

TEHUACANA

THE LOST INDIANS



BY BILL RENFRO

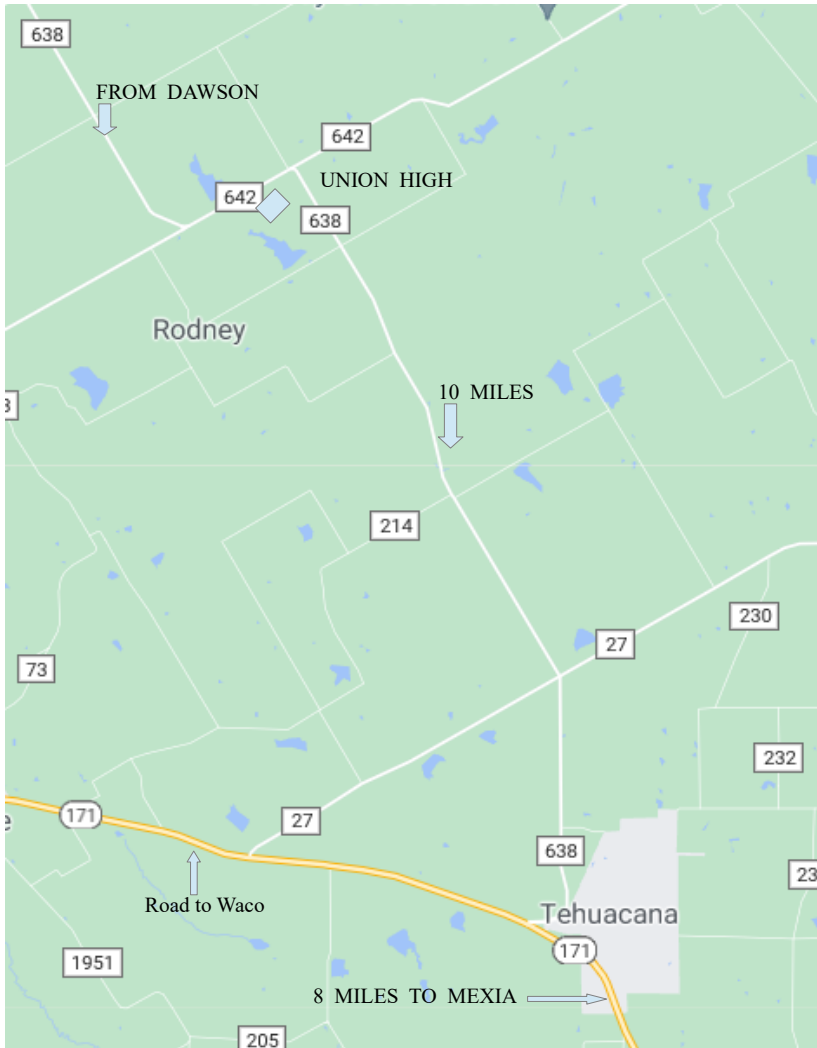


TEHUACANA

THE LOST INDIANS

JULY 2021

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TEHUACANA HILL AND THE CURRENT TOWN IS 9 MILES FROM UNION HIGH AND 17 MILES FROM DAWSON.

THE NAME

THE NAME **TEHUACANA** IS AN INDIAN WORD MEANING **PLACE OF FRESH WATER, OR DEEP WATER.** THE WATER IS FED FROM A SPRING INTO A CREEK WHICH THEN FEEDS **LAKE TEHUACANA.**

THE TEHUACANA INDIANS

THIS IS THE STORY OF THE LOST INDIANS CALLED **TEHUACANA.** THEY LIVED ON TOP OF **TEHUACANA HILL,** WHICH IS 10 MILES FROM **UNION HIGH,** FROM MY LAST BOOK TITLED **ELDORADO.** **TEHUACANA HILL** IS THE HIGHEST POINT IN THE AREA. WITH THE WEST SIDE OF THE HILL BEING TOO STEEP FOR ANYONE TO CLIMB, IT AFFORDED THEM ALMOST 180 DEGREES OF SIGHT FOR MANY MILES.

TEHUACANA HILL IS 66 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL, WHICH IS THE HIGHEST SPOT FROM **DALLAS** TO **HOUSTON.** FIRST NOTED IN HISTORY BY **PHILIP NOLAN'S** TRADING EXPEDITION IN 1797, IT WAS HOME FOR THESE INDIANS, A **WICHITA TRIBE.** THEY ENGAGED IN FARMING AND PEACEFUL PURSUITS UNTIL THEY WERE DESTROYED IN EARLY 1830 BY **CHEROKEES.** LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT THEM.



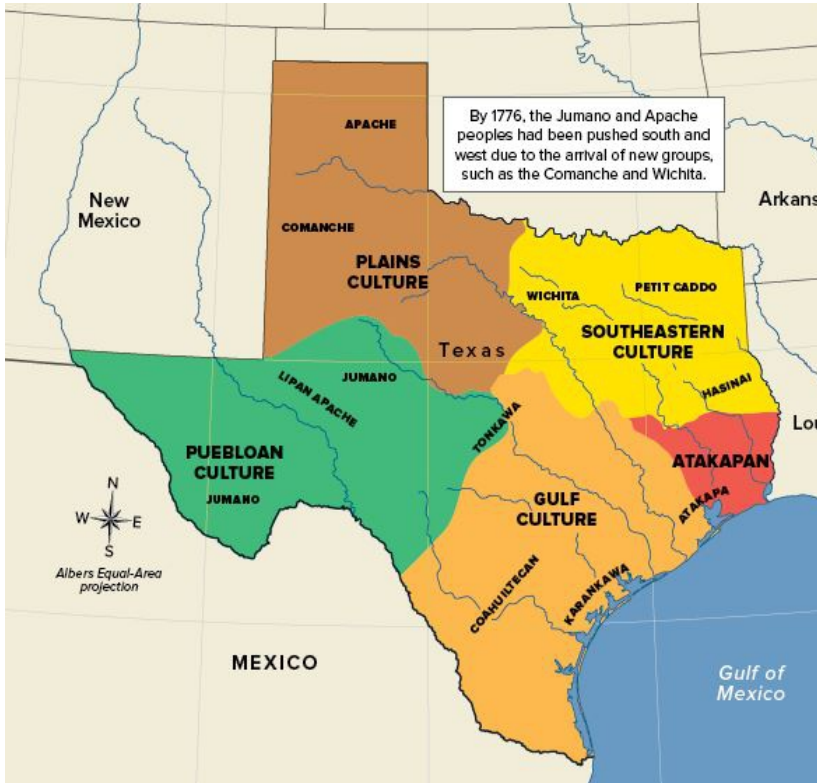


INDIAN ARTIFACTS FOUND HERE





INDIAN FARMERS

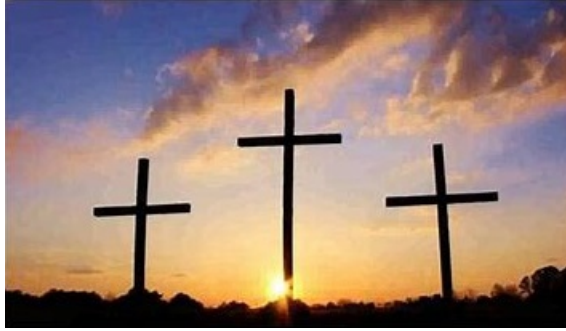


MAP OF THE INDIAN NATIONS.

THE FLAT PLAINS OF TEXAS IS WHERE THE BUFFALO WERE , THAT IS WHY THERE WERE SO MANY INDIANS IN THIS AREA.



TEHUACANA INDIAN



OLD CHURCH HOUSE

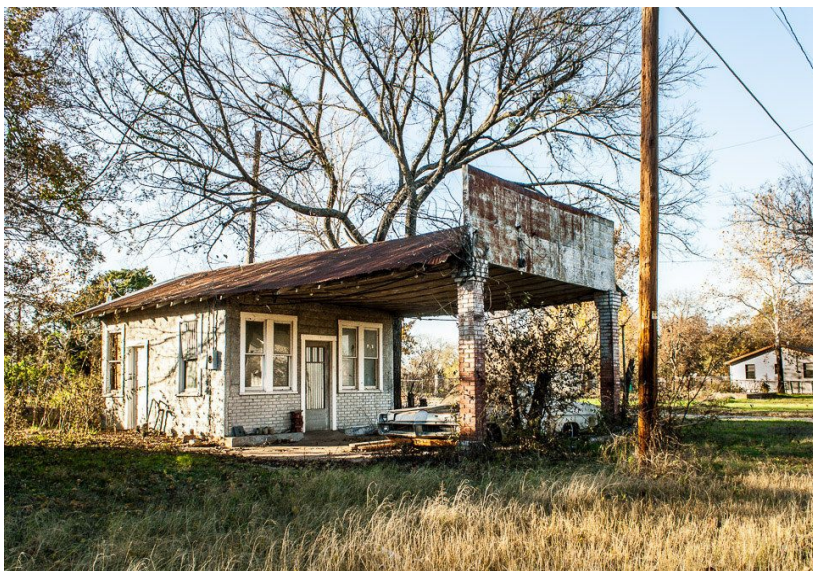
THIS IS THE CHURCH THAT MY UNCLE AND HIS FAMILY ATTENDED EACH SUNDAY. THE CHURCH WAS JUST ACROSS THE ROAD FROM THEIR HOME.

THE TOWN OF TEHUACANA

THE TOWN OF **TEHUACANA** HAS A SPECIAL MEANING FOR ME. MY MOTHER'S SISTER AND HER HUSBAND AND THEIR SON LIVED THERE FOR MANY YEARS. WHEN OUR FAMILY WOULD GO THERE TO VISIT, ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS TO DO, WAS FOR MY COUSIN AND I TO GO BACK INTO A WOODED AREA BEHIND THEIR HOUSE AND HUNT FOR ARROW HEADS. WE WOULD TAKE SOME SMALL HOES AND SEARCH THROUGH THE SANDY GROUND, THOUGH LIKELY DONE A HUNDRED TIMES BEFORE BY OTHERS, BUT IT WAS QUITE A JOY TO AN OLD COUNTRY BOY LIKE ME. WE DID FIND ARROW HEADS ON OCASSION.

MY AUNT LIVED AT THE SAME HOME IN TEHUACANA FOR MANY YEARS, AND ON OUR VISITS IT WAS EVIDENT THAT THE TOWN WAS DETERIORATING, BUSINESSES WERE CLOSING AND PEOPLE MOVING AWAY. ESPECIALLY AFTER WORLD WAR TWO WHEN THEY HAD BEEN TO LARGER TOWNS AND FOUND THEY COULD MAKE MORE MONEY THERE, BUT THEIR FAMILY STAYED.

I WILL SHOW YOU SOME OF THE PLACES THAT I REMEMBER AS A BOY, SHOW YOU HOW THE HISTORIC UNIVERSITY HAD DETERIORATED, BUT THANK GOD SOME CAME TO THE RESCUE, AND NOW THE NEW COLLEGE IS AGAIN TEACHING AND EVEN THE CAMPUS DORMITORYS AND OTHER BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN RESTORED.



THESE ARE THE STORES WHERE MY RELATIVES USED TO SHOP. THE ONE ON THE RIGHT WAS A GROCERY STORE, AND THE ONE ON THE LEFT A DRUG STORE. THE PLACE WHERE THEY BOUGHT GAS WAS DESERTED LONG AGO.

THE TOWN IS ON A **MEXICAN** LAND GRANT OBTAINED IN 1835 BY **JOHN BOYD, REPUBLIC OF TEXAS**. IN 1847 **BOYD** BECAME THE FIRST POSTMASTER OF THE FIRST CONGRESS OF THE **REPUBLIC OF TEXAS**, AND IN 1849 NOMINATED **TEHUACANA** FOR CAPITAL OF **STATE OF TEXAS**. HOWEVER, **AUSTIN** WON , BY ONE VOTE, IN THE ELECTION HELD IN 1850. **TEHUACANA ACADEMY**, A **PRESBYTERIAN** SCHOOL LOCALLY ORGANIZED AND SUPPORTED, OPERATED FOR TEN YEARS. IT WAS CLOSED DURING THE **CIVIL WAR**, BUT FURNISHED INCENTIVE (WITH THE HELP OF **BOYD**) FOR FOUNDING IN 1869 OF **TRINITY UNIVERSITY**. **BOYD'S** GIFT OF 1,520 ACRES OF LAND FOR COLLEGE USE INCLUDES THE PRESENT DAY CAMPUS, WHERE **TRINITY** (NOW IN **SAN ANTONIO**) OPERATED UNTIL 1902. THE SCHOOL PROPERTY WAS DEEDED TO **METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH**, WHICH RELOCATED THE **WESTMINSTER COLLEGE** HERE, ONE OF THE FIRST JUNIOR COLLEGES (1916) IN **TEXAS**. THE **CONGREGATIONAL METHODIST CHURCH** BOUGHT THE PROPERTY IN 1953 AND NOW OPERATES **WESTMINSTER COLLEGE AND BIBLE INSTITUTE** ON THE HISTORIC CAMPUS.

— *Historical Marker Text. Marker erected 1967. Located on the Campus of Westminster College, Westminster Rd., Tehuacana.*





THE ORIGINAL UNIVERSITY

THE OLD UNIVERSITY

I REMEMBER, AS A BOY , ON SOME OF OUR TRIPS TO THE TOWN OF TEHUACANA, MY COUSIN GOING OVER TO THE OLD AND DESERTED UNIVERSITY GROUNDS AND GETTING INSIDE THE MAIN BUILDING AND GOING UP TO THE TOP FLOOR TO SLIDE DOWN THE OLD FIRE SLIDE. IF YOU WILL NOTICE IN THE PICTURES OF THE MAIN BUILDING, THAT IT HAD A SLIDE DOWN THE FRONT OF THE STRUCTURE. THIS WAS THE LATEST IN BUILDING CODES AT THAT TIME. THIS SLIDE WAS THE FIRE ESCAPE IN CASE THERE WAS THE NEED. WHILE WE WERE HAVING FUN, IT WAS SAD TO HAVE SEEN SUCH A MAGNIFICENT STRUCTURE BEING DESERTED AND DETERIORATING BEFORE OUR VERY EYES.

SOME OF THE FOLLOWING PICTURES WILL SHOW THE GRADUAL DECLINE OF THIS HISTORIC STRUCTURE AND HOW REALLY BAD IT BECAME BEFORE SOMEONE CAME TO THE RESCUE AND BEGAN RESTORATION OF THE ONCE MAGNIFICENT PLACE. I WILL TRY TO FIND PICTURES OF HOW IT LOOKS TODAY, BUT I DO KNOW THAT IT AND THE SUPPORT BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND THE COLLEGE IS NOW IN OPERATION AS A JUNIOR COLLEGE.







THERE IS THE FIRE SLIDE WHERE
WE PLAYED.



ONE OF SEVERAL HISTORICAL
MARKERS ON THE CAMPUS



HISTORICAL MARKERS



THE ORIGINAL BELL TOWER
BEYOND REPAIR



RESTORED CAMPUS DORMITORY



LIBRARY TO BE RESTORED





JOSE ANTONIO MEXIA

THE TOWN OF MEXIA

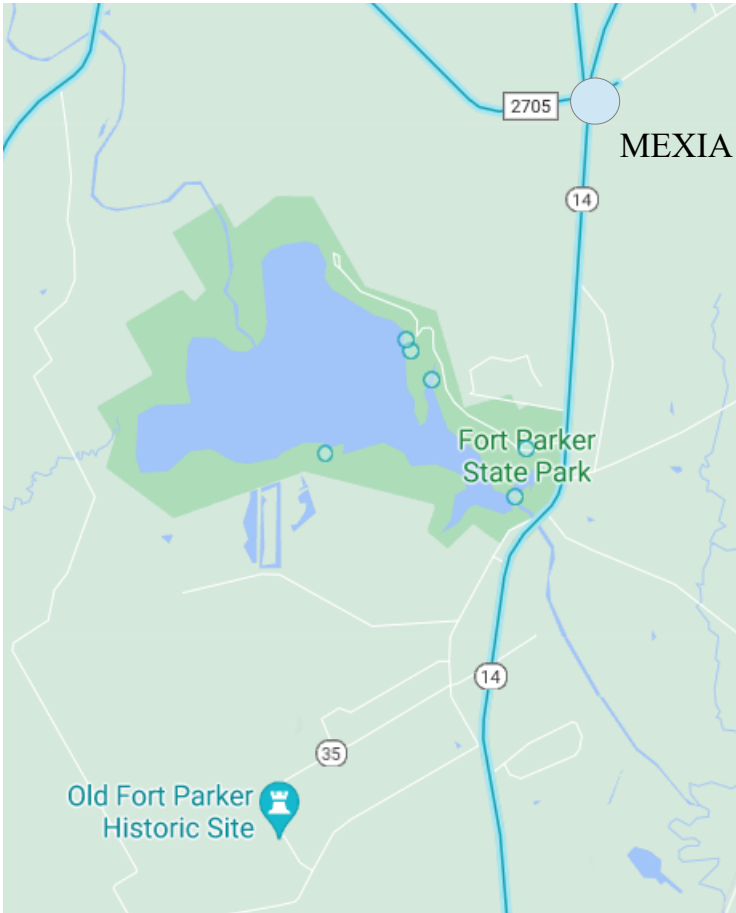
THE NAME OF **MEXIA** IS A **MEXICAN** SURNAME AND WAS NAMED FOR THE **MEXICAN JOSE ANTONIO MEXIA**. **MEXIA** WAS STILL LIVING IN **MEXICO** IN THE 1890s AND HAD CARRIED ON A LIFETIME FEUD WITH THE **MEXICAN PRESIDENT LOPEZ De SANTA ANNA**. HIS LIFE WAS RELATIVELY SHORT BECAUSE IN 1839 HE WAS KILLED BY A **MEXICAN FIRING SQUAD**.

MEXIA WAS A CLOSE FRIEND TO **SAM HOUSTON, STEPHEN F. AUSTIN** AND OTHER **TEXAS REVOLUTIONISTS**. HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS SHOW A LETTER FROM **WILLIAM B. TRAVIS**, THE **ALAMO** COMMANDER TO **MEXIA**, THAT SHOWED A COMMON HATRED FOR **SANTA ANNA**.

MEXIA AND HIS WIFE OWNED A LARGE LAND GRANT IN LIMESTONE COUNTY, SOME OF WHICH NOW INCLUDES THE TOWN OF **MEXIA**. HE SPENT PART OF EACH YEAR IN **LIMESTONE COUNTY, TEXAS** AND PART IN **MEXICO**, WHERE HE WAS AN ARMY COLONEL AND A MEMBER OF CONGRESS.

OIL WAS DISCOVERED IN **MEXIA** IN 1920. THE BOOM ONLY LASTED FOR 8 YEARS BEFORE IT BEGAN PRODUCING LESS AND LESS. TODAY, THERE ARE ABANDONED PUMPS AND OTHER OIL RELATED EQUIPMENT.

MY UNCLE WORKED IN THE OIL BUSINESS UNTIL THE LAST.



MAP FROM MEXIA TO THE OLD FORT PARKER MEMORIAL FORT

FORT PARKER

ON DOWN OUR HIGHWAY OF TIME, JUST 10 MILES SOUTHWEST FROM **MEXIA**, THERE LIES THE RESTORED **FORT PARKER**. THE HISTORY OF **FORT PARKER** I HAD KNOWN ALL OF MY LIFE, BUT HAD NEVER KNOWN THE REAL STORY UNTIL I BEGAN RESEARCH FOR THIS BOOK.

FORT PARKER WAS FOUNDED BY **ELDER JOHN PARKER** AND HIS SONS **BENJAMIN**, **SILAS** AND **JAMES**, AND OTHER FAMILIES FROM THE **PREDESTINARIAN BAPTIST CHURCH** OF CRAWFORD COUNTY, **ILLINOIS**. TRAVELING BY OX-DRAWN WAGONS, THEY CAME TO **TEXAS** IN 1833, SETTLED ALONG THE **NAVASOTA RIVER**, AND BUILT **FORT PARKER** FOR PROTECTION AGAINST THE INDIANS. BECAUSE THEY HAD NO TROUBLE SO FAR, THEY BEGAN TO LEAVE THE FORT GATES OPEN FOR THE MEN WHO WORKED THE FIELDS OUTSIDE THE FORT, SO THEY COULD COME AND GO AS NEEDED. THEN IN 1836, WHILE THE MEN WORKED THE FIELDS OUTSIDE THE FORT, THE WOMEN WORKED THE HOUSES, AND THE CHILDREN PLAYED IN THE FORT GROUNDS, A GROUP OF 100 INDIANS, **COMANCHE**, **KIOWA**, **CADDO**, AND **WICHITA** APPEARED AT THE GATES WITH A WHITE FLAG OF PEACE. BEFORE THE GATES COULD BE CLOSED, THE RAIDERS RUSHED INSIDE THE FORT, AND KILLED **ELDER JOHN PARKER** AND HIS SON **SILAS**. AS THE MEN IN THE FIELDS RUSHED TO THE FORT, THE INDIANS ESCAPED WITH TWO WOMEN AND THREE CHILDREN.

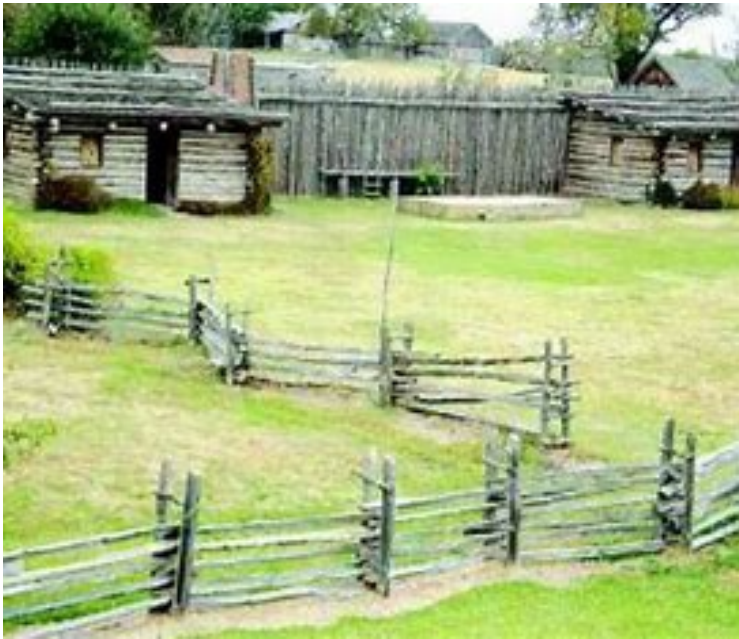


AFTER THE INDIANS LEFT, FIVE SETTLERS LAY DEAD AND OTHERS WERE WOUNDED, SOME OF WHOM DIED LATER.

THE NEXT MORNING THE 21 SURVIVORS, LED BY **JAMES PARKER**, STARTED FOR **FORT HOUSTON** NEAR PRESENT-DAY **PALESTINE TEXAS**. IT TOOK SIX DAYS TO TRAVEL THE 60 MILES. THE TWO CAPTURED WOMEN AND ONE OF THE CHILDREN WERE SOON RANSOMED AND RETURNED TO THE **PARKER** FAMILY, BUT **CYNTHIA ANN PARKER**, 9 YEARS OLD, AND HER BROTHER **JOHN**, AGE 6, BOTH CHILDREN OF **SILAS** AND **LUCY PARKER**, WERE KEPT BY THE **COMANCHES**. **JOHN** BECAME A **COMANCHE** WARRIOR, MARRIED A **MEXICAN** CAPTIVE, AND SETTLED ON A RANCH IN **MEXICO**.

CYNTHIA ANN PARKER BECAME THE MOST FAMOUS OF THE CAPTIVES. SHE WAS ADOPTED BY A **COMANCHE** FAMILY, HER NAME CHANGED TO **NADUAH**, AND RESISTED RANSOM SEVERAL TIMES. IN HER TEENS SHE MARRIED CHIEF **PETA NOCONA** AND HAD TWO CHILDREN, ONE OF WHOM BECAME CHIEF **QUANAH PARKER**.

IN THE WINTER OF 1860, A GROUP OF **TEXAS RANGERS**, LED BY CAPTAIN **SUL ROSS** ATTACKED AN INDIAN CAMP ALONG THE **PECOS RIVER** IN THE **TEXAS** PANHANDLE. **CYNTHIA ANN PARKER** AND HER DAUGHTER **PRAIRIE FLOWER** WERE CAUGHT TRYING TO ESCAPE. NOTICING HER BLUE EYES, **ROSS** KNEW SHE WAS NOT INDIAN AND SENT FOR HER UNCLE WHO IDENTIFIED HER.



THE FORMER HOSTAGE WAS RETURNED TO HER FAMILY IN EAST **TEXAS**, BUT COULD NOT ADJUST TO THE WHITE MANS WAYS . SHE DIED IN 1864 AT THE AGE OF 37, SIX MONTHS AFTER THE DEATH OF **PRAIRIE FLOWER**. BOTH WERE BURIED IN FOSTERVILLE CEMETERY NEAR **POYNOR**.

CYNTHIA ANN'S SON , QUANAH DIED IN **OKLAHOMA** IN 1911. IN 1957 THE BODIES OF **CYNTHIA ANN** AND **PRAIRIE FLOWER** WERE EXHUMED AND REBURIED AT **FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA**.

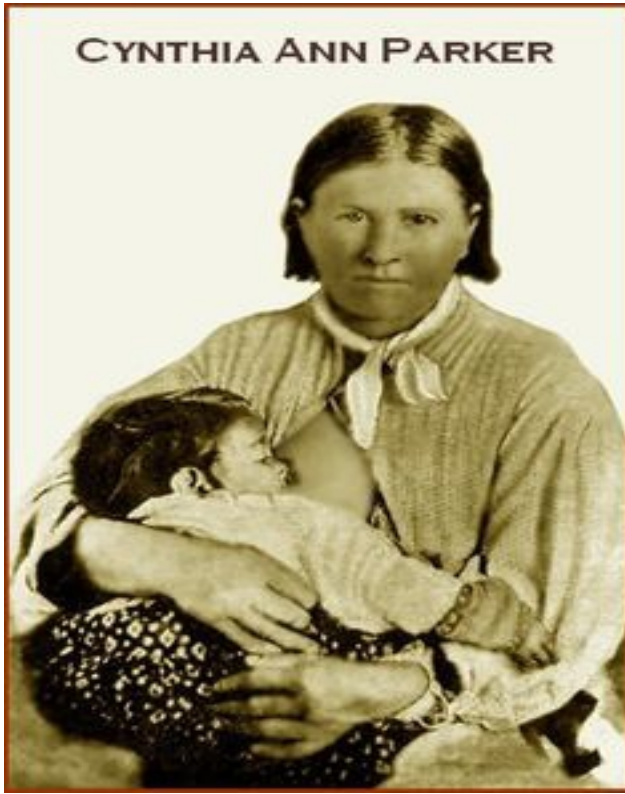
QUANAH PARKER BECAME WAR CHIEF OF HIS TRIBE AND RAIDED OVER MANY PARTS OF **TEXAS**. HE WAS FORCED TO SURRENDER TO THE US ARMY IN 1875. HE SETTLED WITH HIS PEOPLE ON A RESERVATION IN **OKLAHOMA** , WHERE HE DIED OF HEART FAILURE IN 1911.

IT IS SAID THAT HE NEVER LOST A BATTLE WITH THE WHITE MAN. HE WAS THE LAST CHIEF OF THE **COMMANCHES**.

HE IS BURIED BESIDE HIS MOTHER, **CYNTHIA ANN** AND HIS SISTER, **PRAIRIE FLOWER**, AT **FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA**.



CYNTHIA ANN PARKER



CYNTHIA ANN PARKER



QUANAH PARKER

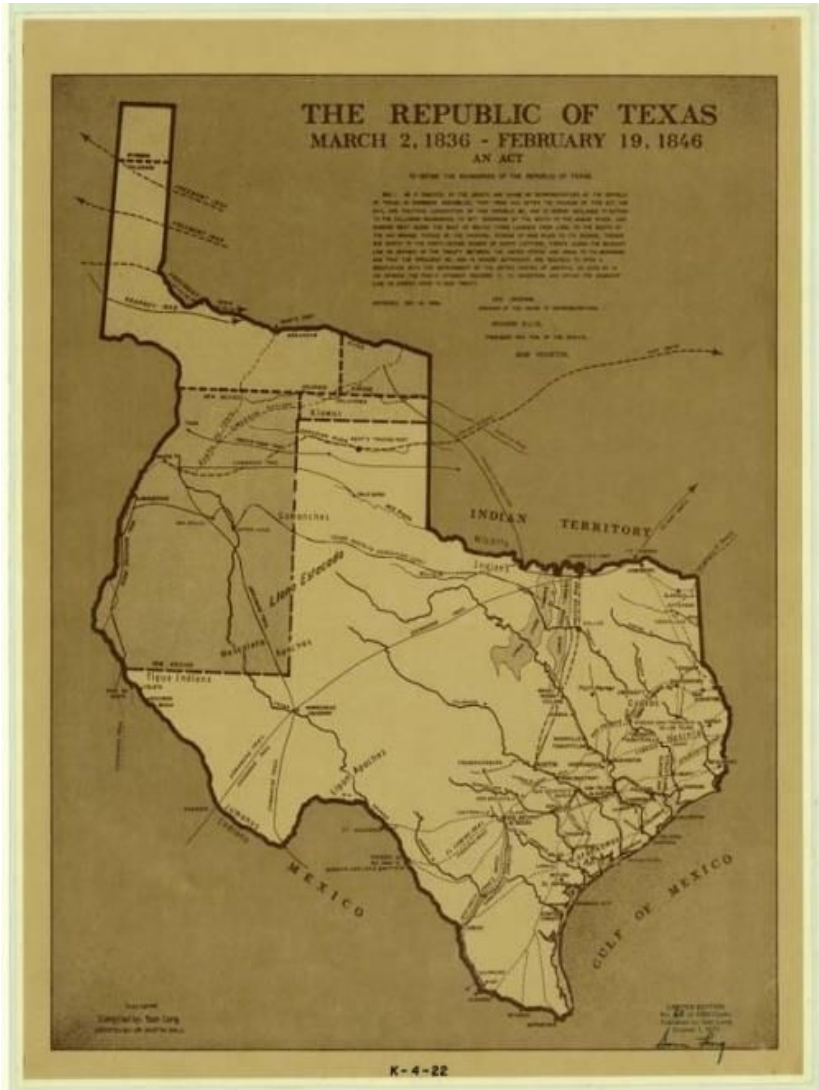


QUANAH PARKER



CHIEF QUANAH PARKER









In Memory of

Wilma L. (Babe) Renfro
March 8, 1932 -
December 13, 2018



Ephesians 5:25
Husbands, love your wives,
even as Christ also loved the church,
and gave himself up for it;