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Review of *Caddo Indians: Where We Come From* By Cecile Elkins Carter

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Caddo Indians: Where We Come From. By Cecile Elkins Carter. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995. Black and white photographs, notes, bibliography, index. xii + 420 pp. \$38.95.

Unlike the Native American tribes of the northern Plains—especially the Teton Sioux—the Indians of the southern Plains have been relatively neglected by historians. This is partially the result of these tribes' long, extensive dealings with the Spanish and French before interacting with representatives of the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. The nomadic buffalo hunting Comanches and Kiowas have had their share of chroniclers, due in part to the dramatic wars they fought in response to their being forced onto reservations following the Civil War. Only recently, however, has a historian, Stanley Noyes, written exclusively about the Comanches before 1845. Southern Plains sedentary agricultural tribes, such as the Wichitas, who never seriously opposed the power of the United States,

have yet to garner a book-length historical study.

Until 1995, the same could have been said of the Caddo Indians, an amalgamation of three separate confederacies who lived on the edge of the southern Plains on the Louisiana-Texas frontier. Like the Wichitas (as well as the northern Plains Arikaras and Pawnees) the Caddos were Caddoan-speakers who had developed a highly complex culture based upon bounteous agricultural production. My own book on the Caddos—also published in 1995, which mainly traces the diplomatic history of all three confederacies till 1854—has now been complemented by the appearance of Cecile Carter's book on the Caddos.

Carter, a Caddo Indian who is the tribe's official Cultural Representative, has combined most of the published documentary and archaeological sources with interviews of modern tribal members to produce a full-bodied account of the Caddos from prehistoric times to their forced removal to Oklahoma in 1859. Although the book is organized chronologically, the author often pauses to allow the voices of twentieth-century Caddos to be heard. For example, in a touching passage, Carter juxtaposes an early Spanish missionary's account of a Caddo ritual in which the participants danced around a pole with an elderly tribal member's visit to the Oklahoma State Historical Society Museum where a similar pole has been kept in storage for the past fifty years. By continuing this pattern throughout the book, and by writing in a highly descriptive and enjoyable style, the author has successfully told the history of the Caddo tribe while at the same time bringing that history to life. She has ably reminded us that Native Americans, too easily perceived as ancient relics of the past, continue to live vital lives.

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