

## Preface

In October 1785 three chiefs, representing the Eastern Comanches, or Kot-sotekas, entered into a peace treaty with the governor of Spanish Texas at a meeting held in San Antonio. The agreement, which both parties had been negotiating off and on for thirteen years, was a watershed moment on the Southern Plains. The Comanche Treaty was the last in a series of 1785 agreements in which the Spaniards in Texas, following more than three decades of war, established peace with a group of formerly hostile tribes, known as the Norteños. The treaties proved successful since the Indians and the Spaniards maintained relative peace in Texas for the next twenty-five years, until relations were disrupted by the movement for Mexican independence and the ensuing arrival of American colonists from the United States.

Until the late twentieth century few people were aware of the momentous agreements that had been reached two hundred years before. In 1975, however, the publication of Elizabeth A. H. John's *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540–1795*, dramatically changed the way people perceived relations between Indians and Euroamericans in Texas. Prior to *Storms Brewed*, an enormous narrative history that climaxed with the 1785 Spanish-Comanche accord, the few studies of the region's Native Americans tended to neglect the colonial era entirely. They also portrayed the Indians as savage barbarians who presented an obstacle to civilization, which the American settlers were forced to heroically overcome in the nineteenth century. For example, one of the period's most respected works, Rupert N. Richardson's 1933 study, bore the title *The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement: A Century and a Half of Savage Resistance to the Advancing White Frontier*, and only ten of two hundred pages dealt with the era prior to the Americans' entrance into Texas.<sup>1</sup>

John's monumental effort focused exclusively on the colonial era and stressed the central role the various Indian tribes played in the Euroamerican settlement of the region between the Red River in Louisiana and the Rio Grande in New Mexico. *Storms Brewed* presented the Native Americans as rational beings who followed their own material interests in dealing with the

Spanish and French newcomers. Using archival sources, John showed how the Indians closely interacted with the Euroamericans, forging advantageous military and trading alliances with whichever power they felt had the most to offer. The work expertly delineated the various tribes, pointing out that most of the region's Indians did not primarily hunt buffalo from horseback, as a majority of movie-fed students believed (and still do), but that some were sedentary agriculturalists, while others hunted and fished near the Gulf Coast. In the quarter of a century since the publication of *Storms Brewed*, all worthwhile scholarly studies of the colonial Southwest, no matter how focused on the Euroamerican settlement of the region, have had to consider the importance of the area's Indians.<sup>2</sup>

John's book also launched a series of monographs on the individual Indian tribes of Texas and Louisiana, which traced their histories into the nineteenth century and beyond. A majority of the works focused on the numerous Comanches, the classic buffalo hunting tribe of the region.<sup>3</sup> Fewer studies looked at the Lipan Apaches and the Tonkawas, other tribes that primarily rode horses and hunted game.<sup>4</sup> A number of books examined the history of the settled, farming Caddoan-speakers from the precolumbian era up to the late twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> A few scholars studied the coastal Karankawas and finally succeeded in demonstrating that they were not primarily cannibals, as most Texas schoolchildren have traditionally been taught.<sup>6</sup> Histories of the Cherokees, Delawares, Shawnees, and Alabama-Coushattas, tribes that immigrated to the region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were also written.<sup>7</sup> Of all the area's Indians, scholars neglected only the Atakapas, a group of people that hunted and fished near the Texas and Louisiana coasts.<sup>8</sup> These works successfully overcame the triumphalist nature of the regions' Native American historiography by matching the quality of the sophisticated studies of Indians that had already been completed for the Northeast, Southeast, and Great Lakes regions of the United States.

Despite the recent multitude of individual tribal studies, only a few scholars have followed John's example of producing a general history of all of the region's Indians and their relations with Euroamericans. William B. Gannett's 1984 doctoral dissertation examined the conflict between the various tribes and the American settlers of Texas during the period of Mexican independence and the Lone Star Republic.<sup>9</sup> This work was hampered, however, by the fact that the author did not consult any Spanish language sources and that he dealt with the Indians by location rather than as a whole. More interesting was Howard Meredith's 1995 book, which traced the movements and cultures of the various tribes that were placed on reservations in the Indian Territory—present day Oklahoma—during the late nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup>

Using traditional native dances as a metaphor for the relationship between Southern Plains tribes and Euroamericans, Meredith's book concentrated on the Indians' dealings with the federal government in the twentieth century and neglected the many groups of the region that did not end up in southwestern Oklahoma. Three years after the publication of Meredith's work, David La Vere produced the first complete overview of Texas's Indian tribes in a forty-six page introduction to his edited work of native oral histories that the Works Progress Administration gathered during the Great Depression.<sup>11</sup> La Vere succinctly traced the history of the various tribes from precolumbian times to the 1930s, paying particular attention to how the Indians' material culture evolved following the arrival of the Euroamericans. This book was followed in 1999 by Gary Anderson's revolutionary study of the Indian economy of the Southwest between the beginnings of Spanish settlement in the late sixteenth century and the advent of the Americans' domination of the area in the early 1800s.<sup>12</sup> Through the innovative use of a wide variety of archival sources, Anderson persuasively demonstrated how many tribes altered their lifestyles following the Spanish and French intrusion in order to forge a thriving exchange-based economy relatively independent of the Euroamerican newcomers. Finally, in 2004 La Vere built upon his previous short essay by using secondary works and published primary sources to produce an excellent book-length history of the Texas Indians from their arrival in the region to the present.<sup>13</sup>

Although the past quarter of a century has witnessed a profusion of scholarly studies of the region's Native Americans that have greatly altered and made clearer our understanding of the various groups' experiences in Texas, no author has yet taken up John's unstated challenge of producing a successor to *Storms Brewed*, a detailed narrative history that would trace the tribes' interactions with Euroamericans from the establishment of peace at the signing of the Comanche Treaty to the Indians' expulsion from the state just prior to the Civil War. During this period of three quarters of a century, the Native Americans continued to play a very important role in the area. For the first half of the era the Indians maintained a numerical superiority over the Euroamericans that allowed them to influence the region's economic, military, and diplomatic affairs to a heretofore unrecognized degree. Although the fortunes of the various tribes declined rapidly following Texas independence, the Indians were not the barriers to civilization that previous scholars have described, but were a race of people desperately trying to survive in the face of overwhelming hostility. By the end of the period almost all of the few remaining Indians were forcibly driven from Texas.

This book, then, attempts to fill the void in the literature by being a worthwhile successor to *Storms Brewed* and, thus, examines the relations between

the Indian tribes and the various Euroamerican groups in Texas and the Near Southwest from 1786 to 1859. In order to maintain clarity, however, this work is more limited geographically than *Storms Brewed*. Many readers have complained that John's book, by going back and forth from New Mexico to Texas and Louisiana over a period of two and a half centuries, was confusing and nearly impossible to follow. Actually, the respective colonies' Indian affairs bore very little relationship with one another and, therefore, *Storms Brewed* was actually two separate books rolled into one. This study concentrates on Texas and a region I call—with apologies to Dan Flores—the Near Southwest, an area bordered on the east by the Red River, on the west by the Llano Estacado, on the south by the Nueces River, and on the north by the Canadian River. Throughout the period encompassed by this book, events in this zone—which traverses the political boundaries of Texas, Louisiana, and the Indian Territory—impacted all the area's tribes while having little if no effect on the Native Americans in New Mexico.

I also decided to begin this book a decade earlier than the conclusion of *Storms Brewed*, which ended, for little apparent reason, with the agreement reached between Spain and the United States in the 1795 Treaty of San Lorenzo. In reality, John's study built toward the agreement reached in San Antonio in October 1785—and one concluded a few months later between the Western Comanches and the Spaniards in New Mexico—and terminated soon thereafter. In part, this was a consequence of the fact that the English language translation of the Béxar Archives (the most important original unpublished source for colonial Texas) abruptly ends in 1789. As a result, few of the above-discussed works deal in any significant way with Indian-Euroamerican relations in the thirty-year period between the last decade of the eighteenth century and the American colonization of Texas in the 1820s, when English sources again become plentiful. Therefore, the histories of important tribes such as the Lipan Apaches, Tonkawas, Karankawas, and Atakapas, remain incomplete due to the continued scholarly neglect of the Spanish and French sources of the period. One of the most important contributions I hope to make with this book, then, is to fill the gaping hole that remains in the studies of Native Americans in Texas and Louisiana from around 1790 to 1825 or so. Therefore, I have thoroughly examined original microfilmed copies of the Béxar Archives from 1789 to 1836, as well as other contemporary Spanish language sources held at the Center for American History at the University of Texas. In addition, I have traveled to Seville, Spain, to look at the most important source for Spanish Louisiana, the *Papeles Procedentes de Cuba*, which contains, for the most part, French language documents held in the *Archivo General de Indias*.

Through the use of these unpublished archival sources, most of the con-

temporary published material, as well as the new wave of studies that have appeared over the last quarter of a century, I have attempted to produce a detailed narrative history that provides a clearer and deeper understanding of the nature of the Native Americans' dealings in the Near Southwest with Spaniards, Frenchmen, Mexicans, and Americans during an era of great transition. This work pays particular attention to the Indians' population, for I believe that one of the most important keys to the tribes' success or failure was their numbers in relation to the region's Euroamericans. Simply put, the Native Americans maintained their dominance in Texas and the Near Southwest only as long as they outnumbered the Hispanics, French, and Americans in their midst. I have also maintained a focus on the various tribes' locations and trading and military alliances, for the Indians played a very important role in the diplomatic affairs of the region well into the nineteenth century. Even after the general decline of the Native Americans following Texas independence, the different tribes followed widely disparate paths as they vainly attempted to maintain their position in the state. Unlike what most people today presently believe, not all of the Indians fought the Euroamerican settlers of Texas; in fact, most tried to reach an accommodation with the Texans that would have allowed them to peacefully remain in what they considered to be their traditional homeland. Unfortunately, Texan antipathy to the Native Americans was so intense that the state's citizens were not satisfied until only but a handful of Indians were driven from its borders. This book, then, narrates the story, formerly only told in piecemeal, of the Indians of Texas and the Near Southwest from the late eighteenth century to the middle nineteenth century, a period that began with the Native Americans dominating the region but ended with their disappearance from it altogether.

Special thanks must be given to four people, in particular, who helped me produce this book. Three of them are friends and colleagues, as well as being among the foremost experts on colonial and antebellum Texas. Mike Campbell, Don Chipman (now retired), and Gregg Cantrell (now at Texas Christian University) all read the manuscript and corrected errors I had made concerning the non-Indian Near Southwest, as well as providing important suggestions that greatly improved the original manuscript. The fourth person is my wife, Sophie Burton, who received a Fulbright Award in 2002 to conduct research in Spain on her own dissertation, and allowed me to tag along with her to Seville. Not only did she help me translate the documents I found in the Archivo General de Indias, she also read this manuscript countless times. I now have to repay the debt by doing the same for her. I can hardly wait!