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Review of *The Texas Indians* By David La Vere

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The Texas Indians. By David La Vere. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004. xiv + 293 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95.

This volume is an overview of Texas Indian cultures from a historian's perspective. It suffers, in places, from both technical and interpretative errors often made by non-specialists trying to synthesize broad topics in anthropology and archaeology. For example, the author states that some Texas Paleoindians used spear points with "blood gutters," a theory of the fluting on Folsom points that has not been seriously considered in the last sixty years. At the other end of the time scale, the author opines that missionized Texas Indians gave up stone tool use manufacture when they had access to (with "amazement and delight") Spanish metal knives and axes. This view is contrary to numerous published studies of Texas missions in which the data clearly indicate that Native peoples made and used stone tools for the entire eighteenth century. There is also a curious assertion that the putative "Coahuiltecans" of southern Texas "dreamed of dominating the network" of the well-known Plains-Southwest bison-hide trade in the sixteenth century. This insight must have come to the author in a dream; I know of no basis for such a concept. Similar hyperbole is found in discussions of the Tonkawa and their role in "nation building" after migrating into Texas from Oklahoma.

The book should not be viewed as a synthesis of Texas Indian cultures in the manner of W. W. Newcomb's *Indians of Texas* (1961), even granting some of the outdated facets of the latter. La Vere's book is a casual overview often written in a somewhat exaggerated style and focusing more on "who did what to whom," resulting in a narrative of skirmishes, battles, and wars in the historic era. While it will be consulted by historians and other specialists interested in various Texas Indian tribes, I suspect its greatest appeal will be to a general reading public—an important role for this book.

The portions that deal with Indian groups related to the Southern Plains, such as the Wichita, Comanche, Kiowas, Tonkawa, and Lipan Apaches, all have their stories told in better venues than this one. Great Plains scholars might want to read these related sections in La Vere's book, although they do not appear, to me at least, to provide any solid new research or interpretations.

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