CHAPTER 5
The Europeans Encounter Oklahoma

Reviewing Facts

1. The Spanish came to North America, including Oklahoma, hoping to find gold. Coronado’s search for the Seven Cities of Cibola took him and his men into present-day New Mexico and Arizona, where the Spaniards found the Pueblo Indians’ towns—built of mud bricks, not gold. Coronado then led an expedition in 1541–1542 across Oklahoma into Kansas in search of another rumored city of gold, Quivira. Instead, he found a village of the Wichita Indians. Coronado claimed the land west of the Mississippi River for Spain. About 60 years later, Juan de Oñate, governor of the new colony of New Mexico, led an expedition out of the capital of Santa Fe toward the east. He also found the dome-shaped huts of the Wichitas.

2. The French explored along the Mississippi River and its western tributaries hoping to trade with Indians for furs and gain access to Spanish settlements in New Mexico. The Du Tisné and La Harpe expeditions resulted in trade alliances with the Osages and the Wichitas. In exchange for hides, furs, meat, and captives, the Indians got French guns and metal goods. The Osages and Wichitas changed their hunting and warfare practices as the tribes became more dependent on trade with the French.

3. War with the Osages pushed the Wichitas south to the Red River where they were closer to Spanish horses, could take Apache captives, and could trade more easily with the French. From the fortified Twin Villages, on either side of the Red River, the Wichitas acted as brokers between the French and Southern Plains tribes. Meanwhile, the Osages gained control of eastern Oklahoma.

4. France’s 150-year presence in Oklahoma came to an end in 1763, when the area became a province of Spanish Louisiana. In 1800 Spain turned Louisiana over to the French for three years. Then in 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte sold the territory to the United States for $15 million. With that transaction, the flag of the United States flew over Oklahoma.

Key Terms

Match the term with the definition below that best fits.

- New Spain
- Seven Cities of Cibola
- pueblos
- Quivira
- coureurs de bois
- middens
- Louisiana
- Deer Creek village
- Twin Villages
- ethnohistorian

1. Towns
2. Frenchmen who traded and lived with Indians, learned Indian ways and language, and took Indian women as wives
3. Area sold by Napoleon Bonaparte to the United States in 1803
4. Trash heaps
5. Wichita town where stock was raised and meat was processed
6. Name given by Spaniards to Mexico
7. Towns rumored to have houses whose walls were made of solid gold and doors of turquoise
8. Settlements established by the Wichitas on opposite sides of the Red River
9. A person who studies the historical development of cultures
10. A place believed to offer incredible wealth, where even common folk ate off of silver plates and drank from golden bowls

Explaining History

1. What objectives was the Coronado expedition hoping to achieve when it journeyed north from Mexico? Later, what were the Oñate expedition’s goals?
2. Explain how Coronado and his men met the Wichitas in 1541. What have been the outcomes of this encounter, then and today?
3. Explain the importance of the journey of the Do Campo party through Oklahoma.
4. List the questions that the French wanted answered before they began commerce with the Spanish settlements in New Mexico.

5. Describe the purposes of the expeditions of Du Tisné and La Harpe.

6. Describe the commerce the French developed with the Wichitas and Osages in the 1700s. Compare and contrast this French-Indian relationship with that between the Spanish and the Wichitas. What factors accounted for the difference?

7. Explain how trade with the French changed the Wichita and the Osage way of life.

8. List the factors that explain the Wichitas’ move south in the 1750s to the Red River. (Also reread page 52 in chapter 4.)

9. Cite reasons that the Wichitas had a flourishing community at the Twin Villages. How did the Twin Villages compare to Deer Creek?

10. What benefits did the Indians (including Wichitas, Osages, and Apaches) gain from their encounters with Europeans? What disadvantages for the Indians resulted from their relationships with Europeans?

11. Read “Correcting History: The Case of Fernandina.” Why were people willing to believe that Fernandina was the “first white settlement in Oklahoma”? Explain how Mildred Mott Wedel found out the truth about Deer Creek.

**Extending Knowledge**

1. The text gives a simple definition of the term “ethnohistorian.” What do ethnohistorians study and what kinds of evidence do they use? (You might begin by visiting the website of the American Society for Ethnohistory, www.ethnohistory.org.)

2. Find out more about the Treaty of Paris that ended the French and Indian War (known in Europe as the Seven Years’ War, 1754–1763). England, France, Spain, and various Indian groups were involved in the war in North America and the Atlantic. How did France lose all its North American claims, including Oklahoma?

**Enrichment Activities**

**Group**

Develop a chart describing the expeditions of the Spanish and French explorers. In your chart give the year(s) of exploration, explorer, and area explored (see the chart on page 65). Include the following explorers: Coronado, Do Campo, Oñate, Du Tisné, and La Harpe. Your chart should also include outcomes and the last words that each explorer might have written in his journal as he left Oklahoma.

**Individual**

Imagine you are Coronado, Oñate, Du Tisné, or La Harpe, and you have just returned from your expedition to what will later be called Oklahoma. Write a letter to your superior officer. Your king will eventually see this, so think carefully about how to describe the ways your findings will help your country in the future, and how to minimize the failures of your expedition (or turn them into advantages).

**Linking Past to Present**

French place-names bear witness to the 150 years the French lived in Oklahoma. List French place-names in Oklahoma and indicate if they are rivers, cities, or mountain ranges. Which town, creek, or mountain range near your home has a French name? Why are there hardly any Spanish-language names?

**Developing Skills**

**Map Reading**

Look at the map of the Louisiana Purchase (page 71) and answer the following questions: (1) What area of Oklahoma was not included in the Adams-Onis Treaty? (2) How did the United States grow with the purchase? (3) What country claimed the area below the Adams-Onis Treaty boundary (Red River)?

**Understanding Chronology**

Read “Viewing History in Centuries” on page 62. A century is named for its last year. The twenty-first century began in 2001 (the world celebrated a year early) and will end with the year 2100. Thus the year 1541 is not in the fifteenth, but the sixteenth century (1501–1600). Now look at the timeline on page 65. Which centuries does it cover?