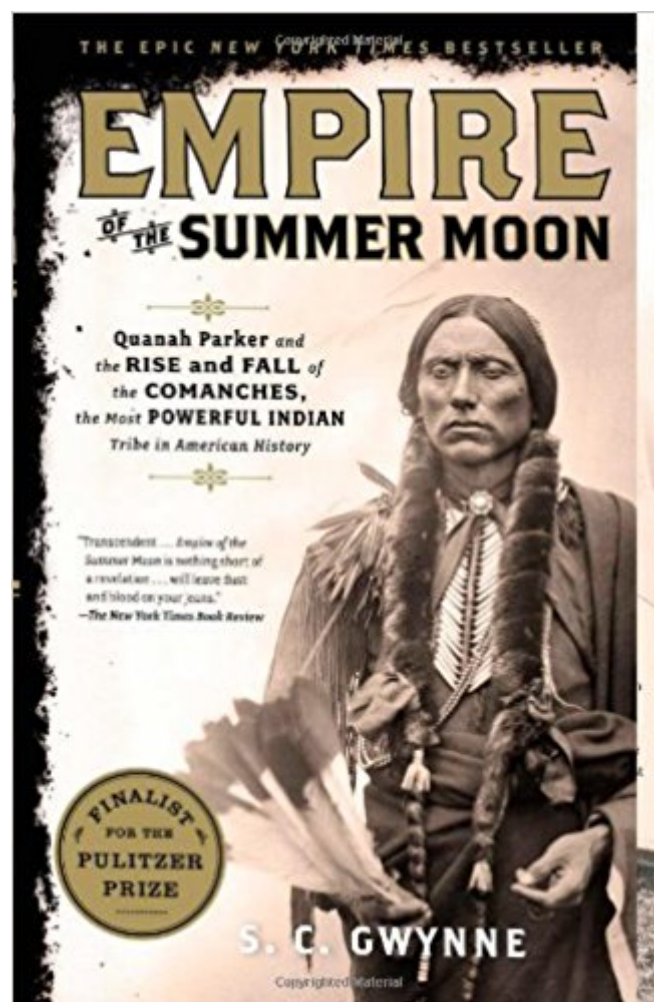


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# Empire Of The Summer Moon: Quanah Parker And The Rise And Fall Of The Comanches, The Most Powerful Indian Tribe In American History





## Synopsis

In the tradition of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, a stunningly vivid historical account of the forty-year battle between Comanche Indians and white settlers for control of the American West, centering on Quanah, the greatest Comanche chief of them all. S. C. Gwynne's *Empire of the Summer Moon* spans two astonishing stories. The first traces the rise and fall of the Comanches, the most powerful Indian tribe in American history. The second entails one of the most remarkable narratives ever to come out of the Old West: the epic saga of the pioneer woman Cynthia Ann Parker and her mixed-blood son Quanah, who became the last and greatest chief of the Comanches. Although readers may be more familiar with the tribal names Apache and Sioux, it was in fact the legendary fighting ability of the Comanches that determined just how and when the American West opened up. Comanche boys became adept bareback riders by age six; full Comanche braves were considered the best horsemen who ever rode. They were so masterful at war and so skillful with their arrows and lances that they stopped the northern drive of colonial Spain from Mexico and halted the French expansion westward from Louisiana. White settlers arriving in Texas from the eastern United States were surprised to find the frontier being rolled backward by Comanches incensed by the invasion of their tribal lands. So effective were the Comanches that they forced the creation of the Texas Rangers and account for the advent of the new weapon specifically designed to fight them: the six-gun. The war with the Comanches lasted four decades, in effect holding up the development of the new American nation. Gwynne's exhilarating account delivers a sweeping narrative that encompasses Spanish colonialism, the Civil War, the destruction of the buffalo herds, and the arrival of the railroads—a historical feast for anyone interested in how the United States came into being. Against this backdrop Gwynne presents the compelling drama of Cynthia Ann Parker, a lovely nine-year-old girl with cornflower-blue eyes who was kidnapped by Comanches from the far Texas frontier in 1836. She grew to love her captors and became infamous as the "White Squaw" who refused to return until her tragic capture by Texas Rangers in 1860. More famous still was her son Quanah, a warrior who was never defeated and whose guerrilla wars in the Texas Panhandle made him a legend. S. C. Gwynne's account of these events is meticulously researched, intellectually provocative, and, above all, thrillingly told. *Empire of the Summer Moon* announces him as a major new writer of American history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The vast, semi-arid grasslands of the southern Great Plains could be dominated by hunters and warriors on horseback. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Comanches, often referred to as "lords of the Plains," were the single most powerful military force in the region, to the frustration of both the Mexican and U.S. governments. In this engrossing chronicle, award-winning journalist Gwynne traces the rise of the Comanche people from their roots as primitive bands of hunter-gatherers to their mastery of the horse and emergence as the feared power brokers of the area. At the center of the narrative is the charismatic Quanah Parker, who skillfully navigated the gaps between his traditional culture and the emerging, settled culture of the late-nineteenth century. Quanah was the son of a Comanche warrior and a woman named Cynthia Ann Parker, who was kidnapped at the age of nine and chose to stay with the Comanches. Quanah was a brilliant, feared war chief who guided his people in adapting to new realities after their final suppression by the U.S. Cavalry. An outstanding addition to western-history collections. --Jay Freeman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Transcendent . . . Empire of the Summer Moon is nothing short of a revelation . . . will leave dust and blood on your jeans."--New York Times Book Review  
"In Empire of the Summer Moon, Sam Swynne has given us a rich, vividly detailed rendering of an important era in our history and of two great men, Quanah Parker and Ranald Slidel Mackenzie, whose struggles did much to define it." -Larry McMurtry

We live in Oklahoma - the middle of modern day Comanche County. My best friend growing up was the great-granddaughter of Chief Quannah Parker. She was even named after Cynthia Ann Parker.

She has been my friend for over 60+ years. Therefore, I knew some of the history of the Comanche way of life, but from their side. I still cherish those memories of the stories told to me by her Grandmother (which was really her great-aunt, but called Grandmother by Comanche culture). She told of how afraid of the soldiers they were as children on the reservation near Fort Sill. I was a child hearing these stories, not really understanding... My family (white settlers) had settled in Oklahoma Territory from the Llano, Texas area before the turn of the century. They had lived thru the battles and loss of lives. Some went on to Arizona, but that's another story. EMPIRE OF THE SUMMER MOON really awakened some of those memories - but from both sides. It was a horrible time for the settlers and the Indians! I have read many books on the subject, but this was the BEST, most accurate account, from both sides. It gives true documentation of events as they happened. We have given this book to so many family members and friends. A few weeks ago, we gave it to a Comanche friend. He said he learned so much about his people from this book. We HIGHLY recommend this book to anyone wanting to know the true history of the west from both sides.

This is the best account I've read of the conflict between the native peoples and the early Anglo and Spanish immigrants to the American southwest. It's particular to Texas, and makes that conflict brutally clear, but it will change your thinking and knowledge about what really was happening as the whole nation went through dramatic change in the 19th century.

I normally get all books from the library, which is where I first got this one. In the past 15 years I have actually bought to keep in my small "library" 2 books--Carl Sagan's "The Demon Haunted World," & this one. Published in 2010, it is the only book I've ever found that tells the history of American expansion into the west without a strong bias toward whites, and with phenomenal documentation (nearly a quarter of the volume is a listing of citations). The fact that for over 40 years I've lived in the middle of the area primarily concerned makes it more personal to me, as well as that one of my grandmothers was born in "Indian Territory" (as Oklahoma was called at first), & my mother told of some of her childhood memories of meeting Indians in her home town as a young girl, all add to my own interest. But the main attraction is the unbiased telling of the story, "no punches pulled." The author doesn't shy away from the details of the brutality on both sides, so it can be disturbing at times; but it also shows the admirable aspects of both sides. There is no question that Quanah was a truly great leader, but you'll have to read the whole story to understand just how great.

I have really enjoyed getting back into reading about American History. I realized that school education doesn't really explore the intricate subject of the Indian culture and history. This book is a well written account of one specific nation and gives the reader a glimpse of all the dynamics of tribal life and how their cultures mixed (and didn't) with the progressive expansion of the west. Easy read and left me wanting to read further on this part of the American west.

Amazing story of an amazing culture. The period in time while this tug-of-war of cultures and land is juxtaposed against each other in an interesting way. Tribes still living as they had for hundreds of years versus the White Man's Manifest Destiny. I would only wish that real time maps and photos were included within the context as the stories unfolded. I found myself leaving the book to review maps or photos to better understand and articulate the story. Lastly the timelines tend to jump to and fro which can be confusing and may cause a reader to bounce around and lose track of how the many events impacted each other.

Highly recommended book on the cultural clash and resultant warfare between the Comanche nation and the White civilization. Mr. Gwynne is respectful to both sides, acknowledges wrongs done by both sides and, really, what was inevitable. Those looking for an in-depth biography of the great figure of Quanah Parker will not find it, but there is enough there to show his qualities and that should inspire a desire to learn more. But it is not just Quanah, it is also men like Jack Coffee Hays and Ranald Mackenzie and the legendary Texas Rangers. Highly recommended book.

After finishing this book, by sheer coincidence I came across *Dances with Wolves* as I was cruising channels. When you put the movie (about the Sioux) next to this book - about the Comanches - you begin to realize how good it truly is and how substance it has. You might expect any story about Indians clashing with whites to leave you rooting hopelessly for the natives, but this account doesn't have that effect. The author wants you to admire the "Lords of the Plains", but he makes clear how brutal and ruthless they could be to whites and Indians alike. The Comanches were a ferocious and highly skilled band of warriors that were only defeated because of the better guns the whites had. I never imagined a tribe of 40,000 could have so thoroughly dominated such a large swath of land for hundreds of years. There was no "trail of tears" for these guys. So unflinching is the book that at times I could feel the terror I'm sure existed in the heart of every white that dared to settle near Comancheria. You're left wondering why anyone would choose to risk life and scalp - your own and your children's - to live on the barren plains of northwest Texas. That's an important question that

the book leaves unanswered. If you want to learn about cowboys and Indians this book is essential. I read Blood and Thunder and this book tells a very different story. Both are excellent but if you read only about the Navajos you don't come close to getting a full picture of this, our own Hundred Years' War.

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