Los comanches en la frontera norte de la Nueva España, 1700-1821:
Using Comanche Sources to Illuminate the Spanish Catalyst in Comanche Ethnohistory

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Dedication

To the first generation *Numuhnuh*—who, despite systematic alienation, forced captivity on the Reservation, starvation, and immense poverty—held on to and handed down a beautiful and rich cultural history. *Udah* (thank you).

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to acknowledge my family. My mother, uncle, and grandparents have unconditionally supported my endeavors in life and pushed me to pursue my education. My husband and grandmother-in-law have tolerated my idiosyncrasies, countless hours of secluded reading and writing, and have always provided the support to complete, not only this project, but all my undergraduate coursework. Likewise, my *kahkoos* (grandmothers) in Apache, Oklahoma, have provided so much support—and much needed laughter—throughout this entire process. Without my family, I know this project would never have come to fruition.

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Abstract

Beginning in the seventeenth century, the loosely unified collection of bands commonly known as the Comanche, migrated out of present-day Wyoming and on to the Great Plains. Upon acquiring the horse, the Comanche pushed into northern New Mexico in 1706 and into Texas in 1743 and proved to be both a military match for, and at times, a necessary ally, with the Spanish. However, the Comanche people and their unique cultural and historical perspective have been marginalized in the broader "Borderlands" historical narrative and have not been utilized as a valuable historical source base. This essay focuses on Comanche-Spanish relations and argues that the Spanish encroachment into lands in present-day Texas and New Mexico not only served as a catalyst for the newly developing Comanche culture, but shaped Comanche history, language, and historical interactions between the Comanche and other groups in the region. Though unlike traditional arguments made by historians, this essay analyzes the Comanche-Spanish relationship from an ethnohistorical perspective using Comanche oral histories and living culture to either corroborate, refute, or shed new light on contemporary historical understandings.

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Illustrations

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Comanche Language Pronunciation Guide

Comanche	Phonetic Pronunciation	Spanish	English
Wiaʔnʉʉ	Wee-ah-nuh	N/A	Comanche band from Walters, Ok area.
Nʉmʉ	Nuh-muh	N/A	Comanche (s.)
Nʉmʉnʉʉ	Nuh-muh-nuh	N/A	Comanche (pl.)
Nʉmʉ Tʉtsiwai	Nuh-muh Tuh-tsee-why	N/A	Comanche Lance
Nʉmʉ Tekwapʉ	Nuh-muh tehk-wahp	N/A	Comanche Language
Nʉmʉ Eka Sia	Nuh-muh Eh-kah See-ah	N/A	Red-dyed Golden Eagle undertail plumes
Muura	Moo-dah	La mula	Mule
Kabʉʉrʉ	Kah-bah-duh	La cabra	Goat
Tohtía	Toh-tee-ah	La tortilla	Flat bread
Paanʉ	Paah-n	El pan	Baked bread
Tʉhano	Tuh-hah-noh	El tejano	Texan
Pooro	Poh-doh	El cerdo	Pig
Pihúura	Pee-whoo-dah	La judía	Bean
Kape	Kah-pay	La cama	Bed
Saabara	Saah-bah-dah	Sábana	Bedsheet
Nabaaka	Nah-bah-kah	La bala	Bullet
Waʔoo	Wah-oh	El gato	Cat
Paapasʉ	Pah-pahs	Las papas	Potatoes

Introduction

The Comanche, the subjects of numerous historical novels, television Westerns, Hollywood movies, and Texas folklore, have long enamored the public and scholars alike.[1] Though they once controlled a vast territory encompassing much of the southern Plains, by 1875 the United States Army had forcibly relocated the Comanche to the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation near Fort Sill, Oklahoma.[2] Though the Comanche were important players in the history of the southern Plains region, they were not among the region's original inhabitants. Beginning in the seventeenth century, the loosely unified collection of bands commonly known as the Comanche, migrated out of present-day Wyoming and on to the Great Plains.[3] Though archeologist and anthropologist actively work to retrace the Comanche migratory route and to develop a better understanding of Comanche pre-contact culture, little is known about the indigenous group's early history. Scholars and tribal historians remain uncertain of whether the Comanche, who refer to themselves as *N~~u~~m~~u~~n~~uu~~* (nuh-muh-nuh, the people), separated from the Eastern Shoshone, with whom the Comanche share a linguistic relationship, or existed as an independent social and political people.[4] Nonetheless, it is certain that the Comanche left the

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[1] Rivaya-Martínez, "De 'salvajes' a 'imperialistas'. Una revisión crítica de la historiografía sobre los comanches durante el período anterior a la reserva (1700-1875)," in *Visiones del pasado. Reflexiones para escribir la historia de los pueblos indígenas de América*, ed. Ana Luisa Izquierdo (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2016,), 154.

[2] Ibid., 155-156.

[3] Cody Newton, "Towards a Context for Late Precontact Culture Change: Comanche Movement Prior to Eighteenth Century Spanish Documentation," *Plains Anthropologist* 56, no. 217 (2011): 55; Rivaya-Martínez, "La expansión comanche en la frontera norte de Nueva España durante el siglo XVIII," in *La frontera en el mundo hispánico: Tierras de convivencia y espacios de confrontación (siglos XV-XVIII)*, ed. Porfirio Sanz Camañes and David Rex Galindo (Quito: Abya Yala, 2014), 347.

[4] Newton, "Towards a Context for Late Precontact Culture Change," 55-56; Daniel J. Gelo and Christopher J. Wickham, *Comanches and Germans on the Texas Frontier: The Ethnology of Heinrich Berghaus* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2018), 1-2; Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee, comp., *TAA N~~U~~M~~U~~ TEKWAP~~U~~?HA T~~U~~BOOP~~U~~: Our Comanche Dictionary Revised 2010* (Elgin: Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee, 2010), 189; Thomas W. Kavanagh, ed., *Comanche Ethnography: Field Notes of E. Adamson Hoebel, Waldo R. Wedel, Gustav G. Carlson, and Robert H. Lowie* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 119. Note, the word "Comanche" is widely accepted to be a Spanish corruption of the Ute

region as a distinct indigenous group and made several migratory waves out of present-day Wyoming onto the Great Plains, descending down through the present-day Dakotas to Texas, and into present-day Colorado and northern New Mexico. Sometime between their exodus out of present-day Wyoming, and the first Spanish reference, recorded by, fray Alonso de Posada, identifying them in 1686, the Comanche acquired the Spanish horse.[5] As the Comanche evolved into a nomadic horse culture, they quickly became both expert equestrians and equine breeders and commanded vast herds of horses across the southern Plains.[6] Upon acquiring the horse, the Comanche pushed into northern New Mexico in 1706 and into Texas in 1743 and hostilely engaged the regions' local indigenous groups like the Apache and Pueblo peoples.[7] Contrary to historian Pekka Hämäläinen's assertion in *The Comanche Empire*, the Comanche, who operated under a hierarchal band and sub-band divisionary system, were never unified politically and did not view themselves under a cooperative economic system.[8] However, as a fluid conglomeration of politically independent and loosely connected bands, the Comanche proved to be both a

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word, *kumanchi*, which the Ute used to describe the N~~u~~m~~u~~n~~uu~~, William C. Meadows, *Kiowa, Apache, And Comanche Military Societies: Enduring Veterans, 1800 to the Present* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1999), 252.

[5] Newton, "Towards a Context for Late Precontact Culture Change," 63; Silvestre Vélez de Escalante, *The Domínguez-Escalante Journal: Their Expedition Through Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico in 1776*, ed. Ted J. Warner and trans. Angelico Chavez (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), 52.

[6] Rivaya-Martínez, "La expansión comanche en la frontera norte de Nueva España durante el siglo XVIII," 344, 364; Kelly L. Jenks, "Tracing the Effects of Spanish Colonialism Upon the Plains-Pueblo Exchange" (M.A. diss., The University of Arizona, 2005), 52.

[7] Newton, "Towards a Context for Late Precontact Culture Change," 64-65; Rivaya-Martínez, "De 'salvajes' a 'imperialistas'," 156; David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University, 2005), 74; Gelo and Wickham, *Comanches and Germans on the Texas Frontier,* 1.

[8] Though Comanches were not politically unified, they did at times form loose coalitions for raiding and military assaults. Private David G. Burnet to Henry R. Schoolcraft, August 20, 1847, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, ed. Henry R. Schoolcraft (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Company, 1851), 232; Rivaya-Martínez, "La expansión comanche en la frontera norte de Nueva España durante el siglo XVIII," 345-346; Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 2. Historians contest Hämäläinen's claims in Betty, Gerald, review of *The Comanche Empire*, by Pekka Hämäläinen. *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (2008): 14705 (2008): 1470; Jeffery Olster, review of *The Comanche Empire*, by Pekka Hämäläinen, *Western Historical Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2009): 505; Joaquín Rivaya-Martínez, review of *The Comanche Empire*, by Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 2 (2009): 257.

military match for, and at times, a necessary ally, with the Spanish in New Mexico and Texas. Likewise, the Comanche established and facilitated a trade network between the region's indigenous peoples and the Spanish and the French, who provided prized European goods.[9] By the end of the eighteenth century the Comanche sphere of influence encompassed much of Texas and parts of present-day Oklahoma, Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico earning the Comanche the epithet, "Lords of the Southern Plains."[10]

Over the past four centuries, from their earliest mentions in Spanish accounts, the Comanche, their origins, and their subsequent domination of an expansive territory with a range of 240,000 square miles have captivated historians and served as the focal point for many scholarly studies.[11] However, the Comanche people and their unique cultural and historical perspective have been marginalized in the broader "Borderlands" historical narrative and have not been utilized as a valuable historical source base. Scholars, primarily in the field of anthropology and sociology, have a methodological tradition of "going-to-the-source" to garner source material for their research and have long recorded different aspects of Comanche history and culture.[12] However, traditional historians by methodological nature tend to shy away from oral histories and living culture and opt to restrict their research to primary and secondary written sources.

Though historians of Comanche history often operate in an interdisciplinary framework, many historians have either long ignored or failed to utilize Comanche oral histories in their own

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[9] Martha A. Works, "Creating Trading Places on the New Mexican Frontier," *Geographical Review* 82, no. 3 (July 1992): 273.
[10] Juliana Barr, "Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the 'Borderlands' of the Early Southwest," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (2011): 41; *see* **Error! Reference source not found.**, 44.
[11] David Weber, *Spanish Bourbons and Wild Indians* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2004), 18.
[12] Scholars such as E. Adamson Hoebel, Waldo R. Wedel, Thomas W. Kavanagh, Daniel J. Gelo, ect.

research. Though ethnohistorian Joaquín Rivaya-Martínez actively seeks historical consultation from knowledgeable living Comanches, the majority of historians like T. R. Fehrenbach, Pekka Hämäläinen, and Willard H. Rollings have not.[13] Instead, when they do choose to examine personal accounts, they tended to rely on either the published narratives of captives, such as the siblings, Bianca and Theodore Babb, or primary source documents written by non-Comanches outside of Comanche culture (e.g. Spanish or U.S. civil or military official reports, missionaries' reports or diaries, etc.).[14] This is not to say that these sources do not hold a wealth of information. Yet, when historians rely solely on non-Comanche sources without examining and incorporating Comanche oral histories, rich with intimate cultural and historical knowledge and perspectives, into their constructed historical narratives, historians rob the Comanche of having an active and represented voice in the historical conversation.

As historians of indigenous Mesoamerica have shown, indigenous communities retain a "collective remembrance" of their historic past and express their historic remembrances in their material culture, language, and ceremonies, etc.[15] However, using contemporary indigenous sources to reconstruct the past can be problematic because culture is not static and evolves overtime, taking on new meanings, narratives, and retellings of those narratives.[16] One way to test the historical validity of contemporary indigenous sources, like Comanche oral traditions and elements of living culture, is to cross-reference those sources with other indigenous narratives and traditional Euro-American sources. By bringing Comanche oral histories and cultural

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[13] T.R. Fehrenbach, *Comanches: The History of a People* (New York: Random House Inc, 2003); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*; Willard H. Rollings, *The Comanche*. *Indians of North America*, Ed. Frank W. Porter III (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989).
[14] Siblings, Bianca and Theodore Babb were both taken captive by Comanches in 1866, ransomed, and returned to their family in Texas where they both wrote accounts of their short time with the Comanches.
[15] Stephanie Wood, introduction to *Mesoamerican Memory: Enduring Systems of Remembrance*, ed. Amos Megged and Stephanie Wood (United States: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 3-14.
[16] Ibid., 5-6.

perspectives into the historical conversation, this essay demonstrates the importance of the Comanche voice in Comanche history, and that historians should seek to incorporate the historical knowledge of both previously recorded Comanches and living Comanches into their research in order to produce a more inclusive and well-rounded historical narrative.

This essay focuses on N~~u~~m~~u~~-Spanish relations and argues that the Spanish encroachment into lands in present-day Texas and New Mexico not only served as a catalyst for the newly developing Comanche culture, but shaped Comanche history, language, and historical interactions between the Comanche and other groups in the region (e.g. trade of Spanish horses and Spanish captives to other indigenous groups, restricted Spanish firearm trade resulting in N~~u~~m~~u~~-French firearm trade, etc.). Though unlike traditional arguments made by historians, this essay analyzes the N~~u~~m~~u~~-Spanish relationship from an ethnohistorical perspective using Comanche oral histories and living culture to either corroborate, refute, or shed new light on contemporary historical understandings.[17] This essay is divided topically into three sections. In the first section, I focus on New Mexico and Texas and provide a brief overview of the region's history by examining the topics of conquest and exploration and the region's colonial period. I examine Spanish and Comanche interactions throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the second section. In the concluding section, I look at Comanche culture post-Spanish Contact and use Comanche oral histories and traditional source materials to analyze shifts in Comanche material, societal, and linguistic culture upon encountering the Spanish. The essay does not pretend to offer a comprehensive examination of the extensive historical context, but rather serves as an accessible study on the subject of N~~u~~m~~u~~-Spanish relations that furthers the

[17] I use the term "N~~u~~m~~u~~-Spanish" in place of Comanche-Spanish relations. The term N~~u~~m~~u~~, pronounced Nuh-muh, is the singular form of Comanche in the Comanche language.

historiographical discussion by demonstrating that a more thorough and inclusive narrative is produced when historians bring the unique Comanche historical perspective into conversation with traditionally relied on historical source

I Early Spanish Involvement in the Region

Conquest and Exploration

To understand the interactions between the Comanche and the Spanish during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is important to understand what first brought the Spanish to the New Mexico-Texas region. Following Columbus' voyage of 1492 and the subsequent Castilian conquest of the Caribbean, various sanctioned and unsanctioned Spanish *entradas* (armed excursions) entered both North and South America. In 1519, Hernando Cortés undertook an unauthorized expedition from Cuba to the Yucatán mainland without the expressed consent of Cuba's governor Diego Velázquez. Cortés' expedition had considerable ramifications for the region as the expedition created a dynamic shift in power away from the Aztec Triple Alliance, who were the dominant indigenous society in central Mexico, to the Spanish Crown and its mission of conquest. Following the conquest of central Mexico, Spain began to colonize the region and established the Viceroyalty of New Spain in 1535.[18]

Likewise, following Juan Ponce de León's 1513 expedition, in 1527 an expedition led by Pánfilo de Narváez left Spain with a license granted by Carlos I, King of Spain, to claim and establish settlements along the Gulf Coast and effectively bring the region under Spanish

[18] Ida Altman, *Spanish Society in Mexico City after the Conquest* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 417. As a note on this essay's Spanish spellings and grammar, I follow the style guide in David J. Weber's, *Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xiii- xiv.

dominion.[19] Though the expedition reached the eastern coast of Florida, a series of devastating experiences forced the remaining members of the expedition to admit failure and seek route to Mexico via the Gulf of Mexico.[20] However, circumstances forced the group to abandon their vessels off the coast of Texas and the eighty member group continued their arduous trek from the coast of Texas to the Gulf of California until four survivors reached Mexico City in July of 1536.[21] Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, one of the four survivors, had been a prominent figure throughout the expeditions journey and had brought back descriptions of the uncharted southwest region and tales of possible *oro*—gold.[22]

Following the Narváez Expedition, three subsequent Spanish expeditions into North America embarked between 1539 and 1540. In 1539, Hernando de Soto and his crew left Spain and landed off the coast of Florida and began their arduous journey across the southeastern United States into Texas before admitting failure and turning towards Mexico in 1543.[23] In the same year that the Soto expedition began, with Viceroy Mendoza's blessing, fray Marcos de Niza led an exploratory expedition across the present-day states of Sonora and Arizona, recording much information about the region and its inhabitants and the wealthy cities of gold that supposedly laid farther on.[24] On the return of the Niza expedition to Mexico City and subsequent report to the viceroy, in 1540 Francisco Vázquez de Coronado embarked on an expedition across present-day Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas in search of

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[19] Alex D. Krieger, introduction to *We Came Naked and Barefoot: The Journey of Cabeza de Vaca Across North America*, ed. Margery H. Krieger (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2002), 1; note that Carlos I, King of Spain, also held the title of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.
[20] Krieger, introduction to *We Came Naked and Barefoot: The Journey of Cabeza de Vaca Across North America*, 1.
[21] Ibid.; Sidney B. Brinckerhoff and Odie B. Faulk, *Lancers for the King: A Study of the Frontier Military System of Northern New Spain, with a Translation of the Royal Regulations of 1772* (Phoenix: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1965), 1.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., 2.
[24] Brinckerhoff and Faulk, *Lancers for the King*, 2; Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 36.

the Seven Cities of Cíbola and the Gran Quivíra and their vast stores of gold.[25] However, Coronado never found the fabled cities of gold that were always just beyond his reach and returned to Mexico in 1542.[26]

During the Conquest period, many conquistadores like Coronado expressed a desire to serve the Crown and expand the Spanish Empire and Catholic Christendom while simultaneously seeking personal glory and advancement "through the process of discovery, conquest, and colonization."[27] Regardless of other motivating factors, gold facilitated personal and state motives for conquest as the acquisition of gold for both crown and conquistador signified wealth, status, and future opportunities.[28] Conquistadores extracted what riches they could from many indigenous communities but they never found the cities of gold that they sought.[29] Nonetheless, the early conquistadores mapped the regions and made contact with indigenous groups. Periods of Spanish migration into the regions followed the conquistadors' expeditions, and by the time that the Comanche emerged on to the scene, the Spanish had well established their presence in the region.

Colonial Period in New Mexico and Texas: Civil Settlements, Missions, and Presidios

[25] Krieger, introduction to *We Came Naked and Barefoot*, 2; Brinckerhoff and Faulk, *Lancers for the King*, 2.
[26] Brinckerhoff and Faulk, *Lancers for the King*, 2.
[27] Stan Hoig, *Came Men on Horses: The Conquistador Expeditions of Francisco Vásquez de Coronado and Don Juan de Oñate* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2012; ProQuest Ebook Central), 15-17, 127, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uncp-books/detail.action?docID=3039784 (accessed February 28, 2020).
[28] Historian Stan Hoig argues that historians like Hugh Thomas and sensational writers portray conquistadors as motivated by their pure "lust" for gold and ruthless conquest. However, in recent decades scholars have debated how accurately that portrayal depicts the motives and desires of the leaders of Spanish expeditions. Without dispute, by arguing that gold was the sole motivating force driving conquistadores, historians create a clean and easily argued narrative. By overemphasizing the conquistadores' "lust" for gold, historians rob their subjects of their independent and complex human agency in the context of their period. As historian Hoig demonstrates, historians must consider all influencers (both private and public) that impacted the conquistadores' motives, actions, and reactions in, *Came Men on Horses,* 13-20.
[29] Ibid., 16-19.

La Provincia de Santa Fe de Nuevo México

Though the Comanche did not migrate into Spanish controlled New Mexico and Texas until the seventeenth century, it is important to understand the history of the region and identify what kinds of Spanish settlements were ultimately established, their purposes, and how the Spanish interacted with both the indigenous populations and other Europeans in the region.[30] As mentioned, the failure of previous entradas to find the cities of untold wealth did not hinder further Spanish attraction to the northern region of New Mexico. Multiple expeditions departed for the periphery of New Spain, each with its own set of motivating factors.[31] However, in 1583 Felipe II, King of Spain, issued an official *cédula* authorizing the viceroy of New Spain, don Luis de Velasco, the Younger, to select an individual to mount an excursion and to "pacify" (colonize) New Spain's northern frontier.[32] Moreover, the cédula specified that the responsibility for financing the expedition would fall to the leader.[33] Ultimately, in 1595 Velasco offered the position to Juan de Oñate, who eagerly accepted the monumental task.

After a change in viceroys and much deliberation, Oñate's expedition set out in 1598 to colonize the region, Christianize the indigenous population, and avoid hostile encounters with the newly conquered peoples.[34] In short, Oñate established *la provincia de Santa Fe de Nuevo México* (New Mexico), explored the Great Plains region unsuccessfully in search of the Gran

[30] This is not to suggest that the indigenous peoples did not actively control areas within the territories claimed by Spain.
[31] As Hoig argues, not everyone sought material wealth (i.e. precious metals—gold and silver) and glory, as many of the expeditions included Catholic missionaries who sought spiritual wealth though the baptism of indigenous souls and the spread of Catholicism in *Came Men on Horses*, 121, 127.
[32] Ibid., 137.
[33] John F. Bannon expounds on the terms of the expedition contract agreed upon by the state and Oñate in, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, Histories of the American Frontier, 8th ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997; EBSCOhost eBook Collection), 34-35, http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy181.nclive.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=22719&site=ehost-live (accessed February 29, 2020).
[34] Hoig, *Came Men on Horses* ,137-139; 146-150.

Quivíra, and engaged in harsh treatment towards indigenous peoples and members of his own party.[35] Regardless of Oñate's character and decisions, he and his expedition demonstrate the Spanish push to "pacify", Christianize, and incorporate the northern frontier of New Mexico into the Spanish fold.[36]

For Oñate, his expedition ended in expulsion from New Mexico and his own financial losses, but colonization in the region proceeded.[37] Members of the expedition had established early Spanish settlements throughout the region, largely near existing indigenous communities, such as *San Gabriel de Los Españoles* (San Gabriel) and *San Juan de los Caballeros* (San Juan), which functioned as capitals for the province at different times.[38] However, a more permanent civil settlement was not created until the provincial governor don Pedro de Peralta established the city of *La Villa Real de la Santa Fe de San Francisco de Asís* (Santa Fe) and relocated the capital there in 1609.[39]

From its initial founding during the Oñate expedition, the Crown tasked the New Mexican officials with the evangelization of the region.[40] However, as early as the Niza expedition in 1539, Catholic friars had accompanied the expeditions into the region. Though the friars, David Weber's "conquistadors of the spirit," tended to the spiritual needs of the expedition, their primary task was the baptism of prospective converts and the nurturement of those converts' newly founded Catholic religiosity.[41] Though Spanish missionaries attached to

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[35] Ibid., 213; A detailed account of Oñate and his expedition are outside the scope of this essay, please refer to pages, 132-232, in Hoig, *Came Men on Horses*; Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 61.
[36] Hoig, *Came Men on Horses*, 219; Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 42; Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 59-60.
[37] Hoig, *Came Men on Horses*, 226; *Weber, Spanish Frontier in North America*, 79.
[38] Hoig, *Came Men on Horses*, 147; Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 59.
[39] Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 41; Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 65.
[40] Brinckerhoff and Faulk, *Lancers for the King*, 7; Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 40, 42; Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 72.
[41] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 69-70. Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 5.

the various expeditions into New Mexico actively worked to convert the indigenous population to Roman Catholicism, the first permanent mission-church was not erected until members of the Oñate expedition founded churches at San Gabriel and San Juan in 1598.[42]

By 1630, Franciscan Friars, had erected numerous adobe churches and missions throughout New Mexico from which they carried out their momentous task of converting New Mexico's thousands of indigenous Pueblo peoples.[43] Likewise, in 1659, Franciscans established the mission *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* at *El Paso del Norte*.[44] The Franciscan friars used the missions as a physical structure to begin to introduce the indigenous populations to Christian dogma. However, as historian David Weber notes, the friars also sought to acculturate the converts and bring them in line with the Spanish concept of *policía*, or "civilized behavior" (i.e. Spanish urban lifestyle).[45] The friars used their missionary efforts in central Mexico as a blueprint and achieved success in most cases among the sedentary Pueblo peoples of New Mexico.[46]

However, this is not to suggest that the indigenous peoples unanimously understood and accepted Christianity and elements of Spanish culture, nor is it to say that indigenous people did not view the two through their own ethno-interpretative lens. Weber mentions that the friars relied on the military forces to carry out physical punishments towards indigenous converts who did not live in accordance with the friars prescribed manor or sought to leave the confines of the

[42] Hoig, *Came Men on Horses*, 147.
[43] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 72-73, 80-82.
[44] Ibid., 68-69.
[45] Ibid., 77-78; Amber Brian, "Shifting Identities: Mestizo Historiography and the Representation of Chichimecs," in *To Be Indio in Colonial Spanish Americ*a, ed. by Mónica Díaz (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017), 147.
[46] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 78, 88.

mission without permission.[47] Though the friars enjoyed some success, whatever their methods, by 1680 the friars mission to "pacify" the indigenous population had failed as the Pueblo peoples joined in revolt against the friars, Spanish colonists, and the overall exploitative Spanish presence in the region.[48] Following the uprising, thousands of New Mexican colonists abandoned the Santa Fe region and fled south taking refuge at El Paso del Norte (the present-day cities of Cuidad Juárez, Mexico and El Paso, Texas) until 1692 when the Spanish regained control of the territory and returned the capital to Santa Fe.[49] Though when the Spanish returned to New Mexico, they did not pursue their mission of colonization and Hispanicizing the indigenous peoples using the same methods and enthusiasm they had had prior to 1680.[50]

Sidney Brinckerhoff and Odie Faulk's assertion that the region of New Mexico was stagnant during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is no longer tenable because the region did experience growth, however minimal that growth was.[51] "In the 1630s it [Santa Fe] had a population of around 250 Spaniards," but, "by 1670 the Spanish population numbered around 2,800 in the upper valley of the Río Grande."[52] Yet, though subsequent civil settlements like *Villa Nueva de Santa Cruz de los Españoles Mejicanos del Rey Nuestro Señor Carlos Segundo* (Santa Cruz), *La Villa de Alburquerque* (Albuquerque), *Don Fernando de Taos* (Taos) were established, New Mexico remained little more than a colonial "backwater" that essentially existed off its own small agricultural production, small hacienda herds, minimal support from the Crown, and conducting trade with, and serving as trade hub for, the region's indigenous peoples

[47] Ibid., 82.
[48] Ibid., 100-102.
[49] Brinckerhoff and Faulk, *Lancers for the King*, 3; for a detailed examination of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, please see Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 80-89.
[50] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 105.
[51] Brinckerhoff and Faulk, *Lancers for the King*, 7.
[52] Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 41, 79.

well into the last years of the Spanish Empire.[53] New Mexico and its Spanish inhabitants had significant impacts on the region's indigenous peoples and their cultures and in the end, "backwater" or not, the province was important enough for the Spanish to promote colonization efforts in present-day Texas to protect Spanish interests in New Mexico and the northern frontier against French encroachment out of French Louisiana.[54]

La provincia de los Tejas

The Spanish Crown did not take the same approach to "pacifying" the region of present-day Texas which they named *la provincia de los Tejas* as early as it had in New Mexico. Though Alonso Álvarez de Pineda mapped the coastline of present-day Texas in 1519 and Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca had been among the first Spaniards to traverse the region in 1528 the Spanish did not seriously begin to colonize the region until 1690 as a defensive reaction towards growing French interests in the region.[55]

Though the French made efforts to explore and colonize North America throughout the mid-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, French colonization did not extend into present-day Texas until 1685. In 1684 René-Robert Cavelier, sieur de La Salle, led an expedition from France to the Gulf of Mexico in order to establish a French colony near the mouth of the Mississippi River that would function as a staging ground for French invasions into New Spain.[56] The expedition's voyage proved arduous and La Salle did not reach the Mississippi River area

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[53] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 67-68, 147; Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 41,79-80.
[54] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 68, 111; Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 97, 109, 119-120.
[55] Krieger, introduction to *We Came Naked and Barefoot*, 1; Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 36, 111-115.
[56] To understand the purpose for the expedition and Franco-Spanish relations leading up to the expedition, please refer to Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 109-110.

but rather landed some 450 miles away near present-day Matagorda Bay, Texas.[57] By February 1685 La Salle and the few hundred colonists successfully established the first French outpost in the region, commonly referred to as Fort St. Louis, and began to search for the Mississippi River.[58]

The French presence in the region did not go unnoticed. By 1686 the Spanish Crown received word that La Salle had set out to establish a French colony in the Gulf of Mexico and the thought of French expansionism so close to the New Spain's northern frontier alarmed the Spanish.[59] As La Salle searched for the the elusive Mississippi River, Spain launched six different reconnaissance expeditions into present-day Texas in search of the location of the La Salle colony.[60] Though the first five expeditions failed, the sixth expedition, led by Alonso de León "El Mozo", discovered the remnants of the French fort in 1689.[61] There French survivors recounted the troubles that the colony had faced, La Salle's murder in 1687, and the fatal indigenous attack on the fort which caused the colony to collapse.[62] Weber argues that the Spanish Crown focused its colonizing efforts on targeted areas in the Northern Hemisphere and did not actively colonize peripheral regions until forced to do so as a reactionary measure to the encroachment of other European powers into the regions.[63]

To curb possible French economic expansionism and threat to the Spanish mining region in modern day northern Mexico, the Spanish responded not by organizing large settler expeditions, but rather chose the most cost efficient, quickest, and most peaceable option— the

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[57] Ibid., 110-111; historian John F. Bannon notes the historiographical debate concerning La Salle's landing in Texas in, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 95.
[58] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 110-111; Brinckerhoff and Faulk, *Lancers for the King*, 3.
[59] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 111.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 111- 112.
[63] Ibid., 112.

creation of missions.[64] In 1690 the Spanish quickly mounted an expedition, led by León and Father Damián Mazanet, tasked with establishing missionary settlements deep in the heart of East Texas amongst the Caddo peoples.[65] Though the Spanish expedition founded both the *Santísimo Nombre de Maria* and *San Francisco de los Tejas* missions as instructed, it became apparent to Spanish officials that the two missions and any subsequent missions would require continual supplies and funding from the Crown.[66] This potential financial drain and the lack of evidence of French settlements in the region caused the Spanish Crown to discontinue their missionizing efforts in East Texas for the time being.[67]

However, during The War of Spanish Succession, there was a reemergence of French activity in the Gulf of Mexico. As France and Spain were diplomatic allies and Spain was unable to halt French involvement in the region.[68] During this period Antoine de la Mothe, sieur de Cadillac, Louisiana's governor sought to foster and strengthen relationships with the indigenous populations both East and West of the Mississippi River.[69] Following the wars' conclusions in 1713 and 1714, Spain took a more assertive effort to colonize East Texas in response to and a defensive measure against French trade (primarily with the Caddo peoples and other indigenous groups) and exploration in the region that had occurred during the wars.[70] In 1716 the viceroy of New Spain, Fernando de Alencastre Noroña y Silva, duque de Linares authorized an expedition into East Texas which resulted in the presidio *San Francisco de los Dolores*, and the missions *San Miguel de los Adaes, San José de los Nazones*, *Purísima Concepción*, and *Nuestra Señora de*

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[64] Ibid., 110- 113.
[65] Note, the name "Mazanet" appears as Massanet in various texts.
[66] Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 102.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 117-118.
[69] Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 109-110; Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 119.
[70] Ibid.

Guadalupe, being established.[71] Hostile French movement into East Texas forced the Spanish to retreat into South Texas, however Spain returned to reassert their presence once again in East Texas and by 1725 had reclaimed the missions that they had abandoned while simultaneously founding new missions and presidios.[72]

Unlike in New Mexico, Spain did not mount extensive attempts to establish civil settlements in Texas even though the Spanish Crown sought to reinforce its claims to the region. Missions were by far much more cost effective and quicker to construct than establishing and cultivating new civil settlements. For the Spanish Crown, it proved safer to establish missions and risk not converting indigenous souls than to establish civil colonies and risk their Spanish inhabitants failing. By the time Spain had decided to secure its Texas territory, the crown was in no position financially or militarily to support colonization in Texas as it had done in New Mexico and other regions in its empire.[73]

The first and primary Spanish civil settlement of any real consequence in Texas was at present-day San Antonio, Texas.[74] Following an increase in French activity in the Gulf of Mexico (primarily on the coast of present-day Louisiana and Alabama), Viceroy Baltasar de Zúñiga y Guzmán, duque de Arión y marqués de Valero, re-appointed Martín de Alarcón governor of the Texas province and tasked him with establishing a defensive position in South Texas to support Spanish efforts to curb French involvement in East Texas (i.e. the missions established in 1716).[75] Alarcón and fray Antonio de San Buenaventura y Olivares reached South

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[71] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 114, 120-121; Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 114-116.
[72] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 124-129.
[73] Ibid., 108.
[74] Though El Paso, Texas was historically a Spanish settlement, prior to 1848, El Paso del Norte was considered a part of the province of the New Mexico and later apart of Mexico. Therefore, I do not consider El Paso as a Texas civil settlement during the period examined.
[75] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 121.

Texas in 1718 and established the presidio of *San Antonio de Béjar*, *el Misíon* (mission) *San Antonio de Valero,* and the small civil settlement *Villa Béjar*.[76] Following the retreat of Spanish settlers, missionaries, and soldiers out of East Texas to San Antonio de Béjar, the Crown tasked the new governor, José de Azlor y Virto de Vera, marqués de San Migul de Aguayo, with retaking East Texas.[77] Aguayo constructed or reconstructed presidios and missions including *Presidio de Nuestra Señora del Pilar de los Adaes*, *Presidio San Francisco,* and *Presidio de Nuestra Señora de la Bahía de Espíritu Santo*.[78] In an act to further solidify the Spanish presence in Texas upon Aguayo's success, in 1731 Spanish colonists from the Canary Islands, supported by the Crown, arrived in Villa Béjar and renamed the settlement *Villa San Fernando* which would later become the City of San Antonio.[79]

Clearly, the Spanish Crown's attempt to maintain control of East Texas was not because of the region's economic profitable as the region never grew in population or economic export, outside of ranching, like other regions in the Spanish Empire.[80] In examining the region, it is evident French trade amongst indigenous peoples in Texas and the potential threat that the French posed to modern-day Northern Mexico's mining operations spurred reoccurring Spanish anxieties to colonize Texas.[81] Though the Spanish made attempts to secure and maintain their claims over the Texas province, the population remained minimal and economically hindered,

[76] Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 116-118; Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 121; the Spanish *presidio* was a fortified military settlement.
[77] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 124.
[78] Ibid., 125-126
[79] Ibid., 144.
[80] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 144-146.
[81] Ibid., 119-120; Judith A. Bense, "Introduction: Presidios of the North American Spanish Borderlands," *Historical Archaeology* 38, no. 3 (2004): 3-4.

the missions and their friars failed, and the French threat never really never matched Spanish fears or expectations.[82]

El presidio

Throughout the colonial period, Spanish settlers and missionaries in New Mexico and Texas made up a collective Spanish minority in a region filled with both perceived and real threats. In this context, the presidio functioned to garrison presidial troops and to offer protection to the various missionary and civil settlement efforts.[83] The military presence also served to protect economic interests (e.g. mining and ranching operations) and Spanish settlements in modern-day northern Mexico from indigenous raids and uprisings and the presumptive French assault.[84]

However, though it supported expansion into the peripheral regions, the Spanish Crown did not initially provide or fund military support for the settlers, missionaries, or their indigenous allies and converts.[85] During New Mexico's formative years the Crown placed the defensive responsibility of the colony with its Spanish inhabitants in agreeance with arrangements made between the Crown and the region's *encomenderos* (recipients of encomiendas).[86] Therefore, a proto-presidial system existed in New Mexico unique to each location and its needs and resources.[87] However, this essay's examination of colonial fortifications on the frontier,

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[82] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 143-147.
[83] This is not to say that presidios did not function in other capacities (e.g. jails, stopping points, landmarks, ect.).
[84] Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 72, 127; Bense, "Introduction," 1; Jack S. Williams, "The Evolution of the Presidio in Northern New Spain," *Historical Archaeology* 38, no. 3 (2004): 6.
[85] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 67.
[86] Bense, "Introduction," 2; Williams, "The Evolution of the Presidio in Northern New Spain," 8.
[87] Bense, "Introduction: Presidios of the North American Spanish Borderlands," 1.

specifically those in New Mexico and Texas, will focus only on the official presidios established by the Spanish Crown after it assumed control of frontier protection and military efforts.[88]

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, presidios relied on a militia system and their operations and physical descriptions did not follow a set standard colonial policy.[89] However, the eighteenth century ushered in a dramatic change to the frontier's disorganized and often ineffective presdial system.[90] Following the death of the Habsburg King of Spain, Carlos II, in 1700, and the War of Spanish Succession, the French-Bourbon Phillippe, duc d'Anjou, ascended the Spanish throne as Felipe V. Though not without international opposition, the Spanish-Bourbon dynasty began and set about a period of reform. Over the next century, the Bourbon reformers, influenced by Enlightenment ideals of order and progress, attempted to strengthen Spain economically and territorially by reconfiguring several sectors of Spanish imperial society (e.g. administration, agriculture, trade, industry, indigenous relations).[91]

As mentioned already, the Spanish fear of French grew considerably as the French continued their operations in the Gulf of Mexico and in the Louisiana Territory. Following the Spanish defeat in War of the Quadruple Alliance in 1720, Felipe V tasked Pedro Rivera with conducting an inspection of the presidios in New Spain's frontier region between 1724 and 1728.[92] According, Jack Williams, Rivera's findings showed that the frontier's presidios and their troops, "...were ill trained and had no standard weapons," and, "many…not fortified," and those that were fortified, "had embarrassingly crude defenses."[93] Using the French model,

[88] Ibid., 2.
[89] Williams, "The Evolution of the Presidio in Northern New Spain," 13.
[90] Ibid., 13-14.
[91] Weber, *Bárbaros*, 2.
[92] Williams, "The Evolution of the Presidio in Northern New Spain," 14.
[93] Ibid.

Bourbon reformers attempted to correct, strengthen, and improve the presidios along the northern frontier region.[94] Regardless of the initial reforms, the presidios conditions and defensive operations continued to decline over the preceding decades.[95]

Though Spain's acquisition of Louisiana in 1762 eliminated the French threat, the indigenous populations in the region continued to pose a growing threat.[96] In 1766, Carlos III of Spain ordered Cayetano Pignatelli, marqués de Rubí, to conduct an official investigation of the region and produce a report outlining his recommendations. Between, 1766 and 1769, Rubí and military engineer Nicolás de Lafora conducted their examination of the area and concluded that reforms were necessary and that establishing a strong line of defense was instrumental to protect Spanish interests on the southern frontier of New Spain (modern-day northern Mexico) from indigenous attacks and raids (e.g. Comanches, Apaches, Utes, etc.).[97] As a result of Rubí's report, and a similar report submitted by José de Gálvez y Gallardo, marqués de Sonora, Inspector General to New Spain, pertaining to aspects of the region's administration, in 1772, Carlos III issued a royal instructional decree that sought to renovate, standardize, and strength the Spanish military presence in the region.[98]

Following the publication of the regulations, Carlos III officially reorganized the borderlands into the Interior Provinces and placed them under the supervision of a commandant-inspector, don Hugo O'Conor, and later a commandant-general, don Teodoro de Croix, when the

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[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Brinckerhoff and Faulk, *Lancers for the King,* 4.
[97] Ibid., 5; Weber, *Bárbaros*, 6.
[98] The *Reglamento é instrucción para los Presidios que se han forma ren la linea de frontera de la Nueva España Resuelto por el Rey Nuestro Señor en cédula de 10 de Setiembre de 1772*; Brinckerhoff and Faulk, *Lancers for the King,* 5-6; Williams, "The Evolution of the Presidio in Northern New Spain," 15-16; Alfred B. Thomas, "*Historical* Background," in *Forgotten Frontiers: A Study of the Spanish Indian Policy of Don Juan Bautista de Anza Governor of New Mexico, 1777-1787: From the Original Documents in the Archives of Spain, Mexico, and New Mexico*, trans. and ed. Alfred Barnaby Thomas (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), 5.

king separated the Interior Provinces from New Spain in 1776.[99] By 1780, Rubí's presidial line was completed and consisted of fifteen garrisoned presidios stretching from *Santa Gertrudis del Altar* in Sonora, Mexico to *Nuestra Señora de Loreto de Bahía* near the Texas coastline. However, many presidios and military garrisons laid outside the theoretical protective boundary defined by the cordon of presidios resulting in roughly twenty-eight military establishments spread defensibly throughout the Interior Provinces.[100]

Though the colonial presidios on the northern frontier varied in appearance, the presidios that the Spanish settlers and Crown established during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries ostensibly served a dual purpose. Principally, the presidios served to defend against indigenous and French threats and to forestall future French advances. Likewise, the presidios served an offensive purpose as the presidios in Texas allowed (even if theoretically if not in practice) Spain to exert control over the region in response to the actions of its colonial French contemporaries. Even though the presidios did not suppress indigenous attacks and raids as sufficiently as the Crown hoped, the Bourbon presidio reforms effectively altered Spain's militaristic approach to the region, so much so that independent Mexico continued to adhere to the Carlos III's 1772 prescribed presidial system.[101] Spain's attempts to colonize and retain control of New Spain's northern frontier served the same end. However, no matter the interrelated crossovers, Spanish colonization efforts in East Texas and New Mexico took three civil, religious, and militaristic

[99] Brinckerhoff and Faulk, *Lancers for the King,* 6-7; Thomas, "Historical Background," 13-15; Williams, "The Evolution of the Presidio in Northern New Spain," 16.
[100] *See*, "Map of Frontier Cordon of Presidios c.1780," in *Lancers for the King: A Study of the Frontier Military System of Northern New Spain, with a Translation of the Royal Regulations of 1772*, by Sidney B. Brinckerhoff and Odie B. Faulk (Phoenix: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1965), opp. 80.
[101] Williams, "The Evolution of the Presidio in Northern New Spain," 18.

forms, and laid the foundation for the interactions between the Spanish and the Comanche during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

II Spanish and Comanche Interaction on the Northern Frontier

To understand the relationship between the Comanche and the Spanish on the northern frontier, it is important to understand that the Comanche did not operate as a centralized social or political entity, but rather a collection of "loosely organized" bands.[102] As such, interactions between the Comanche and Spanish largely depended upon the band and the region under their control. An exhaustive chronological examination on N~~u~~m~~u~~-Spanish relations is outside the scope of this essay; therefore, this section highlights the larger events and themes which directed, dictated, and resulted from Comanche and Spanish interactions between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Comanche Raids, Alliances, & Trade

The Comanche essentially viewed Spanish colonies as spaces to conduct trading and for raiding. Though Comanches initially traded horses and captives at Taos and other New Mexican trade fairs in the early decades of the 1700s, by the 1740s the Spanish were aware that the Comanche were actively trading with French traders out of East Texas.[103] Through the French,

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[102] Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, 5; Weber, *Bárbaros*, 5-6; E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Political Organization and Law-ways of the Comanche Indians*, Memories of the American Anthropological Association, no. 54 (Menasha: American Anthropological Press, 1940), 11; Comanches bands were comprised of multiple smaller familial groups. Comanches self-identified by their familial group and band distinction first and for most. Thomas W. Kavanagh provides a thorough examination of Comanche political identity and organization in, *Comanche Political History: An Ethnohistorical Perspective, 1706-1875* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996).

[103] Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Western Comanche Trade Center: Rethinking the Plains Indian Trade System," *Western Historical Quarterly* 29, No. 4 (Winter, 1998): 491; Frances Levine, describes the Taos trade fair as well as items which the Comanches brought to trade in, "Economic Perspectives on the Comanchero Trade," in *Farmers, Hunters, and Colonists: Interaction Between the Southwest and the Southern Plains*, ed. Katherine A. Spielmann (Tuscan: University of Arizona Press, 1991), 157.

the Comanche acquired firearms, a commodity which the Spanish refused to trade, and in turn the Comanche traded these firearms to other indigenous groups across the Plains.[104] As the Comanche dominated the southern Plains' hunting grounds and raided for Spanish horses, they were able to trade bison hides, furs, captives, and Spanish horses to the French in exchange for European weaponry.[105]

As previously discussed, the Spanish did not provide adequate fortifications in the region until the final decades of the eighteenth century. The lack of protection allowed the Comanche to raid Spanish settlements both in Texas, New Mexico and into northern Mexico.[106] For the Comanche, the Spanish and indigenous settlements in New Mexico proved easy targets to acquire both horses, captives, and European material goods essential to the Comanche trade economy.[107] Comanche horse raids greatly reduced the Spanish horse herds in New Mexico and allowed the Comanches to dominate the indigenous horse exchange on the Great Plains.[108] As Comanches also sought to acquire Spanish captives for both an internal labor source and external trade commodity, New Mexico settlements became targets of Comanche raids.[109] By the mid-to-late 1700s, the Comanche had raided deep into central Texas where they harassed Lipan Apache and drove them and Spanish missionaries farther south.[110] Though Comanche bands were not a unified force, it was difficult for Spanish to distinguish which group had raided when and where.

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[104] Hämäläinen, "The Western Comanche Trade Center," 490.
[105] Ibid., 491.
[106] Jenks, "Tracing the Effects of Spanish Colonialism Upon the Plains-Pueblo Exchange," 73.
[107] Martha McCollough, "Reasons for the Marginal Incorporation of the Comanches by the Spanish," *Great Plains Research* 12, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 375.
[108] Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*, 74-76; Hämäläinen, "The Western Comanche Trade Center: Rethinking the Plains Indian Trade System," 494.
[109] Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*, 75-76.
[110] McCollough, "Reasons for the Marginal Incorporation of the Comanches by the Spanish," 376.

Comanche raids and harassment of their Lipan enemies drew a Spanish military response in 1758 when the Comanche and their allies attacked and decimated the mission *Santa Cruz de San Sabá* in central Texas.[111] The Spanish had built the mission and presidio the previous year to evangelize the Lipan, much as Spanish missionaries had done in New Mexico.[112] To bolster Spanish authority over the indigenous peoples, Col. Diego Ortiz Parrilla led a Spanish retaliation party North to a *Taovaya* (one of the sedentary Wichita tribes and French ally) village on the banks of the Red River where the Comanches and their allies were camped .[113] A battle ensued that concluded with a Spanish retreat to San Sabá.[114] Over the next decade, Comanche raids continued throughout East Texas and ultimately restricted Spanish settlement in North and West Texas.[115]

However, by 1768 the marqués de Rubí reported that Comanche attacks had forced the Apache to relocate along the Rio Grande and were conducting hostile and devastating raids into northern New Mexico.[116] Following Carlos III's 1772 royal decree and reconfiguration of the Interior Provinces in 1776, the Spanish sought an alliance with the Comanche against their shared rival, the Lipan Apaches.[117] Two events led the Comanche to consider peace with the Spanish. First, Between 1780 and 1781, a Smallpox pandemic spread across *Comanchería* (the territory controlled by the Comanche) and decimated Comanche band numbers.[118] Second, following, a devastating Comanche defeat in southeastern Colorado and the death of the much-

[111] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 142.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid., 142-143.
[114] Ibid., 143.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 156-157.
[117] Ibid., 167-168; Rivaya-Martínez, "La expansión comanche en la frontera norte de Nueva España durante el siglo XVIII," 356-357.
[118] Ibid., 356.

respected Comanche leader *Cuerno Verde* (Green Horn) at the hands of Spanish forces out of New Mexico, the western Comanche bands agreed to a formal peace treaty, in 1786.[119] Likewise, the eastern Comanche bands in Texas signed a peace agreement with the Spanish.[120] The N~~u~~mu~~-~~ Spanish peace treaties materialized not only because of Spanish military pressures, but because the Spanish had shifted their peace policy towards indigenous groups in the region to include material gifts such as firearms, ammunition, food items, blades, and other miscellaneous items.[121] As a result, the Spanish allowed New Mexican traders to venture into Comanchería and actively engage in commerce with the Comanche.[122] However, the Mexican War for Independence (1810-1821) stalled peace negotiations, as material gifts and Spanish military support began to dwindle.[123] Relations between Comanches and Spaniards were thus complicated by a variety of competing economic and political factors.

III Comanche Culture Post-Spanish Contact

Despite some syncretism, the Comanches retained much of their pre-Spanish contact culture. Though they never accepted Spanish culture proper, the Comanche were influenced by it.[124] The Comanche certainly adopted and adapted elements of Spanish culture that were beneficial to their nomadic lifestyle. The Spanish horse and the Spanish captive are certainly the most noted elements of Spanish culture that entered Comanchería. However, the influx of

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[119] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 171; Rivaya-Martínez, "La expansión comanche en la frontera norte de Nueva España durante el siglo XVIII," 356, 359.
[120] Juliana Barr, examines the N~~u~~mu~~-~~Spanish peace relations from a gender perspective and notes that women held an active role in the peace accords in, "Womanly 'Captivation': Political Economies of Hostage Taking and Hospitality," in Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009; ProQuest Ebook Central), 240-276, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy181.nclive.org/lib/uncp-ebooks/reader.action?docID=880038 (accessed May 5, 2020).
[121] Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, 172.
[122] Levine, "Economic Perspectives on the Comanchero Trade," 158.
[123] Levine, "Economic Perspectives on the Comanchero Trade," 175.
[124] Stanley Noyes and Daniel J. Gelo, *Comanches in the New West: 1895-1908* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 43.

Spanish goods and culture and its incorporation into Comanche historical culture is far more nuanced than what historians have repeatedly shown. Through examining Comanche oral histories and traditional source materials, this section offers new insights into how Spanish culture created shifts in Comanche ethnohistory.

The Comanche Lance

One element of pre-reservation Comanche culture that survived the days of forced captivity on the reservation was the Comanche warrior ethic. Since the First World War, Comanches have served in every United States military conflict.[125] In contemporary military history, the Comanche are most noted for their service during the Second World War as "code-talkers" who used the unwritten Comanche language as an unbreakable code to transmit crucial messages for the U.S. military.[126] The Comanches' intense militaristic ethos allowed them to dominate the southern Plains for three centuries until the last free band of Comanches, the Kwahar~~ɯ~~n~~ɯɯ~~ (quah-hah-duh-nuh), were finally forced onto the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation in June of 1874.[127]

Scholars have adequately researched and documented Comanche military history and N~~ɯ~~m~~ɯ~~-Spanish military relations, but have continued to rely on the same published primary and secondary information to examine the militaristic components of Comanche history. By essentially excluding Comanche oral history and the information that knowledgeable living Comanches retain, historians fail to accurately depict Comanche military history. One claim that historians, such as Hämäläinen, continue to emphasize is that French firearms revolutionized

[125] The Comanche Indian Veterans Association maintains military records on Comanche servicemembers.
[126] For a detailed examination on the Comanche Code Talkers, see William C. Meadows, *The Comanche Code Talkers of World War II (Austin:* University of Texas Press, 2003).
[127] Ibid., 253.

Comanche warfare and that newly acquired firearms became the Comanches relied on weapon of choice.[128] However, Comanche oral history reveals a different and more nuanced story.

Undoubtably, the introduction of European firearms onto the plains significantly elevated the regional status of the Comanche over other indigenous groups. As noted in almost every secondary source on the subject, Comanches used firearms, acquired primarily from the French owing to Spanish prohibitions on the sale or trade of firearms to the Comanches, as a lucrative trade item with other indigenous groups.[129] However, though Comanches did use firearms, they generally found them ineffective and unreliable weapons ill-suited to for Comanche military tactics and hunting.[130] Instead, according to Comanche tribal elder and historian, William Voelker, they relied on the simple but effective *nʉmʉ tʉtsiwai* (nuh-muh tuh-tsee-why), the Comanche lance, in battle.[131] Though several historians reference the lance as being among the Comanches' weapons arsenal, there has never been a thorough examination of the lance and its importance in Comanche culture, warfare, and history.[132]

According to Voelker, the lance is unique in that the iconic *nʉmʉ eka sia* (nuh-muh ehkah see-ah), or red-dyed Golden Eagle undertail plumes, makes the Comanche lance distinguishable from other the lances of Plains tribes.[133] Voelker notes that the Comanche lances range in height from six to more than fourteen feet, and prior to the Reservation era were unadorned except for

[128] For example, Meadows, *Kiowa, Apache, And Comanche Military Societies*; Carol A. Lipscomb, "Burying the war hatchet: Spanish-Comanche relations in colonial Texas, 1743–1821" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Texas, 2002); Rivaya-Martínez, "La expansión comanche en la frontera norte de Nueva España durante el siglo XVIII"; Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*, 15, 26, 39.
[129] Works, "Creating Trading Places on the New Mexican Frontier," 273.
[130] Rollings, *The Comanche*. *Indians of North America*, 37.
[131] William Voelker, interview by author. See Figure 1 George Catlin "Comanche Warrior Lancing an Osage, at Full Speed, 46; Figure 2 Quanah Parker and W.C. Riggs, Fat Stock Show, Fort Worth, Texas, 47.
[132] Thomas, "An Eighteenth Century Comanche Document," 37.
[133] Voelker, interview with author. Note, in this section I use the present tense to refer to the Comanche and the Comanche lance as the lance is still a relevant and used item of contemporary Comanche culture.

spiritual and cultural accoutrements.[134] In practice, a Comanche warrior regards his personal lance(s) as his most prized weapon as it symbolizes the Comanche warrior ethic.[135] For example, rather than retreat, the bravest of Comanche warriors, use their lance to pin themselves to the ground and fight in restrained hand-to-hand combat with their foes until another Comanche warrior removes the lance from the ground.[136] According to Voelker, traditionally, the Comanche lance blade was produced from metal blades acquired from the Spanish and could be up to thirty-six inches long.[137] The Comanche were able to adequately defend themselves on horseback easier with the lance than with a firearm.[138] Upon the death of a Comanche warrior, prayer was invoked and the warrior's lance blade was removed and recycled.[139]

Several scholars corroborate Voelker's oral history account. According to the late Stanley Noyes and cultural anthropologist Daniel Gelo, the Comanche acquired Spanish swords and refashioned them into new lance blades.[140] Sidney Brinckerhoff and Odie Faulk, experts on the Spanish presidial system, note that the Spanish lance was the presidial soldier's primary weapon of choice.[141] Likewise, Col. Wilber S. Nye describes a skirmish between Comanche and U.S. troops in December of 1868, in present-day southwestern Oklahoma, where U.S. troops recovered a Comanche lance, "of ancient Spanish manufacture," from the battlefield.[142] Most

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[134] Voelker, interview with author. Frank Chekovi (first generation Comanche), also, notes that the older Comanche lances were bare, with the exception of spiritual medicine accoutrements, in Kavanagh, *Comanche Ethnography*, 267.
[135] Voelker, interview with author.
[136] Voelker, interview with author. Frank Chekovi's account of Comanche warriors pinning themselves to the ground during battle with an arrow, rather than retreat in cowardice, corroborates Voelker's claim, in Kavanagh, *Comanche Ethnography*, 267.
[137] Voelker, interview with author.
[138] Voelker, interview with author.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Noyes and Gelo, *Comanches in the New* West, 43.
[141] Brinckerhoff and Faulk, *Lancers for the King*, vii, 72.
[142] Nye, Wilber S. *Carbine and Lance: The Story of Old Fort Sill* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 78,79, 80.

notably, historian Gerald Betty not only argues that the Comanche sought the Spanish blade for their lances, but in fact acquired the Spanish lance from the early colonial Spanish *ciboleros* (bison hunters) and adopted their hunting methods.[143] Betty also notes that the Comanche became so efficient at Spanish lancer techniques that in 1750, the governor of New Mexico, Fransisco Marin de Valle, forbade the sale of Spanish lances to the Comanche.[144] Nonetheless, as archeologist Peter Mitchell shows, Spanish lance blades and metal sabers continued to be highly traded goods between the Spanish and Comanches until as late as 1840.[145]

The lance, with its historical Spanish components, served as a utility tool that impacted the cultural history of the Comanche, who continue to use the lance during several militaristic dances. Historically, Comanche women honored the war deeds and accomplishments of their male Comanches relatives by dancing with that male relative's lance during the Comanche Scalp and Victory Dances.[146] Comanche oral histories and unpublished cultural knowledge like Voelker's, challenge the claims made by historians that the Comanche viewed French firearms as effective tools of combat. Rather, Comanche perspectives show that it was the Spanish lance and the Spanish metal blade that theComanche preferred and prized.

Spanish Captives

Following the establishment of the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation in 1869, the small local *wiaʔnɯɯ* (wee-ah-nuh) band of Comanche settled near what is now present day

[143] Gerald Betty, *Comanche Society: Before the Reservation* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 88.
[144] Ibid.
[145] "Goods (in trade situations) exchanged with the Comanches, ca. 1740–1840," in, "Going Back to Their Roots: Comanche Trade and Diet Revisited," by Peter Mitchell, *Ethnohistory* 63, no. 2 (April 2016): 240-244, table 1.
[146] Meadows, *Kiowa, Apache, And Comanche Military Societies*, 354-355; *see* Figure 3 Comanche Woman Holding Comanche Lance with Spanish Blade, 48; Figure 4 Comanche Victory Dance, 49; Figure 5 Comanche Scalp Dance, 50; Figure 6 Comanche Men's Dance, 51.

Walters, Oklahoma.[147] Though a small band, their leader, Way-See, was clearly a prominent figure during the Reservation period (c.appox. 1875-1901), as he was among the cosigners of an 1897 document sent to the Secretary of the Interior. The document bearing Way-See's name demonstrates his support and solidarity as a Comanche leader for the reservation's agent, Major F. D. Baldwin, following United States Indian Inspector Province McCormick's 1896 official report detailing his concerns about the Reservation's administration.[148] Though Way-See was a Comanche leader during the Reservation period, he was not Comanche by blood. So how is it that a non-Comanche was able to achieve the position of leader in a local Comanche band? Way-See had been born to Spanish parents around 1818 and taken captive by Comanches as a small boy and assimilated into the tribe at the early age of around eight.[149] In an interview, Way-See's great-great-granddaughter, Mary Sapcut, recounted her family's oral account of his captivity narrative:

> Soh-veh-sah, a long time ago, the story goes that a Comanche raiding party attacked a group of Spaniards and a Comanche man saw two boys and decided that he was going to replace his son who had been killed by Spaniards. The Comanche man took the two boys, who were brothers, and rode off with them. The two boys were dressed in very nice clothes and must have been from a prominent family. However, along the way they got too heavy for the Comanche man's horse, and he decided to toss one of the brothers off to lighten the load. The other brother was taken in by the Comanche man's family as a

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[147] Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee, *TAA N~~U~~M~~U~~ TEKWAP~~U~~?HA T~~U~~BOOP~~U~~*189; Kavanagh, *Comanche Ethnography*, *291*, 383.

[148] Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, *Investigation of Affairs at* the *Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache Indian Reservation: Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, Transmitting, in Response to Senate Resolution of April 5, 1897, Letters and Reports Pertaining to the Investigation of Affairs at the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache Reservation*, 55th Cong., 1st sess., 1897, Committee Print 34, 2, 397. A note of importance pertaining to the spelling of Way-See. Prior to 1993, the Comanche did not have an official written language and relied on individualized phonetic spelling systems unique to the Comanche speaker or listener. Likewise, the spelling of Comanche names on Reservation documents often changed depending on how the Reservation official heard and wrote the name down. Therefore, Way-See appears spelled in a variety of ways (e.g. Wissichi, Wis-sis-chi, Waysee, Way-See, Wesi, Weesi. I adhere to the spelling provided by, Mary Sapcut, a Comanche elder and Way-See descendent.

[149] Delores T. Summer, *Descendants of Wis-sis-chi* (self-pub; FamilySearch International), 20-21, https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/57238-redirection (accessed March 26, 2020).

> replacement and given the name Way-See, which means curly [head of hair], and as it turns out, he is our great-great-grandfather.[150]

Though indigenous oral narratives can prove problematic because of the nuances that the narratives take on with each generation's retelling, various captivity narratives given by first and second generation Comanches in 1933 to a team of anthropologists from the Santa Fe Laboratory of Anthropology corroborate the plausibility of elements found in Sapcut's telling of Way-See's initial captivity.[151] For example, their field notes reveal that Comanche informants, Niyah and Tahsuda, noted that families who had lost a child would "adopt" captive children as a replacement for their loss and, when concerning male children, typically only adopted younger boys.[152] It should be no surprise that Comanche informants Herman Asenap, Niyah, and Howard Whitewolf explained that adopted boys held the same status as boys born to Comanche parents and had the same opportunities as biological Comanche boys to achieve prominence through participating in military engagements (e.g. raiding and warfare).[153] Likewise, Comanche informant Herkeyah recounted that a certain captive boy had been placed on a horse and tied to a saddle and was eventually being trampled to death in order to get rid of the child. Similarly, Comanche informant Rhoda Asenap (wife of Herman Asenap) told how her father gave a captive Mexican boy away because he could not easily learn to speak the Comanche language. These accounts corroborate Sapcut's narrative by demonstrating the the decisive and cold stance taken towards captive boys, like Way-See's biological brother, who had not been adopted into

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[150] Sapcut was adamant that it had been handed down that the boys were Spanish and not Mexican captives in an interview by author; Sapcut's account of Way-See's captivity is corroborated by a similar telling of the story by her great uncle Tau-yah (Antonio Martinez) in Summer, *Descendants of Wis-sis-chi,* 21.

[151] Here, "first generation Comanches" refers to the generation of Comanches who were forced to abandon the days of freedom and settle on the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation and "second generation Comanches" refers to the first generation of Comanches born on the reservation who did not personally appearance Comanche culture prior to forced captivity on the reservation.

[152] Kavanagh, ed., *Comanche Ethnography,* 67, 410.

[153] Ibid., 33, 279-280, 327.

Comanche families.[154] Undocumented oral captivity narratives like Way-See's are common among Comanche families and were often recorded in the Bureau of Indian Affairs' heirship reports.[155]

Comanche raiding for Spanish captives became essential to Comanche society and trade following their migration onto the Plains and is well noted among scholars of Comanche history. As noted in the previous section, the poorly protected and widely dispersed Spanish settlements of Texas and Northern Mexico proved easy targets for Comanche raids. As Weber demonstrates, incorporating Spanish captives into the Comanche social structure, allowed the Comanche population to increase from 8,000 in 1750 to approximately 20,000 by 1780.[156] Though many Spanish captives like Way-See were ceremoniously adopted into Comanche families, and by extension the tribe as a whole, many were not and were instead used for camp labor (e.g. hide tanning, domestic chores, etc.), a trade resource (primarily between the Spanish and other indigenous groups at Taos trade fair), or ransomed back to the Spanish.[157] Scholars have produced in-depth works detailing Comanche "captive taking" practices, and articulated and theorized the importance of the lucrative practice in relationship to Comanche economics, the incorporation of captives into Comanche society, and the use of captives as a source of labor.[158]

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[154] Ibid., 79, 463.
[155] The Bureau of Indian Affairs' heirship reports were official testimonies gathered between 1908 and 1923 which sought to record lineage and determine heirship to property of deceased original reservation land allotment allottees and garner a wealth of intimate knowledge about individuals which is either corroborated or refuted by the various testimonies given by Comanche individuals in the reports.
[156] Weber *Bárbaros,* 72.
[157] Works, "Creating Trading Places on the New Mexican Frontier," 269, 274; Joaquín Rivaya-Martínez, "Becoming Comanches: Patterns of Captive Incorporation into Comanche Kinship Networks, 1820-1875," in *On the Borders of Love and Power: Families and Kinship in the Intercultural American West,* ed. David Wallace Adams and Crista DeLuzio (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 48; James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 2002), 179-180.
[158] Works, "Creating Trading Places on the New Mexican Frontier"; Rivaya-Martínez, "Becoming Comanches"; Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*; Barr, "Geographies of Power," Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*.

However, only Rivaya-Martínez, has sought out contemporary Comanches who retain knowledge of undocumented captivity narratives.[159]

Comanche oral family stories, like the one told by Sapcut, corroborate the established Comanche Spanish-captive historical narrative. However, by incorporating Comanche oral captivity narratives into the historical source cannon, much more is gained than mere source-narrative corroboration. Though we know that captives were incorporated into Comanche society, these oral histories shed new light on what this meant in practice. As this essay shows, Comanche oral captivity narratives provide cultural and historical insight into the lives and experiences of Comanche captives, and thereby provide a nuanced personalized element to Comanche history that Euro-American sources outside of Comanche culture cannot provide. However, Spanish and Mexican captivity narratives represent only a small portion of examples found in Comanche oral history and living culture of cultural interactions that occurred between the Comanche and the Spanish during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Language

Historians of Comanche history predominately focus on the economic and militaristic components of Comanche history from an Euro-American perspective. However, the evolution of the Comanche language is of no less historical importance. The Comanche language, or *nʉmʉ tekwapʉ* (nuh-muh tehk-wahp), is among several Numic subgroups of the Uto-Aztecan language family.[160] The Comanches share significant linguistic similarities with the Eastern Shoshone of Wyoming, from whom scholars believe the Comanches originated from.[161] Nonetheless, by the

[159] Rivaya-Martínez, "Becoming Comanches."
[160] Newton, "Towards a Context for Late Precontact Culture Change," 55.
[161] Ibid., 55.

time that the Comanche migrated onto the southern Plains, they had developed their unique Central Numic dialect. Though scholars have studied the Comanche language, historians have yet to tap into the rich historical source base found within the Comanche language. As the late philological ethnohistorian James Lockhart argues:

> "In indigenous-language work one sees the indigenous patterns and concepts on the inside and can deduce many things about the nature and effect of the Spanish presence; in Spanish-language work one sees indigenous people only in the Spanish context..."[162]

Though Lockhart and his students worked, and continue to work, with Mesoamerican language sources (i.e. Nahuatl texts), Lockhart contends, the historians can apply the New Philology methodological approach to studying any indigenous language that has its own contemporary written language sources.[163] Since the nineteenth century, both professional and amateur linguists have produced several Comanche dictionaries and language sources (using either phonetic or crude alphabet systems), yet the Comanche people did not adopt an official written spelling system, and subsequent dictionary, until 1993.[164] Examining the historic linguistic knowledge of thirty-four fluent Comanche speakers, compiled into the Comanche Nation's official dictionary, and cross-referencing Comanche vocabulary with the equivalent

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[162] James Lockhart, introduction to *Sources and Methods for the Study of Postconquest Mesoamerican Ethnohistory: Provisional Version*, Ed. James Lockhart, Lisa Sousa, and Stephanie Gail Wood (Los Angeles: University of California, 2007), 19. Lockhart and his students of New Philology worked, and continue to work, with Nahuatl language sources. Like Comanche, Nahuatl is a part of the Uto-Aztecan language family.

[163] James Lockhart, introduction to *Sources and Methods for the Study of Postconquest Mesoamerican* Ethnohistory, 18.

[164] Examples of early Comanche dictionaries can be found in, Daniel J. Gelo and Christopher J. Wickham, *Comanches and Germans on the Texas Frontier: The Ethnology of Heinrich Berghaus* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2018); Manuel García Rejón, comp. *Comanche Vocabulary: Trilingual Edition*. Ed. and Trans. Daniel J. Gelo (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1995); Elliott Canonge, *Comanche Texts* (Norman: Summer Institute of Linguistics of the University of Oklahoma, 1958); and various unpublished private Comanche and early missionary works. It should also be noted that though the Comanche have an official spelling system, not all tribal members agree with, or use, the spelling system.

Spanish terminology, reveals the extent of which the Comanche acculturated Spanish ideas, material goods, and linguistic signifiers.[165]

It should come as no great surprise that as 82 per cent of Comanche captives were Hispanic, that the Spanish language greatly influenced the evolution of the Comanche language.[166] According to Lockhart's New Philology thesis, in "phase two," indigenous languages borrow terms for items and concepts which they are unfamiliar with.[167] As Table 1 (p. 43.) shows, the Comanche not only adopted Spanish animals and material and dietary items, but also the Spanish term for those items as well. No doubt the considerable number of Spanish captives living amongst the Comanche introduced many of the Spanish terms into everyday use amongst their Comanche captors. The amount of Spanish loan words in present in the Comanche vocabulary shows that the Spanish, their material culture, and their language impacted not only Comanche culture but prompted the evolution of the Comanche language. Historians agree that the Spanish impacted the Comanche, their lifeways, and their history, but historians have failed to use the Comanche language source to corroborate these claims. As this essay shows, this is a missed opportunity, as examining the linguistic knowledge of Comanche language speakers, in correlation with the Spanish language, provides a nuanced look at which Spanish items Comanches adapted into their everyday life and corroborates the historical claim that the Spanish material culture contributed to the evolution of Comanche ethnohistory.

Conclusion

[165] Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee, *TAA N~~U~~M~~U~~ TEKWAP~~U~~?HA T~~U~~BOOP~~U~~.*
[166] Rivaya-Martínez, "Becoming Comanches," 62.
[167] James Lockhart, introduction to *Sources and Methods for the Study of Postconquest Mesoamerican Ethnohistory* 10.

Essentially, two Comanche historical narratives exist: the internal and the external. The external narrative traditionally has viewed Comanches and their history as contextual participants in a larger European, and later American, narrative. Historians have constructed the external narrative from European sources outside of Comanche culture (i.e. Spanish, French, and American accounts or retellings). However, in recent scholarship, Joaquín Rivaya-Martínez has attempted to examine Comanche interactions on the southern Plains by including Comanche source information into his research rather than relying only on Spanish accounts.[168] Moreover, Pekka Hämäläinen, has attempted to revolutionize how historians view the Comanche as historical actors on the Plains.[169] Contrastingly, the internal Comanche historical narrative resides with the Comanche people themselves. Comanche oral accounts and cultural practices, contain the individual and collective historical memories, passed down from generation-to-generation, that create the internal Comanche historical narrative. Traditionally, the Comanche shared knowledge and their history orally and the Comanche continue to adhere to this innate cultural practice.

When historians engage with Comanche history from a cultural perspective, they tend to rely on the works of scholars in other disciplines. Historians shy away from using Comanche oral history because of the potential problems associated with oral history accounts (e.g. changes in information over time, misunderstandings, undocumented nature of oral accounts, etc.).

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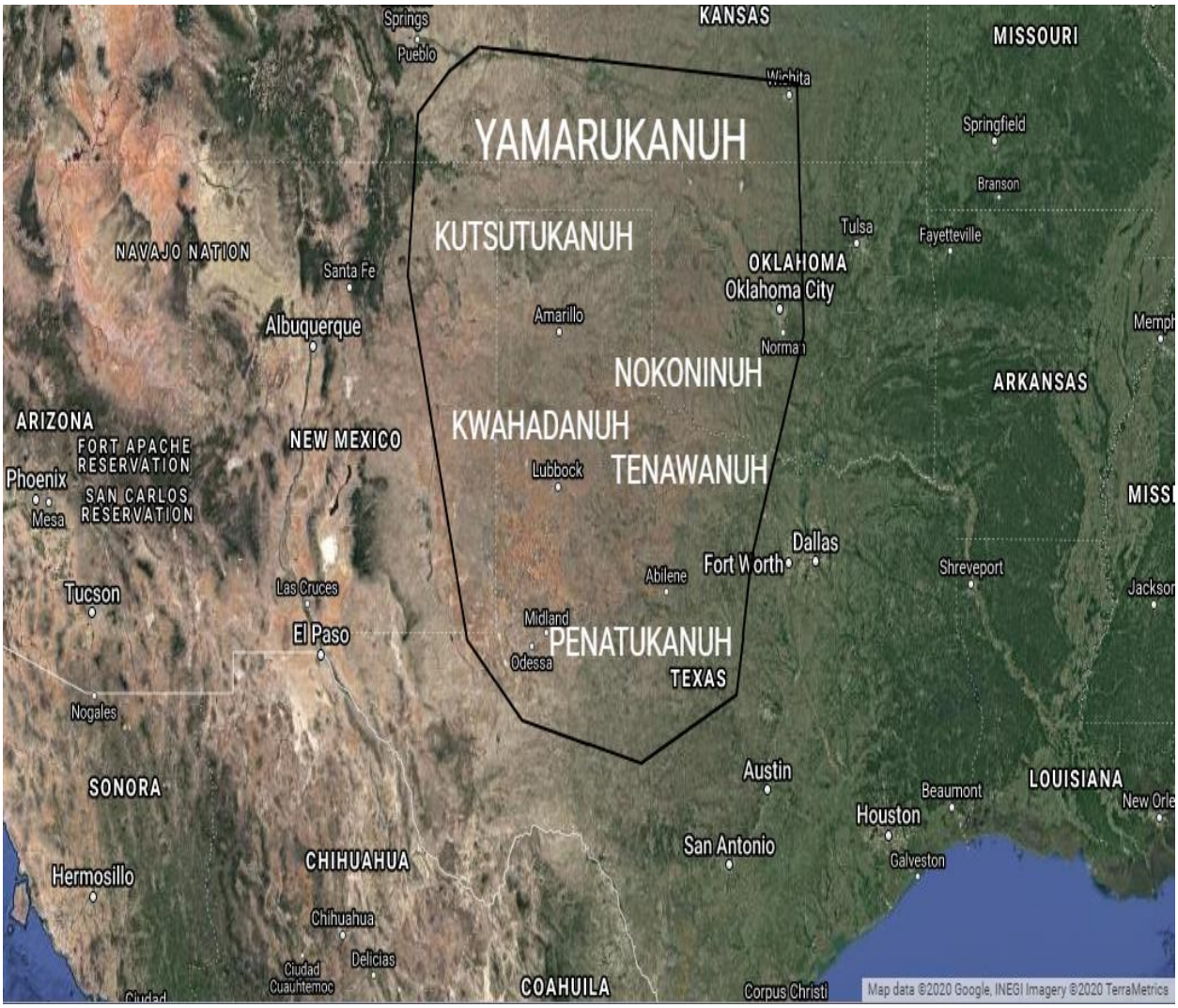
[168] Joaquín Rivaya-Martínez' works include, "Becoming Comanches: Patterns of Captive Incorporation into Comanche Kinship Networks, 1820-1875," in *On the Borders of Love and Power: Families and Kinship in the Intercultural American West*, ed. by David Wallace Adams and Crista DeLuzio, 47-70, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); "De 'salvajes' a 'imperialistas'. Una revisión crítica de la historiografía sobre los comanches durante el período anterior a la reserva (1700-1875)," in *Visiones del pasado. Reflexiones para escribir la historia de los pueblos indígenas de América*, ed. Ana Luisa Izquierdo, 153-192, (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2016); "La expansión comanche en la frontera norte de Nueva España durante el siglo XVIII," in *La frontera en el mundo hispánico: Tierras de convivencia y espacios de confrontación (siglos XV-XVIII)*, ed. Porfirio Sanz Camañes and David Rex Galindo, 339-369, (Quito: Abya Yala, 2014).
[169] Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire.*

However, the Comanche like numerous indigenous communities did not record their histories, accounts, and experiences on tangible documents. To exclude the Comanche perspective from the historical narrative because of this would essentially be "bad history."

In short, historians should engage directly with Comanche oral histories as a historical source base in their research. As this essay demonstrates, previously ignored Comanche oral history sources corroborate and refute our understandings of N~~u~~m~~u~~-Spanish interactions in Spanish Borderland history. Moreover, the inclusion of Comanche oral history and cultural sources provides the Comanche with an active historical voice that humanizes the Comanche as historical actors.

Map 1 Distribution of Comanche Bands in Comanchería



(Image provided by author and created using Maptive, https://www.maptive.com/.)

Table 1 Acculturated Spanish Terminology

Comanche	Phonetic Pronunciation	Spanish	English
Muura	Moo-dah	La mula	Mule
Kab~~uuru~~	Kah-bah-duh	La cabra	Goat
Tohtía	Toh-tee-ah	La tortilla	Flat bread
Paan~~u~~	Paah-n	El pan	Baked bread
T~~u~~hano	Tuh-hah-noh	El tejano	Texan
Pooro	Poh-doh	El cerdo	Pig
Pihúura	Pee-hoo-dah	La judía	Bean
Kape	Kah-pay	La cama	Bed
Saabara	Saah-bah-dah	Sábana	Bedsheet
Nabaaka	Nah-bah-kah	La bala	Bullet
Waʔoo	Wah-oh	El gato	Cat
Paapas~~u~~	Pah-pahs	Las papas	Potatoes
Tsiira	Tsee-dah	Chili	Chile

(Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee, comp. *TAA N~~U~~MU TEKWAP~~U~~?HA T~~U~~BOOP~~U~~: Our Comanche Dictionary Revised 2010*. Elgin: Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation Committee, 2010.)

Figure 1 George Catlin “Comanche Warrior Lancing an Osage, at Full Speed

(Catlin, George. “Comanche Warrior Lancing an Osage, at Full Speed,” between 1837 and 1839. Oil on canvas, 19.6 by 27.5 in. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. Accessed May 7, 2020. https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/comanche-warrior-lancing-osage-full-speed-4015)

Figure 2 Quanah Parker and W.C. Riggs, Fat Stock Show, Fort Worth, Texas

"Quanah Parker and W. C. Riggs, Fat Stock Show, Fort Worth, Texas," 1909. Photographic print (postcard): gelatin silver. DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University. Accessed May 7, 2020. https://www.flickr.com/photos/smu_cul_digitalcollections/58156

Figure 3 Comanche Woman Holding Comanche Lance with Spanish Blade

(Image provided by author. From author's personal collection.)

Figure 4 Comanche Victory Dance

(Image provided by author. From author's personal collection.)

Figure 5 Comanche Scalp Dance

(Image provided by author. From author's personal collection.)

Figure 6 Comanche Men's Dance

(Image provided by author. From author's personal collection.)

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