
Book Reviews

Gwynne, S. C. *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History*. New York: Scribner, 2010. 9781416591054 (hardback); viii, 371 pages, [8] p. of plates; ill., map, \$27.50.

In 1836, the Comanche raided the Texas homestead of the Parker family, a clan of white settlers who had established themselves in territory just east of present-day Dallas. Reflecting their fierce and brutal reputation, the Comanche warriors murdered most of the men, raped the women, and carried off two women and three children as captives. Nine year old Cynthia Ann Parker was adopted by the Penatekas, one of the southern Comanche groups renowned for their fierce raids. By the late 1840s, now a married woman within the tribe, Cynthia Ann gave birth to a son, Quanah, half-white, half Comanche, who would become one of the most formidable Comanche foes of the Texan settlers.

In this historical narrative, S. G. Gwynne presents a rich cultural history of frontier expansion in Texas from the 1850s-1880s through the lens of the life of Quanah Parker, the last and greatest chief of the Comanches. Drawing on historical material from other published sources and documentary material, Gwynne attempts to capture the culture, perspectives, and struggles of the Comanche, and their leader, Quanah, as they responded to the territorial expansion by white Texans. Gwynne's rich and detailed cultural history generally covers three major periods in Quanah Parker's life, marked by the successive subjugation of the Comanche: (1) the 1830s and 1840s, during which disease and settler encroachment disrupted the stability of Comanche tribes and devastated indigenous

populations; (2) the 1860s through 1870s, the period of the Comanche wars throughout Texas and northern Mexico; and (3) the 1880s through the 1910s, the post-treaty period during which the Comanche adjusted to reservation life in Oklahoma.

In representing Comanche responses and strategies, Gwynne faces the challenge of working with the existing materials which often limits his ability to reconstruct the specifics of historical incidents and Comanche experiences. Yet, through his narrative, he manages to give the reader a sense of the uncertainties and foreboding faced by the Comanche in the early period as they struggled to make sense of diseases that ravaged their people, onslaughts faced from Texas settlers and military, and the devastating slaughter of the buffalo. Placing the Comanche within this historic context, Gwynne explains their adoption of the horse, development of military guerrilla strategy, and reputed brutality and thuggishness as their cultural adaptation and tribal capacity to develop into a warlike group of bands who successfully resisted military and settle expansion in Texas for many years. Following the Civil War, Gwynne then describes Quanah's political emergence, from a relatively unknown half-breed who lacked the political and social status of established tribal leaders to become the most feared Comanche warlord throughout Texas. Gwynne's vivid writing places the reader within the context of the battles and night forays against the U. S. military, marveling at the guerrilla tactics adopted by the Comanche. He details the begrudging respect of some U. S. military as they recognized Quanah's military strategies and tactics. Yet, at the same time that the reader admires the sheer audacity of Comanche attacks, all readers of Gwynne's text will share a sense of foreboding, knowing

the end of this story. Gwynne relates the final slaughter of thirty-nine million buffalo between 1868 and 1881 by the buffalo hunters, the final blow that would devastate the Comanche as hunters and warriors. On June 2, 1875, Quanah and four hundred and seven Comanche, from the Quahadis band, surrendered at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, the “only band of any tribe in North America that had never signed a treaty with the white man” (Gwynne 2010:289).

In this third and final period of Quanah Parker’s epic journey, Gwynne details Quanah’s political acuity in transforming himself from a warlord into political leader on the Fort Sill reservation. Instead of resigning himself to reservation life, Quanah initially used his friendship with army commander Ranald Slidell Mackenzie to secure benefits for himself and his people. He developed into a prosperous cattleman, overseeing the leasing of reservation land and amassing a large cattle herd. If Quanah could not beat the white man on the plains of Texas, he never quit learning how to resist, how to feint, and how to defend his interests strategically. Following the Dawes Act of 1887, when the Jerome Commission moved to privatize common lands on the Fort Sill Reservation, Quanah Parker fought the white man at each step, now with lobbying, investigations of allotments received by other Indian tribes, and direct questioning of commission officials. In 1905 Quanah invited his new friend, President Teddy Roosevelt to participate in a wolf hunt on the reservation and to stay with him at Star Home, Quanah’s house. Following his established reputation, Quanah used the President’s visit as an opportunity to lobby Roosevelt on Indian issues, arguing for the retention of Indian lands and discussing unemployment problems.

In this cultural history of Quanah Parker,

Gwynne portrays a brilliant political strategist, a man who struggled to defend his people, and, at the same time, a pragmatist who weathered major disruptions in his people’s lifeways, always trying to make the best of a difficult situation. In the end, Gwynne compares Quanah with another famous Indian leader, Geronimo. Unlike Quanah, Geronimo finished his days in Fort Sill in quiet seclusion, isolated and alone. In contrast, Quanah was always active, busily promoting Quanah route Day at the Texas State Fair, advocating for the Quanah, Acme, and Pacific Railroad, which ran through the town of Quanah, Texas. In 1911, when Quanah died of rheumatism-induced heart failure, thousands of mourners arrived on horseback and in wagons to honor him at his home. In this vivid story, Gwynne portrays a man who lived through extreme and brutal hardships, yet a leader who always looked forward, seeking opportunities in the face of adversity.

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Sweeney, Edwin R. *From Cochise to Geronimo: The Chiricahua Apaches, 1874-1886*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. 9780806141503 (hardcover). viii, 706 pages: ill., maps; bibliography, index. \$39.95

I am writing this book review, not because Ed Sweeney is one of my best friends, but because he has written, by far, the best overall book on the Apache Wars. I like to tell my friends that I have known Ed since 10 B. C. (Before Cochise, his first major work) so that would date his scholarly interest in Apache studies at several decades. Ed and I were in our early twenties and now we are both grandfathers. In gathering this information, Ed spent much time at the National Archives in Washington,

D. C., and almost every repository throughout the United States containing information on the Apaches. He also took many trips into Mexico to take pictures and to gather records that he translated in order to extract the valuable information within.

Admiring his interest in their people, the Apaches at Mescalero embraced Ed's efforts and he now has many friends among them and has been privileged to attend interesting ceremonies that have helped him understand "The People" better. Ed has also walked the ground where many important events took place. Most are not easy to find, but his persistence has paid off and has led to several important discoveries.

From Cochise to Geronimo covers the period after Cochise's death in 1874 to Geronimo's final surrender in 1886 in more detail than any other work to date. Ed has been able to fill in much of the void in all previous treatments on the Apache wars, but this is not to take anything away from the great historian, Dan Thrapp, a person deeply admired by Ed. Through his Mexican archives efforts and intense study of the Morris Opler Papers, Ed has been able to fill in details that Dan correctly suspected. Dan was one of Ed's mentors and would have applauded his achievements.

Ed has not only brought out new information on the principals, but also much on many on the periphery, such as Jelikine, bonito, Chatto, and Zele, all of whom were instrumental in adding to this period's tapestry. Even well-versed, or perhaps especially the well-versed in Apache history, will be amazed at his depth of research and findings.

New books on the Apache Wars will continue to be published, but I feel confident that for comprehensiveness, none will eclipse From Cochise to Geronimo.

Daniel D. Aranda

Watt, Robert N. and Adam Hook, illustrator. *Apache Tactics and Strategy 1830-1886*. Botley, Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2012. 9781849086301, \$18.95, 64 pages: illustrations (some color), maps (some color); 25 cm.

Dr. Watt's book is about the valiant Apache warriors who were often outgunned and outmanned, yet they often "won" through

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their battlefield tactics. Much of the information was gleaned through secondary and primary sources like the National Archives and other useful depositories scattered throughout the country. Dr. Watt has immersed himself in the subject and has visited Apache sites that even the most avid historians will never see.

After he sets the background for his book, Dr. Watt presents a chronology from 1821 through 1886. He then gives a brief description of Apache culture and their environment. This is followed by the main part of the book consisting of his well-illustrated versions of the tactics employed by the Apaches in various encounters. Much of what he describes would have been very difficult to elucidate had he not used military reports and visited the sites. The author, naturally, uses many Victorio War encounters because, after all, the Warm Springs Apache chief was a superb guerilla fighter and is the subject of another of his books in progress.

The penultimate chapter, "Other Aspects of the War," covers additional tactics related items such as horses, mules, weapons and other things that could be turned to advantage. The final chapter, "The Failure of Apache Resistance," summarizes the failure of the resistance due to the use of other Apaches who were willing to betray their own as well as their lack of numbers and logistics that could no longer stem the tide of civilization.

Osprey Books are known for their specialized, concise and easy to understand subject matter, loaded with pictures and illustrations by Adam Hook that generally carry a lot of "punch." Dr. Watt's *Apache Tactics 1830-86* has met their standard if not exceeded it.

Daniel D. Aranda

***El Sicario: The Autobiography of a Mexican Assassin* edited by Molly Molloy and Charles Bowden, translated and transcribed by Molly Molloy. New York: Nation Books, 2011. ISBN 978-1-56858-658-8. 209 pages, \$15.99, softcover.**

Last year at the Rio Grande Theater, I watched a screening of the award-winning documentary, *El Sicario: Room 164*, produced by Gianfranco

Rosi. I had read an earlier version of the manuscript that eventually became this book, so I had some idea what to expect. As it turned out, I was not really prepared for the film, which seemed to be a macabre example of reality-based, performance art as a self-avowed murderer reenacted one of his crimes in the very location where it happened. The film produced a visceral reaction among the audience members, but I had a feeling that many viewers, particularly those not living in the region, would not be able to put the film in the context of their own realities.

For film goers who fall into this category, this book will be a most useful companion. The lengthy introduction provides a primer on how to understand the players in this Mexican drama being played out just across our border. In introducing the book, Molly Molloy also explains how the drug cartels and the Mexican government interact and how the cartels confront each other. The book helps elucidate the themes in the film, but it stands on its own as well. Molly's coeditor, Charles Bowden, is a prolific writer who has published a number of powerfully written books on the violence in Mexico. Notable among them are *Murder City* and *Down by the River*.

Like countless others, I have been kept up to date over the last decade on the brutal violence that has enveloped our neighbors, the people of Juárez, almost exclusively through Molly's tireless efforts. For those of you who do not know Molly through her work, she is to my mind (and that of many others) the leading expert on horribly misnamed "drug war" raging along the US-Mexico border. Daily—or more frequently—for years, Molly has masterminded a list serve that provides accurate information about what is going on in Mexico.

The voice here, however, is not really Molly's or Chuck's. Molly's ability to capture the sicario's cadence and tone in her skillful translation, truly allows the reader to hear the terrifying voice of the assassin as he describes the horror of his profession in cold, matter-of-fact terms. Most revealing is his detailing of how the Mexican law enforcement academies have been infiltrated by the cartels to such an extent that the government is, in effect, training future sicarios in the persons of candidates who are in the employ of the drug lords while receiving their education.

Make no mistake, this book is not always easy reading and is decidedly not for everyone. A day spent

cruelly torturing a victim to a the point of a hideous death followed by a night out on the town for a fancy dinner and topped off a romp with some girls may not be mitigated by the sicario's tale of religious conversion. Believe him or not, it is worth noting that, as the sicario points out, although he found salvation and left the world of contract killing fueled by drugs, booze, money, and women, there are hundreds more like him still in the very, very deadly game. For readers who want to gain a better understanding of what makes one such individual tick and what is happening behind the sensational headlines, this book is an excellent place to start.

Rick Hendricks
New Mexico State Historian

***New Mexico, A History* by Marc Simmons: American Association for State and Local History, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. NY, 1977. ISBN 0-393-05631-7. 207 pages, ill., maps, photographs, index, Suggestions for Future Reading. \$10.90 paperback.**

As a researcher and librarian, I look at three things when deciding to read a book. First, how did I learn about the book? Was it recommended by someone, other reviews, or in my case, a gift from my grandson. I didn't realize that it would also be on the reading list for a class I would take about New Mexico History. I then research the author, his background and what is his interest in writing the book. My last input is a scan of the book; the contents, index, and in this case, the lack of a bibliography.

Researching Dr. Marc Simmons was as interesting as reading the book. Of all his honors, what impressed me the most, was being referred to as New Mexico's best known historian, and he has his own archives with the Wittliff Collections at Texas State University. www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research. Secondly, the King of Spain knighted him for his writings on Spanish colonial history in the Southwest.

His writings include contributions to the Smithsonian Institution's *Handbook of North American Indians*, National Geographic Society's volume *Trails West*, and the *Encyclopedia Americana*. His local writings include popular

journals, and several New Mexico newspapers. He is considered an authority on the Santa Fe Trail. Three of his forty-five books have received awards.

His higher education starts at the University of Texas, then Universidad de Guanajuato in Mexico, and earning his Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico. His first encounter with New Mexico was as a kid in 1950. As he states, "I fell under its hypnotic spell." He has been a New Mexican ever since, even building his own adobe home near Cerrillos, New Mexico.

Honors bestowed upon him include a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship to carry out a study of Hispanic agriculture in New Mexico, the Humanities Service Award from the New Mexico Endowment for the Humanities, and the Rounders Award from the New Mexico Department of Agriculture.

But most important, and why this book was written, he was chosen by the National Endowment for Humanities, American Association for State and Local History, to be the author to write the history for New Mexico. The authors were chosen for their historical knowledge of their State, writing skill, and strong personal feelings for the State.

There were limitations with the project. The length of the book, not so much research, but an interpretive, individual, personal opinion of what distinguishes New Mexico from the other States.

Dr. Simmons chose not to dwell on famous families, but the different groups that came to make the land theirs. He takes each group in chronological order; the Spaniards, the Mexicans, the Americans. Woven into this are the many tribes of Indians, for which it was already their home, and the Missionaries, trying to appease everyone, while saving souls.

A Photographer's Essay by Joe Munroe was chosen for his pictures. I was not impressed with it. There was one small map of New Mexico. As an outsider, and not familiar with the photos, I assumed there would have been more diverse pictures to represent New Mexico. With such valuable limited space, I would think each picture tells a story. The ones of Shiprock, Carlsbad Caverns, Nuclear fusion project, Las Alamos, Fence near Chama, Trinity Site, Mission near Taos, and Sheep ranch near Roswell was a cross cultural of New Mexico. It showed the old and the new. But since he wasn't doing a James Michener type of book where you follow a family through generations, I felt the space for pictures

of two painters and an Indian family could have been better used.

Another interesting aspect to the book was no bibliography. Instead there was a suggestion for further reading, which was probably just as useful, as he sectioned it off pertaining to the different aspects of the book.

It was interesting reading the way he interpreted how New Mexico came to be known as "The Land of Enchantment," and ended up with our motto *E Pluribus Unum*—"out of many, one." With other States being stereotyped as boastful Texas, sophisticated New York, hillbilly Arkansas, New Mexico was known as the bilingual State.

The year 1776 was an important date in New Mexico History. Spain had sent two Franciscan friars on a journey of almost two thousand miles from Santa Fe towards the ultimate destination of California. At this same time on the East Coast, the British were fighting on the Hudson. They had a daunting assignment. They were to find a route to California, and find new missionary work with the Indians. They had considered Santa Fe and New Spain as "a place at the end of the world." The King had other goals than winning souls. He wanted to expand the empire with more land, or precious metals to gain more fortune. Spain had ruled over New Mexico 225 years.

The Spaniards learned from the bloody conquests of Mexico and Peru. So the Pueblo Indians benefited from the humanitarian reform. They received title to their lands, and protection through the courts. Their legal status was defined within the Spanish system. Dr. Simmons is exceptional in following up to date on the protection and problems of the Pueblo Indians.

He covers the terrible Indian attacks from 1598 to the defeat of the Apaches in 1886. There was not one person who didn't have someone they knew killed in these battles. During the Pueblo Revolt in 1680, the prominent Mendoza family, on a ranch south of Albuquerque, lost thirty of its members.

In August, 1821, Mexico won their independence from Spain. We then became New Mexico. For twenty-five years it was part of the Mexican nation. But their political unrest from Mexico City lead New Mexicans to believe they should manage their own affairs.

Both Mexico and the United States had interest in commerce moving freely over the Santa Fe Trail. A consular office in Santa Fe was set up in 1825. Mexico

looked upon the American trade with distrust, and in 1837 put on restrictions.

There were several causes for the Mexican War. The annexation of Texas in late 1845, dispute international boundary, unpaid claims owed by Mexico to American citizens, but probably the greatest was President James K. Polk's ambition to acquire New Mexico and California.

A treaty was signed July 4, 1848. There is a good description of the battles. The Americans had a new experience to deal with. So many foreign-born, what effect would Hispanic customs have, land grants in the captured territories, status of the Pueblo people, and the worry of some Americans; what was the social impact of bestowing free institutions on an uneducated race of mixed-bloods? The New Mexicans were denied for more than sixty years their efforts to achieve statehood.

As a New Mexican, living here less than one year, I found the information well written and informative. In fact, I believe someone that has lived here all their life could learn something new.

Lutisha Piland, Retired Librarian
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White Mothers to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940. By Margaret D. Jacobs. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009). xxxii + 557 pp. \$60.00 cloth, \$30.00 paper, 2011.

This is a big book and an important one. It won the Bancroft Prize, the Athearn Western History Association Prize, and the Armitage-Jameson Prize from Coalition for Western Women's History, awards which certainly merit the wider readership that a paper version now makes possible. The government policies which Jacobs describes led to great distrust and resentment by Indigenous people in the United States and Australia, and finally to general condemnation by the non-Native populations of both countries.

These policies provide a warning of how governments can go astray when they lose track of the people's lives

they affect. This story, a complex one, starts with the efforts of reformers, mostly women in this case, who think it appropriate for the government to take children out of their families and to raise them in conformity with a perceived notion of how they should act and what they should believe. Jacobs traces the role of white women as their ideas morph into support, then implementation of policies that cruelly separate families. Finally, Jacobs explains the gradual changes in attitude that reversed and condemned these policies.

It is cold comfort that the Australian policies were harsher than those in the United States, and that American women finally join the growing criticism of these policies. Jacob's carefully sums up the critiques of the federal boarding school practices without ignoring the voices of those Native Americans who managed for various reasons—especially pan-Indian relationships—to enrich their lives at these schools. These boarding house accounts are already fairly well known. The Heard Museum in Phoenix has had an impressive exhibit of Native lives there several years—but this is a more global in-depth review of how these policies played out over the years. It is the story of the role of white women in both creating and then dismantling a system that deprived many Indian children of what would have been considered a normal childhood for non-Native children, one surrounded by the protection and teaching of parents and grandparents. That was the goal, of course, to replace the changes adopted by different communities and families as they dealt with economic and cultural changes. The policies replaced diversity with a uniformity based on a misplaced perception of a single life style appropriate for all people who lived in these countries and who shared one characteristic, that of being indigenous. Of course, the nineteenth century was one large attempt to find a common “white” American culture, a search which continues to the present. How much must Americans conform culturally and racially? That is a question which Jacobs worked with over the years as she skillfully evaluated the thousands of written and oral accounts, public and private, that related to how people and their governments experimented with policies that ultimately failed.

The steady critical yet concerned voice of Jacobs in relating this troubled history probes deeply into the most treasured beliefs about motherhood, family, childhood, and race. Starting with her own family and her hopes

for their welfare, Jacobs spirals out to include the hopes of other families for the welfare of their families as well. Her compass points to a compassionate yet critical view of the possibilities for collective decisions which become embedded in government policies. It is, in the last analysis, one of hope for these collective decisions to change ultimately for the better.

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