

FREE ADMISSION!**OLD SCHOOL MUSEUM & LOG CABIN**

111 West Houston Street - Dayton

Open Saturdays 10 am – 2 pm

The Old School Museum & Log Cabin

are located at

111 West Houston St.

(Across the street from post office)

Dayton Historical Society members
serve as museum hosts.**For more history/information, visit:**

- Website: daytontxhistory.com
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DaytonTxHistory>

Dayton Historical Society Meetings

6 P.M. on last Monday of month

at Parker Hall (behind Old School Museum)

Guest speaker program is preceded by a short
business meeting and followed by refreshments.**Public is welcome!****To Rent Parker Hall**

call Aline 713-927-1629 or Josh 832-233-3894

Website & Newsletter Contact/AuthorJanette Goulder-Frick -- daytontxhistory@gmail.com

Dayton History News

Trinity River Indian Tribes

Long before the Spanish took possession of the territory that became known as Texas, there were Indians in the vicinity of Dayton. History indicates that there were two tribes living along the Trinity River – the Bidai to the north and the Akokisa to the south. (<https://native-land.ca/maps/territories/akokisa/>)

The Caddo Indians of East Texas recognized the territory along the Trinity River as being that of the Akokisa Indians and referred to the Trinity River as the Arkikosa River until it neared the coast where they referred to it as the Daycoa River. There are several variations on the tribe's name including the Akokisa, Arkokisa, Arkikosa and Orcoquiza.

History regarding the 'El Orcoquisac' Spanish outpost that was located on the east side of the Trinity River south of Liberty during the mid-1700s affirms the presence of both Bidais and Orcoquizas (Akokisa) Indian villages nearby – two similar tribes that were known to intermarry.



Akokisa (Atakapan) Indians

During the early 18th century, Spanish, French and Anglo-Americans discovered about 3,500 Akokisa Indians who lived between the Trinity and Sabine rivers.

Native to what is now Liberty and Chambers counties as well as several other surrounding counties, the Akokisa Indians spoke the Atakapan language and were considered a band of the Atakapa Indians of Lake Charles, Louisiana.

They referred to themselves as "*Hikiki Ishak*" which means "Western People". Their Louisiana counterparts referred to themselves as "*Hivekiti Ishak*" which means "Eastern People".

During the warm season, they ate bird eggs, fish, shellfish along with seeds and stems of lotus flowers. During the cold season, they moved further inland and they used horses to hunt deer, bear and bison. They sold deer hides and bear fat.

Their homes were beehive-shaped and thatched with grass or palmetto leaves such as those found in abundance in the Trinity River valley.

Around the 1750s, the Akokisa divided into five village groups. Some of them entered the San Ildefonso Mission in 1748-49 but left in 1755.

After it was abandoned, the Nuestra Senora de la Luz Mission was built in 1756 on the Trinity River and served both the Akokisa and Bidai tribes.

In 1805, the Akokisa were reduced to just two villages – one village between the Sabine River (Orange) and Neches River (Beaumont) with the other village on the Colorado River.

It was during the Texas revolution (1835-36) that they relocated to Louisiana where their sister tribe, the Hivekiti Ishak, was located.

Tribal communities of the Atakapa that include descendants of the Akokisa still exist and celebrate their heritage – but their appearance is such that they are sometimes mistakenly referred to as Creoles.

Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center in Humble is the site of an Akokisa Indian village that was re-created. It includes a group of historically-accurate dwellings similar to those built by native Akokisa tribes as well as a council lodge, a lean-to, a chief's hut, a brush arbor, and a sweat lodge. (See image below)

An annual Native American Heritage Day initiated in 2018 is hosted annually in September at Jones Park. It includes attendees who are Akokisa descendants.

Artifacts of the Akokisa Indians have been discovered in multiple Dayton locations that overlook the Trinity River valley – both north and south of town – some of which are on display at Dayton's Old School Museum.



Bidai (Hasinai) Indians

The Bidai (Beadeye, Bedias, Biday, Viday) Indians lay claim to being the oldest tribe in Texas per Caddo Indian lore and the Bidai (aka Hasinai) were apparently the architects of the great "Caddo" Mounds near Nacogdoches.

Their principal habitat became an area near Bedia Creek, a western branch of the Trinity River that runs east-west – crossing Texas Highway 90 between Madisonville (north) and the town of Bedias (south).

The name Bidai is based on a Caddo word, *bidai* meaning "brushwood". This likely refers to the Trinity River, which contained lots of brushwood in its bottomlands, or to the Big Thicket, an area of unusually dense vegetation east of the Trinity, where the Bidai also lived.

The Akokisa, an Atakapan tribe on the lower Trinity River, were allies of the Bidai and they frequently intermarried. A discovered manuscript indicates that the Bidai language was much like that of the Akokisa.

The Karankawa Indians who lived along the Gulf Coast to the southwest were also allies of the Bidai during the late 18th century.

A semi-migratory group, the Bidai moved between the Colorado and Sabine rivers and between the Gulf Coast and the El Camino Real trail (an historic road just north of Bidais Creek that connected San Antonio with Natchitoches in Louisiana).

They were surrounded by a number of Indian groups including the Hasinai (a Caddo tribe) to the north.

Apparently, the Bidai were interrelated to the Hasinai and visited them regularly over a trail they established called the "Bidai Trail".

Despite Spanish laws against bartering with Indians, the Spanish governor of the province and others traded extensively with Bidai – as did French traders who illegally visited them to obtain bison and deer skins.

A smallpox epidemic in the 18th century greatly reduced their numbers leaving 3 bands. Survivors were absorbed by other tribes.

Some intermarried with the Koasati, whose descendants are on the Alabama and Coushatta Reservation in Polk County while the majority were placed with Caddo Indians on reservations in Texas and Oklahoma.

In 1718 and 1720, French explorer Francois Simars de Bellisle reported that an agricultural people by the name of Bidai lived near the Trinity in eastern Texas.

In 1748-1749, some of the Bidais were at the San Francisco Xavier de Horcasitas Mission as well as the San Ildefonso Mission built nearby for the Bidai, Deadose, and Akokisa Indians.

