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Caddoan Archeological and Historical Workshop for the Caddo Tribe of Oklahoma in Support of Their Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Grant

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CADDOAN ARCHEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL
WORKSHOP FOR THE CADDO TRIBE OF
OKLAHOMA IN SUPPORT OF THEIR
NATIVE AMERICAN GRAVES PROTECTION
AND REPATRIATION ACT GRANT

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Texas Historical Commission

As part of the Native American Graves Protection Act (NAGPRA) grant recently received by the Caddo Indian Tribe of Oklahoma (Carter 1994), the Caddo Tribe of Oklahoma requested that a professional archeologist (Timothy K. Perttula) conduct an ambitious three-day hands-on archeological and historical training session for tribal members, particularly members of the Caddo Repatriation Committee, in February 1995. The focus of the training session is to familiarize members of the Caddo Tribe in the identification of Caddo material culture (ceramics and lithics, as well as other types of artifacts found on habitation sites and in burial contexts), in learning the locations and distributions of prehistoric Caddo sites within the Caddoan Archeological Area, and establishing an understanding of the known locations of historic Caddo sites from archeological, historical, and archival sources.

I have been involved in Caddoan archeological and historical research for about 20 years, and completed a Ph.D. dissertation on Caddoan archeology in 1989 (Perttula 1989). I have also worked with members of the Caddo Tribe on various archeological projects in Texas, most recently as part of the Caddo Lake Scholarship program established by the Caddo Lake Institute.

To guide the training session, a compendium of basic Caddo archeological, historical, archival,

and documentary records, and source materials will be compiled into a workbook for easy reference by Caddo Tribe members. Included in the workbook will be representative copies of artifact photographs and figures from each Caddo subarea (Perttula 1992:Figure 1) that illustrate the tremendous regional and temporal diversity in Caddoan material culture (in ceramics, stone, bone, shell, wood, copper, basketry, etc.) as documented in ca. A.D. 700-1800 archeological collections from Northeast Texas, Southwest Arkansas, Southeast Oklahoma, and Northwest Louisiana -- the Caddo heartland.

We also propose to bring to the training session Caddoan archeological collections from several sites that are currently being studied. This will provide an opportunity for Caddo tribal members to have hands-on experience with the more common archeological specimens typically recovered in Caddo habitation contexts (i.e., pottery sherds, stone and bone tools, etc.), and help lay out the process of establishing tribal recognition of Caddoan archeological material culture.

The more significant historical and archival sources will also be assembled in the workbook for the training session. Some of the types of documents and source materials included will consist of specific items from colonial French, Spanish, and American primary documents and

archives (such as the Bexar Archives and the National Archives), seventeenth to nineteenth century maps, and General Land Office land survey records and field notes that reference the Caddo tribe. Also to be assembled for the training session are published documentary sources (e.g., the American State Papers, Texas Indian papers, Robertson Colony papers, Austin papers), the 1803-1814 letters and documents of John Sibley, French and Spanish expedition diaries and reports (cf. Bolton 1915), and guides to archives and manuscript sources.

Through the study of archeology, ethnohistory, and history, a great deal has been learned about the native history of the Caddo peoples. We have learned from the Caddo peoples themselves

about their cultural heritage (Newkumet and Meredith 1988; Carter 1995), and professional archeologists and historians alike have finally come to appreciate that Caddo peoples today have a strong and abiding interest in retaining, preserving, and enhancing their cultural heritage.

Great opportunities exist today for archeologists, ethnohistorians, historians, and Caddo peoples to work closely together to better understand the long- and short-term course of Caddo native history. The interaction and consultation between professional archeologists and the Caddo Tribe through the NAGPRA process will allow much sharing of knowledge, and hopefully will result in new learning by both the archeological community and Caddo tribal members.

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