plural communities
a cultural mapping project +
a framework plan for cherokee village, arkansas

University of Arkansas Community Design Center
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executive summary

Urban designers rarely get the opportunity to stage a deep dive into the cultural forces shaping a place before preparing plans. Contemporary planning processes in the U.S. are primarily market-driven and subject to public participation processes neither broad nor representative. Planning has also become constrained by abstract regulatory templates designed more to ensure quick rates of building re-sales (“financial liquidity”) than good placemaking. Not only did twentieth-century forms of land development regulation—like single-use zoning (legislated in the late 1920s) and subdivision codes—prove their obsolescence within a couple of generations, they also unintentionally stymied their own markets and made cities poorer. American towns before the 1920s, almost all great places large and small, were customarily built from proven mixed-use planning patterns rather than single-use zones. The latter allows only one land use in an area. Though pre-zoning (before 1920s) cities like Hardy, Hot Springs, Rogers, and Little Rock look different from one another, their shared organic patterns of placemaking give them greater ability to change and adapt with time. Their timeless vocabulary of placemaking—business districts, main streets, town squares, urban neighborhoods of mixed housing forms and densities, suburbs, neighborhood-based parks, and rural hinterlands—offer a range of choices which facilitate continual renewal. Modern towns and cities, however, have little ability to innovate and adjust to future markets, essentially favoring insiders and the status quo. As planners have come to understand, modern cities are stubborn social systems resistant to change.

Today, a nationwide enthusiasm for recovering a sense of place, plural ways of living, forgotten origin stories of place, and nonexploitative relations to the environment (i.e., ecological stewardship) have elevated cultural landscape studies in land-use planning. Cultural landscapes are places in which a recognized relationship exists among space, natural resources, and human activity according to the Cultural Landscape Foundation. As urban designers, the University of Arkansas Community Design Center (UACDC), in partnership with Cherokee Village stakeholders, were given a special opportunity to excavate the forgotten heritage surrounding an important but little-known midcentury modern planned community in Arkansas. Collectively, we conducted a cultural mapping of Cherokee Village guided by participatory forms of inquiry, research, and representation of its history. Cultural mapping is intrinsically a community-based reflection on place involving collaboration between local stakeholders and outside design professionals. Surprisingly, cultural mapping revealed a far more robust and fascinating set of underlying influences than is evident in Cherokee Village’s built environment. . . . What happens when a city’s relationship to its history, one shaped by a mix of settler and indigenous cultural influences with modernity, is introduced into the planning process?
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**project activities**

In 2020, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) awarded Cherokee Village one of its coveted Our Town grants to undertake cultural mapping in support of a master plan (hereafter referred to as the Framework Plan) to guide future development. The initiative was led by Jonathan Rhodes who met with the NEA staff in Washington DC to organize proposal content and assemble the project team in securing the grant. Rhodes also provided intellectual leadership in recalling Cherokee Village’s forgotten history through the cultural mapping initiative—a key activity important to the NEA’s award decisions. The project goal is to integrate heritage and the arts into strategic planning and economic development for the Village. More than 65 years after its establishment, Cherokee Village is undertaking its first vision plan, which will address infrastructure, place-based economic development, and neighborhood planning reflective of current market demand for housing diversity. Work under this initiative integrates Cherokee Village’s cultural heritage back into the fiber of community development through artist-led cultural asset mapping and a Framework Plan that supports creative placemaking. The Framework Plan will assist Cherokee Village in building greater social capital and a collective identity necessary to attract private and public-sector investment.

Project activities were organized into four primary tasks involving expert lectures, a folklore scholars training program, community design workshops, and multiple stakeholder meetings. First, Community Heritage Research was jointly undertaken by residents, artists, folklorists, the Cherokee Village Historical Society, and the UACDC. This collaboration collected primary source material and scholarship around five designated cultural frameworks constituting the mapping project. Second, Cultural Mapping consisting of 57 digital multi-modal drawings were developed by the UACDC depicting the five cultural forces that shaped Cherokee Village as identified by local stakeholders: Native American heritage, Ozark pioneer and folk heritage, camping and scouting, miccentury planned communities, and regional modernism in design and planning. Regionalism is a common term in design, the arts, and literature used to describe a distinct local geography and culture usually outside national centers of influence. In architecture, regional modernism refers to the synthesis of novel modern space design and planning with the identifiable and traditional building forms of a particular place. Cherokee Village is one of Arkansas’ primary examples of regional modernism in planned communities, mixing glass walls, open-plan-buildings, and the cathedral ceilings of modernism with the traditional methods of Ozark stone craft and gable roofs. Cultural mapping connects both the aspirations and realities of the past with present understandings to inform a future-oriented Framework Plan. A major objective of the Plan is to model place-based development. Third, GIS Mapping (Geographic Information System) coordinating depiction of roads, topography, property parcels, and building footprints into accurate base maps for Cherokee Village’s permanent use was developed by the UACDC in preparation for the planning phase. Fourth, a Framework Plan was developed by the UACDC to strategically guide growth in population, housing development, and tourism/hospitality investments that amplify Cherokee Village’s nature, ecosystems, sense of place, and heritage. This report consists of two primary components—Cultural Mapping and the Framework Plan.

**the framework plan**

The Framework Plan’s placemaking concepts draw lessons from topics explored in the cultural mapping study prepared for the Village, City in the Woods: Mappings of Cherokee Village, Arkansas. Cultural mappings explored both indigenous heritage (e.g., camp, fit with landscape, natural resource management, and communal settlement patterns) and Ozark settler traditions (e.g., camp/resort, village design, midcentury planning, and modern architectural design) in creating settlement patterns of greater
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS

CULTURAL MAPPING

FRAMESWORK PLAN

- Native American Heritage
  - How might the relationship be decolonized using deeper cultural lessons like stewardship of resource commons and communal neighborhood forms?

- Ozark Pioneer and Folk
  - How might Cherokee Village confront its perceived isolation to attract a greater range of services and amenities?

- Camping and Scouting
  - How might the social coherence and the physical attributes of the camp environment inform the development of new neighborhoods?

- Midcentury Recreational and Retirement Communities
  - What new settlement patterns and infrastructure improvements are available to create a sense of place and low-density development?

- Faye Jones, Modern Architecture
  - Is there a set of architectural principles that can be codified in new nonresidential and residential construction?

Restoring the East Village Town Center: The Bowl and the Isthmus

- A New West Village Town Center on the Lake

- South Gateway Highway 412: Village on the Highway

- Lake Ouachita Housing Hill Neighborhood

- Potsomaking Scenarios in the Polycentric Web: New Street Typologies, New Neighborhoods

- Greenways: Movement Signatures that Support Hospitality, Conservation, and Mobility
social and economic complexity. Combining contemporary notions of placemaking with local heritage, the Framework Plan offers plural visions that parallel the midcentury plan’s singular order.

Cherokee Village’s lakes and arterial road network constituted a highly effective capital web for marketing vacant lots to future homeowners. However, the lack of place types beyond the lakeshore has been a few activity nodes (town center, recreation centers, and golf courses) subverts Cherokee Village’s economic and social development potential. The Framework Plan reprograms this uniform polycentric cellular web through design and planning interventions that articulate identifiable place types using established pattern languages of good town form. Pattern languages of identifiable sub-systems facilitate incremental implementation of places rather than assume that development happens all at once. Akin to ecological succession in ecosystems, urban patterns and systems evolve identifiable villages, towns, and cities through urban succession. Places initially grow from simple but vital centers (the pioneer stage) to expanded districts (intermediate stages) in an ever-evolving complexity. Accordingly, the Framework Plan’s six urban retrofit strategies—or pattern languages—catalyze higher-order living possibilities within Cherokee Village’s rural patterns and spaces.

The Framework Plan’s six urban pattern languages are:

1. Restoring the East Village Town Center: The Bowl and the Isthmus
2. A New West Village Town Center on the Lake
3. South Gateway Highway 412: Village on the Highway
4. Lake Omaha Housing Hill Neighborhood
5. Placemaking Scenarios in the Polycentric Web: New Street Typologies, New Neighborhoods
6. Greenways: Movement Signatures that Support Hospitality, Conservation, and Mobility

Each brand of urbanism offers a new dimension of placemaking in alignment with contemporary demands for vibrant mixed-use and social-oriented places. The Framework Plan envisions places with diversity in housing types and ownership models supported by non-residential services including unique trail experiences for pedestrians, equestrians, cyclists, and mountain bikers. As alternatives to automobile-oriented planning, greenway and trail networks host camps, festival grounds, concerts in the grove, equestrian facilities, and botanical gardens—all and much more which can be plugged into a greenway network and scaled as investment allows. New neighborhoods may be built around existing assets like recreation centers, while monetizing fabulous hillside views of lakes through multifamily and vacation hillside housing. The next generation of development in Cherokee Village can fulfill the vision of a “city in the woods” by fashioning discrete nodes of intensity without altering the overall environment that has attracted residents to the Village. The Framework Plan is modular and can be implemented incrementally, and in no certain sequence as a value-add to the Village’s existing assets. Most importantly, the Framework Plan provides multiple visions attractive to different types of investors who all demand scaled plans beyond the single-family parcel to commit to developing in Cherokee Village.
Retirement community magnate Del Webb is credited with having invented the retirement community industry based on his well-known Sun City, Arizona development—an age-restricted retirement community opened in 1960. Webb used innovative market segmentation techniques, including subsidized mini-vacation packages and direct-mail marketing, to recruit seniors nationwide to live in his sunbelt leisure community. But John Cooper had pioneered these techniques six years earlier in 1954 when he planned Cherokee Village in the Arkansas Ozarks and officially opened it a year later.
of the retirement community concept through a 1957 NBC television show featuring neighboring Youngtown, Arizona. Youngtown, the first age-segregated retirement community was also opened in 1954, the same year as Cherokee Village. However, Cherokee Village differed from both Youngtown and Sun City. The latter Arizona projects committed to a consciously generic suburbanism as a business model, while John Cooper combined influences from modern and folk/regional development traditions. Cooper was particularly drawn to the American camp meeting tradition long established throughout the Ozarks with its emphasis on family and social pluralism (i.e., the embrace of multiple lifestyles whether focused on the city, frontier, nomadism, homesteading, back-to-the-land, religion, commerce, education, farming, craft, etc.). While all three progenitor planned communities were marketed around the trope of the “vacation,” only Cherokee Village embraced complexity and regionalism. Cooper aspired toward intergenerational living and associations with local settler pioneer, scouting, and Native American heritages, anachronisms to most post-war community developers.

The significance of City in the Woods lies in its recall of the latent and apparent cultural trajectories engaged by Cooper to conceptualize a new kind of settlement pattern: the midcentury planned special-interest community. These communities were commonly organized around the single-family home and low-density development requiring automobile travel. The midcentury planned community signaled capital’s shift from investment in the centralized infrastructure of the dense nineteenth-century industrial city of production, to suburban real estate development focused on the single-family home. The industrial city was a pedestrian-oriented city, requiring investments in transportation infrastructure like railroads and buses, dense multifamily housing, downtown workplaces, and compact mixed-use urbanism that aggregated goods and labor. Most people walked to work, school, and the market. Conversely, the diffused midcentury landscape relied on the automobile for mobility that distributed or scattered people in an emerging consumer landscape of highway shopping centers and malls. Along with peer developments in America’s inaugural class of post-war planned communities—Levittown, New York being the most well-known—Cherokee Village was a real estate planning product without precedent. Community developers like Cooper were essentially winging it, devising untested forms of financing, land marketing, remote building supply chains, and community governance arrangements outside the traditional structure of the incorporated city. Most developers simply subdivided greenfield sites for development by indifferent merchant home builders, an instrumental rationality that resulted in homogenous suburban sprawl.

Cooper was the rare developer who combined then-progressivist planning and design thinking of the time with strands of countercultural American regionalism in imagining a new community consciously rooted in place—a regional modernism. The famous American architect Frank Lloyd Wright was the exemplary regional modernist given his tendencies to mix traditional building practices and placemaking with radical modern innovations like cantilevers, glass walls, and open floor plans yielding new expressions of space (see his famous Fallingwater residence in Pennsylvania or his Bachman-Wilson House meticulously relocated to Crystal Bridges Museum in 2015). Cooper hired one of Wright’s favorite apprentices—the Arkansas architect E. Fay Jones, the Ozarks’ signature architect. Cooper embraced these countervailing forces of modernity and regionalism present throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The original energy of modernism eventually hardened by midcentury into a formulaic uniformity characteristic of the then-new suburbanism sweeping the nation. An iconoclast, or at least as much as a developer with a lot of capital on the line could be, Cooper intellectually gravitated toward the pluriversal: the world as conceived through multiple economic and social narratives. Or to use the well-known Zapatistas phrase: “A world where many worlds fit.” Cooper was searching for complexity in his creation of community while mainstream developers were moving in the opposite direction.
Cooper was the rare developer who combined then-progressivist planning and design thinking of the time with strands of countercultural American regionalism in imagining a new community consciously rooted in place—a regional modernism. . . . An iconoclast, or at least as much as a developer with a lot of capital on the line could be, Cooper intellectually gravitated toward the pluriversal: the world as conceived through multiple economic and social narratives. Or to use the well-known Zapatistas phrase: “A world where many worlds fit.” Cooper was searching for complexity.

Ultimately, the pluralism celebrated by Cooper was never reconciled with the unyielding economics of the midcentury suburban subdivision singularly committed to the single-family home and its tacit social arrangement—the nuclear family. Sixty-five years later, 80 percent of Cherokee Village’s parcels remain undeveloped with few housing starts on the horizon—17.6 percent of the Village’s population lives below the poverty line (child poverty is 35.3 percent)—whereas 11 percent is the national average. Resident participation in civic groups, once numbering well over 100 in the Village, has practically evaporated. The promise of Cherokee Village was most fully experienced among its first generation of homeowners, but that promise has not persisted among successive generations. The lack of permissible mixed uses and varying housing forms over time have undermined resiliency and the capacity to adapt to shifting social arrangements beyond those built exclusively around the nuclear family. Like 90 percent of America’s small towns and cities, Cherokee Village has experienced acute forms of shrinkage, whether gauged by population count, measures of social capital, job count, economic development opportunities, or all the above. Indeed, the inability to respond to the withering of America’s urban settlements, whether villages, towns, or cities, remains the nation’s largest socio-economic challenge.

When compared to its own origin story as devised by Cooper, Cherokee Village is an incomplete project. Its cultural roots in American regional modernism—a future-oriented modernism tempered by indigeneity, scouting, folk, and pioneering—suggest multiple planning tactics for pivoting to hospitality as a development platform. Hospitality, a distinct way of conceptualizing “living together,” is the ultimate social and economic resource since it embraces plurality, and thus interest and investment. How might the unpacking of these rich cultural logics serve as a platform for envisioning new socio-environmental planning possibilities? What, then, do urban designers and architects do with culture? But first, what is cultural mapping?

**Cultural Mapping: The Problem of Planning Without Memory**

*City in the Woods* cuts across dominant histories defining modern-day Cherokee Village (developer economics, middle-to-upper-class homeownership, and modernism) and minor mostly hidden histories (Native American, camping and youth scouting, and Ozark subsistence settler folk culture) used to market the midcentury planning approach. The blind spots in midcentury modern spatial mindsets go unchecked in what were, at the time, promising though untested development models: automobile-oriented suburbs, single-use zoning, and urban renewal. Our cultural mapping project sheds light on the diminishing returns in the midcentury modern planning model. The
problem in planning without memory, as if our geographies were blank slates, is the loss of social and ecological intelligence developed within indigenous and settler/folk cultural knowledge funds that in hindsight now look especially useful.

Despite the underutilization of the arts and culture as development resources in rural communities, cultural mapping in this case entailed a three-part process of engagement, research, and advocacy. First, collaborations between outside artists and local stakeholders led by community developers structured a comprehensive historical narrative to inform future design and planning. They identified five cultural frameworks which capture the essence of Cherokee Village—Native American heritage, Ozark pioneer and folk heritage, camping and scouting, midcentury planned communities, and regional modernism. This overarching story was essential in organizing more detailed research among stakeholders and outside design and planning professionals, recalling Michel de Certeau’s important observation in his The Practice of Everyday Life: “What the map cuts up, the story cuts across.”

Second, local stakeholders, folklorists, artists, designers, and architects collectively investigated and assembled detailed content from oral histories and interviews, primary sources, archived folklore material, and published histories of Cherokee Village, the region, and the Ozarks.

Third, designers and architects constructed exhibition-ready “maps” narrating the gathered research around the five cultural frameworks. Our cultural mapping animates diverse data sets through various representational strategies akin to a novel. Multimodal mapping strategies employed visual literacies ranging from serial “filmstrip” narratives, to collages, “thick description” drawings that reconstruct lost local heritage landscapes (e.g., camp sites and the Arkansaw Traveller Theater, now demolished), and GIS-based mappings of Cherokee Village’s built environment. Mapping iterations invited community feedback in refining representations of the five spatial stories.

We also gleaned then-prevailing popular media environments to map White perceptions and myths framing indigenous and settler folk cultures—so important to understanding Cherokee Village’s origin story. Here, maps chronicle past conversations and sentiment rather than objectify one data set typical in modern cartography. For instance, what was the prevailing milieu in which Cooper named most streets in Cherokee Village after Indian figures, ones amalgamated from distant tribal nations with little in common? What was the milieu in which White culture believed that Native Americans had disappeared (they are still here) and other racial-reinforcing myths? Indeed, as communications expert John Durham Peters contends in The Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media, while we commonly perceive media as environment, too, environments themselves are media. Accordingly, media is infrastructure—a consequential system that organizes material and socio-political life. Whereas environments, our physical worlds, are laden with intangible messages and memories that influence how the present era civilizes its landscape. Perceptions and myths, the fake news of an era(s), are important to scrutinize given their roles in framing present and future conventional wisdom, which in turn mobilize self-identity and the development processes that shape place. Cultural mapping is indispensable in planning new horizons informed by learned understandings of environments that shaped the past.

cooper’s imaginary and other possible social worlds: new landscapes of hospitality in the framework plan

Born and raised in Earle, Arkansas, John Cooper, like other vacationing Memphians and West Memphians after the turn of the twentieth century, sought resort from the summer heat and humidity of the lower Mississippi delta in the eastern Ozark foothills. With the establishment of a railroad in the 1880s connecting the foothills to major metropolitan centers, the Spring River area—fed by one of the nation’s largest springs—became a tourism and vacation mecca centered around clear cool rivers (great for trout
fishing) and wooded hills. Beginning in the mid-1940s, Cooper, the vacationer-cum-community-developer, embraced the more radicalized experiences of nature in Ozark highlands traditions as he conceptualized Cherokee Village. By the mid-1950s vacationers were converted to permanent residents, including retirees and younger families alike seeking a rural forest-lake community lifestyle.

Cooper’s thinking was engaging, oscillating between strong anti-urban, even anti-modern, regionalist trends prevalent in America over the first half of the twentieth century, and new untested concepts in midcentury modern community planning. Cooper was deeply attracted to a general Native American ethos and its practice of *commong* (shared land management and settlement without institutionalized forms of ownership) accompanied by non-Western notions of hospitality and ecosystem stewardship. While we lack access to Cooper’s writings, it appears as though much of his understandings of Indian peoples were shaped by then-popular media imagery of Native Americans, rife with myths and other forms of misinformation that caricatured the Native American figure. A common invention of White understanding was the pan-tribal blending of practices and customs among the more than 500 tribal nations which differed significantly from one another in customs, values, languages, and livelihoods. The turn to the so-called “primitive” though was not entirely pejorative. White culture was attempting to capture a lost sense of health, community, and spirituality marginalized by its own civilizing forces around the industrial city. Cooper blended remnants of Native American wisdom with White tropes of Indian culture in imagining Cherokee Village.

Another alternative to modernity upon which Cooper drew inspiration was the strong tradition of camp meeting and youth scouting in the Ozarks. Cooper venerated the uniquely American institution of camp meeting dating back to the late 1700s and its role in civilizing the Ozark frontier a century later. Hunting, fishing, and healing camps based in pragmatism and cooperation shared the woods with transcendent religious and educational camps, both giving way to later twentieth-century season social resorts based around recreation. The Ozark’s century river-based camp reconnected social and natural worlds alienated by cities. The nation’s first generation of scouting camps were established in the Spring River basin. Summer scouting and YMCA/YWCA camps in what later became Cherokee Village were important to the socialization of middle-class urban youth who routinely experienced nature-deficit disorder common to city life. Other popular locations of Ozark camp meeting sites, like Branson, Missouri, evolved into permanent settlements and towns. Indeed, camps and cottage settlements were often starter cities as seen in the evolution of nineteenth-century...
camp meeting retreats into fully incorporated cities. Prominent examples include Wesleyan Grove and Oaks Bluff into Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts; Pitman Grove into Pitman, New Jersey; Mount Tabor into Parsippany, New Jersey; and Chautauqua, New York. Paralleling his interest in Native American ritual space, camps for Cooper were likewise primitive quasi-urban forms that offered retreat, self-expression, and play unavailable in the over-civilized industrial city. Interestingly, Cherokee Village homes with lake-front decks clustered around coves, where domestic life spills out onto decks, reproduce the intimacy and holiday environment of the old river camps.

Cooper recognized the hardscrabble Ozark pioneer and folk heritage based on pastoralism and subsistence farming. Popularized, even romanticized, by folklorists Vance Randolph and Otto Ernest Rayburn who chronicled the Ozarks in the first half of the twentieth century, its highland traditions were rooted in commons economies where prosperity was collectively derived from the land before mass settler property enclosures. Regional social customs developed without the universalizing influence of urban culture, absent in this remote geography until the twentieth century. The Arkansas Ozarks did not experience the full thrust of frontier development where westward expansion seeded the development of infrastructure, industry, and cities as theorized by historian Frederick Jackson Turner. In his excellent accounts of the Ozarks [see bibliography in Cultural Mapping section], historian Brooks Blevins argues that urbanization in the Arkansas Ozarks was stymied by its mountainous geography and the blockage caused by mass Indian resettlement to the Oklahoma Territory directly west of Arkansas. Rayburn’s popular book Ozark Country (1941) piqued the nation’s curiosity in this remote region at a time when regionalism in America offered an alternative to a rapidly urbanizing America and the ills of overcrowding. Like author Harold Bell Wright (The Shepherd of the Hills, 1907) before them, the writings of Randolph and Rayburn sparked a midcentury interest among urban “back-landers” who sought refuge in rural lifestyles away from the bustle of city life. Incredibly, all three traditions from which John Cooper drew influence—Native American heritage, Ozark pioneer and folk heritage, and camping and scouting—were reshaped by twentieth century media environments to serve the interests of a newly urbanized and ever mobile middle class confronting their own frontier in novel consumer culture.

In the search for a grammar of belonging among an instant community of urban transplants to Cherokee Village, Cooper left an incomplete cultural legacy idealized through the figures of the pioneer, the Indian, and the frontiersman, common in American counterculture at that time. . . . Their fictionalizations underwrote a longing for the personable social interactions and hospitality prevalent in the traditional communities but lost under the abstractions of the modern city.
Cooper’s unfulfilled imaginary remains fresh with visions of other social worlds. Indeed, our cultural mapping unearthed a subaltern tradition of camp meetings, revival grounds, artsy resort culture, scouting camps, and dinner theaters in the woods as powerful but nearly forgotten forms of urbanism in civilizing the Ozark frontier. These informal communal prototypes share a common orientation toward hospitality: moving one beyond the self and the sovereign toward being a guest as the ultimate form of citizenship.

Their fictionalizations underscored a longing for the personable social interactions and hospitality prevalent in traditional communities but lost under the abstractions of the modern city. Here, it is useful to recall German sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies’ well-known binary between social relations in the organic traditional community (Gemeinschaft) versus those in the anonymous society (Gesellschaft) of the modern city. The eclipse of the traditional community by the dominant modern city attends the growth of advanced Western industrial economies. In contrast to the impersonal yet rational self-interest associated with society and the modern city, Cooper as a community builder was attracted to “organic” concepts of community, Gemeinschaft, as defined by the folk or regional customs.

What if future development and placemaking for Cherokee Village were to be oriented around notions of hospitality and its attendant ways of living together? This would parallel the Village’s current environment, hemmed in as it is around modern notions of withdrawal and privacy. Consider philosopher Jacques Derrida’s existential notion of hospitality as an antidote to excessive privacy. Indeed, hospitality, as articulated in his Of Hospitality, is liberating in its folk-like graciousness toward the other:

> absolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner, but also to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I give place to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names.

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The six forms of urbanism proposed in the Framework Plan below are structured around hospitality and its associations with diversity and social pluralism, with being a good neighbor and all that entails. Each brand of urbanism offers a new dimension of placemaking in alignment with contemporary demands for vibrant mixed-use and social-oriented places. The Framework Plan envisions places with diversity in housing
The six forms of urbanism proposed in the Framework Plan below are structured around hospitality and its associations with diversity and pluralism—with being a good neighbor and all that this entails. . . . The Framework Plan outlines places with diversity in housing types and ownership models supported by non-residential services including unique trail experiences for pedestrians, equestrians, cyclists, and mountain bikers. Trail networks host camps, festival grounds, concerts in the grove, equestrian facilities, and botanical gardens—all and much more which can be plugged into a greenway network and scaled as investment allows. New neighborhoods may be built around existing assets like recreation centers, while monetizing fabulous hillside views of lakes through multifamily and vacation hillside housing. The next generation of development in Cherokee Village can fulfill the vision of a “city in the woods” by fashioning discrete nodes of intensity without altering the overall environment that has attracted residents to the Village. The Framework Plan is modular and can be implemented incrementally, and in no certain sequence as a value-add to the Village’s existing assets. Most importantly, the Framework Plan provides multiple visions attractive to different types of investors who all demand scaled plans beyond the single-family parcel to commit to developing in Cherokee Village.
landscapes, stories, and social geographies of the Arkansas Ozarks surrounding America's first planned retirement-based recreational community

Cherokee Village
Arkansas
est. 1954
rurbanization: the urban-rural cross-section of living in cherokee village

Seasonal and permanent camps dotting the spring river watershed around hardy and now cherokee village inspired the design of cherokee village, especially in the role of water as an organizing force. Village design adopted the settlement vocabulary of the modern camp and its use of the smaller "unit plan" in modulating large camp populations. In cherokee village’s case, nine reservoirs with extensive cove subgroupings akin to hamlets were constructed to provide waterfront homesites, an indispensable camp feature.
“these hills aren’t good for anything but for the people to enjoy them.”

“some parts of the land are made for farming, and on those parts you can raise cotton, or rice, or soybeans, or wheat, or corn, or whatever, but this kind of land wasn’t made for that. It was made to be a beautiful place that people can enjoy.”

“you can’t be a developer without being a conservationist.”

-john a. cooper, sr.

john a. cooper, sr. developer of cherokee village and founder of america’s retirement community industry

spring river near cherokee village
“every 12 seconds a man would be retiring”

del webb is credited with having created the retirement community industry based on his development of sun city, arizona—an age-restricted retirement community opened in 1960. webb used innovative market segmentation techniques including subsidized mini-vacation packages and direct-mail marketing in convincing seniors nationwide to relocate to his sunbelt leisure community. seniors over 55 left their families to live in this “active lifestyle” subdivision structured around recreation centers with pools, shuffleboard, lawn bowling, crafts, and golf on short courses.

but john a. cooper, sr. already accomplished all of this in 1954 when he opened cherokee village, arkansas, a planned retirement-based recreational community. while cooper mostly targeted seniors, he did not employ age restrictions and even donated land for the construction of schools. cooper had been a real estate developer since the late 1940s, and by the early 1950s recognized an emergent market opportunity in the new generation of retirees. post-war retirees were the first to enjoy full social security benefits, pensions and other savings, unprecedented mobility, and extended life expectancy, all shaping new conceptions of retirement structured around “active lifestyles”. cooper fully grasped the scope through his own research, observing that “every 12 seconds a man would be retiring; every 12 seconds a man would be receiving a gold watch”. the cherokee village sales force—over 130 at its peak in the 1970s—was the first to deploy new marketing techniques including free vacation packages to tour homes and direct-mail advertising. cherokee village eventually attracted thousands of property owners from all 50 states and 20 countries to this ozark foothills community.

ironically, del webb and his management consultants reacted with skepticism to demographic and market segmentation development when they first learned of the retirement community concept through a 1957 nbc show featuring youngtown, arizona. youngtown, the first age-segregated retirement community was developed in 1954, the same year as cherokee village. however, cherokee village differed from sun city and youngtown in that john cooper triangulated influences from the nineteenth century american camp meeting movement, the new land sales industry, and regional modernism in creating a sense of place integral to the ozark foothills landscape. cooper was drawn to the summer camp and resort tradition long established in sharp county with its emphasis on social pluralism and family. while all three progenitor planned communities were marketed around the trope of the “vacation” only cherokee village embraced complexity, aspiring toward intergenerational living and association with local settler pioneer, scouting, and native american heritages.
“when a man’s journey, at day’s end brings him to this hogan, house of waters, house of abundance, may he rest in his protection and friendship and join in ceremony with the great chief.”

“under the wise, watchful eye of the chief, be carefree, share the beauty, plenty of game, abundance for all, with evil spirits warded off, the prospects bright, leading to happiness, happiness for all ages shall be constant. when you must, go in peace and may our paths cross once more.”

cherokee sayings selected by mildred cooper and carved on front doors of the cooper home in cherokee village

cherokee village: what’s in a name?
“playing Indian”

John and Mildred Cooper venerated native American culture. Indeed, Cherokee village was named to acknowledge an undocumented Cherokee settlement nearby while its street names adopted proper Indian names, both were involved in the scouting movement, which drew heavily upon native American tropes in a return to primitivism. Postwar era appropriation of Indian names and imagery accentuated a long troubled relationship between Indians and white settler culture that displaced indigenous peoples from their homelands. As author Philip Deloria argues in Playing Indian, Americans have used native American imagery and enacted Indian roles throughout the nation’s history to shape white national identity, from colonial insurrectionists dressing up as Indians to carry out the 1773 Boston tea party and other carnivals and misrule rituals (e.g., the whiskey rebellion of 1791-1794, and the post-revolutionary war of memory societies), to the formation of 19th century ethnographic studies around the ideology of the vanishing Indian (they are still here), conceptions of Indianness changes over time, revolutionary era Indianness celebrated freedom, Americanness, and the potential in open landscapes, what is clear according to Deloria is that America “desired Indianness, not Indians.”

In the 20th century invoking Indianness helped Americans confront anxieties over the environment, authenticity, cold war, and the various dislocating effects of modernity. The scouting youth movements originating in the early 20th century, including the woodcraft Indians and camp fire girls, were at the forefront of enacting Indianness to reestablish links to nature missing among urban youth in industrial society. Interwar period summer camps codified Indianness through practices including dressing up as Indians, performing indigenous dance rituals, and casting a vision around council rings among nearby tipis, totem poles, and wigwams, taking their cues from a natural and ahistorical Indian figure (“the noble savage”), education in woodcraft—the art of living in the woods—was a primary concern of the interwar summer camp. Teachings in woodcraft were accompanied by a focus on the development of handicraft, agriculture, and social skills. Camps generally became incubators of the middle class.

Indeed, spring river residential camps and resorts—the area’s frontline institutions in pioneering larger settlement processes—thoroughly indianized the summer camp landscape after World War One.

The idealization of a seemingly primitive, timeless, and purifying native American ethnography provided a counter to modernization processes that were felt to be more alienating than liberating. Playing Indian was mixed with the era’s progressivist tendencies, especially mass tourism, in the social construction of modern childhood and ultimately national identity, the veneer of Indian lore and motifs deployed in camp life migrated to permanent settlements constructed in the mid-twentieth century, citing Edward said, a founder of postcolonial studies, Deloria thus observes a hardened truth: that the social construction of whiteness—in all its dissonance, imperialism, and subjugation of indigenous culture—is intertwined with the construction of Indianness.

Deloria tells us that the search for the authentic is a distinctly modern condition; a quest for this other that “can be coded in terms of time (nostalgia or archaism), place (the small town), or culture (Indianness).” Like most economic and social relationships in America, even for non-Indians, these relationships oscillated between destruction and creativity, similarly, Cherokee village is an unfinished project on several fronts, socially, culturally, and physically.
cherokee (tsalagi) tribe lifeways

the cherokee institutionalized hospitality and reciprocity in both their commons and family structure, a riparian culture settling along rivers, cherokees were excellent farmers and ecosystem architects, notably, three-fifths of the world’s crops now in cultivation originated from amérindiens.

"anthropogenic forests" or the humanization of the forest breathe life to prehistoric sites, eastern trees (dogwood shown here) intercropped orchards or "mash" with fields, yielding fruits and nuts—pignammon, mulberries, cherries, plums, crampberries, apples, and walnuts, orchards maintained soil fertility while attracting birds and insect control in the fields.

prosperity wealth was not accumulated individually but became the tribal citizens were never rich or poor, a balance was used to help one’s extended family, as prosperity was a gauge of interconnectedness with one another.

extended and blended family structure cherokee family structure was not rigid and fluid, so marriage was not viewed as permanent nor was unwed neighborhood stigmatized, rather, serial monogamy was common and the sharing of family land with resilient kinship structures, siblings often combined families and created international living complexes, as part of the lewchwan language family, cherokee also had in territories like the lewchwan examples shown here.

commons or shared claims to territory since cherokees did not view land as property to be owned or enclosed, land was stewarded communally, natural resources were managed and harvested collectively, mostly within the land’s ecological carrying capacity, families claimed land for as long as they cultivated it.

"three sisters", agriculture indígenas americas integrated the planting of storage crops: corn (maize), climbing beans, and squash (pumpkin among cherokees) as a symbiotic plant guild, beans fix nitrogen, a necessary plant nutrient, into the soil, corn provides the structure for beans to climb, complementing squash vines, squash retains soil moisture and prevents weeds, together, they contain complex carbohydrates, essential fatty acids, and all nine essential amino acids.

egalitarianism and constitutional governance cherokee governance was based on hospitality, flexibility, and decentralization necessary to sustain hunter-gatherer-farming-trade economies, consensus and limited government were balanced by diffuse authority in chiefs who resided outside of red towns, and at red-town councils, the haidenawsiain (talking) had the second great council continously existing representative parliaments on earth behind iceland.

justice cherokees equated justice with the restoration of social harmony, offenders were treated with dignity under a kinship-based civic ethic—the "white path" or path of peace.

matriarchy and care structure maternal ties and clan affiliations passed through mothers and grandmothers, highlighting the centrality of intergenerational caregiving and education for both boys and girls, women decided advancement to political leadership and whether the cherokee went to war—the "red path".
there were no cherokee in cherokee village: native americans and popular culture

“there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism.”

walter benjamin, “theses on the philosophy of history”

Despite the Cooper's generation for native American culture—its understanding of indigenous heritage was marked through the popular culture filters of post-war media, mid-twentieth-century appropriations of indigenous imagery reflected a settler colonialism ever in conflict with its own ideas about the privatization of land as an commodity and the communal organizations of native American land stewardship. Dispossession of Indian identities and the function of settler colonization for rationalism, perceptions of the Indian's presence with nature were mythologized by modern advertising and entertainment to naturalize their own commercial interests, or ketchum cults and common narratives framing popular culture’s caricatures of native Americans under the guise of honor.

Sports teams and mascots

Kevin Kuhlman observes the first use of Indian mascots that arose with the federal allotment processes in the 1890s as native American communities were eliminated and tribal residents were reorganized into land parcels in western ‘Indian territories’, honoring native American was the justification for the use of native mascots, despite depression of their land and homes, some of the negative stereotypes were replaced, a more positive perception of the ‘Indian’ was established, as Indian mascots reflected the conflict to determinate wars to secure peace, different from European wars, native Americans used “marching songs” or “war intensifies, war

Ranchers, football coaches and baseball teams, the Cleveland Indians professional baseball team, and Chief Wahoo, retired mascot of the University of Illinois.

Pan-Indian Imagery

More than 500 tribes (technically Indians) with different languages and cultures were reduced to five pan-Indian stereotypes, the more common tropes have created an enthralled environment of reification, for instance, tipsy, stand in for the whole range of regional shelter types used in tribal situations, now gone, log cabins, weyward, and domed structures among others, the plant tips used tips, and their only on-road Indians while running and traveling between thermal homes, the unassuming maiden, even depicted in the figure of pocahontas, served as romantic interest readily available to white characters, but also doubled as a warning about miscegenation since the Indian love interest usually dies, despite the image of the savage warrior—the treacherous Native American—contemporary images of Native American mascots are those of an Indian warrior, a resolute man, the noble Indian—oppressed by the ‘tying Indian’ in the sense of a binding public service announcement introduced on earth, day in 1972—living within a precise ecological footprint leaving little trace on the environment, another myth is an inhuman, machine-made image seeking riches from running casinos, studies cited byBurns and P. White show that the Indians are at a $100 billion deficit, the ratio of per capita incomes of $4,500 to their u.s. average of $14,460 (in 1998 figures).
celebrated cherokee figures in the modern era

having survived broken treaties, wars, removal, and reallocation, cherokee culture consistently demonstrates its resiliency. cherokee figures continue to advance socio-cultural and political legacies within both the cherokee nation and the united states. this counters the myths that native americans had disappeared and that indian peoples' cultures are static.
On September 28, 1838, Cherokee leader John Benge escorted 1,079 Cherokee toward present-day Siloam Springs, Arkansas. The Benge Route entered Arkansas at Person’s Ferry on the White River in northeastern Randolph County. The group traveled east through old Jackson Road and crossed the Spring River just south of Imboden at a small cobblestone ford. After crossing the Spring River into Lawrence County, the trail continued onto Smithville and crossed into Howell County north of Batesville. From there, the group continued across the Ozark Mountains to near Fayetteville before ending their journey in Indian Territory, present-day Tanasqua, Arkansas.
arcadian imagery: tourism and real estate transform the ozarks
trains, rivers, and float trips
tourism and real estate development in the ozarks were primarily a midwestern phenomenon. by the end of the 19th century, middle-and-upper-class tourists and investors from kansas city, st. louis, and other cities north were attracted by the pastoral imagery depicting the ozarks. arcadian imagery promoting classical, genteel visions of agrarian life—solidified by harold bell wright's 1907 best-seller shepherd in the hills—established the basis of the region's commercial tourism. railroads overcame the geographical and cultural barriers stymieing urbanization of the ozark frontier. through cave parties, river float trips, game parks, and fish camps, regional boosters including railroad companies advertised the ozarks as a continuous "pastoral playground". the ozark float trip staged by outfitters became memorialized in the region's journalism and folklore as discussed by morrow and myers-phillipney in their history of tourism in the ozarks, shepherd in the hills country. tourist-sportsman excursions led to resort cities as rivers were dammed, which in turn brought a rush of homesteaders from across the nation to real estate developments after the 1940s.
likewise, the towns of hardy and mammoth spring on the spring river, each hosting a rail station on the "frisco" line, had their origins in entertaining urban tourists on guided float and fishing trips. mammoth spring is the headwaters of the spring river, issuing nine million gallons of cool water per hour, making it the world's ninth-largest natural spring. the spring river became a famous ozark trout and float stream, where a federal fish hatchery maintains the world's only captive spawning population of gulf coast striped bass. camps and resorts populated the spring river and the south fork of the spring river, eventually attracting summer vacationers like memphian businessman john cooper who stayed. cooper, and real estate developers after him, constructed recreational-based communities throughout north central arkansas, particularly appealing to midwestern retirees.
the interests of urban tourist-sportsmen, mostly businessmen, influenced a strong conservation movement in the ozarks, often in battle with their fellow investor class who developed extractive industries in timber and minerals. later, real estate developers like cooper drew upon a place-based and folk-oriented conservation ethic in the planning of cherokee village—dubbed "the parent of the original vacation-retirement community" and based on sportsmen activities.
the six development stages of the frontier in shaping the ozarks

from frederick jackson turner, “the significance of the frontier in american history” (1893)

disintegration of “savagery”

the the settler frontier advancing west after the war of 1812 pushed indigenous communities west, eventually settling inland into oklahoma reservations by the 1830s. the ozark highlands was the second sanctuary for tribes dislocated from their eastern homelands. osage, quapaw, caddo, and cherokee tribes were displaced from the ozarks in the 1830s, despite the threatened development of local trade with colonists, farmers, and even the mining of salt and metals.

trading

the designation of oklahoma as indian territory prevented ozarks from becoming a primary settler migration route to the west, resulting in broader trade beyond the region only with the rise of steamboating on the white and black rivers in the 1850s, was the region opened to increased trade and settlement. railroads opened in the 1870s, bringing interstate travel including shortline railroads and commerce, timber, and mining industries.

pastoralism and ranching

the shift from frontier livestock raising in the ozarks toward the holistic midwestern model did not occur until after 1850. the model employed purebred british cattle breeds,_encouraging scientific breeding, and emphasis on pasture management and forage crops. ironically, the sheepherder of the plains by hardy butler weight of the thief_ranching became more limited as the region began to shift to agricultural improvements in the region.

raising of unrotated crops—exploitation of soil

lack of fertile soil and streamlining limited agricultural development in north central arkansas. subsistence farming remained a norm among hill farmers of the ozarks up to the great depression and the new deal in the 1930s, a large outmigration of ozarks. cattle in the 1930s formed agricultural improvements in the region.

intensive agriculture of denser farm settlement

the arrival of steamboats aided the shift from subsistence farming to commercial farming near rivers, particularly in cotton production after the civil war. steamboats introduced pre-civil war planters with slaves to relocate to the region, but it was not until technical expertise in the cooperative extension service arrived in northern arkansas to collaborate with rural representatives and local farmers after 1900 did agriculture undergo a more comprehensive shift.

manufacturing and organization of city and factory

the absence of coal and lack of waterpower in the ozarks hindered the influx of industrial capital and early mechanization experienced by other highland regions in the u.s. the lack of urban centers inhibited the growth of large-scale industry and agriculture, rather, tourism, heritage, and land development became major regional economic development forces beginning with the development of resorts around area springs in the 1880s.

see particularly brooks blevins, hill folks: a history of arkansas ozarkers and their image

louisiana colony spain 1789
louisiana purchase from france 1803
arkansas u.s. territory 1819
arkansas u.s. state 1836
arkansas
ozark
settler
folkways

19th century settlers of
highland landscapes often experienced
arrested economic development due to the
lack of urbanization, skilled specialization,
and access to trade. a distinct frontier
commitment persisted in the postbellum ozark
forests to the 20th century. their expressions of
self-sufficiency later proved attractive to
subsequent generations of outsiders seeking
nostalgia, escape from the city, or
back-to-the-land
lifestyles.

subsistence homesteads often one and a
cottagey structure of open logs were
built near springs for access to water (avoiding
the difficulty of digging wells through
rock) and for economic purposes, such as
grazing. the house was an open structure, and a
hedgehog separated from the main house
by a stream. the kitchen, with its
kitchen gardens, was located at the
spring branch for access to water.

The open-range economy
where
homesteaders shared a wooded
habitat for hunting, foraging, and
animal grazing until railroad consolidation
after 1860. fences were used only to keep
animals out of vegetable gardens. an
alternative to tending to poor soils,
stockmen drove small herds of cattle
to market and saved less manageable
hogs for family consumption. forests
were a source of livelihood for foraging
plants, trapping, tree tapping, timbering, fishing,
and moonshining before the
commodification and enclosure of land.

music and distinct ozark mountain
sounds. hillbilly dance tunes, were
played through the fiddle, banjo, guitar,
mandolin, dulcimer, and autoharp.

The cabin-based crafts
included basketry, tailoring, woodworking, spinning
and weaving, and candle making.

hunting and fishing were important
sources of food and products in
subsistence economies based on barter,
cash exchange, and crop farming (except in
bottomlands). wild game such as bear,
deer, and wolves were available.

The pie supper is a ritual where family
wrapped pies are auctioned to raise
funds for charitable causes. the
substitution schools, the needy, or troops
during a war, associated with the rural
ozarks. pie suppers were an important
event where people, families,
performed, played sports, conducted
business, and engaged in general
conversation. some were held weekly,
and pies were separated. pies were
sold, and pies were sold, and pies
were eaten by the local community.

herbal traditions in ozark folk healing
mushrooms and medicinal plants from
european and indigenous communities' botanical knowledge.

education and "subscription schools"
ocurred before 20th century education
reform in arkansas that led to
teachers' salaries and duties. schools convened three to six
months per year. sometimes in residents'
homes for communities who could not
afford a building. one-room schools were
ungraded and had no permanent
furniture. the teacher was a
professional who taught ages five to twenty.

In the Ozark Mountains, the
prevalence of plant-based
medicines—e.g., bloodroot for
wounds, echinacea as a tonic
for colds, and cascara sagrada for
diarrhea—indicates a rich
traditional knowledge of
plants. The Ozarks' high
biodiversity in plant life
appeals to herbalists and
baton for pharmaceutical companies
nearly resulting in plant species' extinction due to
over-extraction, folk healing
across the Ozarks, herbalists' efforts, and
counseling by herbalists, doctors, and
traveling medicine vendors.
from the frontiersman to subsistence farmer to hillbilly

the bear state
Arkansas post was established as the first European settlement in Arkansas in 1718. Within a few years, the French and Spanish forts in Louisiana, described the frontiersmen as lazy and lowlifes, who inspired the classic works of American literature. Today, the state is known for its cultural traditions and outdoor recreation.

satirical press
Satirical newspapers, such as "The Spirit of the Times," were popular in the 19th century. They exposed corruption and criticized government officials, helping to shape public opinion.

movies
Westerns, particularly those set in the American West, have been a popular genre since the silent era. They often depicted the myth of the American frontier, with heroes riding into battle against the odds.

media images of the Ozarks: the people, the land

wellness spas and resorts
Wellness spas, such as the Ozarks' Hot Springs, have a long history of attracting visitors seeking health and relaxation.

amusement parks
Amusement parks, such as Silver Dollar City, offer a mix of rides, shows, and cultural experiences, attracting visitors of all ages.

from pastoralism to wellness, back-to-the-land, and cultural tourism

pastoralist literature
Novels like "To Kill a Mockingbird" have had a significant impact on American literature, blending themes of justice and childhood innocence.

subsistence farming
The Ozarks' history of subsistence farming is reflected in the region's cuisine, which prioritizes local and seasonal produce.

back-to-the-landers
The 1960s and 70s saw a wave of back-to-the-landers who moved to the Ozarks to escape urban life and embrace a simpler, more sustainable lifestyle.

"bubbe"
A term used to describe a grandmother, often with a sense of wisdom and tradition, reflecting the Ozarks' rich cultural heritage.

comic strips
The Ozarks' humor has been celebrated in comic strips like "The Beverly Hillbillies," which have entertained generations with their rural American settings.

the land
The Ozarks' natural beauty, with its rolling hills and crystal-clear streams, has inspired generations of writers, artists, and composers.
the arkansaw traveller theater in hardy: a “thick description”

for twenty-four years hardy, arkansas was home to the arkansaw traveller folk theater east of highway 147 on an old patching road to preserve the culture of the ozarks. the theater was founded in 1968 by leo rayer, the area development agent for the university of arkansas cooperative extension service, and organizer of the ozark folk festival and guild. in the summer of 1968, dinner theater played nightly the tale of the hawker and the squaw from the 1847 folk song the "arkansaw traveler and rackers." published by w.c. pete. since 1949, crowd size averaged five hundred people at every performance.

built by forklifts, the theater with 60 part-time employees sought to holistically preserve the folk and humor traditions of the ozarks using period music, hill folk costumes, and sets throughout the complex. the female employees wore flower dresses and bonnets while men wore suspenders, t-shirts, and hats. theater construction employed traditional pioneer methods and materials. meals represented regional staples including salt pork, corn bread, spring green beans, hill potatoes, beans and ham hock, and chicken and dumplings. the gift shop showcased jams, jellies, brats, and locally made products like hoghill mill stone-ground cornmeal and hill’s valley cheese were also sold. spinning demonstrations accompanied a total entertainment environment which utilized a reconstructed pioneer era cabin as a stage, surrounded by real livestock and the performers’ chickens playing in the stage’s forefront.

reconstruction of theater complex built in 1973 on old patching road
Vectors of Change: Steamboating and Railroading in North Central Arkansas

Nobody associated steamboats with remote mountains, dubbed "floating palaces" by Ozarkers, well over 100 boats regularly traveled the White River at the peak of steamboating in the 1870s.

Ever since the water first steamed up the White River in 1831, the white and black river became highways of commerce through these Ozark wilderness valleys that lacked good roads. In their book, steamboats and ferries on the White River, a group of historians noted the role of steamboating in developing the region's economy beyond subsistence. Small-boat steamers hauled settlers, goods, and passengers downriver while transporting new settlers, food products, and manufactured goods upriver. Steamboats also brought a level of cosmopolitanism to the Ozark frontier, cashing in on steamboats' well-equipped saloons, bars, and gambling rooms hosted excursions and events with fine dining, dancing, and entertainment unavailable in river towns. Ironically, the steamboats transported the material to build the railroads that eventually brought about the steamboat's demise after 1900.

The Kansas City, Springfield, and Memphis Railroad (now the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway Company, now the BNSF Railway) developed along the spring river in the 1880s, and gave rise to the town of Hardy in 1881. Hardy began as a railroad town providing a passenger station and water service for steam locomotives but grew to become a significant tourist destination for summer resorting and camping. Tourists traveling by train from Memphis to the Colorado mountains to escape the miserable Delta heat and humidity became attracted to Hardy and the scenic spring river environment—a closer vacation destination. Memphis area entrepreneurs, including George Gillespie Buford and John Cooper, a generation later built area resorts and year-round residential developments until buses and automobiles displaced the popularity of train travel after 1930. The railroad was the catalyst of economic development in Sharp and Fulton Counties.
“Popularized by naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton (co-founder of the American Boy Scouts) as the material expression of the orderliness and community orientation of Indian life, the council ring fostered a new appreciation for Indian culture, even as it supported the idea of Indians as a dying race, denying contemporary realities of Native American life and reinforcing white dominance.”

"In manufacturing a new type of wilderness out of what—in many cases—had been farmland, summer camps (and to some extent, other rural resorts) seemed to turn back the clock, reversing the westward motion of the advancing frontier and returning the landscape to something that evoked its pristine natural form. Indian names suggested that the land had passed into the hands of camp organizers directly from its indigenous inhabitants, and thus worked conceptually to scrub the land clean of its earlier productive manifestations..."

Abigail Van Slyck, *A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890-1960*
Camp meeting movement

The American camp meeting movement popularizing community experiences in the woods from religious revivals to cultural exchanges, became source material for a uniquely American form of settlement—the special interest community. This included recreational and retirement communities, resort villages, bungalow courts, pocket neighborhoods, trailer parks, and various utopian communities. Contemporary examples include seasonal festivals like Burning Man, a nine-day event focused on community, art, and self-reliance held in the temporary desert city of Black Rock, NV.

The camp meeting has its origins in 18th century religious revivals where families built permanent cabins around a shared lawn landmarked by a tabernacle for preaching and assembly. Camp families independently sustained themselves often over an entire summer. Some early camps were the size of neighborhoods serviced by planned circulation networks, urban blocks, stables for livestock (pre-railroad), and porches for socializing. Late 19th century camps, like Wesleyan Grove in Oak Bluff on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and Pitman, Mount Tabor, and Ocean Grove in New Jersey grew into incorporated towns.

Modern camp variations favored civic, education, and leisure interests. These included the Chautauquas (beginning in 1874 as a summer camp for Sunday school teachers on Lake Chautauqua, New York), health resorts popularized in the 1880s, the early 20th century resort hotel, and summer youth camps. The Chautauqua movement became an American institution, a center for new ideas in the arts and public affairs with concerts and theatrical performances attended by tens of thousands of summer residents seeking self-improvement. Cottages were the primary housing form in campgrounds, though sites later accommodated hotels and multifamily dwellings compatible with the pedestrian scale of camps. Regardless of meeting purposes, all shared a common objective to renew individuals through communal-based retreats to nature.

Summer camp, a “manufactured wilderness”

The rise of the summer youth camp in the 1890s was directed at building capacity and character in urban youth without subjecting them to the adult influences of the resort hotel. Led by American Scouting, youth improvement stemmed from emulation of frontier soldiers and pioneers to mid-twentieth century enactment of Indian roles in recovering a sense of authenticity threatened by modernity. Native American motifs like the council ring and tipi became permanent imagery in the camp landscape. After the New Deal in the 1930s, summer camps were thoroughly modernized but planned to look natural, more akin to suburbs than the urban neighborhoods distinguishing the camp meeting movement. While camps are not exclusively American, they uniquely served as training grounds for prototyping new conceptions of social life in a democracy.
changing concepts of tourism in the ozarks

healing
Belief in the healing power of mineral spring water, coupled with the yellow-fever epidemic in the Mississippi valley that killed hundreds in the 1880s, led to the development of health resorts around Ozarks springs, post-Civil War resorts and camps introduced new populations and urbanism different from the region’s prevailing subsistence agricultural economy.

resorting
After 1930, the Kansas City, Springfield, and Memphis railroad passing through Hardy introduced another set of entrepreneurs that transformed the spring river watershed. Resorts were built for summer residents, many from Memphis, earning Hardy the moniker “playground of the Ozarks,” one of them was John Cooper who later developed Cherokee Village.

camping and scouting
The enhanced financial ability of a growing middle class and the proliferation of automobiles allowed vacationers greater access to the same remote country destinations as the rich, the depression era back-to-the-land movement and scouting favored water-oriented vacation activities in rustic settings.
spring river camps and resorts

camps, whether fish, hunting, religious meeting, healing resort, vacation, or scouting, were important institutions in settling the ozarks; some became towns, the construction of the "trisco" railroad through hardy and mammoth spring after 1900 brought summer camps and with them an investor class that later reshaped the area through real estate development.

wahpeton inn
"home among the leaves"
1912

built by memphian dr. george gillespie butford, this summer resort camp perched on a bluff overlooking the town of hardy inaugurated the moniker "playground of the ozarks", hardy was the 2nd upland train stop in the ozarks for mountain-going urbanites seeking to escape the summer heat, humidity, and disease outbreaks plaguing the central mississippi river valley. around a shared lawn butted built 10 wigwam cottages, an inn, tennis courts, and a lawn pavilion with a coffee shop, bowling alley, shuffleboard court, and a dance floor. the formal arrangement resembles the popular 19th century religious camp meeting with its central lawn and assembly tabernacle surrounded by cabins, later turned vacation camps.

camp kia kima
"home of the eagles"
1916

founded on land donated by memphian boston smith—a vice president of the national boy scouts of america—this boy scout camp was started by the memphis chippewa council to serve its chapters, boy scout camps aimed to recapitulate the frontierman spirit lost to the urbanization of youth by modeling pioneer, scout, soldier, and indian figures. by the time kia kima was founded, world war one instilled a desire to prepare young men with military discipline. this is reflected in the parade ground formation derived from military camp typologies that influenced the first generation of scouting summer camps for boys.

camp miramichee
"quiet resting place"
1916

founded by memphian sophie kraus as a vacation camp for working women, camp miramichee was given to the ywca of memphis in 1920. attendees continued to be women until the great depression when enrollment was opened to girls of all ages. over the next 20 years enrollment populations oscillated between women and girls ages 10 to 18. camping ground layout reflected the unit plan layout, a typology popularized in new deal planning (1930s) that subdivided camps into age-based units, according to author abigail van skyck in a manufactured wilderness: summer camps and the shaping of american youth, 1890-1970. unit plans were accompanied by the use of "landscape naturalization" techniques common in the picturesque, reinforcing a sense of isolation among units. van skyck likens these camp layouts to hamlets in their creation of separate visual and auditory environments. in the case of miramichee, differences were created by clustering units on top of the hill, overlooking the river, or fronting the small creek flowing through the site at its low elevation. overall camp planning uses informality as an antidote to the disciplinary aspects of work and school settings, upon commercialization of the area, the camp was sold in 1975.

camp kiwani
"spirit of joy and youth"
1920

the girl scout council of the mid-south founded camp kiwani for memphis area campers, who initially hiked the five miles separating the camp from the hardy train depot, adjacent to camp miramichee, both camps shared the riverfront as canoeing was a big part of the camp experience with older campers having taken the 100-mile trip from mammoth to black rock, like all early scouting camps after world war one, kiwani was rich in indian symbology appropriating council rings, indian dancing, and native american names for camp structures, singing was an important ritual at kiwani throughout the day, a "singing tree" encircled by a stone bench stood outside the wata or dining hall. this reflected the emphasis on civilizing processes for girls during the 1920s and 1930s, as "girls were encouraged to discipline their bodies in order to enhance the natural beauty of the site", according to van skyck. the camp layout is formal, with sleeping pavilions divided by age levels fronting a shared lawn akin to the central lawns of the camp meeting grounds.
old kia kima in sharp county: one of america’s earliest footholds in scouting

throughout the first world war, preparation for military service was the driving force behind scouting principles. in 1918, the original camp, consisting of tents and wood sleeping stalls, was inspected by the war department. efforts to develop qualities of leadership, discipline, and responsibility in camp activities also reflected those of military training. scout groups all sent the new, improved camp to similar training today.

for its first 15 years, old kia kima served as the primary camp for the memphis area boy scouts. camp attendance remained high until falling off during the great depression and world war ii. throughout the second world war, the camp remained operational in 1948 to 1956, the last years of the great depression and the world war ii. the camp reopened in 1948 to a scouting renaissance that continued through the 1950s. in 1963 the camp closed permanently in response to the ongoing development from cherokee village. the new kia kima reservation reopened upriver the following year.

26 of the original merit badges of the boy scouts of america

- archery
- architecture
- art
- astronomy
- athletics
- bugling
- camping
- chemistry
- cooking
- cycling
- electricity
- first-aid
- forestry
- gardening
- horsemanship
- lifesaving
- music
- painting
- photography
- pioneering
- plumbing
- public health
- scholarship
- sculpture
- surveying
- swimming
scouting in cherokee village: native american heritage in the boy and girl scouts

scouting was a progressive era organization that mixed pioneering ethics and native american heritage with new notions of modern commerce. it was spurred by the fear that skills of survivalism and communal traditions were being lost to industrialization, especially among city-dwelling youths.

while some of the native american traditions employed by scouts were misappropriated, they were most interested in their shared reverence for nature, with three camps on the spring river largely becoming ground zero for memphis scouts to learn the naturalist skills of native people. this area had particular significance to the osage, who hosted inter-tribal games at the foot of waterfall hill along the spring river, both boy scouts and girl scouts would participate in activities that encouraged a closer relationship with nature and native heritage, such as archery, canoeing, dancing, crafts, and games.

camp kia kima and miramichee were founded in 1916, among the first scout retreats established for both boy scouts and girl scouts of america. the hardy area was chosen not only for its native american heritage, but also for its access to the railroad, cooler summer climate, proximity to the spring river, and popularity as a natural healing resort town.
Camp Cedar Valley: Second Generation Scouting Camp

Camp Cedar Valley was constructed in 1942, when the council purchased 32 acres of land on the south fork of the Stony River near Barry, Arkansas. This was the first camp owned by the eastern Arkansas area council (EOAC), at the boyscouts of America. The council was initially formed in 1945, with the goal of establishing a summer camp. The council hosted several temporary camps at local state parks before purchasing the old camp Cedar Valley site. In 1942, the first year the camp opened, one week cost $7.50. That year, 350 scouts attended one of six week-long terms. Cedar Valley hosted activities including swimming, camping, and rowing from a natural beach on the south fork river. The area was also known as one of the best fishing spots in Arkansas due to the extremely cold water. Scouts were trained in other skills as well, including archery and knot tying. Camp activities were replaced by a rough bell originally obtained from the old town of Indian Fork, Arkansas. In 1946, a cabin was moved to the new site. The bell was reinstall the first time at its new location during the US bicentennial celebration.

A log administration building and four stone cabins were located on the site at the time of purchase. Initially, the majority of scouts stayed in tents because the existing cabins were too small. The cabins were added and expanded. The new site of the camp was called Pine Trail Recreation Camp. In 1963, a 771-acre property was developed for three separate camps on the 1,260-acre property. Camps A, B, and C were added to the original camp. The new site of the camp was called Pine Trail Recreation. The new site of the camp was called Pine Trail Recreation camps. The new site of the camp was called Pine Trail Recreation,
order of the arrow and lodge 413

The Order of the Arrow (OA) is the honor society of the Boy Scouts of America, composed of scouts and scoulers who best exemplify scouting oath and law in their daily lives as elected by their peers.

The OA recognizes three distinctions of membership: ordeal, brotherhood, and vigil honor. In order to be inducted, each scout must complete a series of ceremonies and activities that reflect the honor society's respect for native American self-sufficiency and connection to nature. This attitude of service and selflessness became a model for many years. In the 1940s, the order of the arrow (OA) was fully integrated into the boy scout program. Jack Ray, an inducted member of the OA in El Dorado, Arkansas, moved to Jonesboro, Arkansas, to help the Cedar Valley establish the order of the arrow and build lodge 413. To ensure success, he recruited young scouts with leadership potential to help in the process. The first induction occurred in 1949 with the “ordeal” rite of passage ceremony.

For the ceremony, the elected chief would appear on a small island in the river while a runner would carry a torch from the council bluffs down to the candidates. Lodge 413 was named Hi Lo Ha Chey A La and there were several rumored stories of its origin. In 1952, growing interest in “Indian lore” lead Jack Ray to host two native American teenagers from Texas and Washington, Oklahoma. For the summer, they were taught the proper dancing technique and costume construction, around this time, the first official dance team was established when Camp Cedar Valley relocated to Vinita in 1966. The site of the old ceremonial circle was protected. Great care was taken to move the ceremonial elements to the new camp Cedar Valley site.

“Old white” patch was the first issued by lodge 413

“Shield” patch was the first lodge insignia

“Vigil blanket patch” was never sold, only one was given per scout
you owe it to your children...

to bring them closer to an outdoor heritage that has made America great. Here in the Ozark foothills along South Fork and Spring Rivers the Indians hunted and fished and left delicately chipped arrowheads for today's youngsters to find and treasure. Through these quiet glades the Spanish mule trains plodded toward Cibola. The buckskin hunter came with his long rifle and made a home in the wilderness where the wind blows free and trees talk.

you owe it to yourself...

to look over the possibilities of building the home of your dreams in the Ozark foothills. Cabin or lodge, simple or imposing, CHEROKEE VILLAGE is designed around your plans for outdoor living, a home in the hills, a place to fish and hunt, swim, paddle a canoe down glistening South Fork, ride horseback to Raccoon Springs and "back of beyond." Above all it's a place to rest in a setting of scenic loveliness. Away from the city and yet, accessible by air, rail and highway.

Cherokee Village is a family resort...

and families look to the future. With homesites being laid out on developed landscaped areas adjacent to a private lake with a three-mile shoreline, your home in the hills will increase in value as the years go by.

Modern conveniences make all the difference to the housewife who likes to combine the best in city and country living.

and it is priced for the average family...

with an eye to the long view—small down payment and easy monthly payments (as low as $15.00). Build on your lot now or later; once you own a homesite in Cherokee Village you can take your time and have all the fun of making long-range plans for that home in the hills you and your wife and children have dreamed about.
the multigenerational retirement community

cooper's cherokee village concept while special interest communities were not new to the american landscape, communities organized around the ethos of aging first arose in the 1950s. not coincidentally, this kind of market segmentation paralleled the rise of the nuclear family; ironic, given the cherokee practice of living in blended multigenerational households formed along matrilineal descent. interestingly, cherokee village did not employ age restrictions as had del webb and the retirement planning industry after sun city in the 1960s. nor did cooper market primarily to seniors, but generally to young families, among his marketing innovations in land sales other than direct mail and free vacations to tour home sites, cooper deployed "graduated land sales", a theory articulated by joe basore, his marketing executive (and son-in-law), "what we're doing is just like graduating... first from grade school, then high school, then college. we're selling land for people to play and pay for while they are young, then they are graduating to the next phase—retirement, and then later to apartment or townhouse living. it's graduated living."

as the earliest planned recreational community, cooper pioneered other planning concepts which became standard bearers in the industry. cooper was the first to use golf fairway frontage for middle-class housing. the july 1971 issue of golf usa recognized john cooper as "the architect of america's land development industry, and originator of the planned retirement concept which has swept the nation." likewise, instead of using highway strip malls prevalent at the time, cooper developed a mixed-use neighborhood town center, reinforcing a village orientation. perhaps most notably, cherokee village originated as an unincorporated community (i.e., not a city), and thus functioned as an early example of the common-interest community, this entails shared ownership and governance of public amenities among residents through a property owners association and/or suburban improvement district.

vertical integration of real estate development. in addition to lot sales and financing managed by his real estate company, cooper owned an engineering and construction company for construction of village infrastructure and homebuilding. cooper's operations produced their own drain tile and included a complete cement plant and concrete block factory. cooper also provided furnishings packages for new homeowners. cherokee village even had its own disaster fall-out shelter stocked with a two-week supply of food and water—an example of civil infrastructure rare in speculative community development.

unlike the standardized landscapes signaling retirement communities everywhere, cooper emphasized the village's integration with a rugged ozark riparian landscape, drawing upon the tropes of pioneers and native americans (indianness is represented as a ghost in the brochure) prevalent in the scouting movement, marketing material clearly referenced back-to-the-land imagery central to ozarks tourism since the 1880s. this included hunting, swimming, archery (bowfishing still popular), and horseback riding through mountain streams, alongside golf courses, equestrian facilities, a marina, and an airstrip. unfortunately, cooper's unique sense of placemaking was not replicated by the industry.

cherokee village's remoteness forced another innovation in cooper's business model—

first direct-mail brochure
John A. Cooper, Sr. founding architect of America's retirement community industry

A native Arkansan, John A. Cooper, Sr. (1906-1998) was inducted into the Arkansas Business Hall of Fame in 2004, joining the likes of Sam Walton, John Tyson, J.B. Hunt, William Dillard, and Winthrop Rockefeller. John Cooper opened the nation's first planned retirement-based recreation community in 1954; and by 1967 his Cherokee Village Development Company was the nation's fourth largest land developer.

The man who most changed the face of Arkansas.


Upon Cherokee Village's 60th anniversary in 2014, Cooper's namesake company employed approximately 600 people and its developments have attracted more than 125,000 property owner households.

1906
Born in Earle, Arkansas.

1927
Received a law degree from Cumberland School of Law in Lebanon, Tennessee.

1946
Purchased 400 acres along the south fork of the Spring River for a summer retreat, christening the property Otter Creek Ranch.

1949
Developed Avondale Gardens in West Memphis, Arkansas.

1953
After purchase of additional land around his summer retreat, Cooper formed the Cherokee Village Development Company to develop a planned community.

1955
[June 11 marked the official grand opening of Cherokee Village.]

1960
Del Webb opened the massive Sun City in Arizona, an age-restricted community utilizing modular homes resulting in a golf course; Sun City is considered the prototype of a retirement community—the "Sun City Concept"—even though Cherokee Village (now age-restricted) predates Sun City by six years.

1965
Cooper begins work on Bella Vista in Northwest Arkansas, his second retirement-based recreational community built around a camping resort encompassing 36,000 acres.

1966
Cooper co-founded and is elected president of the National Association of Community Land Developers to formulate and maintain ethical standards in the land development industry.

1968
The Cherokee Village Development Company changes its name to the John A. Cooper Company with Cooper as president and chairman of the board.

1970
Cooper opens his third planned community, Hot Springs Village, eventually encompassing 607 square miles.

1971
The company reorganizes as Cooper Communities, Inc., and relocates to Bella Vista Village, Arkansas.

1982
Howard Schwartz opens the villages in Florida, the nation's largest age-restricted retirement community with a population now over 128,000 people and the nation's 10th fastest growing metropolitan area.

1983
Mildred Cooper dies at the age of 77. The Mildred B. Cooper Memorial Chapel designed by Tom Brooks was opened in 1991 in Bella Vista.

1986
Cooper Communities, Inc., builds Tellico Village near Knoxville, its first planned community outside Arkansas, encompassing 4,600 acres.

1989
Retired from Cooper Communities, Inc.

1998
John Cooper Sr. dies at the age of 91 in Dallas.
the three Cooper community developments in Arkansas, collectively, are greater in land area than the state’s largest city, Little Rock.

From U.S. Census 2018 estimates of 2021 population count.

The three Cooper community developments in Arkansas, collectively, are greater in land area than the state’s largest city, Little Rock.

Mass merchandising real estate was not new in the United States in the 1950s. In the rural, farm-oriented, locust-fueled world of real estate, the idea of mass merchandising real estate was born in 1954 in Cherokee Village—a rural community in the outskirts of a metropolitan area. It was planted for a population of more than 30,000, with plenty of raw land. The emerging land sales industry in the 1950s was a supply-side market that assured consumers of property ownership. Subdivisions were created in rural areas outside the regulatory reach of utility service companies to keep development costs low and ensure a steady customer base. Through 40 percent of purchasers’ overall property acquisition costs, including the purchase price of the lot, the community (Cherokee Village) provided complete road, water, sewer, and service infrastructure to the development. This strategy allowed for easier credit and more financing options, making it easier for buyers to purchase the property.

Developer Business Model

Land sales were a departure from the business model of traditional community developers who financed projects through complex debt and equity capital structures, distinct from the community developers who earned revenues from commissioning neighborhood developers to other developers. Land sales companies drew profits from the sale of lots to individual buyers. In addition to selling lots, the company’s revenues came from the sale of lots with selling costs constituting 33 percent of the price of a lot. The purchasers would finance the development of the subdivision, and the company would lease the land to the developer. This allowed the company to retain control over the development and ensure its success.

As the market expanded, more land was sold, and the company’s revenue increased. However, the success of the company was dependent on the success of the developer. If the developer failed, the company would lose money. This led to a “winner-takes-all” mentality, where the company would support only the most successful projects. This approach was criticized for its lack of diversity and for prioritizing profit over community development.

Federal Regulation of Land Sales

In the early 1960s, the federal government began to regulate land sales. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Consumer Protection Act were enacted to protect consumers from fraudulent land sales practices. The FTC’s Regulation of Deception was designed to prevent fraudulent land sales practices, and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA) was enacted to protect consumers from high-pressure sales tactics.

In its early years, Cherokee Village was seen by locals as an elitist community of people with considerable wealth, despite the fact that most residents were middle class. Cooper’s unique community design and marketing likely led to the perception held by locals. Cooper was present 70 years ago in formulating a community prototype that acknowledged a retiree every 12 seconds (now an American turns 65 every 7.2 seconds). Cooper was the first to convert raw land into marketable home sites, originating the mass merchandising of real estate.
how were mid-twentieth-century recreational communities developed?

it is more complicated than a city, requiring both private and public decision-making structures.

1. acquire property
remote amenity-based subdivisions are supply-side developments where the developer assembles a packaged community to create demand for homes sites. midcentury developers employed sophisticated mass marketing processes to convert rural land into marketable home sites.

2. develop infrastructure
midcentury developers financed and constructed infrastructure for entire communities, rather than phase project implementation as per short-term demand. to keep costs low, developers specified septic systems (instead of sewers), unimproved roads, and water supply through individual wells or purchase from neighboring governments. in addition to electricity (telephone party lines were initially shared among cherokee village residents).

3. develop amenities
amenities generated around recreation and natural geographic features were central to merchandising homese sites and lifestyle. in midcentury communities, usually to vacationers, investors, and retirees.

4. charter governance bodies
property owners associations, suburban improvement districts, and incorporation as cities are structures to which developers shift the burdens of providing and maintaining public services—fire/police, streets/trails, water, sewer, electricity, communications, and recreation—to property owners.

1954
property owners association
- can form board
- collects fees
- establishes and maintains budgets
- sets and enforces legally binding covenants for owners
- maintains common improvements

1969
suburban improvement district
- can make contracts with nearby municipalities
- can operate utilities
- can sell or lease improvements to adjacent municipalities

1997
incorporated city
- headed by elected mayor
- can set and collect taxes
- can establish planning and building codes
- establishes and operates municipal services
- can set ordinances

jan cooper purchased land to establish cherokee village in 1954

130-person sales force

advertising and vacation visits

marketing and sales

roads

utilities

golf courses, marinas, and town center

fire, police, schools, and hospital

municipal services
# Cherokee Village: Evolving Governance Structure

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Services</td>
<td>• owned and managed by John Cooper</td>
<td>• managed by appointed board and president</td>
<td>• headed by three commissioners appointed by the circuit court</td>
<td>• formed municipal court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• managed marketing and sales of residential property</td>
<td>• managed marketing and sales of residential property</td>
<td>• sells bonds</td>
<td>• formed multi-department government headed by elected mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• hired contractors to maintain common property and infrastructure</td>
<td>• levies assessments and user fees</td>
<td>• formed planning department and code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• fire department built</td>
<td>• tax split: 35% city/65% SID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Services</td>
<td>• informal post office opened in the sitting bull restaurant</td>
<td>• volunteer EMT service established</td>
<td>• elementary, middle, and high school built</td>
<td>• took over management of fire, police, and school services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• hospital built</td>
<td>• police force established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• post office formalized and moved to town center</td>
<td>• renovated town center to house city hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility Services</td>
<td>• established quapaw water company built initial 17-mile water supply network</td>
<td>• purchased water company and made improvements to water network</td>
<td>• expanded electrical network</td>
<td>• took over management of utility services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• built initial 21-mile electrical power network</td>
<td>• expanded communication network</td>
<td>• utility services</td>
<td>• built sewer system serving town center and other centrally located properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• built 8-16 phone party-line</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transit Services</td>
<td>• built 26-mile street network</td>
<td></td>
<td>• took over management of street network construction and maintenance</td>
<td>• took over management of street network construction and maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• built half-mile airstrip</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity Services</td>
<td>• built reservoirs</td>
<td>• managed upkeep for reservoirs, golf courses, recreation centers, marinas, parks</td>
<td>• took over management of reservoirs, golf courses, recreation centers, marinas, and parks after donation from cooper communities</td>
<td>• contracted the SID to continue the management of all recreation services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• built golf courses</td>
<td></td>
<td>• second golf course built</td>
<td>• grocery store was closed and displaced by city hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• built recreation center</td>
<td></td>
<td>• second recreation center built</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• built marina</td>
<td></td>
<td>• grocery store opened in town center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• built parks</td>
<td></td>
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cherokee village and hardy: a comparison of street networks

In land area, cherokee village is Arkansas' 19th largest city though 75th in population size. hardy ranks 93rd in land area and 215th in population size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>cherokee village</th>
<th>hardy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>population</td>
<td>4,973</td>
<td>772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parcels</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>4,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total road length</td>
<td>296 miles</td>
<td>49.2 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total land area</td>
<td>21.3 sq. miles</td>
<td>5.4 sq. miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The land ordinance of 1785 adopted by the U.S. Congress of the Federation authorized the public land survey system for homesteading and taxation covering three-quarters of the Continental U.S. The one-mile grid could readily be combined into 36 sections to create townships and subdivided into 16 sections to create 40-acre farms, which could be further subdivided.
subdividing the universe: the house lot as the unit of commerce

While John Cooper's Cherokee Village Development Corporation (John A. Cooper Company in 1958, then Cooper Communities, Inc. in 1971) was an early example of the interstate land sales company popular from the 1950s to the 1970s, his company proved to be a successful community builder, according to author Morton Weisweis in his book. The land companies generally followed one of four business models: acreage peddlers who sold land for investment purposes; developers of built projects; land merchants who simply subdivided projects with little improvement; and second home developers who built minimal improvements and sold them to second-home buyers. Cooper's communities were characterized by their high levels of investment in public amenities and civic programming. Cooper was a community builder having financed and built public facilities on land which he donated including parks, schools, and schools. Cooper commissioned noted design professionals like William Colley and an award-winning planner from Memphis who laid out Cherokee Village.
placemaking amenities: the promise of community

placemaking is a human-centered planning approach which emphasizes a sense of belonging to a biome, connection to people, and other non-market investments that enhance social capital and ecological stewardship.

new kio kima boy scout camp
John Cooper built the New Kio Kima Boy Scout Camp in 1962. Upon completion of John A. Cooper Lake to replace the old Kio Kima Camp, the land around the old camp was being developed and infilling the wilderness experience expected in scout camping.

cherokee elementary school
Located outside of Cherokee Village in Highland, Cooper donated the land for construction of Cherokee Cooper’s land and monetary donations were credited with the early school system’s performance successes.

cherokee village town center
Designed by E. Ray Jones and built from 1954-1956, the Town Center serves as a commercial and institutional anchor for Cherokee Village. It housed the first grocery store and the post office, and now houses city hall.

sharps county regional airport
Located in the heart of Cherokee Village, the airport was built by Cooper in 1954 to provide transportation for prospective clients. The present-day airport on the southeast end of the village is now managed by a consortium of Sharp County communities.

sharp county fire department
The first of three fire department buildings was built by the Sharp County Improvement District in 1956. The present-day building was built in 1958, and the fire department was replaced and opened the first fire office in the building. The present-day building is the fire headquarters.

st. andrew’s episcopal church
Designed by a noted architect from Texas, St. Andrew’s was built in 1966 on land donated by John Cooper. It was the first church built in Cherokee Village.

thunderbird recreation center
Sitting along the northern shoreline of Lake Thunderbird, the Thunderbird Recreation Center was built in 1965 as the first of three recreation centers.

cherokee village fire department
The first of three fire department buildings was built by the Sharp County Improvement District in 1956. The present-day building was built in 1958, and the fire department was replaced and opened the first fire office in the building.

sitting bull restaurant
Demolished in 2001, the Sitting Bull restaurant opened its doors in 1956. Neither the edifice nor the restaurant remains. It housed the first office in the building.

omaha recreation center
Located on the shores of Lake Omaha, the Omaha Recreation Center was the first of three recreation centers.

omaha recreation center
The Omaha Recreation Center was built on the shores of Lake Omaha to strengthen investor interest in lots on the lake and in the western portion of Cherokee Village.

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sitting bull restaurant: dining for recreation rather than utility

The restaurant, which also housed Mildred Cooper's Wigwam Gift Shop—and later a post office and expanded fine dining, entertainment, and meeting facilities—served as an important social center in the community.

The transformation of the American working-class diner into the mass market restaurant for socializing and redefining a "1950s middle-class family togetherness" paralleled the rise of the retirement recreational community. Both embodied the kinds of institutions formed to organize a novel postwar consumer landscape structured around the white nuclear family. During its early decades, the sitting bull restaurant enforced dress codes, even requiring long dresses for women and slacks and ties for men. In a vacation community, despite this new age of affluence where a middle majority possessed discretionary income, Cooper still had to subsidize the restaurant's operations from its beginning in 1956 to 1970 because she wanted it to provide good food available at inexpensive prices.

Overlooking the creek north of the town center, the sitting bull restaurant eventually grew to become a community center complex with the addition of a library, fireplace, recreation room for teenagers, meeting rooms, and a private dining room (and also a dry county) called the fee pee room. Apart from the frontier imagery, Andrew Hurley notes in his diner, bowling alley, and theater (one of the new family dream in postwar consumer culture that these once working-class institutions were domesticated as family-oriented establishments through "family respectability" imagery replicating home, the new family restaurant employed standardization and technology to homogenize food traditions alienated from immigrant communities. Hurley observes: "diner builders and owners customarily appropriated the nation's founding myths of frontier settlement and westward expansion in the names they chose for their establishments and the motifs they employed to enrich the dining experience. In crafting populist images that were not overly threatening, they attempted something even more ambitious; a standardized national cuisine that would make items like spaghetti and fish and chips as American as apple pie."

Over its 45-year history, the sitting bull restaurant went through several ownership changes and rebrandings until its demolition in 2000, according to resident and author Alan Parker. "They tore down the most historical, most charming and most used building in the village. While we lack documentation indicating why Cooper chose to name the restaurant after the famous Hopi potter, Tafoya Indian leader Sitting Bull became a popular media figure after he joined Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show in 1885 eventually meeting President Grover Cleveland. For media-savvy shaped Cooper's pan-Indian imagery, though one mostly oriented toward western tribes rather than the eastern Cherokee nation.

Despite this new age of affluence where a middle majority possessed discretionary income, Cooper still had to subsidize the restaurant's operations from its beginning in 1956 to 1970 because he wanted to make good food available at inexpensive prices.
In addition to golf courses, early recreational communities were structured around the damming of streams to create reservoirs (lakes and natural reservoirs are manmade by way of dams), reservoir building became a popular midcentury economic development tool in the Ozarks, attracting a post-WWII retirement population as well as families seeking outdoor-based lifestyles. Water-based amenities offered a broad appeal to naturalists, anglers, and recreationalists of all ages and income groups. In Cherokee Village the reservoirs constructed from headwaters and second order streams are moderately scaled, their fractal geometries provide an intimacy through the many coves, natural rock formations also harboring numerous caves, springs, and sinkholes. More than golf courses, water provides spatial and botanical landscapes shared among the many homeowners who are not boaters.

John Cooper modeled his retirement community concept around the area’s river-based summer and scouting camps that he and his wife, Mildred Cooper, generously supported.

nine dams: the re-creation of camp lifestyles
the seven lakes of cherokee village

while village lakes express self-similar cove formations—a fractal geometry that is a function of its foothill topography—variations in scale, geography, drainage features, and elevation characterize each lake as a distinct neighborhood.

lake thunderbird 1950
264 acres
15' maximum depth
25' average depth
7.2 miles of shoreline
wake lake with fishing, boating, and skiing
marina with boat slips and rental

lake aslec mid-1970s
19.3 acres
unknown maximum depth
no wake lake with fishing

lake cherokee 1954
27 acres
40' maximum depth
6.5 miles of shoreline
no wake lake

lake omaha 1970
199 acres
40' maximum depth
7.5 miles of shoreline
wake lake with fishing, boating, and skiing

lake sequoyah mid-1950s
75.3 acres
55' maximum depth
2.4 miles of shoreline
no wake lake with fishing, boating, and swimming beach
boat slips and dry storage

lake navajo mid-1960s
54 acres
25' maximum depth
1.5 miles of shoreline
no wake lake with fishing

lake chanute mid-1970s
54 acres
unknown maximum depth
2.2 miles of shoreline
no wake lake with fishing
Cherokee Village pre-development watershed

The pre-development hydrological patterns of the south fork of the spring river watershed had already been civilized through campsites, river-based recreation, and cattle ranching.
cherokee village patterns: capture land and dam

The village's identity is shaped by the watershed's undulating topography and its fingered distribution of headwater streams, which were damned in the 1950s and 1960s to create a chain of reservoirs for recreation and homesites.
C

cherokee village patterns: roads and the "polycentered net"

The village's road network combines new arterial roads with existing highways in a mosaic of loops called a polycentered net. Urbanist Kevin Lynch coined the term to describe new midcentury settlement patterns where streets no longer generate urban form or recognizable spatial configurations (e.g., town squares, main streets, urban cores). Rather, the polycentered net is a neutral geometry or planning "fabric." Unlike traditional town streets where people shop and socialize, the road network here delivers only traffic and utility services.
cherokee village patterns: roads and reservoirs as a “capital web”

The construction of a road network and reservoirs constitutes an infrastructure package implemented by the developer—known as a capital web—for attracting investment from the sale of lots, road infrastructure—not town centers—shapes low-density settlement patterns. The concept was coined by urban designer David Crane in the 1960s to capture this new singular vision of midcentury planning characterized by indeterminacy: i.e., we know things will change but we don’t know what the market will demand next. The polycentric net offers new possibilities in generating greater specialization and variation among future development in each loop.
There are more than 3,100 residential units in Cherokee village. Most early property owners who constructed homes purchased homesites fronting a reservoir, river, or golf course.
Cherokee Village Patterns: Parcels and Buildings

80 percent of subdivision parcels, however, remain undeveloped despite having been sold more than 50 years ago. Without additional reservoir, river, or golf course frontage for homesites, what market models will attract the next stage of home building? How adaptable are the loops in sponsoring greater specialized development to answer various market demands?
Cherokee Village Patterns: Topography and Roads

Feeder roads with branching cul-de-sacs tend to follow the ridge-valley pattern of the topography as they infill the arterial loops. Cul-de-sacs result in low connectivity among land uses including the lack of walkability. Thus, reservoirs rather than streets assist in wayfinding and in creating a sense of place.
Cherokee Village Patterns: Traffic Intensity

Average daily traffic count for each road network shows the hierarchy of travel intensity within the polycentric web among arterial, feeder, and local roads. Traffic counts were interpolated from data supplied by the city of Cherokee Village.
cherokee village patterns: paved roads vs unpaved roads

Over 80 miles of roads remain unpaved, which are informally used by residents as trails and biking paths. These unimproved road networks provide conservation services for the village, at least for now.
Cherokee village patterns: roads and buildings

Buildings tend to aggregate around a spatial feature: water or a golf course. Streets are no longer the means for expressing a shared landscape or in creating recognizable town form as in traditional settlement patterns like Hardy.
Cherokee Village Patterns: Topography, Roads, and Buildings

The polycentric net is driven by a homogeneous subdivision of homesites within each loop. However, the network lacks human-scaled articulation, like blocks, it also lacks a larger identifiable order, like a town grid or a linear fabric seen along rivers and beaches. Older Arkansas hill towns like Fayetteville, Eureka Springs, and Hot Springs have iconic or "imageable" street networks supportive of wayfinding and non-traffic services related to recreation, socializing, commerce, and delivery of ecosystem services.
cherokee village patterns: topography, roads, buildings, and watershed

The capital web of reservoirs and road loops stretching across the village's 21.3 square miles creates a distributed order of water, recreational assets, and a town center, as focal organizations in a polycentric net. Could future development capitalize upon these underutilized focal organizations by developing greater specialization and variation around these centers?
cherokee village patterns: full buildout

what if cherokee village had been fully built out as planned? would the natural environment of wooded hills and streams have disappeared or become severely fragmented?
cherokee village patterns: clearings

tree canopy coverage in cherokee village is 94 percent. clearings in the forest are some of the more unique spaces in the village, especially those at public facilities, golf courses, and reservoirs.
Cherokee village patterns: income stratification

Information gleaned from the U.S. Census Bureau and the 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates shows significant variations in household income and home values across Cherokee village’s seven census blocks. Data sets for each census block include population, median age, median household income (mhi), and median home value (mhw, exhibited on next page). Among the 2,370 households in Cherokee village, the highest median household income lies within the undeveloped Fulton County census tract, more than twice that of some census blocks in east Cherokee village.
cherokee village patterns: median housing values

unsurprisingly, lake thunderbird households enjoy the highest home values. though, census blocks containing lakes do not necessarily guarantee overall high home values. of the 3,131 housing units in cherokee village, 24.31 percent are unoccupied, a high rate suggesting that many units are being deployed for rent to vacationers, migrant corporate staffs, and other short-term occupancies.

persons below poverty level 17.6% (american average 11.1%)

median home value for cherokee village $105,703
cherokee village civic clubs: scripting the “active adult” lifestyle

Cooper planned for the “active adult” lifestyle, a theory of retirement developed in the mid-1950s. The first generations of residents participated in over 100 civic associations. Cherokee village continues to demonstrate high levels of social capital, including development of its own historical society and community development initiatives.
social conceptions of retirement were reconstructed in the mid-1950s, especially as average lifespan increased to 69.6 years from 47.3 years in 1900. In 1954, well-known sociologist Robert Havighurst with Eugene Friedman published the meaning of work and retirement, arguing that in retirement, workers substituted "organized leisure activities" for the structure and status once provided by holding jobs. This concept became known as the "activity theory." Retirement was no longer envisioned as a time of withdrawal, the theory led developers to reach different planning conclusions—some toward the construction of age-restricted communities while others like Cooper emphasized intergenerational connection. Regardless, all developers of retirement communities were compelled to script a lifestyle concept in project planning beyond the simple sale of houses or lots. Cooper sponsored publication of a seasonal (later monthly) newsletter, "Cherokee Villager," to help build community association and facilitate to market the sale of lots, research shows that seniors fear loss of purpose and social isolation more than death, thus the centrality of civic association in retirement-based communities like Cherokee Villager.
a genealogy of midcentury planned communities: the bauhaus in the woods

with the rise of postwar mass suburban housing, consumers purchased the lifestyle vision projected by a neighborhood as much as the attributes of an individual home. a large consumer market for modern design and planning set the stage for midcentury developments like cooper's cherokee village. new developments of widely different scales across the u.s. were premised almost exclusively on automobile use, and novel blends of nature, community, and city. high-profile midcentury developments contemporaneous with the planning of cherokee village show that cooper was working within a zeitgeist—"a spirit of the age" shaped by the european bauhaus—though, inflected by a regionalism specific to the ozarks.

sun city
maricopa county, arizona
1960; 5,725 acres

despite the name, sun city is an unincorporated census-designated place, it is commonly acknowledged as the first age-restricted retirement community built in the u.s. the amenity-based community constructed by developer del webb offered five tract home models built around golf courses and shopping/recreation centers within a street network of concentric circles. sun city is not the first active adult retirement community in america, coming six years after cherokee village and neighboring youngtown (the first to age restrict through the restrictions were later dropped). by 2000, the company had built 13 sun cities, now a brand of prudential homes, inc., a fortune 200 company. del webb effectively franchised the age-restricted retirement community model to eventually encompass 57 communities in 20 states.

levittown
long island, new york
1947; 4,000 acres

consisting of more than 17,000 detached identical homes, levittown is upheld as the prototypical postwar american suburb for its scale and pioneering application of assembly line techniques in housing construction, a vertically-integrated company connecting real estate, planning, and all facets of construction, the firm levitt & sons, inc., saw themselves as manufacturers more than builders, likening their company to "the general motors of the housing industry." car and house ownership underwrote the american dream, while communities like levittown helped in making homeownership widely available to a white middle-class market. its regimented planning and expedience in construction (one house was built every 16 minutes) resulted in homogeneous environments for which suburbs became known. the levitts became the model for contemporary production builders supplying mass housing today.

park forest
illinois
1945; 2,000 acres

a planned community to address the housing crisis brought on by six million veterans returning from world war ii, park forest was a collaboration between developers nathan manor, carroll swett, and philip kubrick, and acclaimed town planner elbert peets. peets was planner for the three model greenbelt towns implemented under the new deal in the 1930s. like levittown, park forest exemplified large-scale suburbanization through rationalization of the home building industry combined with organic and curving plan geometries influenced by landscape architect frederick law olmsted and the garden city concept of Ebenezer Howard. like a wartime production assembly line, developers established an onsite production company and supply chain eventually employing over 1,000 workers and completing 21 housing units daily, developers built community spaces and a shopping plaza with gathering spaces, while setting aside land for churches and schools.
Crestwood Hills
Los Angeles, California
1947; 835 acres

Four musicians seeking an alternative to tract housing built by production builders across the country—like the Levitt brothers—formed the Mutual Housing Association (MHA) to build modern houses in the Brentwood section of Los Angeles. The MHA was driven by a utopian vision to cooperatively develop 580 single-family houses. According to Tanya Burkett, architect and Crestwood historian, this co-op neighborhood attracted like-minded progressives seeking a sustainable and inclusive community in a time of segregation and racially restrictive covenants. MHA members shared in the planning of the community and design of modern housing, as well as the financing of infrastructure and civic amenities. The MHA hired noted modernist architects Whitney Smith, a. Quincy Jones, Craig Ellwood, and Richard Neutra. Landscape architect Garrett Eckbo, and engineer George, indeed, Burkett contends that Crestwood was one of the “few fulfillments of the bauhaus dream” in America.

Holli Hills
Alexandria, Virginia
1949; 326 acres

Hailed as one of the finest examples of mid-century modern communities in the U.S., Holli Hills was planned by two visionary developers, Robert S. Davenport and architect Charles Goodman, joined by landscape architect Bernard Vautier with later help from famed landscape architect Dan Kiley. They treated the landscape as an “architectural laboratory,” sensitively sited homes to the hilly topography rather than the street. Parklands preserve natural drainage channels, while natural and manicured landscapes were well blended. The design approach married glass houses (more than 450) and open interiors with the wooded terrain, like Crestwood’s founders. Holli Hills began with utopian ambitions to mix income groups within the same neighborhood so that households can move among homes as their needs change and thus age in place. An architectural control committee still governs allowable changes to homes.

Arapahoe Acres
Englewood, Colorado
1949; 30 acres

Similar to Holli Hills, a progressive local businessman Edward Hawkins learned with modernist architect Eugene Sternberg to create a cohesive neighborhood of modern middle class homes inspired by the work and philosophies of Frank Lloyd Wright. The development participated in the reverse-growth housing program, a national effort then to improve housing development by enrolling architects in the design of neighborhoods and houses. Departing from Englewood’s street grid, Sternberg sited streets and houses to be in harmony with the site’s rolling topography and to slow traffic. Hawkins, an avid fan of Frank Lloyd Wright’s later work, designed most of the neighborhood’s 124 homes combining influences from the international and usonian styles of modernism. With its iconic design, Arapahoe Acres was the first mid-century modern neighborhood to be listed as national register historic district.
“modern building is now so universally conditioned by optimized technology that the possibility of creating significant urban form has become extremely limited. . . . critical regionalism necessarily involves a more directly dialectical relation with nature than the more abstract, formal traditions of modern avant-garde architecture allow.”

Kenneth Frampton, “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance”
placemaking in the ozarks

John Cooper commissioned two Arkansas architecture firms who balanced new modernist expressions of space with the concern for local topography, context, climate, light, and tectonic form (construction systems) that rooted buildings to place. Fay Jones was hired to design the town center, nearby townhouses, and a house near the river. A Jonesboro firm noted for their modernist buildings, Stuck, Frier, Land & Scott, Inc., was hired to design the lakeside Thunderbird Recreation Center. While houses were left to individual builders, many of the first lake homes exhibited a regionalism based in contemporary fenestration (window) patterns, traditional gable roofs and interior cathedral ceilings, open floor plans, and outdoor decks. These various brands of modernism demonstrated that buildings could celebrate a sense of place without resort to the cartooning of traditional architectural styles or kitsch. Their “critical regionalism” resisted debased and sentimentalized consumer trends. Cooper was the only developer in the first generation of the post-war land development industry to connect design thinking with placemaking for middle-class housing. Risky, since land developers commonly invoked a generic suburban planning format to attract a wide consumer base nationwide.

similarly, the Thunderbird Recreation Center by Stuck, Frier, Land & Scott, Inc., terraces pools, lawn and game courts, and various assembly buildings along lake Thunderbird. The elegant composition of low-eave roof structures on heavy masonry bases frame exterior recreation spaces with lake views, counteracting the heavily wooded landscape on the arrival side of the buildings. Panelizing stone with wood-framed glass curtain walls, the complex balances transparency and enclosure in connecting lake with woods, and intimate spaces with assembly-sized spaces, like Fay Jones’ work, simple but well-detailed building forms create community landmarks without an overbearing monumentality.

Like his famous mentor Frank Lloyd Wright, Fay Jones adroitly addressed the coordinates with which modern architecture often struggles: earth and sky, street and garden building frontages (there is no principal front and throwaway back), and human scale, whether residential or commercial. Jones grounded his buildings through an earthwork of masonry bases and retaining walls that shaped courts and plazas as extensions of interior living spaces; the bustle of the ground was countered by the serenity of a simple but iconic lightweight roofwork of wood with deep overhangs for sheltering outdoor space, as with the best modern architects, Jones located skylights at the heart of the building rather than rely solely on the wall for admitting natural light to interior spaces. Windows were never punched holes in the walls but rather systems of organization in composing building elevations. He skillfully used symmetry to create typologically clear building organizations in service to expressing a poetics of construction fitting of the Ozark landscape, paradoxically, Jones’ buildings create a convincing environmental continuity (known as “organic architecture”) yet stand as powerful landmarks.
1921
January 31, born in pine bluff and raised in el dorado, arkansas.

1938
Jones’ architectural ambitions are sparked by a short film on the johnson wax museum, designed by frank lloyd wright, his eventual mentor.

1941
After initially enrolling in the engineering program of the University of Arkansas, enlists in navy and attains rank of first lieutenant as a naval aviator and a reconnaissance pilot.

1946
After a year as a draftsman at a little rock engineering firm, re-enrolls at University of Arkansas in the inaugural class at the school of architecture.

1950
Graduated from the university of arkansas architecture program.

1951
Graduated from rice university with a master of architecture.

1951-1953
Served on the faculty at the university of oklahoma.

1953
Apprenticed to frank lloyd wright at his taliesin east studio and school in spring green, wisconsin; joined the faculty at the school of architecture at the university of arkansas, established a private practice in fayetteville where he designed and built homes of several university of arkansas faculty members.

1956
Completed own house in fayetteville, which is now listed on the national register of historic places.

1959
The barn residence is published in house beautiful, the first national magazine to publish Jones’ work, bringing in hundreds of unsolicited requests for house plans.

1961
Completes design for the colwell house, his first project in cherokee village, receives his first two aia awards, both for houses, one belonging to walmart founder sam walton.

1965
Completes design for the cherokee village town center, his last of several projects for john cooper.

1966
Become the first chairman of the university of arkansas architecture department, completes design for the cherokee village townhouses, implementing a design already proposed for bella vista.

1974
Become the first dean of the newly founded university of arkansas school of architecture.

1977
Completes design for stoneflower, one of his most published and awarded residential designs.

1979
Designated a fellow of the american institute of architects.

1980
Designated a fellow of the american academy in rome, designs and builds thorn crown chapel in eureka springs, arkansas.

1984
Awarded title of aca distinguished professor by the association of collegiate schools of architecture.

1988
Retired from teaching.

1990
Received the aia gold medal, the highest professional distinction for american architects.

1991
Architecture magazine surveys names Jones as one of six “most admired” living architects.

2000
The aia recognized thorn crown chapel as the fourth most significant structure of the twentieth century, recognized by the aia as “one of the ten most influential architects of the twentieth century.” thorn crown chapel is added to the national register of historic places, only 20 years after it was built.

2004
E. fay jones dies at home in fayetteville on august 30.

2006
Thorn crown chapel was added to the aia’s exclusive list honoring buildings that remain great after twenty-five years.

2009
The school of architecture at the university of arkansas is named in his honor.

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e. fay jones: one of america’s most significant architects

A native arkansan, e. fay jones (1921-2004) was an internationally acclaimed architect who won the American Institute of Architects’ highest honor—the AIA Gold Medal in 1990. Jones’ thorn crown chapel in eureka springs was voted the 20th century’s fourth-best building by the AIA.
e. fay jones architecture in cherokee village
application of the principles of organic architecture with words from Fay Jones

detail
as a vocabulary for building and site, details should manifest large systems of thought while expressing "an intensity of caring." The detail fulfills the cognitive function of moment to bond together various scales and environments, including inside and outside, earth and sky, and heavy and light.

form
Generative ideas are a seed that integrates the part to the whole, the nesting of patterns where "you should see the relationship, to the parts and to the whole." Jones' approach balances overall symmetrical arrangements with local asymmetries adapting to function and context; light was also a key force in Jones' thinking: "since architecture is space...

site
Establish a fit between building and site, blending exterior and interior space through extension of ground and ceiling surfaces from inside to outside. At final resolution, site and building should achieve a kind of singularity, or openness, of harmonious and ideal relationship.

material
Use native materials according to their intrinsic properties. "Materials should be used in a way that conveys their strength and best qualities, letting each material—whether it is wood, stone, or steel—express its basic nature."

shelter
Buildings should aim for dignity and simplicity, not platitude. "Every man should have a place where he can have communion with himself and his surroundings, a personal environment free from disharmony and frustrations.

E. Fay Jones architecture in other Cooper communities

Jones was commissioned by John Cooper to design public buildings, town centers, and golf clubhouses, in all three of his Arkansas-based community developments.
1950
1970

a legacy of midcentury modern architecture in Cherokee Village

Midcentury modern design (1940s-1960s) was a movement that democratized access to high design in products, graphics, clothing, furniture, architecture, and landscapes through mass production. The midcentury aesthetic in architecture features open floor plans, light-filled interiors, spatial connection between inside and outside, and the expression of structure and natural materials.

Just as camps inspired an architecture of cabins, cottages, and lodges, so the idea of Cherokee Village motivated its own forms of contemporary architecture. Alongside the organic modern architecture by architect Fay Jones for Cherokee Village, many early homes in Cherokee Village approximated more the informality of cabins and lodges—like the A-frame—than the conservative suburban home. Residential design reflected the optimism and newness of modern architecture in their open plans, transparency in the use of floor-to-ceiling glass, light-filled rooms, and connection to a forested lake edge. These homes brought the outdoors inside, modern design expressed new functional relationships emphasized by concern for authenticity and economy in the use of material and structure. Despite the role of mass production and standardization of building components, the first generation of homes in Cherokee Village exhibit regional variations in midcentury design. Midcentury modernism is more a set of principles than a style, as the best examples project a timeless, clean line that still resonates today, the spaces of midcentury modernism characteristically expressed and facilitated a new lifestyle focused on family and the outdoors.
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kia kima, silver ferry

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kia kima, saxon lodge

kia kima, saxon lodge

kia kima, feasting spuds

kia kima, saxon lodge


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native american heritage

ozark pioneer and folk

camping and scouting

midcentury recreational and retirement communities

fay jones, modern architecture

the construction of whiteness is intertwined with the construction of indianness, dominated by the settler dissonance of "revering" indigenous culture while simultaneously dismantling it. how might the relationship be decolonized with consideration for deeper cultural lessons like stewardship of resource commons, communal neighborhood forms, a disciplined ecological footprint, etc.?

austerity characterized the ozark frontier resulting in resourceful but ruralized economies lacking the specialization and opportunity intrinsic in more complex urban economies. how might cherokee village confront its perceived isolation to attract a greater range of services (e.g., healthcare), amenities, and lifestyles demanded by current markets?

that camps arose to become pivotal institutions in advancing social improvement and a middle-class order among settler culture is uniquely american. how might the social coherence and the physical attributes of the camp environment inform the development of new neighborhood archetypes in cherokee village?

the land sales industry was driven by lot subdivisioning for single-family homes: a mid-century market phenomenon now with limp market demand. what new settlement patterns and infrastructure improvements are available to create a sense of place throughout low-density development not tied to water or golf course frontage?

good design leverages market value and place identity. the midcentury buildings constructed in cherokee village's early years constitute a cultural gene pool that warrants extension of this legacy. is there a set of architectural principles that can be codified in new nonresidential and residential construction that embody cherokee village's unique sense of place while maintaining a range of lifestyle choice?