

Indian Slavery in Spanish Texas

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RM: ...Carter...Grand Maris...The information concerns Kentuckians moving into the Upper Peninsula. According to Mr. Carter, many Kentuckians saw Michigan over the years as a paradise. A place to obtain jobs. Back in the 19th Century during the lumbering boom, many Kentuckians and Tennesseans came up to Michigan in order to work in the lumber camps in the lower peninsula. Later on in the 20th Century, there was another migration. We could say it's 2 parts. First the migration to the Detroit area prior to WWI and during WWI to work in the automobile factories. The second migration was one to the Upper Peninsula during the era of WWI and the 1920s. The Kentuckians moved primarily to Luce and Alger Counties. They were located north of the Newberry area where there was a large concentration of them. They were also located in Alger County in a place called Kentucky, Nelstrand, and other locations. These people tended to work in the woods. Some of them were hired by the American Charcoal Factory in Newberry and many of them were involved in a rather interesting industry, fern gathering for floral shops in the large cities. The Kentuckians remained very independent. Remained in extreme poverty, many of them living in shacks with canvas covering windows, no floors, children without shoes, and very little clothing during the winter time. They were a constant problem for the DNR as they poached throughout the area. Many of these Kentuckians continue to live in the Upper Peninsula in the two counties mentioned earlier.

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In effect, this document, through the requirement, justified wars against non-Christian Indians and any Indians who had taken up arms against the Spanish. When this doctrine was applied to the Texas situation, it would justify most military campaigns made against the Indians. Armed with this document justifying their slaving operations, the Spaniards moved northward from the valley of Mexico seeking wealth and additions to their labor force. As early as 1536, Cabeza de Vaca, returning from his odyssey, noted as he approached Kuda Kan in western Mexico, that quote, “we hastened through a vast territory, which we found vacant. The inhabitants having fled to the mountains in fear of Christians” End quote. As the years past, the Spaniards moved northward and by the late 16th Century they were operating in the vicinity of La Jonta. The confluence of the Rio Conchos and the Rio Grande. The town of Santa Barbara, to the south, acted as a ??? of this slave trade, which sent raiders into west Texas. In 1581, Gaspar de Lujan, commissioned by Juan de la Fada of En Day, led a raid and seized Humano Indians at La Jonta. As a result of this, in similar raids, the Indians feared the Spaniards for years. However, except for undocumented raids into Texas, Spanish attention in the closing years of the 16th Century was drawn to settling New Mexico. From the budding Spanish settlements in the upper Rio Grande valley, raiders moved eastward into west Texas and raided the Plains Apache for slaves. These Indians were non-Christian and were hostile toward the Spanish. These early encounters made the Apache mortal enemies of the Spanish. Once El Paso was founded, after 1659, the Apache moved against the settlement. In retaliation, the Spanish raided their rancherias and seized captives. The Apache and other Indians were enslaved and either kept at El Paso, or sent into the interior of Mexico. Slaving in Spanish Texas did not become fully organized until after

settlement took place in the 18th Century. It was also at this time that the Apache and Comanche began their movements into Texas, which helped to intensify slaving on both sides. The Plains, or eastern Apache, who are difficult to clearly identify as a people, began to move southward into Texas in the early 18th Century. They were forced southward by the intruding Comanche, who entered the Plains around 1700. In a great battle fought in the Wichita river country in 1723, the Comanche broke the Apache and the movement was continued in earnest. As the Apache migrated into Texas, they came into direct conflict with the Spanish, settled in San Antonio and other settlements, and with the Indians native to the region. The Comanche, who were also a major force in the Texas story, followed the Apache. And by 1743, they were within the environs of San Antonio. Herbert E. Bolton probably best summed up the Indian situation in the 18th Century when he stated, "perhaps the most significant feature of the entire Indian situation was the applicable hatred for the Apache felt by the nations of the north. On this hostility turned much of the history of Texas for several century." The Comanche allied themselves with the other Indians of Texas and the combined alliance fought the Apache, and at times, the Spanish. The first known hostile encounter between the Apache and the Spanish took place around 1720 north of San Antonio. Relations between the two fluctuated between periods of war and peace. Near the mid century, the Spanish made the mistake of allying themselves with the Apache, and even established missions for them, only to win the enmity of the Comanche nortenos, or nations of the north, and other tribes. The result of this was that raids were frequent and captives filled the camps and settlements of Texas. Further enflaming the situation was the French trader who was interested in commercial profits. The French had originally hoped to

establish trade relations with the Spanish of New Mexico but were forced by the restrictive Spanish commercial policy to trade with the Indians. Operating out of Nacatish, Louisiana, the French traded with the Indians in east and north Texas. The twin Tiavias villages straddling the Red River on the Texas/ Okalahoma boarder, just north of present day Dallas, became their principle trading center on the Plains. After a French inspired peace between the Tiavias and the Comanche in 1746, trade with the Indians flourished. The French provided the Indians with arms and ammunition in addition to manufactured goods and also took Indian captives. These captives were obtained in the raids and wars, which were aided by the French guns. The Tiavias villages became the major slaving center on the eastern plains. The other major slave trading center was in New Mexico where the settlements of Taos, Picorice and Pecos saw the trade formalized by the Spanish. It was at the summer trade fairs that Indians were able to trade captives and obtain lost friends and relatives. The slaves brought to these fairs were considered the richest treasures of the government officials and civilians. These fairs were so popular that Indians from Texas traveled to them in order to trade away their captives. A captive could be anyone unfortunate enough to be caught in a raid. Spaniards from Texas and New Mexico were found among the Indians of Texas. As the Apache and Comanche raided far into Mexico, captives from this direction were brought northward. Indians from every tribe were liable to be enslaved. Age made no difference. The church records from the San Antonio area showed that Indian babes a few days old were seized by the Spanish as well as octogenarians. Usually adult males died while defending themselves and captives tended to be children and women. The price for individual captives depended on the sex and age, with females commanding higher prices than males. In

1763 when the Spanish sought the return of a Christian Apache woman, Esa Bell, the French paid the price of 200 pesos on her. I might point out that one peso was equal to our present dollar. A young female Indian between 12 and 20 years of age could be traded for either 2 good horses and some trifles such as a short cloak, a horse cloth, and a red lapel, or a mule with a scarlet cover. Male slaves were worth half as much and might bring a mule or good horse in exchange. Governor Portillo of New Mexico proposed in December 1760 that 3 Spanish women and 4 boys be exchanged at the rate of one horse each. In 1786 a 100 peso bounty was offered for captives. In an interesting twist of events, Chief Quintesen proposed to release 5 Spanish captives in exchanged for a blacksmith who would be sent to the Tiavias village. The Royal regulations of 1772 for the interior provinces set the exchange rate for Spanish soldiers at one for one. "But if this is not possible and it is necessary to give more, it will be 2 or 3 Indians for each Spaniard." This ratio did not extend to Indian auxiliaries or scouts who continued to be exchanged on a one for one basis. Although the fairs and trading centers were the chief ransoming spots, they were not the only means available. Ransoming of captives was carried out on an individual basis on the trail by families who sought lost relatives, at provincial capitals on a sporadic basis, and by means of peace treaties. There are numerous accounts of Spaniards rescuing captives they discovered among the Indians. In 1779-1780, Captain Antonio gil Ivaro rescued a Spanish woman and her son. They had been seized by the Comanche in New Mexico and were found in east Texas. Ivarvo bought them with his own funds and had to be reimbursed by the government. The two former captives lived in east Texas temporarily, where they were happy, but they longed for their former home. In the spring of 1783 Pedro Vial, a Spanish trailblazer paid 60

pesos to rescue Maria Theresa, who had been kidnapped from her home at Hacienda de san Lucas in Coila, a province to the south of Texas. Parents, at times, sought out their lost children. But this had a double danger. Possible capture and the immensity of the territory. A Spanish boy, Gregorio, was herding goats for his father in 1793 when he was seized by a party of Lipan Apache. His parents desperately sought after him at the missions of Coila and Texas and were elated when he was finally discovered. A double misfortune hit the Mindiola family of Coila who lost two daughters to the Lipan. After making a thorough search, the father, Blas, successfully ransomed one daughter, Ignasia, but his older daughter, Maria Liliana, remained among the Lipan for 9 years longer before being ransomed. At the provincial capitals of Losa Dice, at San Antonio, individual ransoming was carried out. Indians wishing to sell or trade their captives knew they could find buyers among the Spanish. In October 1765 three Comanche chiefs, 17 warriors, and three women arrived in San Antonio to trade two captive children. A Comanche woman who had been held captive by the Lipan Apache for 5 years was rescued in a similar fashion. In 1794 a Comanche party arrived at the Presidio of La da Jia and sold a 12 year old Lipan girl. The Comanche also knew they could rely on the Spanish governors to aid them in rescuing lost relatives seized by the Apache or Spanish. In 1772, La Gentile, the wife of Chief Avea, and another woman were captured by the Lipan Apache and sold to a Spaniard in Coila. The Comanche Chief sought the aid of Governor Ripperda of Texas to intervene with the governor of Coila to have the women returned. According to various directives from the viceroys and the commendance general, both Indian and white captives were to be rescued whenever it was possible. According to the royal regulations of 1772, Indian captives were to be retained in Spanish

settlements and treated as prisoners of war than the slaves, so that they could be easily returned to their own people. The general desire to suspend hostilities made it expedient for the governors of Texas to make informal agreements and formal peace treaties with the Indians to end hostilities and return captives on both sides. Apache raids were halted and peace temporarily restored and such agreements were made with these Indians. In one instance in 1737, Cabeos Colorados, one of the principle Lipan chiefs was captured along with a number of his people. The entire group was imprisoned for several months while the Spanish vainly tried to negotiate for an end to the raids. When this did not take place, the Indians were shipped to Mexico never to be heard of again. A treaty with the Tiavias, on October 27, 1771, stated that all Christian captives living in their villages would be free. The Tiavias did not have any in their villages at the time, but promised to try and obtain them from the Comanche. In 1772 viceroy Buchareli approved of the policy of returning Indian captives in an attempt to restore peace on the frontier. A peace treaty between the Texas government and the eastern Comanche in October 1785 included article 3 which stated that the Comanche would "present their captives to your race [the Spanish] for ransoming without offering them to any other nation" in an effort to keep the Comanche fighting the Apache and at peace with the Spaniards. Commandant General Jacobo Jegarti ??? suggested that a small ransom be paid to the Comanche for all Apache children under 14 years of age. The motives behind the suggestion were to encourage the Comanche to continue fighting and to spare the lives of the children so that they could be ransomed and ????. The decade of the 1780s brought about a new turn in the ransoming process. On June 8, 1780, Theodoro Decroy Commandant General of the interior provinces created the redemptive fund. The major objective of this fund was to

restore the funds to the treasury which had been depleted by earlier redemption through voluntary contributions. The fund proved difficult to collect, even in Texas where the need for such a fund was quite obvious. Strict orders were issued for its collection between September and December 1784 and the Texans responded poorly. Of the three major centers of population in the province, San Antonio, La Bajia, and Macadocius, only San Antonio contributed, and then only 15 pesos, 4 ½ reales. The following year the collection improved and the entire province contributed 73 pesos and ½ real. The break down of this was San Antonio-35 pesos, La Bajia-35 pesos, and Macadocius (where the threat of capture was least felt)- only 6 reales. Given the fact that the average cost of a single captive was 100 pesos, this fund was never a success. If an individual was not ransomed, he or she was forced into the life of a captive or slave. In the early years of the 18th Century, many Indians of Texas simply killed their captives after torturing them. However, once it became profitable to trade captives, they were kept and traded or used as slave labor. In general, it can be said that the Indians treated their captives better than the Spanish. The Comanche offer a good view of life of captives and their treatment. Ownership of a captive was based on primary possession. Once this was established, an owner was free to do whatever he desired with a captive. On occasion this could cause problems when one band of Comanche made peace with the Spanish and promised to return captives who were traded to another band who were not involved in the peace arrangements. Once in the Comanche camp, the captives were attached to their owner's tent. The white women did some work and often became the wives of their owners. The Indian captives were forced to do the most difficult labor in the camp and became real slaves among the Comanche. Indian women were never able to free themselves of this

bondage through marriage as was true of white women. Their escape from this life was either through death or ransom. Although rape of captives was tolerated, it was not usually practiced among the Comanche. Adoption into a Comanche family was frequently carried out if the members approved of the captive. Usually this was done to replace a warrior or member lost in a battle or raid. The captor was then considered the father of the captive and the new member was accepted as an integral member of the family. Male children, whether red or white, were raised with great care, and in many cases became the greatest enemy to their former people. The Comanche used their male captives for numerous tasks in the camp and allowed them to accompany a war party or hunting expedition if the occasion arose. Literate Spaniards read and translated intercepted Spanish correspondence. Older captives were kept in the Comanche camp without being watched or bound. However, should one of these captives, regardless of what the age, escape and was recaptured, he or she was killed. The Spanish dealt with Indian captives in either of two ways. One, they were sent to the interior of Mexico to work in the silver mines, or to be attached to a family. Or two, they were kept in a Texas settlement to be Hispanized and assimilated into the community. The silver mines of Mexico needed a large supply of Indian slaves because of the terrible working conditions and the resulting high mortality rate. This demand was filled with Indians from the North. In San Antonio and other Texas settlements, there was also a demand for laborers to augment the efforts of the white population. For instance, in 1736-37, the Canary Islanders of San Antonio sought mission Indians as laborers and immediately ran into conflict with the missionaries. When the demand increased, enemy Indians could be seized in what the Spanish regarded as a just war. Missionaries like Fri Santa Ana of San

Antonio condemned these wars or raids feeling that the officers, soldiers, and civilians who took part in them were more interested in “greater hopes of a considerable prize of horses, hides, and Indian men and women to serve them. These are the purposes of the campaigns and the ones entertained by most of the citizens who joined the soldiers in such operations. Since the purpose is so vile, so is the outcome” According to official Spanish policy, Indian captives were to be given good treatment, distributed to Spanish families or missionaries and Hispanized. In return for this treatment, the Indians would provide the labor for tasks around the settlement. Indian captives brought to San Antonio were immediately introduced to the Hispanizing process. They were given rudimentary instruction in the Catholic faith and baptized. In the process, they lost their Indian names and were given Spanish names. Usually they accepted the surname of their guardian or god parent. Marriage proved to be a strong means of assimilated captives. For instance, Apache captives married Spaniards. In 1725 Margarita a “servant” of Captain Nicholas Flores, married Juan Paz, a soldier of the San Antonio Presidio. As the years past and more captives joined the community, these marriages were extremely common. Captives married Indians of different tribal affiliations. Pedro Alcontera ??? married Maria Delores, a Lipan on August 9, 1766. The experience of Jose Benito, an Hasani, is an interesting case of captivity and assimilation. He was taken as a child by the Apache, who raised him. By November, 1766 as an adult, he was probably rescued by the Spanish and then baptized at San Antonio. His wife, Maria Francesca, a Lipan was also baptized at the same time. They continued to live in San Antonio and in April 1767, their daughter Maria Josefa was baptized. Indian captives also married black and mulatto slaves in the community. There is every indication that the Hispanizing process was

complete and that these captives were incorporated into Spanish life. However, there are also instances of former captives fleeing the missions and rejoining their people, thus proving that the Hispanizing process was not as successful as we might assume. Besides providing the Spaniards with a labor supply, the captives augmented the population and also had other functions. Both sides interrogated their captives and gained invaluable knowledge as to the size, strength, and general conditions of the enemy. Some captives like Francisco Chavez and Antonio Travino lived with the Indians for months or years and when they returned to the Spanish settlements, became excellent interpreters and sources of information on Indian life. Spanish captives among the Indians provided them with technical knowledge. Racially, both the Indian and white populations were changed as a mestizo element developed among the communities. It has been estimated that by the 19th Century the Comanche population was heavily mixed with other Indians and Spaniards. The taking and keeping of captives in Spanish Texas became an integral part of frontier life. There was never an attempt by officials to halt this activity because of the hostile conditions on the frontier. Even after the governor of Spanish Louisiana, Alejandro O'Riley outlawed the slave trade in 1769, it continued with Texas providing a steady supply of captives. Captives continued to be taken throughout the Mexican regime and into the American period. As the Apache and other tribes were reduced in strength, the Comanche dominated the trade in captives. It was not until the 1870s with the defeat of the Comanche at the hands of the United States Army, that this slave trade, begun some 300 years earlier, came to an end.

(music is playing)