



CELEBRATING ALLAN HOUSER

AN OKLAHOMA PERSPECTIVE



Born to Freedom: Allan Houser Centennial **Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City** **March 13 – December 31, 2014**

Numerous Oklahoma museums and cultural institutions have partnered with the Oklahoma Museums Association to present “Celebrating Allan Houser: An Oklahoma Perspective,” which recognizes the 100th anniversary of Apache artist Allan Houser’s birth. The celebration features exhibitions and events across the state through December 2014 to honor the Oklahoma native.

Born to Freedom: Allan Houser Centennial at the Oklahoma History Center highlights the cultural and environmental influences that shaped Houser’s upbringing and later, his art. Composed of small, medium, and large-scale sculptural pieces, watercolors, tempera, as well as three-dimensional culturally significant objects, visitors get a sense of Houser’s studio work including his artistic process of sketchbooks, drawings, clay pieces, and finished sculptural pieces made of bronze, welded steel, and marble.

Allan Houser’s father, Sam, was an Apache scout. One of his good friends was named Naiche. He worked closely with Geronimo and became a famous painter. Naiche made several hide paintings of Chiricahua Apache ceremonies. These paintings are important because while the Fort Sill Apaches were at Fort Sill, they were not allowed to perform their ceremonies.



Apache POWs as U.S. Scouts in the Army at Fort Sill, Oklahoma Territory. Sam Haozous standing in back row (2nd from left). Naiche sitting front row with rifle.
 Courtesy of The Fort Sill National Historic Landmark & Museum, 437 Quanah Road, Fort Sill, OK 73503



Apache Sunrise Ceremony 1910
 Courtesy of Oklahoma Historical Society
 Research Division

The Oklahoma History Center is lucky to be one of the few places to have one of these paintings. The one in the collection depicts the Sunrise Ceremony, a coming of age ceremony for young Apache girls.

Among the Apaches, a young woman’s entry into adolescence is the most important community ritual. During the Sunrise Ceremony, the girl is called “White Painted Woman” and is the center of attention for the whole community. There are



Naiche Hide Painting-Apache Sunrise Ceremony
 Courtesy of Oklahoma Museum of History

several days of feasting, dancing, and rituals, after which, she is considered to be an adult by the tribe. The imagery on Naiche’s hide painting is of a Sunrise Ceremony in the Oklahoma History Center’s collection. For a closer look, come visit the Oklahoma History Center.

Activity

Use artifacts and events to relate with Apache culture for a better understanding of American Indians.

Time Needed: Time to draw and write short sentences and share with the others.

Materials needed: Paper and pencil

Instructions: There are many life changing events in a person’s life. Think about your own life-changing events. Can you list any? Draw a picture and write about an event you think is a sign of graduating to adulthood. For example: driving a car, voting, graduating from high school, etc. After you are done, share with others who have done the activity. Did anyone draw the same pictures? Why did you draw that event? How does it relate to what was drawn about the Sunrise Ceremony?