

Clark County Historical Association
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Pottery Making

Nearly one thousand years ago, the prehistoric Caddo began to make their own distinctive pottery. They were widely known for their beautiful masterpieces. Many of the items they made were used for rituals and funeral gifts!



Caddo Indians in Clark County





The Caddo Lifeway

Caddo Indians enter history in the chronicles of the Hernando de Soto expedition, which talk about the events that occurred during the Spanish passage through southwest Arkansas. When the Spaniards crossed over to Caddo country on June 20, 1542, they entered a nation uniquely distinguished by language, social structure, tradition, and way of life.

Interesting Discoveries

A reconstruction of the route taken in the expedition is described in the de Soto chronicles. It locates the army's entrance to Caddo country on the Ouachita River between Hot Spring County and in Arkadelphia (Clark County). It is said that the Spaniards stopped to make salt from "briny water" from the Saline Bayou. The salt springs at Bayou Sel became the site of the earliest salt works produced by the Europeans that came to Arkansas. Southwest Arkansas has many salt sites, and the Spaniards followed trails used by generations of Caddo salt makers. The Spaniards learned every tradition and every daily routine that the Caddo Indians used. They realized who and what they were encountering were unique, and it was all here in Clark County! One of the places that continues to be of great purpose is Desoto's Bluff here in Arkadelphia. This is believed to be where the Spaniards travelled and settled.

