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Review of *From Dominance to Disappearance: The Indians of Texas and the Near Southwest, 1786-1859* By F. Todd Smith

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From Dominance to Disappearance: The Indians of Texas and the Near Southwest, 1786-1859. By F. Todd Smith. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005. xv + 314 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$59.95.

F. Todd Smith's work provides the first detailed history of the Indians of Texas and the Near Southwest, an area encompassing parts of present day Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma over a seventy-four year period.

Foremost, it highlights the competing efforts of the Spanish, French, American, and later Texan governments to control and maintain boundaries in the region, much of which depended on the ability of colonial powers to provide trade goods to tribes, and to supply assistance in the form of protection against then-existing enemy tribes. The Spanish inability consistently to provide trade goods and the growing intercession of illegal colonial traders in one another's "territories" created a pattern of shifting trade and conflict that further contributed to the political instability and frequent demographic shifts of local populations.

From Dominance to Disappearance specifically highlights several European influences, including the appointment of tribal leaders by

colonial governors; the importance of giving trade goods as gifts to establish and maintain alliance, friendship, and military support from tribes against other tribes and colonial powers; the use of trade as incentives to raid from competing Indian and Anglo groups; and the ways colonial powers contested boundaries and the rights to trade in specific areas.

Maintaining numerical superiority over Euro-Americans through the first half of this period allowed Native populations to influence directly the economic, military, and political affairs of the region. The period after Mexican independence from Spain (1820-1835) and Texan independence from Mexico (1836-1845), however, resulted in the brutal and rapid decline of Native peoples. As their power and population quickly decreased, so did their ability to resist increased settlement and hostilities. Within twenty-five years of gaining independence from Mexico, Texas had removed all Indians except the Alabama-Coushatta from its borders.

Smith addresses the numerous influences that led to Native population declines in this region, such as disease, waning subsistence bases, increased dependence on Anglo food sources, alcohol, warfare, forced indebtedness, a struggling mission experience, encroaching Anglo settlement, pressure to sell their lands, and repeated relocations. He demonstrates how varied Anglo powers strategically courted and supplied tribes when it benefited their interests, then ignored and neglected them when their support was no longer needed. He also provides examples of the greed of many traders, Indian agents, the U.S. government, the Texas Militia, and settlers, as well as how Texas presidents held alternating war and peace policies, and how the U.S. aided Indian raids into Mexico.

Smith's work focuses on a poorly known chapter of Native American and Texas history. Its political complexity reminds us of the numerous autonomous cultures that are now lumped and taken for granted under such names as Comanche, Wichita, and Caddo.

Although the work makes little mention of the Kiowa, Plains Apache, Cheyenne, and

other Plains groups active in much of the western half of Texas throughout this period, it provides a stimulating and detailed history of the Anglo-Indian political and military interactions in this time and region.

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