediately as they were close enough to get to Ft. Natchitoches very rapidly. They only had forty warriors by then. A series of great epidemics had cut the population - all of the population of all of the Caddo people drastically in a series of huge epidemics happening about every three to seven years for a number in a series. The Caddo started from the Great Bend as soon as they got their paper. It took quite a while because of the raft and the way they had to make the trip, around and about to get from the bend down to Natchitoches. It took them several days to get there. The Hasinai came in a large number fairly rapidly. Mainly, they came in one by one at night because by now the Natchez had set up a field very close to the Post, and they had to come in covered by darkness.

From Los Adaes, the Spaniards or Mexicans who were there answered the call as well. For some reason, those who came, came without any guns. Maybe they didn't have any. The Spanish always had a very difficult time getting supplies from Mexico. It was a long way and took a long time.

Maybe what few they had, they had to leave at the Los Adaes, or maybe they just didn't want to let the French or St. Denis see how shabby their equipment had become. Who knows why. Anyway, they came to help, but they came without any ammunition. St. Denis was himself fairly limited in what he had available as ammunition. The fight went on, hand to hand combat, for five or six days. The Natchez sent a messenger into the fort saying they would like to come in and make peace. St. Denis put some conditions on that. The messengers went back to the Natchez base. Since it had all been a ruse to try to get in to the fort so that they could take it, the Natchez were angry, and so frustrated they set up a big wooden frame. They had with them a French woman they had captured in one of their skirmishes on the Mississippi River. They tied that woman into this big frame. St. Denis, the Nashitosh, the Spaniards, and the few settlers who were then at Natchitoches, watched in horror as they saw the woman tied and then set afire. That did it. No matter they didn't have enough ammunition. They poured out of the fort, the Nashitosh in the lead, to attack the Natchez. The fighting continued until the Natchez were on the run. They fled followed by the Natchitoches. Most of the Natchez were slaughtered. Actually, that was the end of the Natchez Nation. There were too few left for the Nation to survive.

That was an incident that neither the French, St. Denis, nor the Caddo Indian people never forgot. It's another story that was passed down, generation to generation. It is one that managed to stay pretty well in accord with fact because officials in New Orleans received reports describing what took place during the battle with the Natchez.

St. Denis, by the strength of the friendship and the influence he had with Caddo people, established an advantage for the French that lasted right up past the point that Louisiana became a Spanish possession and past the point that Louisiana became an American state. Historians say, and this apparently has been reported accurately, that after President Jefferson signed the Louisiana Purchase,

General Gates told him, “Sir, you have bought Louisiana for a song.”

For those of us who had our beginnings here and for all of the people of today’s Louisiana and especially those in Natchitoches who descend from the original settlers here, I think we can add to that song with the words from the Woody Guthrie song

*This land is your land, this land is my land
This land was made for you and me.*

As the Caddo Nation enjoys visits here and as hopefully some of you will visit us from time to time, we’ll say, “This land is our land” and, “I give you my hand.”

Notes

¹Copy of the Journal of M. de Bienville’s Overland Journey from the Taensas to the Village of the Yatachés (March 3-May 18, 1700” in Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams, trans. and ed. Iberville’s Gulf Journals. Tuscalousa: The University of Alabama Press, 1981. Marne was the name given Red River by the early French.

Question & Answer Session

Question: You alluded to the epidemics that swept through the native people. Were they brought in by the Europeans?

Carter: Yes, very early. A lot of research has been done to kind of pin down how so many of the epidemics through all of the native tribes could have been caused just by this, and particularly with the Caddo. Since the earliest epidemics were very early, people said, “How could that be” because the earliest European contact was with the DeSoto Expedition, the Spanish Expedition that came was the first European contact for Caddo people. By that time, they had come all the way across from Florida and had come through all of the southern states before they ever got across the Mississippi and into Arkansas and down into this part of the country.

People are saying if they still had anyone who had survived or who was carrying small pox by that time, the argument was they wouldn’t be a strong enough exposure. It has been disproved since then. The old saying that the white people brought small pox to the Indians by giving them blankets, that is certainly an extreme way to do it, but it’s true. The first epidemics that were brought into Caddo country were 1542.

Question: Cecile, could you talk about the Caddo huts in relationship to the missions and where the Caddo huts were in relationship to the missions whether they were inside the missions or outside the missions.

Carter: They were as far away as they could get. When the Spanish came and sent their missionaries, of course the idea that the Spanish government had was, in order to take possession of a country, you first send the missionaries to get the people to come live inside the mission grounds where you can not only convert them to Christianity, but you can use them as semi-slave labor. Then you send military to keep them there. But try as they would, particularly in northeast Texas, where you had nine different missions in different villages that were between the Sabine and the Trinity Rivers. They would come in with great pomp. It must have been a wonderful parade for all the Caddo people to see these lines march in with banners and dressed in long black robes and make a big parade out of it.

When they would first meet with the fathers or the friars, they would promise, “We’ll come but right now we’ve got to gather the crop, and when that is done, then we’ll come.” It was always some excuse like that and they never came because they didn’t want to live within a confined space. They had always had their own homes built in sort of a pattern like we’ve had, particularly in earlier days, in the United States when you had these really large farm communities. You would have a farm household here and have that farm’s garden or field

of some kind. Then the closest neighbor would be on the other side of that. You would often have two or three families living in the same homestead pattern. That's the way Caddo were living. Sometimes those Caddo villages would stretch out for twenty miles. They were all one community. They all had a central ceremonial area that they would meet together for special occasions or special events of any kind.

They were never inside the missions. They were as far outside as they could get. The missionaries just despaired of it. They were not at all successful in converting Caddo people, not until it got to be like the 19th or 20th century, anyway. Again, because it was such a long, long, strong tradition of reverence for "the leader above" by whom they were blessed and dared not disappoint or disobey because they owed so much to him.

I used to wonder when I was much younger why it was that I would hear so many of the grown-ups among the Caddos say, "We are so pitiful." I thought, "No, you're not. You're alive. You're not sick. So you lost all except about 10% of your population for various reasons, and you lost your homeland, but still you are not so pitiful." Then, I've gradually learned that this was the main prayer, "Bless us, we are so pitiful" - meaning "We are compared and in your sight, we are so small, and we need to be blessed by you. We will try our best to honor you in support."

A long answer to a simple question.

Question: What sort of belief in the afterlife did the Caddo people have?

Carter: One thing that's interesting about that is that a lot of that tradition remains today. Generally, the

belief was that when a person dies, you buried the body. The person went on a journey from this life to another life. Another life would be not too dissimilar from the life you had always lived on earth. You would recognize your own people who were already there as well.

When I say there are some traditions that still sort of remain, not for all Caddo people, now, but for many, particularly the older people who still follow some of the old traditions. When a person dies, you, of course, prepare the body, and you stay at home or with it for three days because it takes that time for the spirit of that person, the soul of that person, to have started their journey.

There are certain burial rites, as well, that most Caddo people still follow. One is with the burial service itself. There are certain things that are done. Also, when a Caddo person is buried, the body is placed in the grave so that when you rise, you'll rise facing the east for the sun to rise.

I know just a couple of weeks ago, one of our family was saying that they wanted to bury a close relative in the Caddo way. Of course, most state laws now say you have to bury them in a cemetery. You can't do it near your homestead the way it used to be done. They had a big argument with the funeral director or the cemetery manager because that cemetery buried all of their bodies with the headstones in the same place, and they said, "What will we do with the headstone? It will be at the feet instead of the head." He said, "So. Do it!"