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**Review of *The Caddos, the Wichitas, and the United States, 1846-1901* By F. Todd Smith**

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*The Caddos, the Wichitas, and the United States, 1846-1901.* By F. Todd Smith. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996. Maps, photographs, tables, notes, bibliography, index. xvii + 190 pp. \$29.95.

An introductory assertion that neither the Caddo nor the Wichita had to endure a particularly traumatic relocation experience will startle any reader who has an inkling of the history of those tribes. Ultimately, it must perplex anyone who perseveres through the ensuing chronicle of repeated dispossession and decimation under the aegis of the governments of Texas and the United States. The first chapter presents further dubious analysis, sometimes irrelevant to the sources cited, in a quixotic attempt to trace both tribes from the 1540s to 1846 in sixteen pages.

Happily, the author hits his stride in chapter two, thenceforth relying largely on documentary sources to construct a useful chronology of complex events that have been too long untold in readily accessible studies. While the declared focus is Caddo and Wichita relations with the United States government, Smith pays proper attention to their 1859 ouster from their small Texas Reserve by

murderous Anglo Texan gangs against whom the United States could not and the government of Texas would not protect them. Also well explained is their succeeding exodus to Kansas to escape the turmoil of the Civil War, only to suffer an even worse ordeal of disease and starvation.

Subsequently striving to rebuild their lives on their newly assigned Washita River reservation just west of the 98th meridian, in so-called Indian Territory, the Caddo and Wichita endured endless malfeasance, misfeasance, and nonfeasance by US authorities at whose mercy, necessarily, they existed. Here, and in the Texas episode, readers can see roots of two of the most intricate, and ultimately shocking, chapters in the history of Indian travail under the US legal system.

The story of their valiant efforts to support themselves by farming a reservation too arid for their traditional agriculture and their progressive efforts—often frustrated—to adopt such economic alternatives as raising livestock and hauling freight is well told. Readers should be wary, however, of the simplistic, one-sided treatment of difficulties with such neighboring peoples as the Comanche, Kiowa, Cheyenne, and Arapaho.

Chapter six, "Life on the Wichita Reservation, 1879-1901," provides illuminating socioeconomic data. Smith emphasizes Caddo and Wichita attitudes toward the education of their children and toward religion (competing Christian missionaries, the Ghost Dance, and peyotism), noting the integration of tradition with new ways.

In sum, this is a useful contribution which should encourage further inquiry and fuller development of historical context.

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