THE TAOVAYAS INDIANS IN FRONTIER TRADE AND DIPLOMACY 1719-1768

By Elizabeth Ann Harper*

The story of the Taovayas Indians epitomizes two significant aspects of the history of the northern border lands of New Spain; first, the varied policies of the French, Spanish, and American governments which successively competed there for supremacy; and second, the Indian population movements, wars and alliances which interplayed with the work of the white empire-builders. To the Taovayas, a small, semi-sedentary village group of the so-called Wichita confederacy, fell the role of middlemen in the commerce and diplomacy of the southern Plains in the eighteenth century. For some fifty years they bore an importance far out of proportion to their numbers, but they declined as suddenly as they had risen to power, and, curiously enough, by the middle of the nineteenth century even the name of the Taovayas was no longer current. This study will trace the Taovayas in their ascendancy in co-operation with the French and their decline under the Spanish and American regimes, showing their influence upon the development of the Louisiana-Texas frontier and, conversely, the impact of the struggle for empire upon an Indian band in whose range the powers clashed.

At the beginning of the European period, the upper Arkansas Valley was peopled by dark-skinned, tattooed Indians whom ethnologists call Wichita and whose few hundred descendants comprise the modern Wichita tribe. Their origin was probably in the southeast around the lower Red River whence they migrated northward with their kinsmen, the Pawnees before the Europeans came. Tradition among both the Wichitas and Pawnees is that the two groups separated somewhere in the Platte River region, the Wichitas turning back to the south.1 A semi-sedentary agricultural people, the Wichitas lived in small villages of grass huts.

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Although they recognized that they were related to each other, the Wichita village groups were never organized as a tribe; each village was autonomous, functioning somewhat as a band under its own name. The Taovayas were such a unit.

The Eighteenth Century saw important changes in the lives of the Wichita people. The advent of the horse furthered a greater dependence on hunting for subsistence, making it practicable to supply larger village groups. Shortly thereafter came the influx of European trade goods, virtually unlimited new wealth which could be acquired by trading buffalo robes to the French adventurers. Large-scale hunting operations became not only feasible, but enormously profitable. As a result, many small villages merged. Pressure from the Osages on the north and the Comanches on the west accelerated the diminution of the number of villages because larger groups could defend themselves more effectively. The names of many village bands were lost in the process of consolidation. Wichita is merely one village designation which has survived to apply to the entire people. But at the climax of their history, the Wichita were a minor band. It was the large village called Taovayas, probably itself the result of the combination of several smaller groups, which overshadowed all the kindred bands in the history of the northern border lands of New Spain in the latter eighteenth century.

The story of European contact with the Wichita people is a long one. Quivira, discovered by Coronado in 1541, was not the land of fabulous wealth which he had sought, but a series of grass-hut villages of the Wichitas. The Spaniards first reached them in July, 1541, on the Arkansas River in the vicinity of modern Lyons, Kansas, where there were six or seven settlements some distance apart in the first group. During the twenty-five days which he spent in Quivira, Coronado saw or heard of twenty-five towns. Swinging northeast across Little River and Smoky Hill River to the vicinity of present Lindsborg, Kansas he reached Tabas, which the Indians said was the remotest area of Quivira and a region of very great importance. Tabas perhaps equates with the band name which the Spaniards spelled Taovayas two centuries later.²

The fleeting contact with the Coronado expedition had no apparent influence on the Wichita villages, and there was little

more direct contact with Europeans for another century. However, by the time French explorers encountered the Wichitas, they had acquired the horse, the European importation which set in motion a virtual revolution on the Plains. The old ways of life were already in a process of re-orientation around the horse, but the advent of the commercially-minded Frenchmen helped to determine the course of the reorganization. Because the French traders seized upon their villages as trading posts, the Wichita bands remained semi-sedentary villages at a time when many similar Indian groups abandoned their villages in favor of a roving life on the Plains.

That the French explorers knew the Wichitas by 1673 is shown by early maps which picture Paniassa villages scattered along the Arkansas River in present Oklahoma and northern Kansas. The French often called the Wichita people Panis with a qualifying adjective, as in Paniassa. Panipiquets (some records give this "Pani Pique"). Panis Noirs because they so closely resembled the Pawnee Indians whom the French had encountered farther north. The descriptive names coined by various French traders, which persisted into the Nineteenth Century, thus add to the confusion in nomenclature created by the presence of the many Indian Village names.

The French opened trade relations with the Wichita villages in 1719 and sponsored a Wichita-Comanche alliance about 1747. With the establishment of that alliance the Wichita villages assumed great commercial importance. Some village bands established themselves side-by-side at favorable trade locations, retaining their separate identities but functioning as a single market-place. Other groups moved south under pressure from the hostile Osages. The maps of the early eighteenth century indicate a steadily decreasing number of villages. Such a strong trend toward consolidation developed among the remaining groups in the Arkansas

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3 The early Indian tribes and the Spanish and the French expeditions and trading relations in Oklahoma of the 18th Century are the subject of condensed accounts by the late Dr. Joseph B. Thoburn, at one time Secretary and later Director of Research in the Oklahoma Historical Society, under the titles "Indigenous Indian Tribes," "Spanish Explorations," and "French Trading Operations." (Joseph B. Thoburn and Muriel H. Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People [New York, 1929], Vol. I, pp. 21-45).—Ed.


Valley that by 1749 there was only one large Wichita-speaking village on the river, located east of present Newkirk, Oklahoma. Its inhabitants were called Panipquets by the French voyagers.

The large Panipiquet group moved their village south to Red River about 1757 to escape the damages which they continually suffered at the hands of the Osages and to improve their commercial opportunities. Established on both sides of Red River near present Spanish Fort, Texas, they had easy access to the French trading posts of Louisiana. Shortly after their southward migration, they encountered the Spaniards of Texas. It was these Europeans who called them Taovayas, possibly a Spanish rendition of the Indian village name heard by Coronado in 1541 and by La Harpe in 1719. And it was as Taovayas that the leading band of the Wichita people appeared in the history of the northern frontier of New Spain.

Although one of the twin villages on Red River was that of the Wichita band, the Taovayas were larger and more powerful and their name was generally applied to both villages. These villages, named San Bernardo and San Teodoro by Athanase de

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8 Joseph B. Thoburn, “The Northern Caddoan Peoples of Prehistoric Times and the Human Origin of the Natural Mounts, So Called, of Oklahoma and Neighbor- ing States,” manuscript in the Oklahoma Historical Society. The Caddoan (Wichita-speaking peoples) village site east of present Newkirk, in Kay County, was the location for work of an archeological expedition headed by Dr. Thoburn, under the auspices of the Oklahoma Historical Society, in the summer of 1926. It was during the work of this expedition that Dr. Thoburn brought to light evidences here of a trading post indicated on old foreign maps as “Fernandino” which was probably operated by the French about 1749, on the Arkansas River in Oklahoma (Thoburn, Ms., ibid.; Muriel H. Wright, “Pioneer Historian and Archeologist of the State of Oklahoma,” The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. XXIV, No. 4 [Winter, 1946-47], p. 404; also, historical data on Fernandino as Oklahoma’s first white settlement, in the feature article by George H. Shirk, under the title “Real Estate Deal No. 1” in the magazine section of The Daily Oklahoman for August 27, 1950, pp. 14-15).—Ed.

9 Wide variations resulted when Spaniards, Frenchmen, and Americans tried to spell the Indian band name, as in these examples: Tabas, Tabayas, Taboyages, Taguas, Taguyas, Tahuyaces, Tahuaves, Taobaianes, Taoballases, Taobayaces, Taobayais, Taobayas, Taobayases, Taovayash, Taorayaces, Taouiches, Taouaires, Taouiazes, Taouyayaches, Taovaianes, Tauaiches, Tauaires, Tauaiases, Tauaias, Tauayers, Tauayas, Tauoyayases, Tauyases, Tauiaries, Tavaias, Tavaiazes, Tavayas, Tavoiages, Tovyaches, Towehas, Touyaces, Towaiases, Toyas, Tobiaches, Towashack, Towash, Towe-ash, Towiaches. (The Taovayas are generally referred to as “Tawehash” in the early Indian records in Oklahoma. The Confederate treaty signed August 12, 1861, at the Wichita Agency [east of present Ft. Cobb, Oklahoma], concluded by Confederate Commissioner Albert Pike with nine Indian tribes and bands bears the name of “Isadowa, Principal Chief of the Wichitas” as one of the signers together with two other Wichita chiefs. The supplementary article to this treaty has this statement: “It being well known to all surrounding tribes and universally acknowledged that, from time immemorial, the Ta-wa-i-hash people of Indians, now called by white men the Wichitas, of whom the Hue-cos and Ta-hua-ca-ros are offshoots, possessed and inhabited, to the exclusion of all other tribes and bands of Indians, the whole country lying between the Red River and the False Washita. . . .” [War of the Rebellion Official Records, Series IV, Vol. I, pp. 546, 547].—Ed.)
Mézières in 1778, became strategically important in both the commercial and military affairs of the northern border lands. By virtue of their favorable location, their alliance with the Comanches, and their trade connections, the Taovayas prospered. Until the end of the Eighteenth Century they were the most numerous and powerful of the bands which the Spaniards called the Norteños, or Nations of the North, and were a force to be reckoned with by San Antonio, New Orleans, and Santa Fe. The Taovayas appeared in the Spanish literature of New Mexico as the Jumanos. In that province they were known largely as eastern allies of the Comanches, to be dreaded chiefly because they supplied that tribe with French guns and ammunition.

The Comanche Indians figured prominently in the story of the Taovayas after the French-sponsored alliance of the two groups in 1747. Nomadic hunters and warriors, they found the Taovayas village a convenient market for buffalo skins, horses, mules, and war captives. The Taovayas bartered their surplus agricultural produce to the Comanches as well as French trade goods.

The Waco, Tawakoni (or Touacara), Wichita, and Iscani were bands of Wichita people who maintained their identity during the period of Taovayan predominence. The smaller of the "Taovayas towns" at the Spanish Fort site on Red River was actually the Wichita village, and those two bands were joined there by the Iscanis on at least one occasion. The others were located in villages in northern Texas, where they usually operated in alliance with the Taovayas and Comanches. The Kichais were a band of similar character. The Caddo bands around the Natchitoches area, of whom the Cadodacho (or Kadohadacho) are considered the "real" Caddo, were linguistic relatives of the Wichita bands. While the relationship was not recognized, they were usually on good terms during the Eighteenth Century, and the Caddos acted as intermediaries between the Taovayas and the successive French, Spanish, and American officials at Natchitoches. The Taovayas and their friends collectively were called the Nations of the North, or Norteños, by the Spaniards.

The most dangerous enemies of the Taovayas were the Osages, who drove them south from the Arkansas to the Red River and played an important part in their ultimate downfall. The Taovayas in turn, in alliance with the Comanches and other Nations of the North, drove the Lipan Apaches south from Red River, threatening them with extinction and forcing them to seek refuge in Spanish missions. Their common hatred of the Apaches was the force which welded the northern Indians into the offensive alliance which produced their first conflict with the Spaniards of Texas.

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The only Europeans who dealt successfully with the Taovayas were the French traders, who continued their work long after the territory had passed to the Spanish crown. No efforts of Spanish officials, friars or soldiers could approach the success of that free-trade relationship, so firmly was it rooted in mutual self-interest. Its break-down under the restrictive Spanish commercial regulations, when the Taovayas had become dependent upon trade goods and while their northern enemies, the Osages, still had easy access to firearms, was a severe blow from which the Taovayas did not recover.

French traders in the Mississippi Valley strove from the beginning of the Eighteenth Century to establish trade relations with the Spaniards of New Mexico. The first requirement was peace on the intervening plains, in itself a threefold task. The French had first to establish alliances with the Indians along the proposed routes, then to make peace between warring tribes, and finally, to convince the western-most tribes that it would be more profitable to trade with the New Mexicans than to raid them. Success in the undertaking would open a lucrative trade with the Indians themselves as well as the New Mexicans.

The tributaries of the Mississippi River were the obvious highways to the Spanish province, and the villages of the semi-sedentary tribes on those streams formed ready-made trading posts. The Indians found French goods, especially guns and ammunition, so attractive that they could be induced to move to locations preferred by the voyageurs and even to consolidate their villages for commercial advantages. The Wichita people of the Arkansas Valley figured in such a scheme in 1702 when Louisiana's Governor Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville proposed to bribe the Panis to move a hundred leagues up the Arkansas to join the Mentos at a site accessible by water the year around, both to facilitate trade and, by strengthening French influence, to discourage Panis raids on New Mexico. The project was not accomplished.

Actual trade relations with the Wichita bands were initiated in 1719 by Benard de la Harpe and Claude Du Tisne, French agents who came from Louisiana and Illinois, respectively, to make peace pacts with the Indians and establish outposts from which to launch the New Mexico trade. La Harpe, travelling north from Natchi-
toches, found nine Wichita villages located together along the Arkansas above the Forks of the river in present eastern Oklahoma. The alliance which he proffered was debated in council by the Indians and accepted on September 4. It seemed to them that the French must be a very powerful nation if they could send such a small party as La Harpe’s all the way from Louisiana without fearing enemies along the way, but probably the most telling argument was their desire for French arms to use in warfare. Whatever their motives, they now entered into a mutually profitable relationship which was to endure throughout the period of French dominion.

When La Harpe inquired about the route to New Mexico, the chiefs admitted that the Arkansas was navigable in winter as far as the Spanish territory, but they refused to take him there because they feared the Padoucas (Comanches) who roamed the

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13 Bernard de la Harpe, “Relation du Voyage,” December 12, 1719, *ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 289 ff. The nine village names were recorded as Touecaras, Toayas, Caumu-ches, Aderos, Ousitas, Ascanis, Quataquois, Quiscapquiris, and Honenchas. Taoyas is generally equated with Taovayas.

(Touacaras [or variants Tabuscaros, Towoccaro, etc.] was the name by which the Tawakonis were known even after they were listed under the designation “Wichita and Affiliated Tribes” at the Wichita Agency, after their removal [1859] from Texas, and settlement on the Washita River in Oklahoma. The Touacaras or Tawakonis were leaders among the Wichita speaking groups from the time of La Harpe’s visit to their village on the Arkansas in 1719. Ochillas, the principal chief of the Tawakonis [1861], was long the recognized leader of the tribal group, and again a Tawakoni was the chief of the Wichitas as late as 1901. La Harpe’s designation “Ousitas” or “Wusitas” referred to the Wichitas, the name of which was carried west by the French from their contacts with the Choctaw speaking peoples of the Lower Mississippi Valley. This name, now Wichita, is from *wia-chito*, a Choctaw descriptive name [from the Choctaw words *wia*, “arbor” (brush arbor) and *chito*, “big”] meaning “big arbor,” referring to the grass thatched arbors and houses for which the Wichita peoples have been noted since their discovery. While the name Wichita, or a variant, is found in a few references to the Taovayas, or Tawehash, it was first officially applied to the tribe by the U. S. Commissioners in the Camp Holmes Treaty of 1835, made in council on the Canadian River in Oklahoma, at which time the tribe was living in country owned by the Choctaws. The Choctaw delegation headed by some of their noted chiefs formed one of the largest tribal groups in attendance at the Camp Holmes Council, and their position as owners of the country in which the Wichita lived apparently led the U. S. Commissioners to adopt this name in the treaty. The Towocarro, or Tawakoni, were the leaders of the Taovayas and the allied Comanche delegation to Camp Holmes where the old name Taovayas evidently was unheard and finally lost in the council proceedings, the treaty officially designating the tribe under the name *Wichitaw* [Muriel H. Wright, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma* (Norman, 1951), pp. 247, 248, 255, 256, 258, 259—Ed.]

14 La Harpe’s first expedition in Oklahoma was the subject of close study by the late Dr. Joseph B. Thoburn whose notes on La Harpe’s Journal and map showing the route of the expedition northeast from Red River to the Arkansas are a part of Dr. Anna Lewis’s article, “La Harpe’s First Expedition in Oklahoma, 1718-1719,” in *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. II, No. 4 (December, 1924), pp. 331-49. Dr. Lewis here presents La Harpe’s Journal translated from the French, found in Margry’s *Decouvertes et Etablissement des Francais.—Ed.*
region of the sources of the Canadian and Arkansas rivers. The Spaniards were said to frequent the same region for gold, furs and slaves.

La Harpe learned that his new allies lived in their villages only from March until October in order to cultivate their crops. Tobacco, which they dried and braided in great quantities, was one of the most important. For the rest of the year they became roving hunters, and they owned many beautiful horses, equipped with saddles and bridles.

When La Harpe left the villages the chiefs brought him farewell gifts, one of which was an eight-year-old slave. The Taovayas chief apologized for having no slaves to present, saying that if La Harpe had come only a month sooner he could have given him seventeen war prisoners which unfortunately had since been eaten at a public feast. This is the first of several early reports of cannibalism in the Wichita villages.

Coincident with La Harpe’s journey to the Canadian in September, 1719, was Claude Du Tisne’s expedition from Illinois to the Arkansas Valley, where he encountered Wichita villages which he called Panis. The Osages, whom he met first, tried to dissuade him from visiting the Panis because they were loath to see their enemies acquire French guns. Failing to sway Du Tisne from his purpose, the Osages told the Panis that the Frenchmen had come to catch them for slaves, and the Du Tisne party was received with hostile suspicion until he convinced the Panis of his peaceful intent. Then they readily consented to an alliance.

Du Tisne thought the Panis a very brutal people, but he found that they could readily be appeased with guns, highly prized articles of which they had only six. The village which Du Tisne first visited comprised one hundred and thirty houses and two hundred warriors. It lay forty leagues west of the Osages, on the bank of a small stream twelve leagues west of the Arkansas. Around the village lay a high prairie and to the southwest rose a forest which was very useful to the Indians. One league northwest, on the banks of the same stream, was another village, stronger than the first, and several other Panis villages were said to be located farther west and northwest. In the two villages which Du Tisne visited were some three hundred horses which the Panis valued so greatly that they were reluctant to part with them. Du Tisne

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16 Voyage Fait par M. Du Tisne en 1719, chez les Missouris pour aller aux Panissass, Extrait de la Relation de Bénard de la Harpe. Margry, Vol. VI, pp. 311-312.
17 Claude Du Tisne to Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, Kaskaskias, November 22, 1719, ibid., p. 314.
traded goods to them in return for two horses, a mule which bore a Spanish brand, and an old silver cup. Inquiring about the source of the Spanish articles, he learned that the Panis had been to the Spanish settlements in years past, but that the powerful Comanches now barred the way.

The Panis vigorously opposed Du Tisne's plan to go to the big Comanche camp which they said was five days west, for they too wished to keep French guns out of the hands of their enemies as long as possible. Despite their protests Du Tisne visited the Comanches whom he found after six days of travel. They treated him kindly, and he returned convinced that if the French could conciliate the Panis and the Comanches, they would gain the route to New Mexico which they desired.

In 1724 Etienne Veniard de Bourgmont, charged with the responsibility of broadening French control of the Plains tribes, sponsored a peace meeting of Otoes, Osages, Iowas, Kansas, Panis, Mahas, Missouris and Illinois with the Comanches at a Kansas village. But French activity in the Arkansas Valley lagged and the peace achieved by Bourgmont was not extended south to the Wichita villages for some twenty years. When the Mallet brothers Pierre and Paul, blazed the trail from Illinois to Santa Fe and made their way back from New Mexico to Louisiana on the Arkansas River in 1739, they found no French activity above the forks of the Arkansas.

French interest in the Arkansas route to New Mexico was renewed by the report of the Mallet brothers. The French and Spanish crowns were then allied under the first Family Compact and good trade relations between their colonies seemed quite possible if only the Indians could be controlled. The ambitious Louisiana officials failed to realize that the Spanish colonial officials would not sanction the French traders, regardless of their respective home governments, because they dreaded above all else a commerce which would place guns in the hands of the Plains Indians.

In 1741 Fabry de la Bruyere was dispatched from New Orleans by Governor Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville to follow up the Mallets by exploring the Arkansas and making alliances with any unknown tribes that he encountered.

One of his principal errands was to exhort the Osages, Panis and Comanches to quit attacking New Mexico. Difficulties along

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18 Etienne Veniard de Bourgmont, Relation du Voyage de la Riviere Missouri, sur le Haut de Celle des Arkansas et du Missouri aux Padoucas, June 25, 1724—le Haut de Celle, November 1, 1724, ibid., VI, p. 312 ff.
the route and dissension within the party caused the abandonment of the expedition in 1742 before anything could be accomplished, but Fabry's report furnishes an approximate date for the southward migration of part of the Wichita people, proving that most of the related bands preceded the Taovayas-Wichita contingent into the Red River region. An Osage war party visited his camp, seeking a Panis band called Mentos who formerly lived on the Arkanasa, but had recently moved south. The Mentos were then located near the Cadodacho on the lower Red River, where they were counted allies of the Caddo bands, as were also the Tawakonis and Kichais.

By 1749 the Wichita people remaining in the Arkansas Valley were concentrated in two adjacent villages on the upper Arkansas River in present Kay County, Oklahoma. Several French traders who had continued west from those villages with Comanche guides were arrested in Taos, New Mexico, at the annual mercantile fair, by Spanish officials who were alarmed by the increasing traffic in firearms on the Plains. From the interrogation of men arrested in Taos in 1749 and 1752 emerged the story of French activities among their Indian allies.

The Panipiquets, as the French called the Wichita people who remained on the Arkansas River, were described as warlike cannibals, distinguished by their tattooed faces. Their two large, neighboring villages, in which they lived throughout the year, were strongholds composed of numerous grass huts, which were built close together and surrounded by moated and loopholed fortifications of post and earth. Extensive fields of corn, beans, and pumpkins lay outside the villages.

All of the five hundred men of the Panipiquets used firearms, although not very skillfully, and the French furnished them an ample supply of guns and ammunition. The other trade goods which

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21 "January 24, 1742, he (Fabry) witnessed the arrival in his camp of a party of 35 Osages who were going on the warpath against the Mentos, whom these savages call also Panis, who used to be on the Arkansas River, above the Forks and about 25 leagues above the Panis noirs, from which they withdrew on the Saint-Andrew River, where one still sees their old village, and for the last 4 or 5 years near the Cadodacho where they are now."—Fabry de la Bruyere, Extrait des Lettres (du Fabry de la Bruyere) a l'Occasion du Voyages Projete a Santa-Fe, ibid., p. 474.

22 Ibid., p. 483.

23 The testimonies of the prisoners, Luis del Fierro, Felippe Sandoval, Pedro Sartre, Luis Tuesi, and Jean Chapuis, were in substantial agreement on the following information. They appear in these two documents: Autos fjos sre averiguar que rumbo han traído tres franceses que llegaron al Pueblo de taos con la Nan Cuimanche q benian a hazer sus aconstum brados resgattes, and Testimonio de los Autos fjos a Consulta del Goveor del nuexo Mexico sobre haver llegado dos franceses cargados de efectos que conduisan de la Nueva Orleans, Archivo General y Publica (Mexico City), Provincias Internas, Tomo XXIV (William Edward Dunn Transcripts, Library of the University of Texas). Hereinafter cited as Autos de los Franceses.
they desired most were vermillion, hats, cloth, knives, and miscellaneous hardware. One of their most cherished possessions, given them by the French commandant in the name of his king, was a French flag, which they kept in their village with a great deal of care and affection.

The Panipiquets were very well disposed toward the French and since 1747 had been allies of the Comanches, an arrangement accomplished by French mediation. That alliance had made possible the safe passage of French merchants over the Plains. The Comanches still did not go to the French colonies, however, and traded with them only through the Panipiquets. The French traders came up the Arkansas River to the Panipiquet villages in their canoes, and returned to the Arkansas Post laden with skins, suet and buffalo robes. The Panipiquets conducted them from villages by land on trading expeditions to the Comanches. The merchants who were arrested in New Mexico sought the permission of the Spanish officials to proceed regularly to that province with Comanche guides, but the New Mexican officials would not countenance a trading arrangement which would provide firearms to the Plains Indians.

Even though the attempt to establish a legal French commerce with New Mexico failed, the Panipiquets enjoyed an unprecedented prosperity. Taking advantage of their location at the head of navigation on the Arkansas and near the easternmost range of the Comanches, they had become important middlemen in the expanding commerce of the Plains. But their good fortune was short lived.

About 1752 the French and Indian trade network was further extended when the Comanches, through the mediation of the Panipiquets made peace with the Pananas (modern Pawnees). The French traders then projected a trade route directly from the Illinois country up the Missouri River to the Pananas, where they could buy horses and proceed to Santa Fe with Comanche guides. This meant that the Panipiquets would be largely by-passed in their Arkansas River location, for the Missouri was a more convenient highway for the Illinois traders. Meanwhile, the Louisiana traders were trying to open the Red River route for more direct passage to New Mexico. As the Arkansas route dwindled in importance activity lagged at the Arkansas Post, the early trading establishment near the juncture of the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers from which the French had carried on much of the Wichita trade.

Moreover, the French guns proved to be a mixed blessing, because the hostile Osages were more skillful in their use and owned more of them than did the Panipiquets. The continuous damages which they suffered at the hands of the Osages and the diminution of the Arkansas trade forced the Panipiquets to move. They mi-

24 Ibid.
grated south to Red River about 1757, driving out the Lipan Apaches who lived there. The statement of a prisoner whom the Taovayás released in 1765 is the only information concerning their removal, but it is quite possible that the Louisiana traders encouraged the move, since it operated as much to their advantage as to that of the Panipiquets themselves.25

On Red River the Panipiquets established twin villages across the stream from each other at the western edge of the Cross Timbers.26 There, at the eastern limits of the Comanche range, they resumed their role of middlemen, and their villages became the farthest western resort of the traders from the post of Natchitoches, Louisiana. Strengthened by alliance with their kinsmen who had already moved south, and cooperating more closely than ever before with the Comanches, the Panipiquets could now prey on the Lipan Apaches just as they themselves had been harried by the Osages in the north.

The Taovayás emerged on the scene in Spanish Texas as warriors engaged in a full-scale offensive. It was in pursuit of the Lipan Apaches that they invaded the Spanish frontier in Texas, abruptly introducing themselves as a new factor in Spain's control of that northern province. The Spaniards became involved in the Indian wars caused by the general southward migration of the Wichita and Comanche bands without realizing what had happened to them. The southward drive of the Norteños pushed the Lipan Apaches into Spain's Texan outposts. Such was the strength of the Panipiquets with their French firearms that the Apaches were forced to seek a European alliance of their own to combat their enemies. They necessarily turned to the Spaniards in Texas.

Spain's strict prohibition of the distribution of guns to the Indians precluded any possibility that she might arm the Apaches so that they could fight on equal terms with their enemies. The alternative for the hard-pressed Apaches was to place themselves under Spanish protection by accepting mission life. The friars of the Texas frontier had long hoped to convert the Apaches, so they welcomed the change in the Apache attitude without making a very critical examination of their motives. When, in the spring of 1757, the Apaches requested a religious establishment, Father Alonso Giraldo de Terreros led in founding a mission for them on the San Saba River. To protect the friars and their neophytes, the presidio of San Luis de las Amarillas was built nearby and encharged to Colonel Diego Ortiz Parilla.27

25 Antonio Trevino, Testimonio, August 13, 1765, Bexar Archives, Library of the University of Texas.
26 The village sites were at present Spanish Fort in Montague County, Texas, and just across the river in Jefferson county, Oklahoma. (Thoburn and Wright, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 43).
Father Terreros’ wealthy brother in Mexico liberally endowed the mission, so that it was richer in worldly goods than were most frontier religious establishments. The Apaches boasted widely to other tribes of the splendor of their mission and the power of their new allies, doing everything in their power to make the Spaniards seem to be actively leagued with them. They probably thought to intimidate the Norteños but, contrary to their expectations, such braggadocio cost the Apaches dearly. It drew the jealous wrath of the Nations of the North upon the San Saba settlement, and the Apaches never found mission life there the haven which they had imagined.

The Apaches slowly gathered at San Saba in 1757, but the friars found it impossible to make them settle there. The cause of their extreme restlessness that summer, even more than their native reluctance to assume the trappings of civilization, was the rumor that the Nations of the North had formed an alliance and were mounting an attack to destroy the new asylum of the Apaches.

Of the northern Indians the Texan Spaniards then knew only the easternmost, located in the Nacogdoches mission area, and it was probably from the Apaches that they first learned of the newcomers on the upper Red River. The latter, known to the French as Panipiquets and to most Indians as Taovayas, were already leaders among the Nations of the North.

The Spaniards were precipitately introduced to their northern neighbors on March 16, 1758, when more than two thousand mounted warriors attacked the San Saba mission and presidio. Most of the Nations of the North and the Comanches were represented in the attacking force. Well equipped with guns and ammunition and ably led by a Comanche chief, they all but destroyed the mission. Fathers Terreros and Santiesteban and eight other persons were killed in the raid, the mission was sacked, and the Apaches were frightened away from the site.

The Spaniards had either to punish the raiders or forfeit the respect and confidence of the Apaches and the other mission Indians in Texas. The commandant of the San Saba presidio, Colonel Parrilla offered to lead a punitive expedition against the Nations of the North, and his project was approved by the council which met at Mexico City to consider the problem.

The prominent role played by French guns in the San Saba raid directed Spanish suspicion to the French Louisianans. Since

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first aroused by the activities of La Salle on the Texas coast and, particularly, since the later commercial overtures of St. Denis, the Spaniards had viewed French presence on the Texas border with jealous alarm. The Spanish officials accused the French of instigating the attack on San Saba.\footnote{Ibid., p. 90; Allen, "Parrilla Expedition," p. 70.}

Indignantely the French authorities repudiated the suggestion, pointing out that nothing could be more contrary to their persistent policy of seeking to establish friendly commercial relations with Spanish Texas. They fully agreed that the San Saba culprits should be punished and claimed that, in deference to Spanish opinion, their traders had withdrawn from the offending villages. In token of his good will the commandant of Natchitoches, Césaire de Blanc, kept the San Antonio authorities informed on developments among the Nations of the North. Through De Blanc the Spaniards learned that some of the silver articles from the San Saba mission were traded to Frenchmen at the Tawakoni village on the Sabine, but that most of the valuable loot was in the village of the Taovayas, who, because of their superior numbers, had obtained most of the spoils.\footnote{Césaire de Blanc to Governor Jacinto de Barrios y Jáuregui, Natchitoches, August 16, 1768, in Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de México, (Cunningham Transcripts, University of Texas).}

De Blanc tried in vain to convince the Spaniards of the futility of their proposed campaign in the north. Conceding the justice of the Spaniards' desire for reprisal, he argued nevertheless that such a course could only lead to a prolonged warfare in which the Spaniards must operate at a disadvantage. The Nations of the North and the Comanches were even then inciting each other to a renewed attack on San Saba, and a Spanish expedition, however justifiable, would only precipitate a series of deadly raids on the frontier. De Blanc warned that even among Spanish mission Indians there were accomplices of the Norteños, who would strike when and where the Spaniards least expected. In the event of warfare in their home territory, the Indians could simply vanish into the vast open spaces, to dart about like wild beasts and at last fall upon the Spaniards when they least anticipated an attack.

De Blanc's tender of his good offices as mediator was sincere, for it stemmed from his desire to keep the frontier at peace in order to prevent a disruption of commerce. But the Spanish officials spurned his interference. His realistic arguments as to the impossibility of winning a war with the Nations of the North and the dire consequences for Texas which must accompany failure carried no weight with the angry Spaniards. Parrilla's faction pressed for a chance to vindicate Spanish arms. The Apaches declared that they could not settle at the mission until their enemies were subdued, so the missionaries joined in the clamor for a northern
campaign. Finally, a new raid on San Saba presidio, followed by reports from Nacogdoches that the Nations of the North were preparing a concerted offensive against San Antonio as well as San Saba, convinced the Spaniards that a vigorous policy against the Norteños was imperative.  

Parrilla was an able soldier who had seen service in both Europe and New Spain. He had been governor of the provinces of Sonora and Sinaloa, and had learned something of Indian warfare in campaigns against the Apaches of the Gila region. The encounter with the Norteños at San Saba had inspired in him a healthy respect for the new enemies: "These northern Indians, treacherous in their conduct and arrogant in their preparations, so magnificent and numerous, are unique among the tribes of the Indies. . . . They are similar to the Moors in their manner of attack."

Parrilla's estimate of the enemy indicated the need for a large regular force for the northern campaign, but the inadequate frontier garrisons could spare only a few soldiers. The Spaniards finally mustered a makeshift army of five hundred men, largely new to Indian warfare: one hundred thirty-nine presidial and officers, two hundred forty-one militia, thirty Tlascalteco Indians, and ninety mission Indians accompanied by the Franciscan Fathers Acayos and Pelaez. A herd of more than sixteen hundred head of horses, mules, and cattle considerably impeded their march.

Intelligence from the French and the Indians of the Nacogdoches region showed the Nations of the North concentrated somewhere north of the Brazos River. The military council at San Antonio in January 1759, recommended that only the Wichita, Tawakoni, Tonkawa, and Iscani bands be punished because the Comanches were too far away in unknown territory and were too fierce for Parrilla's small force to tackle. Accordingly, in August, 1759, the expedition struck a northeasterly direction from San Antonio. Parrilla's own official report furnishes the particulars of the campaign.

Just north of the Brazos River on October 2 the Spaniards surprised a Tonkawa village where they killed several warriors and took one hundred forty-nine captives. Using the prisoners as guides, the expedition pushed north toward the Taovayas village on Red River. On October 7 some sixty or seventy mounted Indians attacked the group. One determined charge by the Spaniards

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85 Parrilla to the Viceroy, April 8, 1758, quoted in Allen, "Parrilla Expedition," p. 55.
86 Bolton, Texas, p. 90; Allen, "Parrilla Expedition," p. 60.
87 Diego Ortiz Parrilla, Testimonio de Campana contra Indios Norteños, October 7, 1759, in A.G.I., Audiencia de Mexico (Dunn Transcripts, loc. cit.).
seemed to disperse the attackers, who fled into a forest. The Spanish cavalrymen following them closely, emerged abruptly onto a clear plain, just in time to see the Indians disappear into a fort on the bank of a large river. The Indians, safe within the stockade, laughed tauntingly at the Spaniards, challenging them to enter if they could.

Parrilla saw that the fortified Taovayas village to which the Tonkawa prisoners had led him was a more formidable stronghold than the Spaniards had anticipated. The Indians occupied an enviable defensive position. Their village of high, oval-shaped huts was surrounded by both a stockade and a moat. The winding road which led along the bank from the village to Red River was protected in the same manner, and a sizeable force of Indians was stationed at the ford to forestall attack from that direction. A corral inside the stockade secured their livestock. Just beyond the village loomed the tents of their Comanche allies. As the Spaniards approached, the inhabitants of huts outside the palisade scurried into the fort, and Indians armed with guns manned their posts in front of the stockade.

While the Spaniards paused to consider their strategy, the Indians took the initiative. They made repeated sallies from the fort under the leadership of a daring Taovayas chief who finally fell in the battle. Each mounted warrior had a companion on foot who kept a reserve supply of loaded guns ready for him. Thus they kept the Spaniards under constant fire for about four hours, never allowing them to gain the offensive. Indian reinforcements continued to arrive all afternoon and well into the night, when they stopped fighting to hold a great firelight celebration inside the fort.

One of Parrilla's worst problems was desertion. Many of his raw recruits and all of his Apaches were so frightened that they fled the battlefield. The two cannons which the Spaniards had expected to weigh heavily in their favor were so ineffectual that the Indians jeered at their volleys, adding to the demoralization of Parrilla's men. At the insistence of his remaining troops, the commander ordered a retreat that night. In the hasty withdrawal the Spaniards lost the two cannons, dangerous trophies which they were unable to retrieve from the Taovayas for nineteen years.

Parrilla blamed his failure on French intervention. The Taovayas stockade flaunted a French flag, the Indian warriors were well supplied with French weapons, and the Spanish soldiers had clearly heard a fife and drum within the fort. Emphasizing those damning evidences of French complicity, Parrilla contended that the well-built fort, the excellent strategy, and the disciplined military action of the Indians could be explained only in terms of French coaching. 38

38 ibid.
The Spaniards did not realize that the materials seen by Parrilla were the usual currency of long-established French trading practices rather than the implements of a conspiracy against the Spanish control of Texas. Nor could they believe that good war strategy might be of Indian as well as European origin.

After the failure of Parrilla’s punitive expedition in 1759, some of the Spaniards realized the truth of de Blané’s argument that the Norteños would in all likelihood remain the masters of the northern prairies and that new conciliatory techniques would be required to restore peace. Spanish colonials divided into two bitterly opposing groups: one faction wished to continue the attempt to subdue the Nations of the North by force; the other, convinced of the improbability of a military defeat of the Norteños, thought that it would be wiser to make allies of them. The former argued that the Apache mission of San Saba should be continued, regardless of its primary role in causing the northern war. The latter wanted to abandon San Saba and even to go to war against the Apaches if necessary to win the friendship of the Nations of the North. The Apaches, they contended, obviously wanted military protection rather than religion, and the Norteños, if allied with the Spaniards, would be powerful agents for the extension of Spanish control in the north.39

Parrilla led the faction which demanded that the Apache mission be continued and that another attempt be made to conquer the Norteños although he insisted that a large, highly-trained and well-equipped army would be necessary to defeat them. He preferred to continue the missionary effort among the Apaches because he was convinced that the Nations of the North would never make trustworthy allies. The continual raids of the Norteños on the San Saba establishment and other frontier settlements tended to support this argument. He proposed to discourage raids at San Saba by removing the livestock to San Antonio and increasing the presidial garrison to protect the mission until a decisive campaign could be launched against the Nations of the North.40

The group which opposed the projected military solution resorted to the services of unarmed friars for the restoration of peace. Their leading proponent was Father Joseph de Calahorra y Saenz, a veteran missionary at Nacogdoches who enjoyed the confidence of most of the Indians in northeastern Texas. The Tawakoniis came to him repeatedly in the spring of 1760 to ask forgiveness for the San Saba raid and to plead for a restoration of peace with the Spaniards. They even offered to return to him the horses which they had stolen from the mission in years past if he would

39 Bolton, Texas, p. 91.
40 Parrilla, Carta Consultiva, San Antonio, November 18, 1759, in A.G.I., Audiencia de México, (Dunn Transcripts, loc. cit.).
intercede with San Antonio in their behalf, and they begged him to come to their village for a peace parley.  

Calahorra, having obtained the permission of Texas' Governor Angel de Martos y Navarette, went to the Tawakoni village in September, 1760.  

He found the Tawakoni and Iscani villages located side by side, divided only by a street. The two towns, which together comprised forty-six large households, could muster two hundred fifty warriors. Despite their peaceful overtures, they were building a fort at their Sabine River villages comparable to the Taovayas establishment on Red River.

The Tawakonis told the priest that the Taovayas lived five days farther on toward New Mexico, in a village very similar to their own. That they had six hundred warriors, more than twice as many as the Tawakoni-Iscani group, helped to explain their dominant position in the northern league.

A Taovayas delegation came to the Tawakoni village to treat with Calahorra. They were so eager to make peace that they offered to restore the two cannons which Parrilla had lost, and they seemed to react favorably to the friar's request that they return their Spanish captives. Calahorra learned that the Taovayas were then at war with New Mexican Apaches whom they called Pelones, and that they could easily conduct him to that province in fifteen days. The Taovayas left only after securing Calahorra's promise to visit them in the following spring.

The Indians requested that Calahorra found a mission among them, and agreed to live under Spanish law as a condition for its establishment. Armed with that promise, Calahorra advocated to the government that the San Saba mission and presidio be moved to the Tawakoni village, for he believed that the Apaches could never be Christianized and only feigned a desire for conversion in order to be protected in Spanish missions. The Norteños seemed to him far more promising as potential converts and allies. Too canny to rely upon religious arguments alone, Calahorra stressed the strategic value of a post among the Nations of the North. If further military campaigns were almost certainly doomed to defeat, the Spaniards must cultivate the friendship of the Norteños in order to counteract the increasing influence of the French among them. At the Taovayas village there were already said to be five houses occupied by French hunters. Calahorra hoped to offset that potentially malicious force by winning the Indians over to Spanish mission life.

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41 Fray Joseph de Calahorra y Saenz to Governor Angel de Martos y Navarette, Nacogdoches, May 26, 1760, in A.G.I., Audiencia de México (Dunn Transcripts, loc. cit.).

42 Calahorra, Diario del Viaje, September 16-October 24, 1760, A.G.I., Audiencia de México (Dunn Transcripts, loc. cit.).

43 Calahorra to Governor Martos, Nacogdoches, October 18, 1761, in A.G.I., Audiencia de México, (Dunn Transcripts, loc. cit.).
In asking for peace with the Spaniards, the Nations of the North probably hoped to secure another connection as pleasant and profitable as the French trade alliance which had been their only prolonged association with Europeans up to that time. Another motive must have been their jealously of the Apache mission, which prompted them to seek a sanctuary for themselves. Whatever their reasons, however, the negotiations failed.

Calahorra’s recommendation for the transfer of the San Saba mission to the north was rejected. Parrilla’s steady insistence that the Nations of the North could not be trusted prevailed over the priest’s arguments. Furthermore, according to a modern historian, the Apaches, alarmed by the news of Spanish talks with the Nortenos, undertook a systematic campaign to prevent a peaceful settlement. They raided in the south, leaving objects of northern origin along the trail; then they raided in the north, leaving Spanish articles along the way. The Spaniards and Nortenos soon distrusted each other more than ever.44 From 1762 to 1769 San Saba sustained frequent attacks from the Comanches and Nortenos, who usually made them in pursuit of the Apaches. Captain Rabago y Teran of San Saba, whose championship of the Apaches had been partially responsible for the rejection of the northerners’ peace overtures,45 proposed another campaign against the Taovayas fort in 1766. He estimated that a successful expedition would require one thousand men. The matter was deferred until the Marques de Rubi could complete his tour of presidial inspection, and by 1767 Indian raids were almost a daily occurrence at San Saba.

Rubi’s inspection of Texas in August, 1767, was only one portion of a general survey which had been ordered by the crown with a view to the comprehensive military reorganization of New Spain, a step necessitated by Spain’s defensive expansion into Louisiana and California. Rubi’s report formed the basis of the policies instituted by Teodoro de Croix in 1776 with the organization of the so-called Provinces Internas, the interior, or more accurately the northern, provinces of New Spain.46 Rubi’s recommendations on Indian policy marked a turning point in the official Spanish attitude toward the Nations of the North. Advocating a reversal of the previous stand, he prescribed a relentless war of extermination against the Apaches, whom he regarded as the root of Texas’ Indian troubles. He commended the Nortenos for their good disposition, recalling that they had never attacked Spanish dominions

44 Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Texas and the North Mexican States (San Francisco, 1890), Vol. I, p. 401.
until provoked by the Apaches, and then only for just revenge on their traditional enemies.47

Another factor in the modification of Spanish views of the Nations of the North was the return of Antonio Treviño, a Spanish lieutenant who was released in 1765 after two years of captivity in the Taovayas village.48 Treviño gave the Spaniards their first eye-witness account of the leading northern village, and his official report49 may have helped to convince the Spaniards that an alliance with the Norteños would be wiser than continued hostility. The following information is derived from Treviño’s testimony.

Although the Taovayas were guilty of extremely cruel treatment of many prisoners, they admired bravery above all other virtues. Treviño’s courageous stand at the time that he was captured in a skirmish between a Taovayas party and a Spanish frontier patrol so impressed the Taovayas chief that he took Treviño back to the Red River village, where the Indians cared for him until he recovered from his severe wounds. Treviño lived as a member of the tribe for two years. He and his captors regarded each other with a great deal of affection but his homesickness became so apparent that the Taovayas, declaring that he had never been considered a prisoner, released him and escorted him safely back to San Antonio. The intimate knowledge of the Taovayas which Treviño gained during his captivity made him a valuable liaison agent between that tribe and Spanish officialdom when diplomatic relations were established a few years later. Treviño, informed the government that the Taovayas village fortress from which the Nations of the North had repulsed Parrilla could withstand a much stronger attack than any which the Spaniards were then able to mount. A very deep ditch about four paces in front of the palisade ensured that no one could reach it on horseback. Four great subterranean houses inside the stockade would, in the event of a siege, hold all of the villagers who were unable to participate in the fighting. Most disturbing of all was the news that the Taovayas had learned from French traders how to operate the two cannons which they had captured from Parrilla and that those two pieces were now mounted in the fort.

If a military expedition against them seemed futile, so did a revival of Calahorra’s plan to convert them to mission life. Game was abundant around the village and its inhabitants made frequent buffalo hunts. Their extensive fields yielded far more agricultural produce than the villagers needed. Since the principle attraction of the missions to most Indians was a dependable food

48 Ibid., p. 108, n. 38.
49 Trevino, Testimonio, August 13, 1765.
supply, it was unlikely that the prosperous Taovayas would be interested in mission life.

A brisk trade with the French in buffalo robes, Apache slaves, and horses and mules stolen from the Spanish settlements assured the Taovayas a plentiful supply of ammunition, guns, and other manufactured goods. Raids on Spanish settlements and Apache camps had become excellent business for the Taovayas.

The only enemies who seriously threatened Taovayan well-being were the Osages of the north, who had driven them south to Red River some eight years before. Their alliance with the fierce, numerous Comanches substantially increased the war threat of the Taovayas, and their village had recently been augmented by another related band. In addition to the Wichita village, which had been located just across the stream north of the Taovayas since the first years at the Red River site, there was now an Iscani village ad-joining the Taovayas town on the south. The Iscanis apparently had moved to the Taovayas village from the Tawakoni village on the Sabine River where Calahorra had visited them.

Treviño’s first-hand information on the strength of the Taovayas obviously argued the desirability of conciliating them. At the same time, the considerate treatment which he had received at their hands somewhat discredited Parrilla’s old argument that the Norteños could not be trusted.

Some hope for improved relations with the Nations of the North was born in December, 1767, when a party of Taovayas and Comanches appeared at San Saba. Although they intended to fight any Apaches whom they found, they requested a peace parley with the Spaniards. The presidial garrison refused to let them inside the fort for fear of treachery, but they gave them presents of clothes, brown sugar loaves, tortillas, and trinkets. On their part, the visiting Indians allowed a supply train to enter the presidio unmolested and left in good spirits.

The garrison of San Saba looked forward to a respite in their long war, but sporadic horse-stealing raids by the northerners continued all month, and on January 2, 1768, there was another attempt to take the presidio. An Indian captive told the Spaniards that the French were encouraging the Taovayas, Tawakonis, Tonkawas, and Comanches to harass the garrison. Tales that the mission had rich stores and that its Apache residents enjoyed such luxuries as silver plate had led to the new attempt to sack San Saba.

The Rubi recommendations and the Treviño report might have led to marked changes in the Indian policy of Texas, but they came

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50 Ibid.
too late. Spain had acquired Louisiana and the French inhabitants of the new crown province henceforth overshadowed the Texans in Spain's relations with the border tribes. By their earlier failure to act upon Calahorra's recommendations, the Texans had forfeited their only opportunity to win the Nations of the North, an expensive mistake which threw those frontier tribes permanently into the Louisiana camp.