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Review of *The Wichita Indians: Traders of Texas and the Southern Plains, 1540-1845* By F. Todd Smith

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at an objective point of view providing a base of diplomatic and military historical interpretation for future work by "other scholars to build upon and produce more detailed studies. . . ." These will include Anglo-American historians and Wichita scholars and leaders such as Gary McAdams and Vanessa Vance Robles, as well as Waco scholar Virgil Swift.

Language and names are critical to understanding the complex events in the Southern Plains from 1540 through 1845. The name Wichita, for example, is a difficult one to sustain over time. The Wichita proper call themselves the Kitikiti'sh. Their mythology and traditions are distinct from the Waco, the Tawakoni, and the Keechi, as the tribe presently spells the name, or "Kichai" as designated in the present volume. The author explains some of these relationships and their complexities at various places in his study. Increasing use of Kitikiti'sh or Wichita language and proper names can help further define significant interconnections of peoples, places and things. Exclusive use of English language narrative limits our understanding to Western thought in ways that fail to reflect Wichita cosmology, reasoning, and motivations accurately.

Smith places proper emphasis upon the impact of disease and technology, stressing the significance of the recurring introduction of diseases by Europeans and Americans among the Wichita, who had no immunity against smallpox, influenza, measles, cholera, and numerous other infections. The tremendous loss of life placed civil and social structures under enormous pressure during this extended period of encroachment by foreign populations—Spanish from the south, French from the southeast, Osage from the northeast, as well as Comanche and Kiowa from the north. The acceptance and distribution of new technologies allowed the Wichita to remain in the mainstream of Southern Plains commerce until well into the nineteenth century. Their strong agricultural base of corn, beans, and pumpkins provided for surpluses with which to trade and prosper.

The Wichita Indians: Traders of Texas and the Southern Plains, 1540-1845. By F. Todd Smith. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. xiii + 206 pp. \$32.95.

The perception of order in seeming chaos in *The Wichita Indians* arises from the historical discipline of Todd Smith. Building upon the studies of Elizabeth A. Harper John and the work of several archaeologists, Smith states that his study is not intended to be the final word on the Wichita Nations, but an attempt

Todd Smith has taken scholarship a long way in elucidating the incredible stories of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes on the Southern Plains.

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