

The Kanza Reserve 150 Years Ago

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This is the 26th in a series of monthly articles by Ron Parks about the Kanza Indians and the Council Grove are 150 years ago.

What the Numbers Say

Numbers can help us understand the story of Council Grove and the Kanza.

In September 1860, the *Council Grove Press* summarized the federal census conducted earlier that summer, giving us a snapshot of Council Grove and Morris County at that time. Two years later a detailed census conducted on the reservation by officials of the Office of Indian Affairs provided a picture of the Kanza people.

In July 1860, 775 Euro Americans lived in Morris County. Of these 230—all white males either born in the United States or naturalized Europeans—could vote. In the column labeled “colored persons” there were none. There were 443 males (57%) and 332 females.

Out of the 27 occupations listed, there were 170 farmers or farm laborers, seven blacksmiths, seven merchants, four medical doctors, three wagon makers, two lawyers, and two teachers. The only woman listed as holding “a profession, occupation or trade” was Sarah Dunlap, milliner. Of the 167 active households recorded, seven were headed by women.

There were three townships: Council Grove—population 385, Neosho—235, and Clark’s Creek—155. Council Grove Township contained the town of Council Grove and environs.

Other than licensed traders, government officials, and their families, no white people had a legal basis to reside in the Council Grove Township. Until a treaty diminishing the reservation was ratified that November, the Kanza Indians were the lawful occupants of this township.

In October 1860, agent Milton C. Dickey reported 866 Kanza. There were 460 males (53%) and 406 females. Of the total, 63 (7.3%) were mixed-bloods.

In 1862 a detailed census counted 812 Kanzas. Of these 397 (48.9%) were males and 415 females. Of the 812, 263 were listed as children, although ages were not specified. Girls outnumbered boys 145 to 118.

At the time the Kanza lived in three villages. The village of Ishtalasea (Speckled Eyes), located on Big John Creek approximately three miles southeast of Council Grove, was inhabited by 271 Kanza. The largest number of people living in a single household was at the lodge of Wawhohhoh, where four men, three women, three girls and one boy resided.

Kahegahwahtiangah's (Fool Chief) village of 247 was situated near present Dunlap. Twelve people lived in Kewahlezhe's lodge, including three men, three women, four girls, and two boys. This was the only full-blood village where single-person lodges were listed, all three of them inhabited by men.

The third village, formerly led by the recently deceased Kahagawachuffe (Hard Chief), was located on Kahola Creek near where it joins the Neosho. In 1862, Nopahwie and Allegawaho headed this village of 257 inhabiting 47 lodges.

Thirty-two mixed-bloods living in 14 lodges were listed as unaffiliated with any of the three villages. Interestingly, nine of these lived in single-person households.

In all, there were 245 Kanza lodges in 1843, 173 in 1857, 159 in 1862, 141 in 1868. This downward trend is reflected in the shrinking of the average household size: 6.5 in 1843, 5.9 in 1857, and 5.1 in 1862 and 1868.

This trajectory is also reflected in the censuses of the tribe's total population over a half century:

1843: 1,588

1857: 1,015

1868—718

1873—533

1887—193

1897—185.

Contrast these numbers with the population growth of the Council Grove Township:

1855--83

1860—385

1865—586

1870—1,072.

Council Grove household sizes averaged 4.5 in 1860, 5.8 in 1865, and 6.1 in 1870. The population of African-Americans was zero in 1860, 19 in 1865, 66 in 1870.

The average age for males living in the Council Grove Township in 1860 was 22.4 years, females averaged 16.7.

In 1860 the seven wealthiest men in Council Grove had personal estates of \$42,000 out of a township total of \$84,099. And although by 1865 the personal estate value of the township's 586 people had swelled to \$218,815, slightly more than 50% of this was possessed by seven men.

In 1860 the wealthiest man in Council Grove was merchant Malcolm Conn whose personal estate was worth \$11,000. His personal estate was \$10,000 in 1865. That year it was said of Conn that he drove the only buggy in town.

In 1870 his wealth held steady at \$10,000, but the 1875 census listed Conn's personal estate at \$300. Although the reasons for Conn's precipitous financial decline are unclear, we do know that in 1873 there had been a national depression and a local coal mine swindle; in 1874 a grasshopper invasion wiped out the crops. Conn left Council Grove in 1875.

By tracing tribal censuses over time, we can also provide a numerically-based sketch of a Kanza individual. Allegawaho (the most common spelling) was head chief of the Kanza from 1867 until the tribe's removal to Indian Territory in 1873.

He first appears in the 1857 census as "Allicawahho, (chief)," head of a lodge consisting of three men, four women, and three children. He receives a silver coin payment of \$77.50, \$7.50 for each member of his household.

He is the sixth of eight chiefs to sign the 1857 document acknowledging the correctness of the annuity receipts. Because the order of signatures on such documents ordinarily reflects the chiefs' hierarchy, we can ascertain his status at the time.

In 1862 "Ahlegawawho" is head of a household consisting of two men, four women, and four boys. His wives' names are Wawgobah and Hoyahle. He is allotted forty acres not far from where Kahola Creek joins the Neosho River. Oddly, he is the only Kanza chief not assigned one of the 138 stone huts recently constructed for the Kanza.

"Alleguaho" is the first name listed on the 1868 Kanza census, reflecting his position as the head chief of the Kanza, having attained that title early in 1867. Living with him are three women and seven children.

The 87th Kanza listed on the 1887 census is "Allegahwahhu." His age is given as 69. He lives with his wife, 43-year-old Wycse. The government has assigned them English names: Robert and Emma Lincoln. Soon after the tribe moved to Oklahoma, the government deposes Allegawaho as head chief and replaces him with a more compliant leader, Washunga.

The oldest Kanza listed on the 1897 census is 77-year-old "Allagahwahhu." Tallied as a member of the Rock Creek Band, Allegawaho lives in a lodge with his 14-year-old grandson, Kahwahungah. This census recognizes four Kanza bands: Picayune—50 members; Kah-ho-la—18; Rock Creek—37; and "Half Breed"—82. This latter group now constitutes 44% of the tribe.

The 1902 Kanza Allotment Homestead document assigning parcels of land to individual Kanza does not list Allegawaho. Its reservation lands formally carved up into chunks of private property, the Kanza Tribe ceases to exist as a legal entity on July 1, 1902. Allegawaho, who would have been 82, apparently does not live to witness this sad occasion.

SOURCES: *Council Grove Press*, 9-7-1860. Council Grove Censuses: Kansas Territory Census 1855 from www.territorialkansasonline.org; Federal Censuses of 1860 and 1870 and State of Kansas Census 1865, Morris County, available on microfilm at the Council Grove Public Library. Kanza Censuses: "Census of the Kansa Indians, 1843," Louis Barry, *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Volume 29, 478-490; 1857 Kanza Census, *Letters Received, Office of Indian Affairs, from the Kansas Agency (LROIA,KA) 1856-61*, microfilm 234-365, Frames 436-446; 1862 "Census Roll of the Kansas Tribe and List of Allotments," located in files of Kaw Mission State Historic Site; 1868 Kanza Census, *LROIA,KA 1865-68*, microfilm 234-367, Frames 1191-1203; 1887 Census: *The Kaw Indian Census and Allotments*, Bradford Koplowitz, 1996, 1-7; "1897 Census at Osage Agency" and "1902 Homestead Allotments" courtesy of Kaw Nation. "Homecoming Centennial at Council Grove," Mamie Stine Sharp, *Kansas Historical Collections*, volume 16, p. 555. "Malcolm Conn: Merchant on the Trail," Mark L. Gardner, *Wagon Tracks*, February 1987, p. 8. *The Kaw People*, William E. Unrau, p. 74.