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### Race Relations Between the European Settlers and the Indian and Mexican Races

In the late 1800's the west was filling up with European Settlers who felt they were superior to all other races, especially the dark-skinned ones. The Indians were hunter-gathers by nature, and the white settlers were taking over their food source. The buffalo had no where to graze and kept moving, this meant that the Indians had to move. The farmers were fencing in their homesteads and removing the ground cover for planting. This caused the Indians to have to go elsewhere for their food. The Indian way of life included, raiding the other tribes, stealing horses and taking hostages. The Indian tribes used horses as signs of wealth, and needed women to do the heavy work, and to increase the population the Indian women had problems with reproduction, the men only hunted for the food, and tended the horses. The relations between the Indians and the white man were total static, and fear on both sides. The Mexican and white relationship was one of total misunderstanding, this was due to a lack of communication and a total culture clash. The two races spoke different languages and had different lifestyles and neither wanted to change their way of living.

In the book the *Empire of the Summer Sun*, Gwynne tells us that, The Comanches lived in an area known as Llano, this was a place with oceans of grass. "A place of extreme desolation, where white men became lost, and disoriented, and died of thirst." (Gwynne2) The Comanches were mounted warriors and the whites were taught to dismount to fight. The white man's way

of battle was no contest for the Comanches, who could fire one arrow after another from horse back, and speed away, before the white soldier could reload after his one shot he was dead. The Comanches were excellent horse breeders and knew how to develop a small sleek horse that was fast and agile. (Gwynne33)

When the plains Indians captured females, they would rape and beat them into submission. The braves saw nothing wrong with their actions, this was a way of life. The white settlers thought this was barbaric and wanted it stopped. When the Comanches captured the Parker women Rachel was treated in this manner, but Cynthia Ann was not raped, maybe due to her age and because the brave that took her wanted her for himself. Young girls had been raped but the adults were treated worse than the children. (Gwynne 45)

The Comanche had no tribal unit, no big chief, no governing council, or Comanche nation, no one that the American Government could go to for peace treaties. To the white settlers this made no sense at all, there was not one governing person, that could make decisions for the rest. The Indian male was totally free to make his own decisions. He had no one to answer to, no church, no military society, no state, no police, no domineering clans or powerful families, no rules. He was free to come and go as he pleased, he could even take his friend's wife, if he had enough horses to pay for her. (Gwynne 51)

The man who captured Cynthia Ann Parker became her husband, when she was old enough. Cynthia Ann gave birth to three children, two boys and a girl. The eldest boy was named Quanah and became the first chief of the Comanche Nation. Quanah lived for twelve years as the son of a Comanche war chief, this was a very privileged life. Quanah's life was horses, from the time he was four years old he was on horseback, the horse became a part of his person. Quanah was taught how to use a bow and arrow with precision, how to build a fire, and all the things that a

comanche warrior needed to know. When Quanah was twelve his life changed forever, his village was raided by white men and the only survivors were Cynthia Ann, her daughter Prairie Flower, and the two boys. The soldiers knew that Cynthia Ann was white, and she kept telling them who she was. Cynthia Ann and her daughter were returned to her family, although they no longer knew or understood her Indian ways. Cynthia Ann never knew what happened to her sons, she only hoped that they had survived. (Gwynne 198)

Quanah and his brother Peanut went to live with their father's Indian wife, but she soon died. This left the boys at the discretion of the Indian tribe. They were treated cruelly and had to beg for any life sustaining supplies they needed. Peanut died of unknown causes leaving Quanah alone. Quanah grew into a strapping six-foot-tall man, and nobody treated him badly again. Quanah became the leader of the last band of Comanche to surrender and move to the reservation. (Gwynne 199)

The reservation was worse than anything that Quanah could have ever imagined. The Indians were treated like children, they were totally dependent on the United States Government for everything. The cattle were sent on the hoof, and if there was a draught the animals lost weight to the point that the only meat on them was the hide. The other provisions were not enough if they even arrived. The Indians went hungry on a regular basis. Quanah decided the only way for his people to survive was to learn the white man's ways. He learned to speak English, and how to plant seed, he also began to wear white man's clothes. (Gwynne 289)

Quanah made friends with the local ranchers, these people needed grazing land. Quanah got a law passed that the Indians could lease land to the local ranchers for a profit. He also started raising his own herd and fed the tribe with his own herd. This brought Quanah prestige and built him a fortune. He built himself a ten-room house and furnished it with the help of the ranchers.

He never refused to feed anybody who came to his house, this generosity cost him his fortune. Quanah Parker died a broke man, but a very happy one. He went from son of a war chief, to the supreme chief of the Comanche Nation. He made friends with the white man and prospered. (Gwynne 310)

While the Indians were being removed from Texas and surrounding areas, a group of nuns from a Catholic foundling hospital in New York city board a train with 57 toddlers. The train was headed for Arizona to deliver the children to their new homes. The children were orphans or children who had been left at the hospital because the parents could not afford to take care of them. The Sisters wanted the children to be raised in the Catholic faith and had made arraignment for this to happen. Each child had a ribbon sewn into the collar of their clothes. The color of the ribbon was the destination of the child. The children were chosen because of their hardiness and the unlikelihood that anyone in New York would come to claim them. The children were placed in a home before leaving New York, several nuns would stay in the town until they were sure that the home was appropriate for the child, this would take a couple of weeks. (Gordon 1,4)

The copper prices had risen and the mines in Clifton- Morenci were manned by both Mexican and American miners. The nuns had been corresponding with a priest in Clifton about placing the children. Because the nuns had said that the children should be placed in catholic homes, he placed them in Mexican homes. The Mexican families where the only families who attended is parish. The white or Anglo population were mostly protestant and met at the local hotel on Sundays. The Anglo and Mexican people did not communicate, due to the difference in language and lifestyle so they knew little about each other's lives. (Gordon 193)

When the train stopped in Clifton, there were a lot of Anglo women there, as well as the Mexican women that were picking up the children. The Anglo women wanted to touch and hold the orphans. They were really surprised that the children were Anglo, light hair and fair skinned. Most of the people at the station were Mexican, and they were getting the children. Later that night the ladies of the white community were telling their husbands about the fact that the Anglo children were placed with Mexican families. They started saying that they had seen a Mexican with one of the Anglo children and that he was under the influence of alcohol. That the Mexican families had no business raising Anglo children, the men bought this hook, line, and sinker. The next morning the children were taken from the Mexican families and a trial was held to determine where the children should be placed. (Gordon 75)

The Mexicans were just as good parents as the Anglos, they would have given the children the same chance of success as the Anglo parents. The problem was that the Mexicans made a lower wage than the Anglo workers, the Mexican workers knew that they were being paid a better wage, than they would get in Mexico. The Mexican homes were kept just as clean as the Anglo homes were. The main cause of this disagreement was that the Anglo and the Mexican women wanted a child to give their love to. (Gordon 75)

When two Ethnic groups come together there is always a thing called culture clash. They worship differently, live a different life style, speak a different language. This causes the two groups to shy away from each other. Sometimes it may cause fear, the Comanche were raised to believe that raiding another people's property was alright. The sign of wealth was how many horses they owned. If they wanted or needed more horses, they would go steal more from a neighboring tribe. The white settlers did not understand this culture and became very scared when the Indians appeared. If an Indian man needed another wife, he would raid another tribe

and take the one he liked. The white settlers were monogamous and respected their women, they could not understand this fact about the Indians.

The Indians could not understand how a bunch of settlers could move into their backyard and set up housekeeping. The white settlers just wanted land and the land looked empty to them. The Indians depended on the natural plants for food and medicine, the white settlers just cut it all down, or let their livestock eat it. To the Comanche the land was for everyone to use and could not see why the white settlers put up fences. All this led to a total culture clash that ended in war. There was no communication due to the language barrier, if they had understood each other's language they might have averted the many wars. People cannot become friends unless there is communication.

The Mexicans and the Anglos were thrown together because of economics. Both ethnic groups needed a way of making a living wage for their families. The copper mines provided that wage. The Mexican people would have made a lesser wage in Mexico, the whites were making a decent wage according to U.S. standards. The women had all lost children due to the dust and chemicals around the mine. Both groups of women wanted a child to replace the hole in their heart, that was left by the child they lost. Since the Mexican women were all catholic and were members of the local catholic church they were given the children. The white women were jealous of the Mexican women because they also wanted the children. Again, they both spoke different languages, and the communication barrier arose. They never visited the others home and knew nothing of how they lived. The Anglo women made up stories, about how bad the lives of the children would be, if the Mexicans raised them. Communication is the soul of our lives, if we do not talk we do not know the true story of another person. The race relations in the 1900's west was not so different than the race relations today. A lot of problems can be stopped if

people will just communicate with each other. Culture was a defiant reason for the problems between the Mexican and American people. The Mexican population ate different food, and raised their children in the Catholic Faith, the Anglos where the complete opposite. The Mexican women wanted the fair skinned children to help close the culture gap, and fit into the Anglo lives.