



RICHARD THOMAS

Tribal Affiliation: Chickasaw

Contact Exhibit C Native Gallery & Gifts for pricing

Richard Thomas has always been an artist at heart, spending time drawing and carving wood as a teenager and had build two or three boats by the time he was 13 years old. Thomas crafts with leather creating moccasins, quivers, bows, spears and more.

Thomas' workshop is stacked high with personal projects. Thomas-made squirrel sticks, a kind of mallet hurled at small game to harvest them, are proudly displayed at the Chickasaw Visitor Center (Sulphur, OK) and Chickasaw Nation Welcome Center (Davis, OK).

THE STORY OF THE SQUIRREL STICK:

An Indian youth fell in love with the daughter of the chief, but the chief did not like the young man and refused to let him court his daughter. The youth knew he must change his lazy ways in order to impress the chief. He did not know how to do this so he did nothing about it.

One day he sat on a log whittling a stick; it began to take the shape of a short bottle with a long neck. As a squirrel scampered by, the youth threw his stick at the animal. It was hit on the head and fell over dead. "What a powerful stick," he thought.

He took the squirrel home to his mother to cook for supper. The next day and then the next, he continued killing squirrels with his stick. He soon became known as a great hunter. He kept his squirrel stick a secret, however the chief heard about the young man's changed ways and allowed him to court his daughter. The courtship flourished and in a few months, they were married. He kept hunting with his secret weapon throughout their long life together. They had many children.

He kept his secret until he lay dying and then told his eldest son the secret of the squirrel stick. He made him promise to tell only his eldest son. From that time on, the secret has been passed from generation to generation and for this reason, the legend of the squirrel stick survives today.

1. "Squirrel Stick" / White Oak / 16L x 2W

