

# LONE STAR

A HISTORY  
*of*  
TEXAS  
*and*  
THE TEXANS



T. R. FEHRENBACH

Lone Star:

A History of Texas

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And the Texans

T. R. Fehrenbach

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To the memory of my maternal grandfather,  
Charles Columbus Wentz:  
Born in the worst era of this nation's past,  
named for a Negro slave; cotton grower,  
cattleman, and latter-day empresario;  
he had always courage.

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## Foreword to the 2000 Edition

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Techniques change daily, social mores over decades, but the basic nature of societies changes more slowly, if at all. Change in Texas over the past thirty years has been neither as rapid nor as profound as many predicted (and some would have preferred) in the 1960s. The reasons are logical: The Texan mystique was created by the chemistry of the frontier in the crucible of history and forged into an enduring state of heart and mind. This may not be an entirely rational state, but then there is not much rationality attached to ethnic identity whether Texan, French, or Israeli. Meanwhile, Texas, through the last half of the 20th century, has suffered little "history." There has been enormous growth and a splendid record of economic development, which are not the same thing. This economic infrastructure may endure or crumble, but it will not spawn the trials, myths, and legends that explain the Creation.

This is why so little "good" historical explanation has been written of the 20th century—and why 19th-century Texas, from the Alamo to trail drives to Spindletop, will still fascinate Texans in future centuries. Records of economic development do not lend themselves to heart-stirring narratives, and history, after all, is not mere facts and figures but the telling of the human story.

As a construct, history is too often revised to match contemporary views. It has been said that each generation must rewrite history in order to understand it. The opposite is true. Moderns revise history to make it palatable, not to understand it. Those who edit "history" to popular taste each decade will never understand the past—neither the horrors nor glories of which the human race is equally capable—and for that reason, they will fail to understand themselves. The 1968 *Lone Star* was in some ways highly original; it was more a panorama of perceptions than a book of facts and figures. At each stage of history, the narrative was largely drawn from contemporary sources. I have seen no reason to change this, which makes the current edition an update, not a revision, from the ephemeral perspectives of the nineties.

*T R. Fehrenbacher*  
*September 1993*

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## Foreword to the 1968 Edition

THIS book was put together from an enormous total of scattered and sometimes conflicting source general histories published in the United States and abroad; documents, manuscripts, and archives in English, Spanish, German, and French; historical and scientific quarterlies; private journals, family records, and letters; 19th-century newspapers and official papers of several governments. I have also drawn on specialized works on subjects ranging from anthropology to zoology and from geology to firearms. I have generally followed published works; notation of any unpublished source is made in the text. Because this is a general work, I have not interrupted the flow with irritating footnotes.

A tremendous amount of Texas historical material exists. There are county, city, and regional histories besides the general histories and the usual documents; there are biographies of almost every prominent Texan in every field, as well as histories of most industries, including the major oil companies, railroads, and cattle ranches. If every waterhole has its history, most have their mention in print. All this varied writing contains bits of exciting information and occasional gems of insight, but it tends to be drowned in detail, littered with trivia, and constricted in perspective. Texans have continually tried to capture the imperial vision that created the broad plantations, giant oil corporations, and baronial cattle spreads, as well as the hundreds of thousands of frontier farms. But the state is so wide and varied, and so rich in ceaseless action, that the student trying to grasp the "feel" and meaning of Texas's place in American history is often baffled. Modern general histories are few. *Lone Star* was written in an attempt to fill this void and correlate the whole.

Despite a profusion of source material, much vagueness surrounds large areas. The men who entered Texas were overwhelmingly doers, not writers or observers. Those who did write usually wrote long after the fact and were often extremely parochial in viewpoint. Therefore, the historian has to tread carefully between different versions; it is impossible to state dogmatically which flag, if any, flew over the Alamo or behind Houston's horse, Saracen, at San Jacinto. Differences exist not only between Texan and Mexican accounts, as would be expected, but also between Texan and Texan. For example all of the principal figures at the Battle of San Jacinto were at odds with each other before the battle, and most became political enemies following it. Even such immense and literate journals as that of the lawyer-doctor-ranger John S. Ford, written in his old age, tend to be self-serving and must be suspect. Nor is modern scholarship immune. The question of whether the earliest inhabitants of Texas were Amerinds, or of non-Mongoloid stock, is still controversial.

Another problem facing every Texan historian contemplating a Texan readership is that all nations have their national myths, and Texas became enough of a nation within a nation to formulate its own. Many of Texas's legends, historically unproven and even historically insupportable, are fondly held and fiercely defended. This is not unique to Texas. The American nation has its own mythology.

~~This book was not written to destroy myths but so far as possible to cut through them to the reality underneath. I have not written from a present-minded or problem-oriented viewpoint, but to put things in broad perspective. The history of Texas, in perspective, lies at the core of the history of fully one-quarter of the United States. It can neither be repudiated nor ignored.~~

As Walter Prescott Webb wrote, "The historian whose work is to stand the test must deal with facts as if they were remote, with people as if they were no longer living, with conditions as they are or were and not as they should have been." I am a Texan, but I have deliberately tried to write about Texans in this book as if they were Frenchmen or Chinese.

For those Americans who may be appalled at the thought that so much American destiny was wrought by the flash of flintlocks and the nation in its present form built over the bones of countless Amerinds, Mexicans, and Confederates, I might add that Texans, first and last, have always been Americans, too.

T. R.

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*Old now is earth, and none may count her days.  
Earth might be fair, and all men glad and wise.  
Age after age, their tragic empires rise,  
Built while they dream, and in that dreaming weep:  
Would man but wake from out his haunted sleep,  
Earth might be fair, and all men glad and wise.*

OLD HUNDRED TWENTY-FOUR

**COMANCHES AND THE KING'S MERCIES**



## THE AMERINDS

*I live, but I shall not live forever.  
Mysterious Moon, you only remain,  
Powerful Sun, you alone remain,  
Wonderful Earth, only you live forever.*

### DEATH SONG OF THE TEXAS KIOWA

IN the beginning, before any people, was the land: an immense region 265,000 square miles in area rising out of the warm muck of the green Gulf of Mexico, running for countless leagues of rich coastal prairies, forests, and savannahs; reaching out hugely 770 miles from boundary to boundary south to north and east to west, to enclose a series of magnificent, rising limestone plateaus, ending in the thin hot air of blue-shadowed mountains. Geologically, this was a New Land, thrusting westward from the sea across three major geophysical provinces of North America, the Atlantic-Gulf coastal plain, the Great Plains, and the Rocky Mountain system. Therefore, it was a land of sudden and dramatic change.

No human beings were native to the New World; every race of men entered as invaders. The date of the first intrusion is not known. But it came tens of thousands of years before the dawn of recorded history, during the last great Ice Age. Immense glaciers covered the Northern Hemisphere, and because the earth's water supply is constant, the oceans shrank. A land-bridge rose out of the northern seas to connect Asia and Alaska, and the first men to see America almost certainly crossed this narrow strip.

They were not Indians. Another and very different race first took possession of Texas soil.

This race passed down the few unglaciated valleys of the north, seeking the sun, and the grass and game that followed the sun. These early men reached both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, but their true home was the High Plains. They left their greatest concentrations of relics and fire sites high on the limestone plateaus of Texas, and here the oldest remains of man in the New World were found. Modern radiocarbon tests proved charred wood from one such campsite to be beyond the dating range of the carbon-14 technique—and this process can search back 37,000 years. Man in Texas was not, as scientists once believed, a late arrival. Fluorine analysis of ancient human bones found in Texas limestone showed that these were contemporary with the bones of the ages-extinct Pleistocene horse, uncovered beside them. Archeologists, who once firmly thought that Indians were the first proprietors of North America, grudgingly named these original Texans Paleo-Americans, or simply, Old Americans.

They were biologically true men—the half-men, such as the European Neanderthal, had died out long before they left the Old World. They were not Mongoloid. The skulls they left behind are longheaded, more longheaded than any race of modern men. They had massive teeth, and their leg bones were flat and curved. They were more unlike American Indians than white men are different from Chinese, and they may have been a Caucasoid race that roamed east out of Central Asia in the human dawn.

The Old Americans entered Texas with hundreds of thousands of years of human evolution and

social development behind them. They were erect, gregarious, symbol-and-weapon-using, and therefore intelligent. They had fire, wore fur and skin garments, and made tools of flint and bone. They chipped beautiful stone spearheads, thousands of which they left behind. They were mentally and physically equipped to conquer new worlds.

Like all Pleistocene or Ice Age men, they were hunters. They roamed across the High Plains, leaving their tools and bones from Clovis, New Mexico, to Abilene, Texas, and from Abilene east to the bank of the Pedernales, just above the Balcones Escarpment. Their favorite hunting ground was the Llano Estacado, the Staked Plains—the home of the ancient American elephant.

Magnificent animals lived on the high plateaus in those times: the awe-inspiring *Elephas columbi*, the Columbian elephant, the mammoth, the mastodon, the ground sloth, and the ancient bison, a beast twice the size and probably four times the weight of the modern buffalo. The Old Americans must have been an incredibly tough, almost inhumanly courageous race; they pursued and killed all these animals with flint-tipped spears. They roasted meat in great kitchens or middens in the limestone; they flaked new flints around their fires, and they must have roared great hunting and victory songs to the Pleistocene moon. They left no "old" bones. Life was hard and incredibly dangerous; men probably rarely lived beyond eighteen or twenty years, and females not much longer.

They may have made flutes and drums, and they may have worshiped their God or gods, but nothing more of their culture has survived—with one fantastic exception. These were the great stone heads found in the bed of the oldest trace of the Trinity River, seventy feet above the present flood plain. Paleontologists consider these heads the most exotic relic unearthed in North America.

The heads, discovered among the bones of the Columbian elephant and the giant mastodon, were tooled from rock. One weighed 135 pounds, one 60, and the third an even 100. The first two massive heads are recognizably human: one frowns, one smiles. The third, and largest—weird, inhuman—can only represent some unknown force or beast.

The Old Americans wandered across the high plateaus for many thousands of years. But nature is never constant, and the world is never made. The land changed. The vast ice sheets retreated north; the rivers dug deeper into the earth, and the lakes dried. The lush land that had been Texas grew hotter, harsher. The woolly mammoth disappeared. Something happened to the elephant. Perhaps, like the ground sloth and the mastodon and small native horse, it was pushed on its way to extinction by Paleo-American spears. The Pleistocene ended, and the Pleistocene animals died. The Old Americans vanished with them.

Whether the race died out, or merely changed so much over the millennia as to be no longer recognizable, is unknown. But there were already new conquerors, new proprietors, on the land. Before the land bridge sank, other men crossed from Asia and pushed out across the Great Plains. Some went east, and some west, and some did not stop until they had climbed the Andes, thousands of miles to the south.

The new men were definitely Asian. They were Mongoloid in skin shade, hair form and color, and other ways. These were the Amerinds, or American Indians, as Europeans later named them. They called themselves, in hundreds of different tongues, merely the People, or sometimes, the Real Humans.

Like the Old Americans, the Amerinds came as hunters and gatherers. But besides their racial stock they differed from the Paleo-Americans in many ways. The Old Americans apparently came in a single invasion, over a relatively short period of years. There were never very many of them, and they preserved a certain cultural unity; Old American spear points, for example, never varied much from

place to place, or over thousands of years.

The Amerinds came in a long series of invasions, a genuine *Völkerwanderung* that had not completely ceased by historic times. By about 5000 b.c. these invasions were in full swing, and they continued for thousands of years. The ice was gone; instead of a few unglaciated routes, the Amerind could choose a thousand corridors south. Some remained for long periods in the north before they left and some never roamed at all. The Amerinds—most of whom in North America showed almost identical racial or physical characteristics, with only minor variations of height or color—became differentiated culturally. They split into linguistic stocks, and then adopted mutually unintelligible languages within each linguistic group. They made their tools and artifacts in different ways: the early Amerinds left twenty-seven different kinds of dart points on the Edwards Plateau of Texas alone.

They carried a great assortment of stone and bone tools: axes, knives, drills, pipes, scrapers, picks, and graters. Their principal weapon was still the spear, but they had developed the atlatl, or throwing stick, to give them extra range. They came out of Asia with domesticated dogs.

Culturally varied, speaking different languages, nomadic and constantly impinging on each other, the hundreds of bands of Amerinds could only follow the oldest human logic: they made war. Each new folk wandering from the north invaded already appropriated hunting grounds, and the first wars stemmed from the most logical of reasons, the defense of territory. But a constantly roaming, constantly colliding people soon imbedded the idea and act of warfare deep in their cultural heart. All men except the Real Human Beings—kith and kin—were enemies. The fighting was not racial, but internecine, as in modern Europe; the center of society and most important member was the warrior. There was a place for women, because warriors were too occupied to work; there was a place for priests or shamans, and both the young and old, but no place at all for the weak or cowardly.

Civilized men, caught in their modern traps and pressures, have often looked longingly toward the seeming freedom, and barbaric majesty, of the Stone Age, nomadic Amerind male. Females did his bidding; he seldom soiled his hands with labor. But the division of labor, and the culture that grew up around it, was cruelly logical. The warrior had to hunt and fight. He had to kill the elusive deer, the dangerous bear, and the powerful buffalo with a flint spear, or the tribe went hungry; he had to defend his soil, and—the culture soon demanded it—carry war and raids to the enemy, for women and spoils. He had to prove his courage from the day of manhood until he died, and sometimes prove it while dying. The fiendish custom of torturing captured males—captive children were enslaved or adopted, and women were equally useful—probably originated as a courage rite. The tortured captive had to prove his courage at the stake; the tormentors had to gain moral superiority by breaking it. Significantly, whatever sadistic pleasure they got out of it, almost all Amerinds considered it an evil omen if a prisoner defied their tortures and died well.

Virtually all Amerind peoples took scalps from the bodies of their enemies, living or dead, and every warrior lucky enough to secure them wore or displayed them in various ways. These were, certainly, more positive proof of courage or success in war than the medals or decorations of more civilized man.

Amerinds spread through the forests of the eastern seaboard of North America; they poured down into Mexico and beyond, and some of them scattered across the High Plains and central plateaus of Texas. Now, the land was taking its modern form. The lushness and the great waterholes that had supported mastodon and elephant had long vanished. Across the plains the rain fell less and less, in a marked progression from east to west. The violent, harsh contrasts between timbered country in the east, savannah in the south, and endless prairie to the west appeared. The dense growths of the limestone plateaus became arid, cedar-sprinkled hills. The land lay far south, and there were rivers on

palms on its southern fringe—but it was also in the center of the great North American continental landmass, where icy winds could sweep down from the Pole. Such regions are always varied, and subject to violent natural change.

Warm, moist breezes blew out of the Gulf; they moved inland over leagues of endless, bending grass until they turned hot and searing. Arctic winds at times howled off the roof of the world, roared across the High Plains and whistled over the decaying limestone formations of the central plateaus, plunging into the dry savannahs beyond. In spring, warm and cold winds met and warred, with brilliant electricity, ice rains, and dark funnels that dipped and tore the ground. Nature was always hard, and frequently at war with itself.

Over the whole land the sun burned, not the distant, friendly orb that filtered light through European forests, but a violent, brassy engine that browned the earth and made the hillsides shimmer with heat. The moon hung low and silver-cold beyond the ephemeral night clouds against a back-blaze of stars. On each successively higher prairie or plateau the land stretched out, fairly level, further than any living eye could see. There were few boundaries anywhere, and then sharp ones: where the trees ended and the land became an ocean of souging grass; where the high mesa turned to blue-mountained, dusty desert; where the rolling, grassy, mesquite-studded savannah etched up into the flinty Balcones Scarp. The regions were wider than modern European nations; the subregions larger than Atlantic seaboard states. Over it all the wind blew, now south, now north. Endless land, and eternal wind—it made all animal life restless, long-visioned, volatile, and free.

The Amerinds who entered this harsh, changeable country may have seen no beauty in it, nor learned to love it, until a generation had been born there. The tribes who scattered through it in the Amerind Archaic Age were not notably successful. They were tough and hardy, but they were on foot. They were in open country, armed with flint knives, stone axes, and flint spears; for some thousands of years they did not have the bow and arrow. Bison dotted the plains, but even this modern buffalo, a fraction of the size of the ancient, Pleistocene bison, was a formidable beast to attack on foot, at arm's length. More important, it was impossible for the tribes to follow the buffalo on their great migration north and south over the arid plains. The hill country, where the ancient limestone formations frayed out above the Balcones Escarpment in spectacular scenery, supported deer and bear and smaller game. But there was not enough of this, nor sufficient easily killed animal flesh upon the grassy savannahs to the south, for Texas tribes to live off the fat of the land. There was, simply, very little fat, and the campsites of the early Amerinds have revealed mortars and pestles, seeds, and the remnants of roots among their small bones, as well as cracked human femurs. Broken and sucked human marrow bones have been discovered preserved in the ancient muck of the coastal prairies in great quantity—proof that where the Old Americans had been able to live well on mastodon and elephant meat, the aborigines who displaced them came to depend on other foods. In modern times all Texas tribes except one—the late-coming Comanches—practiced at least some form of ritual cannibalism, a grisly ceremonial residue of a harsh past.

The land was too big, too harsh, too restless in climate for man to dominate, or even carve a stable niche for himself, with the tools the archaic Indians possessed.

This era, which paleontologists call Archaic, lasted for some thousands of years across all America. The invention of the bow, about the time of Christ, did not make life much easier, except that now birds, and more small game, were added to the Amerind diet. The great change, which ushered in the Neo-American Age, was the Agricultural Revolution. In America, as everywhere on earth, this was the greatest social and economic revolution mankind ever experienced, beside which the Industrial

Revolution was a mere change of phase.

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Several thousand years before Christ lived—certainly long before 2500 b.c., for radiocarbon-dated seeds have been discovered in New Mexico as of that date—the Amerinds of Middle or South America discovered how to domesticate maize, or Indian corn. Just as all mammalian life is dependent, in the final analysis, upon water and grass, all human civilization is based on the controlled growth of some cereal grain, whether rice, or wheat, or corn. No civilization could exist without cities—the words are synonymous—and no stable populations could live without a dependable food supply. When the Amerinds of Middle America learned how to grow corn, and along with this development to domesticate a few animals, the basis for a genuine American civilization was firmly laid.

True city-based civilizations began to rise in Middle America, in the same latitudes and in no way inferior to the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Babylon, and Ur of the Chaldees. Their centers were in Middle America and the slopes of the Andes, and in time they sent dim reflections to the ends of both American continents. There was no single Amerind civilization, but a series of connected cultures, which, in the hands of different peoples, rose, flourished, withered, and were restored. The Aztecs of the Valley of Mexico, and the Incas of Peru, were merely the conquerors and stabilizers of what was already a very ancient culture, and both took command within recent pre-Columbian times.

In Mexico, many miles to the south of the Texas plains, a succession of Mayan, Toltec, and other cultures farmed the soil, grew large populations, and erected vast cities, comparable to ancient Memphis, and not much inferior to Imperial Rome. Immensely disciplined, hard-working, and imaginative, these Amerinds evolved a highly sophisticated social and political organization, with complete divisions of labor, classes, and castes. They built immense palaces and pyramids out of carved stone. They developed mathematics, writing, and astronomy—their calendar was superior to Cortés's—and pursued fine arts. They worked gold, silver, and copper with brilliant mastery. The fact that they did all these things without smelting metals only adds luster to the accomplishment—though this lack, when they were taken by unexpected disaster from across the Atlantic, probably more than anything else sealed their doom.

Had Cortés and the conquistadores met metal-armed and armored men, the fate of Mexico might have been startlingly different.

Where the civilization of this Nuclear America might have gone can only be conjectured. The Spaniards, on arrival, did not commit genocide, but something probably worse: culturicide. In almost a single night the Europeans, who sacrificed men and women to their God by burning them alive, justified the extinction of Amerind culture because of the Mexic addiction to ceremonial human sacrifice, the cutting out of living victims' hearts with stone knives. The dominant Amerind aristocracy was exterminated, their temples razed, and their palaces purified. The conquerors even erased the memory of their Mexican slaves. Ironically, the racial descendants of the Aztecs first learned authoritative facts about their vanished heritage from the excavations of North American and European archeologists in recent times, who stumbled upon abandoned Amerind cities the Spaniards never found. Even then, the memory was blighted, because no cultural bridge survived.

Had the discovery of America been delayed a few centuries, the history of Middle America would have been much more like that of modern Asia. Europeans might have conquered, but they could not so easily have destroyed, and essential Amerind culture would have survived. When Columbus sailed the Mexic civilization was on a par with 14th-century Europe, and certain other tribal groups of North America were culturally contemporary with the Germans of Tacitus' time. As it was, the Amerind contribution to the world was profound: three-fifths of the value of all the earth's agriculture in the

20th century came from crops the Americans planted first: maize, "Irish" potatoes, yams, tobacco, beans, squash, pumpkins, peanuts, tomatoes, chocolate, rubber, and long-staple cotton. Amerind discoveries were essential to modern American civilization.

Though Amerinds tamed the llama, alpaca, turkey, duck, guinea pig, and dog, again in one crucial field—animal domestication—they fell behind. They had good reason; in the New World the horse, pig, cow, and sheep did not exist.

Between 2500 b.c. and Columbian times, the use of corn spread northward. When the first white men came, the planting of maize had reached its geographic limits. But this great cultural revolution bypassed Texas, or rather, surrounded it on each side. The cause was geophysical, and obvious. For several hundred miles on either side of the Rio Grande the country was virtual desert—not "true" desert, like the Sahara or Kalahari, but Lower Sonoran plain, dry, dusty, almost waterless, with less than twenty inches of annual rainfall. When the tremendous Amerind invasion went north, it could have more easily marched through the southern part of Hell than crossed South Texas.

But agriculture crept up the spine of Mexico and created a pallid reflection of Aztec splendor among the Uto-Aztecan peoples of the Rocky Mountain system. On the high plateaus of New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado the Puebloan culture evolved, one of the two true barbaric civilizations of North America. The Pueblos—again, there was a series of tribes and peoples, at different times and over a wide area—farmed cotton and corn, beans, tobacco, and squash. They also ate sunflower seeds. They built spacious houses out of slabs of stone, which they chinked with adobe and covered with hides or thatch. They made beautiful ornaments and garments and pottery. They discovered social organization; both men and women worked in the fields. The practice and notion of war declined in their culture, and the peaceful farmer, rather than the savage warrior, became the nucleus of society. They organized colorful pageants and ceremonials; the Pueblos rose out of savagery to barbaric civilization.

About a.d. 1000 the Pueblo (the word comes from the Spanish for "village") culture seemed to expand. Versions of it spread into the High Plains of Texas, and a Puebloan tribe built fine stone dwellings along the Canadian in the Panhandle. Other feelers of civilization inched down the Rio Grande into the Trans-Pecos region. Here, on the ruins of other semiagricultural tribes, such as the cave-living Basket Makers, the Jumanos put together a definite, though struggling, Amerind nation. But here, as on the edge of the Great Plains far to the north, the agricultural advance stopped. The Puebloan remained a civilization of the upper Rio Grande.

Meantime, far to the east, certain events still clouded in mystery were taking place. The archeology of the American Southeast is much less advanced than that of the Southwest; the wet climate and the inundation of the white man destroyed sites and ancient evidence still preserved in the thinly settled, arid High Plains. But around the year 500 of the Christian Era, a vital new Amerind culture was spreading up from the Mississippi basin. It began on the Gulf of Mexico, reached the Great Lakes, and followed the curve of the sea so far as the forests ran. Thus, it spilled over into Texas, crossing the Sabine with the western edge of the great Southern pine forest. This barbaric civilization has been called the Mound Builder, from the eroding remnants of the immense earthen pyramids they left behind.

The Mound Builders showed strong Mexican cultural influences. Otherwise, they were a Circum-Caribbean Amerind culture, building pole houses not unlike those found on the islands or the coasts of Venezuela. It seems likely they entered the present United States by water, though archeologists dispute this. No evidence of their passage across Texas has yet been found. The Mound Builders raised

dirt pyramids fifty feet high, faced them with log stairs, and erected temples—presumably to a sun-god—at the top. The similarity to the Mexic culture is unmistakable; the Mound Builders used mud and logs because they lived in a country with little stone. The Amerinds also wore feathered robes, and they were divided sharply by class; their chieftains were borne about on litters, like Aztec or Mayan lords. The smell of the Middle

American civilization lies all across this Mississippi pattern, as archeologists have described it.

Although this new culture spread widely along the Gulf and up the Mississippi, something happened to it long before the Europeans came. This reinforces the idea of invasion; the Mound Builder culture was foreign, and it did not quite take root in a vastly different land. But in modern times it left behind a barbarian civilization within the borders of historic Texas, the Caddo Confederacies of the Piney Woods, once the most numerous and powerful Indians within the state.

A haunting feeling of having descended from something greater still pervaded the Caddo nation when the first Europeans arrived. It was not truly indigenous to Texas; it faced East rather than West and it halted abruptly where the pine woods ended, far short of the central plains. The Caddoan language, even, was linguistically bound not to the prairies, but to the lower Yazoo. Caddos resemble Choctaws, Cherokees, and Creeks; they unquestionably had a common cultural ancestor.

The Caddoan peoples—there were two great confederacies, the Hasinai and the Kadohadacho, and more than two dozen tribes—still maintained the forms not of a blood kinship but of a former political ascendancy. There was a genuine bureaucracy: minor officials, subchiefs, tribal chiefs, who reported to each other, and finally, to the great chief of all the tribes, the Grand Caddi. They had a priesthood, which outranked the secular officialdom in standing.

The high priest, or Xinesi, was responsible for the eternal flame in the central Caddo temple. All the various tribal temple fires had to be lit from this central, holy flame, a pontifical organization with recognizable manifestations.

The Caddoans lived in a country of abundant rain, with rich soils. They enjoyed complete economic self-sufficiency; they hunted game much as the Anglo-Saxon settlers did, more as a supplement than staple. They grew two varieties of corn and a whole assortment of vegetables, including pole beans. They lived in small villages, made up of large timbered houses, domed and thatched. These houses were airy and comfortable, furnished with colored rugs, baskets, and pottery. The villages were organized on a communal-kinship basis; both men and women worked the soil, and house-raising were public affairs.

The Caddoans made bows of a superior wood, Osage orange or bois d'arc, which was greatly in demand on the plains and in the far west. They must have carried on an extensive commerce with the west, because Puebloan cottons and pottery, as well as Plains buffalo hides, were often found in their houses. In this commerce the Jumanos of the Trans-Pecos acted as middlemen. Caddos occasionally hunted the bison, but they had no great enthusiasm for moving out on the plains. War had declined among the confederacies, and society no longer revolved about the cult of the warrior, as it had in the Archaic Age. The village official, the priest, or the peaceful husband had become the social ideal. These had developed into hereditary classes.

These peaceful Amerinds had developed other traits, or had degenerated them, showing civilized origin. Though they no longer built temples or pyramids to the sun-god—or even knew why these ones were built—they practiced a ritual torture unknown to North American tribes. Captives were stretched on racks to face the morning and evening sun; the ritual, and torture, was carried on for days, before the prisoners were killed and eaten, not for food, but ceremonially. The Caddos had torments far more exquisite, and lengthy, than the fiendish, savage, but relatively quick executions of the Plains Indians.

Unlike other Amerinds, the Caddoans shed tears easily. They wept and wailed on almost every occasion, especially meeting or parting. White enemies were often warned of an impending massacre in historic times, by the fact that the Caddos went into sobs and fits of weeping. Uniquely, the Caddos mourned their victims while they prepared to kill them.

The cult of courage, at the base of most Amerind culture, was not important to the Caddos. A warrior who triumphed, or gained loot by treachery or stealth, or who fled the scene of battle with some gain, was still a hero. The Caddoan practice of war, however, was not really sophisticated: it was replete with moves, actions, delays, and ceremonials that no longer made sense even to the participants; they were fixed by custom. All war preparations, for example, required eight days, and ended with a ceremonial burning of a house. In all this can be sensed the dead hand of a former military tradition—much as the love of close-order drill has persisted in European armies in the Atomic Age.

Because they were agricultural and war was no longer a central part of their culture, the Caddoan tribes were remarkably amiable to white men in the first years of contact, with disastrous results to themselves. It was not accidental, though ironic, that the first French and Spanish who encountered Caddos appreciated them more, found their culture more related to theirs than that of any other Texas Amerind, and also destroyed them most easily.

Between the Puebloan civilization of the upper Rio Grande and the decadent barbaric grandeur of the Sabine Hasinai Confederacy, the vast reaches of Texas remained what anthropologists call with some justice a cultural sink. Mexic and Circum-Caribbean influences reached Texas, but only on the fringes. On the hot, dry, harsh sweeps of the high mesas, the limestone plateaus, and the rolling coastal savannah, the numerous tribes never culturally left the Amerind Archaic Age.

Racially all Texas Indians were quite similar, except for minor differences of height and skin shade. In their tribal customs, habits, and economies, however, they were as differentiated as Frenchmen and Chinese. Nor were the land and peoples stable.

It is impossible to reconstruct the history of these peoples with any accuracy, and since a majority of the Texas tribes died out or had decayed to impotency by early historic times, their history had little importance to what came after. Its pattern merely suggests a continuing, endless rhythm of periodic aggression from the north, with sporadic internecine warfare at all times.

South of the Caddo Confederacies, along the Gulf Coast, lived a number of small Atakapan tribes. These were a wretched reflection of the Caddos in some respects; their name was a Choctaw word for "man-eater."

Further south along the coast, from Galveston to Corpus Christi bays, the Karankawa tribes had a more formidable reputation as cannibals—though their man-eating seems to have been as much of a ritual nature as for dietary benefit. This people early acquired a name for peculiar savagery, as well as bestiality. An early Spanish traveler wrote: "They are cruel, inhuman, and ferocious. When one nation makes war with another, the one that conquers puts all the old men and old women to the knife and carries off the little children for food to eat on the way; the other children are sold . . ."

Several Spaniards described Karankawa tortures and cannibal feasts—though naturally none of these men were eyewitnesses. The most notable fact about the Karankawas was that they avoided all contact with Europeans; they refused to cooperate with them in any way, and attacked any incursion on their territory with fury. In return, no Amerind tribe was ever described in worse terms or exterminated with greater relish or sense of justification.

West of Karankawa country, on a line ranging through San Antonio to Del Rio and south to the mouth of the Rio Grande, was the territory of a great number of small bands of Coahuiltecan. This



was cactus and brush country, arid, rolling stretches of semidesert, dry savannah at its best, which the Spanish called *brasada* or *monte*. The bison did not come below the Balcones Scarp because of the heat, and there were no large game animals in sufficient numbers to support a true hunting economy. Few regions of America were less bountiful for primitive man, without irrigation techniques or the use of domesticated cattle. The Coahuiltecan culture was one of digging and grubbing, with an occasional economic windfall such as a jackrabbit in the pot.

Yet, such is human ingenuity that no other species ever used the resources of a country more fully: the Coahuiltecan consumed spiders, ant eggs, lizards, rattlesnakes, worms, insects, rotting wood, and deer dung. They caught fish when they were beside a stream, roasted them whole, then set them in the sun for several days, collecting flies and maggots. The enriched food was eaten with gusto. They utilized almost every plant that grew in South Texas. They made flour from agave bulbs, sotol, lechuguilla, and maguey. They roasted mesquite beans, and ate these with side orders of earth. One peculiar source of food—which a Spaniard Cabeza de Vaca described as "indescribable"—was the Second Harvest: whole seeds and similar items picked out of human feces, cooked and chewed.

The Coahuiltecan also discovered uses for local plants not wholly scorned by civilized man. They concocted a drink, mescal, from maguey leaves. This was intoxicating, and, in a slightly refined form, is the principal intoxicant of the Mexican peasantry today. The Coahuiltecan also dissolved ground red Texas laurel beans in mescal, and produced real firewater. They ate the fruit of the prickly pear, and from another cactus, peyote, they produced what can only be called a very unusual tea.

These tribes were all completely nomadic, moving constantly, erecting only temporary shelters of mud, skins, or brush. They did not seek war, but fought if their territory was violated. The tribes or bands were all patrilineal, but band fought band. They frequently killed female or girl-child captives, and practiced infanticide, because, in their eyes, the land was already overpopulated.

Inhabiting, for the Amerinds, the least fruitful part of Texas, the Coahuiltecan perhaps had a more glorious history in former times. They were of Hokan linguistic stock, and the only other Hokan, or Yuma, tribes in modern centuries lived in California. Paleontologists have envisioned a broad band of Hokan peoples, stretching from Pacific to Gulf at one time, split by waves of hardier Uto-Aztecan, who appropriated the southern sierras and poured into Mexico in prehistoric eras. The Hokan-speaking tribes, perhaps, were driven into brutal, inhospitable country—South Texas and the similar Arizona-California border. Certainly, no Amerind people would have settled there by choice.

Above the country of the Coahuiltecan, over the Balcones Escarpment, lived the Tonkawas, whose name for themselves was Tickanwatick, or "the most human of men." They ranged across the great Edwards Plateau to the Brazos valley. The Tonkawas were not one tribe, but a group of tribes; their language was apparently unrelated to any other Amerind stock, but perhaps derived from Hokan. So far as can be told, Tonkawas had lived on the central plateau from time immemorial; they may have replaced the first Old Americans. They lived by hunting, fishing, and gathering fruits, nuts, and berries. The Tonkawa culture was that typical of the pre-horse southern Plains Indians; they lived on the edge of bison country, in buffalo-hide tepees, and they used large dogs as beasts of burden. They had evolved the clan organization, with both civil and military authorities. Like most Texas natives, they tattooed their bodies, wore breechclouts and long hide moccasins; in winter they donned buckskin shirts and warm buffalo robes. They carried bows, their principal weapon, and long Plains lances, and they dipped their dart heads in mistletoe juice—presumably in the hope of poisoning them. Fray Morfi, a Spanish priest who wrote about Tonkawas in the middle of the 18th century, called them "a terrible and bellicose nation . . . they live for warfare, robbery, and the chase."

The Tonkawas, however, did not hunt or raid very high on the Texas plains; they were confined to

the Edwards Plateau. Another, fiercer tribe was lord of the rich buffalo grounds.

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At some recent but unknown date, a new race appeared out of the north to harry the spreading Puebloan cultures of the Rocky Mountains. The new men spoke Athapaskan, a language whose traditional homeland was the far Northwest, Canada, and Alaska. These tribes must have wandered for many years south across the Great Plains, finally entering the eastern Rockies. In the passage, they had become exceedingly warlike and unusually fierce and skilled at fighting. These were the Apaches, who looked on all other Amerinds as enemies.

The Apache invasion of the Southwest caused reverberations that still lingered in tribal wars and tribal hatreds until the last years of the 19th century. Apaches raided through a vast region, from modern Kansas to Arizona to deep in Mexico. They pushed out some of the former tribes, exterminated others, and settled down in their new homeland to ceaseless warfare with the rest. They split into two great divisions, the Eastern and Western Apaches. The Western tribes, Navaho, San Carlos, Chiricahua, and Mescalero, carved out a place in the southern Rockies; they became Arizona- and New Mexico-based. They ceased to be wholly nomadic; they learned rudimentary agriculture from the various Puebloan cultures, which they continually harassed, but they never lost their traditional warlike spirit. They remained raiders and marauders to the last.

Each Apache tribe or group was influenced by its new locale. The Eastern Apaches—Jicarillas, Palomas, Carlanas, Lipans, and others—apparently destroyed the Puebloan cultures of the Texas Panhandle, forced the town-dwellers back into the mountains of New Mexico, and made themselves masters of the High Plains. They ranged as far north as the Dismal River in Nebraska, and south into Mexico. They harried all the surviving Puebloan tribes, and began to exterminate the Jumanos of the Trans-Pecos Texas area. They kept Tonkawas and others far to the east and south, away from the richest of the bison plains. Halfway between the endless plains and the eastern Rockies, they made semipermanent settlements. One tribe, the Jicarillas, even began to use irrigation on their fields of corn. But, above all else, the Eastern Apaches learned to live off the buffalo.

As during the Pleistocene, the richest game area in North America lay on the High Plains that ended almost indiscernibly in the central Texas plateau. Here there were millions upon millions of American bison, as well as elk, deer, and antelope. Each spring and fall the bison congregated on the southern plains, moving north in a seemingly aimless pattern during the summer. Anthropologists believe that the typical buffalo-hunting cultures of the Plains evolved first in Texas, then spread north; the Eastern Apaches were certainly the dominant prototype.

The plainsman based his life and culture—aside from war, which was already deep-seated—upon the bison. The great hunts took place in spring and fall, when small herds were surrounded by men on foot and shot with arrows until all beasts were dead. The bison was a remarkably vulnerable animal in many ways. It did not frighten or stampede unless it smelled the scent of an enemy, and men downwind from a herd could sometimes kill hundreds of beasts in one spot; the sight of falling buffalo, or the odor of blood, did not start the rest. Sometimes herds were deliberately stampeded into canyons, or over deep furrows in the ground, where the trapped or injured animals could be killed and skinned at leisure.

Immediately, the dead bison were opened with flint knives, and raw livers and other delicacies eaten on the spot. This work—in fact, all work—was done by women, either of the tribe or slaves; men's labor was confined to the hunt or war. Buffalo carcasses were then roasted. The intestines were often cooked whole, as a special treat. Some lean flesh was sun-dried, or jerked, to carry over the winter on the trail. Buffalo guts were cleaned out and used as bags to store precious water. Buffalo bones

made picks and tools.

The hides were used for shelter, clothing, and blankets. The Apaches made comfortable and ingenious tepees of buffalo skins, with light frames of sotol poles. These tents, actually dryer, warmer and more airy than log cabins, were flapped with bearskins for doors, and open at the top for escaping smoke. Four to twelve people lived in one tepee. Wood or dung fires were built in their centers, and they were furnished with hide blankets spread over soft beds of dry grass. Tepees shone red and white against the sun, and the bison hide was tanned so fine that rain could not penetrate or even stiffen it.

In the hot months, Apaches wore very little—breechclouts or buckskin skirts and moccasins. Their coppery skin, like that of all Amerinds, was sun-resistant. In winter, they put on deerskin shirts or wore heavy buffalo robes. Outside of his clothing, his flint-edged weapons, and his tents, the Apache owned nothing. It was simple, a matter of minutes, to strike his tents and move, and so far as possible during the hunting seasons, the tribes formed long caravans and followed the migrating bison herds. Shaggy dogs pulled the ingenious Plains travois, while scouts and warriors ranged far ahead.

But Apaches on foot were simply not equipped to exploit the Plains to the fullest. The High Plains were beautiful and flowering in spring or after the widely scattered summer rains, but other times, and in summer, they turned to broiling near-desert. The water holes dried and the grass withered. The buffalo followed the rain and grass, and in the hottest months, heavy-hided, they went north to avoid the terrible sun. The herds moved too far and too fast across endless, almost waterless country for walking hunters to follow. The Apaches prized deer, antelope, and bear for their meat and fine hides, and the bear especially for its fat. But these animals, while numerous, were not so easily killed as the staple buffalo.

Therefore, the first Plains Amerinds had to supplement their economy with other foods. They learned rudimentary agriculture from the harassed Puebloan cultures of the upper Rio Grande, and planted beans, maize, squash, and pumpkins, usually on small plots alongside the infrequent rivers and streams. While these crops ripened, Apache bands settled down for long periods in tent villages beside the waters. The Spaniards gave these semipermanent camps the name *rancherías*, which clung, just as they gave the Athapaskans the title Apache, from the Puebloan Zuñi word meaning "enemy." A Spanish explorer claimed to have seen a *ranchería* of "five thousand souls" on the headwaters of the Arkansas—probably a gross exaggeration.

Although they had one foot on the Great Plains and the other imperfectly affixed to the land, the Apaches clearly were the lords of high Texas. They dominated the region, and their power extended so far as they cared to bring it. Apache bands roamed as far as the Red River in northeastern Texas, and warred with the Tonkawas along the Balcones Escarpment. The areas they did not penetrate (the barren Karankawa coastal bend, the pine woods of the Caddos, and the Coahuiltecan southern triangle between the Gulf and the Rio Grande) they simply did not want.

The Apache society never climbed to true barbarism, but remained savage throughout its independent history. The borders of the rich bison plains acted as a brake upon agriculture. The culture continued half hunting, half farming, unable, or unwilling, to make the most of either way of life.

More important, Apache society was remarkably fragmented, even by Amerind standards. The "nations" the Spaniards continually wrote about were nations only in the Spanish descriptive term: they could not even be called true tribes. These uncommonly fierce warriors took no orders, not even from their own kind. Their social organization never evolved beyond the kinship band, nor political organization beyond the warrior and his sometime leader, the band chief. The T'Inde, or People, were only several thousands of men, women, and children who shared a common language and a common

way of life—and in the Southwest, even these began to shatter and separate. The Navajos soon ceased to consider themselves Apaches, though they were still nomadic and Athapaskan-speaking. Important cultural differences developed between the Eastern and the Western tribal groups.

In this intensely democratic way of life, all warriors were not only theoretically but actually equal. The center of society was the warrior and his personal family group: wives, children, slaves. Each family group was self-sufficient; brothers espoused dead brothers' wives, because in a society devoid of organization there could be no orphans or widows. There were both civil and war chiefs, but no one appointed them. A warrior became a chief through exploits, experience, and his prestige, which might attract other warriors around him. Warriors obeyed a chief implicitly on the war trail—a taboo with discernible logical roots—but they joined his war party purely at their own option. A chief who failed or made unwise decisions, was quickly abandoned. Any male who disliked or disagreed with a band leader could find a more congenial band, or start his own. Thus chieftainship in the Apaches was elective in the truest sense.

Women were not exactly chattels, though they did the labor and were expected to serve warriors. They had to be protected and provided for. The Apaches, like most tribes, often found wives by raiding other Amerinds; boys, as well as girls, were frequently carried away into captivity to augment the numbers of a band. While the first Europeans, accustomed to chattel slavery, called the Apache captives slaves, these prisoners were usually adopted into the tribe with full rights. Women were married to warriors; young males were allowed to become Apache warriors. Ironically, this Amerind lack of prejudice dismayed and horrified European women captives as much as the Apache custom of physical torture of captured males.

Apaches had strict moral codes and taboos, which made as much sense, in their circumstances, as such codes everywhere. Children were treated permissively until they began to develop; then they were taught the disciplines of work or war, according to sex. Boys were trained and hardened for the chase and fighting. Boys became warriors when they were old enough; the words man and warrior were synonymous.

The Apaches had a vague belief in a supreme being, but their religion was largely shamanistic and revolved around certain folkloric deities, such as the Killer of Enemies, a powerful, supernatural creature that befriended Apaches. The Apaches were children of the sun, sprung from mother earth, finely attuned to the mysterious world around them. They were more influenced by the land than by ideas. They did have a supernatural horror of the dead, or the spirits of the dead, an Athapaskan cultural residue carried down from the gloomy Northwest.

The only genuine socializing acts of the Apaches were the hunt and war, because here numbers and cooperation counted. But both were sporadic actions, and never cemented the bands together. Families and bands of Apaches lived beside each other along streams, or on the hunting grounds, but always in individual states of splendid isolation. The Apaches feared nothing that walked or breathed, and thus there was no external force, even danger, to hold the tribes together or to keep the People strong.

### CORONADO AND COMANCHES

*I have done all that I could possibly do to serve Your Majesty and to discover a country where God our Lord might be served and the royal patrimony of Your Majesty increased . . .*

FROM THE REPORT OF DON FRANCISCO VÁSQUEZ DE CORONADO TO THE KING OF SPAIN

IN the burning midsummer of the year 1540, a new and powerful invader burst into the American Southwest, not from the north but out of Mexico. This was the fateful expedition of Francisco Vásquez de Coronado, Governor of Nueva Galicia, who rode in golden armor at the van of a powerful army: more than three hundred Spaniards in shining steel, accompanied by conquered Mexican Indian allies and women, with priests walking in the apostolic fashion, and with the red and gold banners of Spain and the Cross, going on before.

This, with Hernando de Soto's expedition proceeding further east, was the last and largest of the great *entradas* of the *conquistadores*. It was an extension of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, and for many decades afterward marked its limits.

The Spanish conquest of the New World began in the islands of the Caribbean discovered by Columbus. Here also began the Spanish colonization policy based on the *encomienda*. This was a grant of land, usually huge, to the Spanish conqueror who defeated the American Indian inhabitants and created a *tierra paz*, "pacified country." The grant included all the inhabitants as well as the land; they were to work for the *encomendero* and provide him with revenues, a part of which went to the Spanish Crown. The system was an obvious extension of the social organization of feudal Spain, incorporating the far older Mediterranean concepts of latifundia, modernized by the newly powerful, centralized authority of the Crown. Because, from the first, Spanish exploration and colonization were both subsidized and rigidly controlled by the Crown, colonization became one of conquest, never settlement, which was always expected to return a profit to the central authority, and which was jealously guarded.

The islands of Cuba and Santo Domingo were conquered and enclosed in *encomiendas*, but immediate problems developed with the conquered Indians, who were supposed to work the land in the style of European peasants. The Circum-Caribbean tribes died rapidly under such treatment, both from Spanish barbarity and their own cultural inability to adjust to such a form of serfdom. The Spanish discovery of Mexico was the result not of a search for gold but of a hunt for new Amerind slaves.

While the economic needs of the island *encomiendas* were eventually filled by the importation of African slaves, the discovery and conquest of the Valley of Mexico turned the Spanish toward a new preoccupation: the hunt for gold. Vast quantities of gold were found in Tenochtitlán, the city of the Aztecs. This, however, was the accumulation of centuries; Cortés and others were disappointed to find that Mexico did not possess extensive gold deposits. But the chagrin was soon ameliorated by the discovery of virtually inexhaustible silver lodes, at Potosí and elsewhere. A stream of metal eventually amounting to billions of dollars was begun to Europe. Shortly afterward, Pizarro entered

the Inca empire of Peru, and found a real storehouse of virgin gold, and the search was on again.

Thousands of Spaniards, eager for fame and fortune, accumulated in the New World. Spreading out from the central valley of Mexico, Spaniards quickly reduced the agricultural civilizations of the Middle American plateaus. The reduction was characterized by brutalities that with the passage of time historians tend to ignore, but in the end it was complete, and final. All traces of the higher Amerind culture were destroyed, though millions of Mexican Indians continued to live on in various stages of Spanish servitude. The efforts of genuine Spanish humanitarians, such as the gentle Bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga, to improve the harsh treatment of Indian serfs failed, and could not help but fail, in the face of Spanish nature and the *de facto*, if not always admitted, needs of the Crown. Both Charles V and his son, Philip II of Spain, were increasingly desperate for money to finance their enormous European wars.

It was not really possible to bring crippling pressures against the *encomenderos*, who operated mines and plantations with the sword and lash but who also fed millions of silver pesos into the treasury of the Crown. The Indians would not have performed these services without the severest repression, and Spaniards of the 16th century were enormously successful at adjusting humanitarian theory to economic reality. Nor was the policy without its genuine rationale, a rationale that kept the Spanish then and later from any sort of trauma.

All the Spanish conquistadores were marked in unusual degree by four dominant characteristics. They were ferociously courageous and audacious; they were the most successful explorers the world had ever seen. They were rapacious for fame and gold—but not, curiously, avaricious, because they seldom held what they seized but spent gold prodigally. They were utterly racist in an unconscious way, never doubting Spanish superiority, not even bothering to theorize it—but making the practice of their superiority nonetheless terrible to the victims. Finally, as a heritage of the Moorish wars, the Spanish were filled with the juices of religious crusade, the most hideous of all human conflicts. The bigotry that fueled the Counter-Reformation and applauded the Inquisition was frequently turned against French or Italian Roman Catholics—something not always understood; it was not a purely Catholic, but a remarkably Iberian, phenomenon that differentiated the Spanish Church from every church in Europe. The Moors left something behind in Spain besides the Alhambra and the Afro-Asian mustang: an unconscious cultural impulse toward expounding religious faith with the sword. To the Spaniard, intellectualism was for German monks; rationalism for cowardly Italians. The Spanish were not unique, or even peculiarly detestable, though a long line of Anglo-Saxon chroniclers have tried to make them so. Every age has a people or a culture that believes the shortest distance between dreams and goals is a bomb, a bullet, a gas oven, or a keen Toledo sword and burning stake.

Because the Spanish faith was real, and America had two continents filled with heathen, even the Spaniard who came for lands, riches, or to raise his station in life arrived with a ready, and unshakable, rationale for conquest. It gave him a sort of moral superiority that not only dominated the battlefields of Europe for more than a century but lasted and stood the test of time. Destroyed empires and millions of dead Amerinds never haunted the Spanish conscience, because even the enemies of the Spanish were willing to give crimes against humanity committed with an ideological basis higher status than those done with no such excuse.

A superior culture—superior in the realities of organization and power—always has attempted, and always will attempt, domination of other cultures upon which it impinges. The means can be in question; the practice, never. Even Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan de Zumárraga, who blanched at the documented atrocities done to *Indios*, never questioned the propriety of the conquest itself, or the

inherent value of the advance of European civilization. They would have preferred that it be carried out in gentler ways.

Conquerors who question themselves or their values soon cease to be conquerors, whatever else they become. When Vásquez de Coronado, for example, who was known among the conquistadores as something of a legalist, asked his chaplain about the ethicality of impressing several Indian girls into his wife's service, he was told that while the captives were not technically subject to the Crown or laws of Spain, but free agents, if they were allowed to go free they would remain heathen and unquestionably burn in hell forever. However, under Doña Beatriz, the girls would learn both European civilized values and adopt the true faith, ensuring their eventual entry into Paradise. The real crime would not be in enslaving them, but in letting them go free. Coronado was satisfied; the girls were kept in bondage, and passed from recorded history.

Those who regarded this Spanish attitude as magnificent sophistry, however, had to face the fact that the Spanish were fully prepared to back it up with hot blood and cold steel, to the ends of the earth. Not only the Aztec and Inca states but the kingdoms of Europe quailed when the Spanish tercios of massed infantry received the *¡Adelante!* (Forward!), and the cavaliers of Salamanca kissed the cross-hilts of their swords and shouted the *¡Sant'Iago!* calling upon the patron saint of Spain. To the world of the 16th century, the phrase "fought like Spaniards" meant "fought like devils," and was the fighting man's supreme compliment.

Besides ferocity, battle skills, and an ultimate sense of moral superiority, the Spanish invaders were equipped to invade America in other ways. Accustomed to an arid homeland (most of the true conquistadores came from Salamanca), which was essentially a high plain devoid of timber and lacking large rivers, the Spanish found the mountains, deserts, and high plains of Middle America different only in degree. They left no record, as other Europeans did, of finding the Southwest particularly unlovely or forbidding; it was a land in which they could feel at home. More important, they were mounted, and rode the Spanish mustang, not the heavier, grain-fed northern European horse. *Caballero* and gentleman were the same word in Spanish, as in no other European language. Spaniards were horsemen, and they had a horse that could live in the new land.

The Spanish horse was a relict of the Moorish occupation. It had a strong dash of Arabian blood, crossed with North African barb; it was desert-bred and hardy. It could feed entirely off grass, and live from waterhole to waterhole.

It could carry the Spanish armor across the plains and high mesas, thus giving the invaders mobility and military advantage. In a pinch, the mustang could, and did, serve as food. Mounted on Spanish mustangs, armored, and armed with Toledo steel, a Spanish *entrada* could cut through any American Indian "nation" that lived.

Two events called forth the Coronado expedition of 1540. Spanish conquest and pacification of Mexico had reached nowhere near the Rio Grande, but New Spain was filled with adventurers eager to find new kingdoms in America. After all, Cortés had found Mexico, and Pizarro Peru. No one believed the possibility of conquerable empires was exhausted. Further, the Crown was insatiable in its demands for specie, which poured through Madrid without lasting benefit, to enrich the Flemish and German bankers who financed Spanish wars. The viceregal government of New Spain not only believed in the existence of more golden cities, but was prepared to implement the belief. When Álvar Núñez (who preferred to use his matronymic of Cabeza de Vaca, because it denoted higher social rank) returned to Mexico from his shipwreck on the Texas coast, after six years of wanderings among the Amerind tribes, he brought rumors of great cities in the north and west, and he reported to the

Viceroy, Mendoza, that he had seen "signs of gold, antimony, and iron." Cabeza de Vaca had not actually seen gold or silver, and he had in fact suffered incredible hardships in captivity among the Karankawas and Coahuiltecans, who had not yet learned the expediency of killing a white man on sight. The "cities" the Texas Indians had told him about were the terraced cliff dwellings of the Puebloan culture of New Mexico. But the Spaniards, with the fresh evidence of Tenochtitlán and Cuzco, were easily led astray.

Mendoza sent a priest from Nice on the French-Italian coast, Fray Marcos, to investigate Cabeza de Vaca's rumors. His report was the second event that assured the Coronado invasion. Marcos had had vast experience in the New World: he had been on Santo Domingo during the final extermination of the natives, accompanied the brave Alvarado on his sweep through Guatemala, and claimed to have been with Pizarro in Peru. He was considered an old hand, who could recognize gold when he saw it, and he was ordered to scout the northern country with a Negro slave who had returned with Núñez.

Fray Marcos de Niza traveled an incredible distance, through modern Arizona and New Mexico, then fortunately relatively devoid of Apaches. Eventually he came to a city, which he scouted from a great distance. On his return, he informed Mendoza of a "land rich in gold, silver, and other wealth . . . great cities . . . and civilized people wearing woolen clothes." He had seen the wealthy city of Cíbola rising out of the desert, with walls and gates, surrounded by domestic animals whose names he did not know. Cíbola was larger than Tenochtitlán—which, before the Spanish swords and smallpox epidemics, had contained 300,000 Amerind souls.

Marcos did not claim to have entered Cíbola or any of the other six cities of that fabulous land. But before retiring he had piled a cairn of stones on a hill overlooking the Cíbola plain, and on the rocks erected a small Cross, taking "possession" of Cíbola and "the kingdoms that lay beyond it" in the name of God, King Charles V, and the Viceroy, Mendoza. No one in New Spain questioned the validity of that title, and Mendoza himself was enthralled.

From his own purse, Mendoza put up the equivalent of two million dollars to finance an expedition to claim these northern kingdoms. The choice of commanding it—there were many claimants—fell on Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, thirty years of age, already distinguished in rounding up *Indio* slave and pacifying areas of Mexico, and more to the point, wealthy enough through his wife's inheritance to raise 50,000 *excelentes* to defray the costs. Thus Coronado and Mendoza, between them, invested almost four million modern dollars in this quest for gold. Coronado also seemed a reasonable choice in other ways. Not a great combat leader, he was still high-minded, and with a strict legalistic sense. As Governor of the Mexican province of Nueva Galicia, he had been an enormous improvement over the conquistador human beast, Núño de Guzmán, who once nailed a man to a post by his tongue, for insolence.

With an army of 321 Spaniards, five Portuguese, two Frenchmen, two Italians, a German, and one Scot, several hundred tamed Indians, several women, and some religious (the Spanish term for assorted clergy) including Fray Marcos of Nice, Coronado moved north. After five months of marching through the *despoblada*, hot, dirty, and hungry, on July 7, 1540, the army arrived on the upper Rio Grande, outside the city Fray Marcos had claimed was Cíbola.

Cíbola proved to be a sun-bleached rock pueblo of Zuñi Indians, containing perhaps two hundred dwellings all told. In front of this village, several hundred Zuñi warriors were disposed warily for peace or war.

The army's notary, Bermejo, rode forward in armor to read a proclamation to the astonished Puebloans. They were decreed subjects of his Spanish Majesty beyond the sea, and further informed that they were now under the King's protection, with nothing to fear. Here, for the first time, a



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