

Osage in Missouri

1. Semi-nomadic prairie culture, hunting, growing and gathering
 - a. Settled on upper Osage River, drainage of the Lamine River and south bank of Missouri River
2. Claimed Great Bend of the Missouri south to Arkansas river and east toward Mississippi
3. Few Osage were shorter than 6 feet, many were 6 ½ to 7 feet tall
4. Clan based tribal group: Tzi-shu, or Sky People lived on north side of village, Hunkah, or Earth People lived on south; each had a hereditary chief and subchiefs
5. Fiercely warlike, waged various types of war from nonlethal “counting coup” to outright slaughter
6. First contact with European were between 4,000 and 6,000
7. Feared by other tribes
8. Missouri welcomed influx of white traders, trappers, and random travelers – the “Hairy Eyebrows”
 - a. Results were disastrous
9. Killing Sicknesses, come with the Spanish a century earlier
 - a. Pandemics of smallpox, measles, cholera, and influenza began spreading inland immediately
 - b. Fatal diseases passed along by fur trappers, traders, soldiers, priests, feral animals and eventually other tribal groups
 - c. Smallpox greatest culprit – 1699
10. After French established themselves: Missouri and the Big Osage went to war
 - a. French arranged a peace lasting nearly a century
 - b. Trade one of three main pursuits: acquisition of territory and conversion of natives
11. Spanish crushed the Indian; French civilization embraced and cherished him
 - a. French had trading excursions, up the Missouri river by 1700, more than 100 traders, 7 or 8 to a party paddling in bark and dugout canoes to trade European goods for furs
 - b. Well-organized enterprise overseen by a regional government
 - c. Goods bartered would alter tribal way of life
 - d. Most sought after trade item – gun; tried to keep enemies from getting one
 - i. Indian trade burgeoning by 1723, Frenchmen Bourgmont built Fort Orleans, first Missouri post, near present day Brunswick, across the Missouri River from Missouri's town
 - ii. Got some of sworn enemy tribes to ally with the French and live peacefully in the interest of trade
 - e. By 1740, Osage responded to cheating by some of the voyageurs by killing some Frenchmen
 - i. French built a fort to the west, situation improved somewhat

12. 1754 – French and Indian War

- a. Many tribal alliances French had established were broken by English traders
- b. Osage biggest offender, French hunters and traders on Osage land in trouble
- c. During war, French trade suffered badly
- d. French built a city several miles to the south of the Missouri's mouth on west bank of Mississippi, named St. Louis, soon cultural and financial hub of the region

13. Spanish rule

- a. Greatest problems with Osage, who followed own code of behavior, swearing allegiance to the prevailing powers while robbing and murdering them
- b. Spanish governor Luis de Unzaga y Ame`zaga placed bounty on Osage scalps and armed Quapaw with powder and shot
- c. Missouri aggressive as well
- d. Next governor – Bernardo de Ga`lvez y Madrid, failed to mollify or control Osage
- e. Osage at war with the Otoe, Peoria, Quapaw, and Pawnee as well as all the Missouri River nations
- f. After Revolutionary war, Spanish still struggling; Osage raining havoc on settlers, etc.
- g. 1793, Lt. gov., Ze`non Trudeau said several tribes and Spanish of Louisiana Territory were declaring war on the Osage
- h. Enlisted help from Quapaw, Ioway, Delaware, Shawnee, Cherokee, Caddo, Chickasaw, Ottawa, Miami, Abnaki, Piankeshaw and Sac and Fox
- i. Effort failed

14. Spanish ceded Louisiana Territory back to the French, December 1803 sold Louisiana Territory to the U.S.

- a. Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark on historic expedition
- b. First tribes they met were Missouri and Otoe, beginning of disastrous century for tribes of Missouri

15. Hordes of settlers scrambled to claim land soon designated as Missouri Territory

- a. Resident tribes faced conflict with whites, but also displaced tribes being driven farther west
- b. 1808 Osage signed first treaty with U.S., ceding most of homeland;
- c. Next 17 years, Osage forced to give up traditional hunting grounds, practically every piece of land held in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma
- d. Final treaty in 1825 – left with only a narrow strip running across what is now southern Kansas
- e. William Clark instrumental in treaty's execution
- f. Osage finally contained, if warriors stole horses or caused mayhem, U.S. gov't. deducted damages from trade goods upon which the tribe had come to rely