Matthew Babcock

German-Comanche Diplomacy on the Texas Frontier: Assessing the Meusebach-Comanche Treaty of 1847

I

On January 22, 1847, a pack train of forty men, consisting of a company of mounted Germans, five Mexicans, and Anglo-American surveyors left Fredericksburg, Texas and headed north for the Comanchería, or Comanche country. After several days of arduous travel over steep limestone ridges, the party, led by German colonization agent John O. Meusebach (1812-97), passed through the game-abundant upper Pedernales and Llano River valleys into Comanche territory. Along the way, they picked up three Shawnee warriors, whom Meusebach hired to hunt for them. Based on their tracking, the Shawnees let Meusebach know that the Comanches were continuously watching them. On high alert, the company chose their campsites carefully and tied up their horses tightly.

As the men were about to break camp at the mouth of Beaver Creek on February 5, a delegation of eight Comanches, led by Penateka (Honey Eater) Chief Ketumsee (c. 1794-c. 1865) bearing a white flag approached them. After sending out his interpreter Lorenzo de Rozas, who had been a Comanche captive as a child, to greet them, Meusebach soon followed on horseback. Ketumsee explained that his people had been observing Meusebach's party since they had forded the Llano River, thought that the Germans desired to wage war on them, and asked them to clarify their purpose. After Meusebach assured Ketumsee that his people had only peaceful intentions, the local Comanche band leader promised to summon the Western Comanche head chiefs to a council at his camp on the lower San Saba River to hear Meusebach's proposal for a treaty of peace.[1]

As the indigenous legal scholar Robert A. Williams, Jr. (Lumbee) has argued, Native peoples strongly believe that successful treaty relationships are built on a foundation of trust, which then lead to healthy social relationships.[2] The treaty councils and Meusebach-Comanche Treaty of 1847 that followed are significant because they produced a lasting peace agreement based on reciprocal German and Comanche trust and respect. Anglo Texans routinely followed most of the same treaty protocols as the Germans in their own diplomatic relations with Comanches, from gift-giving to smoking the calumet pipe. By the 1840s, however, treachery and reciprocal violence had damaged their relationship, which meant these ceremonies and the treaties they produced held less meaning for both parties. The fact that Germans sought permission from Comanches before settling on their land places them in sharp contrast to most Anglo Texans of the era. The clearest sign of the importance of this treaty, however, is that Germans and Comanches still honor the Comanche-Meusebach Treaty in Fredericksburg today.

A number of scholars of German settlement in Texas have examined the Meusebach-Comanche Treaty of 1847 previously. The vast majority of these scholars, beginning with Rudolph Leopold Biesele and Moritz Tiling, and continuing with his granddaughter Irene Marschall King, who wrote the first biography of Meusebach, have given sole credit to John O. Meusebach for the success of the treaty.[3] According to Tiling, "We cannot but admire the courage of von Meusebach who, with a few followers, penetrated into the unknown territory, but must also give due credit to the able and skilled manner in which he dealt with the ferocious and warlike Comanches, inducing them to sign a treaty." Tiling concludes that this is "the most important pioneer work of the Germans in Texas."[4] Without question Meusebach deserves some of the credit, perhaps even most of the credit, for initiating and negotiating this treaty, but the Comanches and even some Anglo Texans also played an important role.

More recently, undergraduate student Karl Hoerig has argued that "the treaty could only have been of minor importance" because just six Comanche leaders signed it, and the majority of their people were not bound by it. According to Hoerig, scholars have exaggerated the extent of German-Indian peaceful relations into a popular myth and "evidence of peaceful contact after 1850 is almost nonexistent."[5] Hoerig is correct that Indian raids and attacks on German settlements increased in the 1850s; however, the precise Comanche role in those developments is unclear. His contention that the treaty was unimportant holds less weight. First, it was signed by Penateka Chief Santa Anna (?-1849), a prominent leader of the 1840s previously known as Pia Kusa, or "Big Leggings," who Hoerig himself notes "had considerable influence over the Penateka Comanches in the area."[6] And second, it was foundational

both for German-Comanche relations and German settlement in the Texas Hill Country. Indeed, as Daniel J. Gelo and Christopher J. Wickham have shown, following this treaty, German settler Emil Kriewitz (1822-1902) produced a German-Comanche glossary and Comanche cultural notes that were published by cartographer Heinrich Berghaus in Germany in the early 1850s.[7] This suggests that some Germans in Texas and Germany had a genuine interest in Comanche language and culture.

Although Meusebach had no intention of making war on the Comanches, more than a simple desire to make peace had brought his party, laden with three wagons, to the Comanchería. Meusebach came as Commissioner-General of the *Adelsverein*, whose official name was the *Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas,* or Society for the Protection of German Immigrants to Texas. This organization was originally founded in the spring of 1842 at Biebrich on the Rhine River by a group of German noblemen for the purpose of securing land in Texas for Germans and other European immigrants and providing for their welfare. In June 1844, the *Verein*, or Society, purchased a 3.8 million-acre land grant from Henry Francis Fisher and Burchard Miller that lay between the Colorado and Llano Rivers in Texas. Fisher and Miller had originally obtained the land from Republic of Texas President Sam Houston in February 1842. But when Fisher sold the tract, which he had never explored, he made no mention of the fact that it lay within the boundaries of the Comanche homeland or how isolated it was from the coast and other Texas settlements.[8]

Promised 320 acres of land if married and 120 acres if single, German immigrants flocked to the Texas ports of Galveston and Indianola, or Carlshafen, with more than 7,000 arriving from 1844 to 1847. With so many arrivals, it was crucial that a permanent place of settlement be determined for the immigrants. But Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels (1812-75), Meusebach's predecessor as Commissioner-General, found that the period of occupancy for the Society's first land grant had expired and could not be renewed and that the Comanche presence and sheer distance from the Gulf of Mexico made occupancy of the second grant impossible. Needing to act quickly, Solms chose a beautiful place along the banks of the Comal and Guadalupe Rivers between San Antonio and Austin, known as "Las Fontanas," or "the fountains" or springs. Solms purchased this tract of land from Juan Varamendi and Rafael Garza for $1,111, while immigrants were already heading inland from Carlshafen. After leading the first group of immigrants to the banks of the Comal River himself on March 21, 1845, Solms named the settlement New Braunfels, after Braunfels, Germany, the ancestral home of the Solms family.[9]

Settlers received only town lots and ten-acre tracts but began building their homes and planting corn and potatoes. Meanwhile, Prince Solms

returned to Germany in May. In the same month, his replacement, Baron Ottried Hand von Meusebach, who shed his title and called himself John O. Meusebach in an effort to be on equal footing with other Texas citizens, arrived in New Braunfels via New Orleans. A native of Dillenburg in the province of Nassau, Meusebach was well-educated, studying geology and natural science at the Mining and Forest Academy at Clausthal in the Harz Mountains and law, cameralism, and finance at the University of Bonn. This interdisciplinary background would serve him well in Texas, where he had to be resourceful because he inherited the same aforementioned challenges as his predecessor and a number of additional ones. The first obstacle he faced was a debt of $20,000 that had arisen because Prince Solms had issued promissory notes and issued certificates of credit to cover expenses. Secondly, several thousand more immigrants were coming to Carlshafen in November 1845.[10]

This led Meusebach to found a second German settlement on a 10,000-acre grant located eighty miles northwest of New Braunfels along the forested banks of the Pedernales River. He named it Fredericksburg in honor of Prince Frederick of Prussia, who was a member of the Verein. Although it appeared that the pressure was now off and immigrants had two communities in which to settle at least temporarily, Meusebach faced new and unexpected problems. With the outbreak of the U.S.-Mexican War in May 1846, the private teamsters who drove the carts and wagons carrying the immigrants from the coast deserted the Verein for the higher prices offered by the U.S. Army. As a result, four thousand malnourished immigrants remained stranded at Carlshafen in disease-ridden tent camps, suffering from malaria, bilious fever, and dysentery, during the spring and summer of 1846. Moreover, those who made it to New Braunfels and Fredericksburg spread these diseases inland to those communities.[11]

On top of these obstacles, Meusebach also had to stave off an uprising against him in late December 1847 by a group of disgruntled New Braunfels colonists who were frustrated with the Verein's failed promises. Thus, as Meusebach waited to meet with the principal Western Comanche leaders, he was in a potentially vulnerable position and under pressure to broker a successful treaty from a variety of different fronts. That peace and friendship alone were not his only objectives is evident by the fact that he brought Anglo-American surveyors to determine the suitability of the land grant for farming and geologist Ferdinand von Roemer (1818-91) from Berlin to find out whether silver or other precious metals were in the area. In order to maintain title to the Fisher-Miller grant, Meusebach and the Verein had to have it surveyed and occupied by the fall of 1847.[12]

The Comanches, whose homeland Meusebach and the Germans were entering, had proven their military might to all of their adversaries. Late

arrivals to Texas, the Comanches were an offshoot of the eastern Shoshones who moved southward into the Arkansas, Canadian, and Red River valleys as they transitioned into equestrian bison hunters. The Comanches first appeared in New Mexico in 1706 and had moved southward into Texas by 1743, displacing the Lipan Apaches from the Panhandle and Red River valley and pushing them into the very same Hill Country region where Meusebach and Ketumsee now stood. In March 1758, Comanches and their Caddoan Norteño allies had sacked and destroyed the San Sabá mission, which Spaniards had built for the Lipans. More recently, in August 1840, under Potsanaquahip, or Buffalo Hump (?-1870) Penateka Comanches and their Kiowa allies had launched massive attacks on the Texas communities of Victoria and Linnville in broad daylight. Now, from the San Saba River valley, in plain view of Meusebach's party, Penateka warriors were departing on horse and captive raids into northern Mexico. Texas Governor James Pinckney Henderson (1808-58) had even sent a letter to New Braunfels trying to stop Meusebach from making the expedition to the Comanchería because of the potential for Comanche hostility against Fredericksburg and other frontier settlements, and the lack of available troops for protection in light of the U.S.-Mexican War.[13]

Nevertheless, Penateka Comanches, too, had good reasons for wanting to make peace with Meusebach and the Germans. In March 1840, they had suffered a treacherous attack by Anglo-Texan troops at the Council House in San Antonio, where 35 peace-seeking Comanches were killed and 27 captured. According to one scholar, "the Comanche people would take nearly a decade to get over the loss." Indeed, the Penateka rancherías along the San Saba River included surviving relatives of those slain chiefs such as Chief Ozanarzco and Buffalo Hump, who lost his uncle, Muguara (Spirit Talker) (?-1840), the Penateka head chief in that fateful confrontation. Skilled in warfare and diplomacy, Buffalo Hump served as the leading Penateka spokesman for the next thirty years.[14]

At this point in the proceedings, John O. Meusebach deserves credit for making several decisions to help solidify Comanches' trust in the German settlers. First, following the initial negotiations, he invited Ketumsee and his Comanche companions to join him for dinner in the German camp, which they accepted. Second, two days later, after reaching the outskirts of Ketumsee's camp on the San Saba River, Meusebach's lead party immediately complied with the Comanche leader's request that they discharge their rifles as a sign of good faith. Demonstrating reciprocal trust and friendship, Ketumsee and his advance guard did the same with their own American-made rifles before inviting the Germans into their camp.[15]

As part of a group of only forty men surrounded by an estimated five to six thousand Comanches, however, Meusebach's group remained vulnerable. Although Ketumsee invited the Germans to spend the night in his camp, Meusebach opted to move across the river under the pretext of finding better forage for their horses. Here Meusebach faced further tests of his leadership skills. A Comanche group passing through the area spent the night in his camp, the Comanches from Ketumsee's village placed further pressure on the Germans' food supply by showing up as uninvited dinner guests, and the Comanches rustled two of the Germans' best horses during the night. Demonstrating a high degree of tolerance, Meusebach accepted the first two Comanche actions. In the third case, the Comanches complied with his firm request the next morning that the horses be returned, for which Meusebach then rewarded them with gifts, which consisted of woolen and cotton goods, and the opportunity to trade.[16]

On the following day, February 9, at noon, some familiar faces for Penateka leaders, Texas Indian Agent Major Robert S. Neighbors (1815-59) and Delaware interpreter Jim Shaw (?-c. 1858), who had helped broker the Texas Comanche Treaty of 1846 at Council Springs on Tehuacana Creek with Chiefs Santa Anna, Buffalo Hump, and Mopechucope (Old Owl) (?-1849), arrived on the scene.[17] Neighbors and Shaw had been sent by Governor Henderson bearing the same letter he had previously sent to New Braunfels with instructions to either dissuade Meusebach from venturing into Comanche territory or, if that could not be accomplished, to assist Meusebach in the treaty negotiations. Meusebach, feeling that the governor was exaggerating the Comanche danger, refused to turn back but accepted the offer for diplomatic support.[18]

On the morning of February 11, a second council was held with the Comanche leaders in the German camp. Without question Meusebach was the primary leader driving the proceedings. The fact that he had already been negotiating with the Comanches for ten days on his own and that this council was held in his tent reflects that. However, the influence of Neighbors and Shaw is also apparent. Shaw, who was fluent in Comanche, replaced Rozas as interpreter. Also, Meusebach now, for the first time, requested a council with specifically named Western Comanche head chiefs, Santa Anna, Buffalo Hump, and Mopechucope—the same three chiefs that Neighbors and Shaw were most acquainted with and had signed the 1846 Texas treaty. How would Meusebach even know the names of these leaders unless Majors and Shaw told him about them? Finally, like Meusebach, Neighbors and Shaw had brought gifts for the Comanches, and additional gift-giving followed this council. Comanche chiefs received colored wool blankets, copper wire for

bracelets, tobacco, and cotton cloth for shirts, while warriors received tobacco and colored strips of cloth for breechclouts.[19]

Following this second council, Meusebach and his men decided to investigate the abandoned Spanish presidio further upriver. On February 12, 1847, after two days' journey, two messengers from Comanche Chief Santa Anna asked their purpose. At this point, in the interest of conserving his food supply and because of the difficult terrain, Meusebach decided to send back the wagons and reduce the size of his party from 40 to seventeen. He also recognized that his men were so outnumbered by the Comanches that the extra numbers made no difference from a defensive standpoint.[20]

Continuing onward with Meusebach's reduced party of seventeen were Major Neighbors, interpreter Jim Shaw, geologist Ferdinand von Roemer, two Mexicans, the three Shawnee hunters, and five Germans. The real purpose of the trip, of course, was to learn as much as possible about this additional stretch of land within the Fisher-Miller grant, especially its suitability for farming and whether it contained precious metals. After eight days of riding, the group at last reached the San Luis de las Amarillas Presidio ruins, but the news was disappointing. Roemer not only determined that there were no silver deposits or other precious metals but that the entire Fisher-Miller Grant north of the Llano River was unsuitable for settlement on account of the lack of fertile soil, isolation, and Comanche presence.[21]

When Meusebach's group returned to the lower San Saba River valley in late February, they were greeted by considerably more Comanches than when they had left. Chiefs Mopechucope, Buffalo Hump, and Santa Anna were camped adjacently with 1200-1500 warriors and their families. These Comanche chiefs knew Major Robert Neighbors not only from the 1846 Texas treaty negotiations but also because two of them, Mopechucope and Santa Anna, had accompanied him as part of a delegation of Texas chiefs to Washington, D.C in June 1846 in which federal officials hoped to impress the Comanches with the scope of American power. According to Neighbors, although Mopechucope and Santa Anna were unmoved by President James K. Polk, they were quite taken by the capital itself and agreed to remain at peace. Meusebach's party was hopeful that this prior experience would prompt the Comanche leaders to be conciliatory.[22]

On March 1 at noon, fifteen to twenty chiefs assembled with Meusebach, interpreter Jim Shaw, Major Neighbors, Roemer, and several others in Mopechucope's camp for a council. The Comanches spread buffalo hides in a circle with "a fire of live coals" at the center "for the purpose of lighting the peace pipe," which also lay at the center of the circle with a small pile of tobacco. According to Roemer, the chiefs "differed much in appearance."

The peace chief Mopechucope "was a small old man who in his dirty cotton jacket looked undistinguished," while "The war chief Santa Anna . . . was a powerfully built man with a benevolent and lively countenance." Finally, Buffalo Hump, "scorn[ing] all European dress" and wearing only a buffalo hide, copper arm rings, and a necklace, "was the genuine, unadulterated picture of a North American Indian." Following Comanche diplomatic protocols, the participants passed the peace pipe twice around the circle.[23]

Meusebach then began the oral proceedings with an address in which he called for a three-point treaty of peace so that the Germans and Comanches "may learn" to "live . . . as brothers." By way of introduction, Meusebach stated plainly that his people were overcrowded at New Braunfels and Fredericksburg and planned to build a new settlement on the Llano River "and plant corn" and raise cattle, but in return the Comanches would always be welcome to come to German villages to trade their pelts, horses, and mules in exchange for surplus German food products. His first proposal was that the Germans had "permission to travel" through Comanche territory between the Llano and San Saba Rivers under Comanche protection and that the Comanches "could visit German communities" under German protection, provided they came in peace. Next, he proposed that the Comanches and Germans would support one another when enemy horse thefts or other crimes occurred. Third, in exchange for permission to survey the land between the San Saba and Concho Rivers, Meusebach promised to provide $1,000 worth of presents and another $2000 in provisions to the Comanches in Fredericksburg.[24]

After hearing Meusebach's address and conferring with their people, the three Comanche leaders responded favorably at noon the following day. Mopechucope promised to "leave the war path and walk the white path of peace with" the German people west of the Brazos River. The council ended with mutual hugs, where the Comanches "tried to show the strength of their friendship by the strength of their embrace." Everyone then feasted on a meal of venison and rice, which Meusebach had prepared.[25]

On March 3, Meusebach's party began their return trip to Fredericksburg, having exhausted their food supply. During the negotiations the chiefs had promised the Germans that their "horses would be safe from theft," so they had "turned them loose" and then "found them again" upon their departure. According to Roemer, this "was remarkable evidence of the trustworthiness of the Comanches when they have given their promise of hospitality." Further evidence of Comanche good faith occurred on March 4, when a group of Comanche men and women under Santa Anna greeted Meusebach, offered to accompany the Germans to Fredericksburg, and their warriors "shot several wild horses" to feed them.[26]

Meusebach safely reached Fredericksburg on March 7, and the treaty was signed there after the second full moon on May 9, 1847, by Meusebach, Shaw, Neighbors, Santa Anna, and five other Comanche chiefs.[27] By all indications the treaty was a success. German settler Emil Kriewitz of Potsdam was named Indian agent, lived with Santa Anna's Comanche group for several months in 1847 to better understand them, and served "as mediator in the exchange trade relationship." As Kriewitz asserts, "If the [Comanche] Indians had decided to destroy" the "isolated German settlements" of Castell and Leiningen, which Kriewitz had helped found on the Llano River, or even Fredericksburg or New Braunfels, "they could have done so. But they remained true friends and profitable trade relations were maintained." [28]

Things seemed particularly safe in New Braunfels, where local merchant and explorer Viktor Bracht (1819-87), who was born in Düsseldorf, helps corroborate Kriewitz's prior statements. When Santa Anna visited that community in August 1847, Bracht writes, "He assured us that friendship for the Germans, which he esteemed very highly, should continue in the future as it has in the past." In June 1848, in their "Testimonial for Texas from New Braunfels," which was printed in Texas German newspapers, thirty-three residents, including Bracht, stated "That people here ridicule fear of Indians, and that a German settlement or farm has never been attacked by them," and "That property and life are as secure here as in Germany."[29]

According to Fredericksburg storeowner Theodore Specht (1810-62), "friendly relations" with Comanches "endured for several years" with single Comanches frequently sleeping in settlers' homes. When the settlers were suffering from scurvy and other diseases due to inadequate and often spoiled provisions from the Verein during the fall and winter of 1846, "the Indians . . . furnished us daily with fresh deer and bear meat" and "sold us horses, mules, deer hides, ropes, and other valuable merchandise." These friendly trade relations continued after the Verein ceased issuing food to German immigrants in 1847. Fort Martin Scott, established as a U.S. Army outpost near Fredericksburg from 1848 to 1853, also helped stabilize German-Comanche and German-Indian relations generally in the area. According to Specht, "the troops treated the Indians well" and "prevented them only from excesses," noting "We seldom heard of horse thefts and far less of murders."[30]

Although evidence indicates that Indian attacks and livestock raids became more prevalent on the Germans in West Texas beginning in 1851, they were still far less than in the rest of Texas. In addition, other Texas Indian tribes such as the Wacos and Lipan Apaches, who were hoping to implicate the Comanches, were often the ones committing the acts. In the late 1850s, Col. Jack Hays (1817-83) remarked to Muesebach that he was "astonished that the [Comanches] kept their treaty so well" and that "he was never molested nor

lost any animals during his travels within the limits of [the German] colony, but as soon as he had passed the lines he had losses."[31]

If Germans and Anglo Texans alike brought surveyors, negotiated treaties, and established settlements on Comanche land, what accounts for the difference in the two relationships? The courage and skill of John O. Meusebach in venturing into the Comanchería, proposing a peace treaty, and developing a personal relationship with Comanche leaders is certainly part of the answer. Meusebach maintained that his greatest asset during the negotiations was his straightforwardness. As a sign of respect, the Comanches called him "el sol Colorado," or the Red Sun. As Meusebach explained, the name had come about in part because of his full reddish beard but Chief Santa Anna had more fully explained to him that when his warriors saw Meusebach "walking among them unarmed, they felt" he was "a man to be looked up to, like the sun above us."[32]

Yet, Meusebach was not in power long enough to be the sole reason for the treaty's success. Indeed, he had already submitted his resignation as Commissioner-General in January 1847, which became effective on July 20, 1847. In contrast to his predecessor Prince Solms, however, he remained in the area, settling on a small farm midway between New Braunfels and Fredericksburg, at Comanche Springs. This meant he was still accessible to Comanches, and they did come to visit him. On one occasion, shortly after his resignation from the Verein, Meusebach invited a Comanche delegation traveling to Austin to join him for dinner, and they accepted. But upon their return, after their negotiations in Austin did not go well, they rustled some of his horses. Further evidence that personalities alone cannot explain the Meusebach-Comanche treaty success is that Santa Anna, who was the most important Comanche leader to sign the agreement, and Mopechucope, who never signed it, both died of cholera in 1849.[33]

Other important reasons for the treaty's success were the generosity Germans displayed in feeding the Comanches during the proceedings and in furnishing them with gifts and provisions in Fredericksburg. Finally, German settlement patterns in villages, reliance on the Verein for subsistence, and their smaller population numbers meant that they were initially less intrusive on Comanche lands and resources than Anglo Texans. With the financial collapse of the Verein in 1847, however, German settlers shifted to a more dispersed settlement pattern of family farms and had to provide for their own subsistence, competing with Comanche and other Native peoples for wild game.[34]

From the Comanche perspective, a more basic difference between the German and Anglo-Texan settlers was that the Germans kept their word.

When the Prussian coppersmith Friedrich Schlecht (1816-74) encountered Comanches burning the underbrush north of the Frio River in 1848, a Comanche chief determined from "the color of [his] hair and eyes, [he] belonged to the people who come from the direction of the rising sun" and explained that "his people respected us because we had kept our word through our treaties and promises just as the Comanches did." Anglo Texans, on the other hand, "had already broken treaties with them many times."[35]

In addition, Germans demonstrated a keen interest in Comanche culture. As Indian Agent, Kriewitz not only lived with Chief Santa Anna and adopted Comanche dress, he also produced a Comanche-German glossary and notes on Comanche knowledge, traditions, and cultural practices, which cartographer Heinrich Berghaus published in Germany in the early 1850s. Bettina resident Dr. Ferdinand Herff (1820-1912), who would eventually learn the Apache and Comanche languages, performed a successful cataract operation on a Comanche man in 1847 and treated members of the tribe for smallpox. In return for his efforts, the same Comanche man gifted the unmarried physician a teenage Mexican girl, and the Comanches invited him to witness how one of their medicine men treated a war wound.[36]

Although Anglo Texans such as David Burnet (1788-1870) and Robert Neighbors also lived with Comanches, produced Comanche glossaries, and notes on Comanche culture, violence more regularly characterized relations between Comanches, the Texas Rangers, and Anglo-Texan settlers.[37] This damaged the trust relationship that Comanches valued so much and was at the root of the treaties that Texas and U.S. Indian agents attempted to negotiate. In 1847, despite his knowledge of Comanche culture, Burnet called the Indians "untutored savages" with whom treaties were "a mere nullity," and he believed their eventual "subjugation" or "early removal" was "inevitable."[38]

The Meusebach-Comanche Treaty of 1847, then, is significant because Germans and Comanches respected one another and kept their word. In contrast to Anglo Texans, Germans sought Comanche permission before surveying and settling on their lands. Meusebach's straightforwardness in negotiations and his advance party's quick decision to comply with Ketumsee's request that they discharge their rifles helped demonstrate German good faith. The Comanches' own restraint during the negotiations and Major Robert Neighbors' personal relationship with Chiefs Santa Anna, Buffalo Hump, and Mopechucope were also important. Although peace with the Comanches was not Meusebach's sole goal on the expedition, the fact that most of the region between the Llano and San Saba Rivers was unsuitable for farming and that his party found no evidence of silver or precious metals in the area helped ease German pressure on Comanche lands in the short term.

The final sign of the Meusebach-Comanche treaty's importance is that Germans and Comanches still honor it today. The granddaughters of John O. Meusebach, Irene Marschall King and Cornelia Marschall Smith, brought the original document back from Europe in 1970, and it was presented to the Texas State Library in Austin in 1972. Since at least 1946, Comanche delegations from Lawton, Oklahoma have also regularly participated in Fredericksburg anniversary parades and, beginning in 1997, in powwows honoring the treaty itself. In addition, in 1987, for Fredericksburg's 150th anniversary, artist Jesse Hester created a bronze statue of Chief Santa Anna passing the peace pipe to Meusebach titled "Lasting Friendship" to commemorate the treaty.[39] The popular myth to be debunked, then, is not the treaty's success, significance, or even the accuracy of the sculpture itself, but the argument on the accompanying plaque that it is the only unbroken contract between Europeans and Native peoples in the history of the United States. That notion truly is an overstatement, which ignores massive subsistence and life changes experienced by the Penateka Comanches as their numbers diminished from the 1850s onward in the face of disease outbreaks, the northward movement of the buffalo, land encroachment, and warfare.[40]

University of North Texas at Dallas
Dallas, Texas

Notes

[1] "Meusebach's Expedition into the Territory of the Comanche Indians in January, 1847" in Robert Penniger, ed. and C. L. Wisseman, trans., *Fredericksburg, Texas: The First Fifty Years* (Fredericksburg, TX: Fredericksburg Publishing, 1971), 38-39; Moritz Tiling, *History of the German Element in Texas from 1820-1850* (Houston: n.p., 1913), 95-97; Irene Marschall King, *John O. Meusebach: German Colonizer in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 111; Jefferson Morgenthaler, *The German Settlement of the Texas Hill Country* (2007; reprint, Boerne, TX: Mockingbird Books, 2016), 67, 72; Thomas W. Kavanagh, *The Comanches: A History, 1706-1875* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 39.

[2] Williams, Jr., Robert A., *Linking Arms Together: American Indian Treaty Visions of Law and Peace, 1600-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 125.

[3] R. L. Biesele, "The Relations between the German Settlers and the Indians in Texas, 1844-1860," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 31 (October 1927): 116-29; Rudolph Leopold Biesele, *The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (1930; reprint, Fort Worth: Eakin Press, 1987), 178-90; King, 111-23, 75-76.

[4] Tiling, 104.

[5] Karl A. Hoerig, "The Relationship between German Immigrants and the Native Peoples in Western Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 97 (January 1994): 433, 424.

[6] For the quotation see Hoerig, 433; Joaquín Rivaya-Martínez, "Captivity and Adoption among the Comanche Indians," Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 2006; Daniel J. Gelo and Christopher J. Wickham, *Comanches and Germans on the Texas Frontier: The Ethnology of Heinrich Berghaus* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2018), 120; Jodye Lynn Dickson Schilz, "Santa Anna," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed November 28, 2022, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/santa-anna.

[7] Gelo and Wickham, 69, 79-80; Glenn Hadeler, "Kriewitz, Emil," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed November 28, 2022, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/kriewitz-emil.

[8] Tiling, 68-70; Biesele, 66-67, 76-77, 107; William Geue and Ethel Hander Geue, eds., *A New Land Beckoned: German Immigration to Texas, 1844-1847* (Waco, TX: Texian Press, 1966), 2-4, 15; King, 33, 69-70.

[9] Tiling, 76; Biesele, 117-20; Geue and Geue, 3, 7-8; Glen E. Lich and Günter Moltmann, "Solms-Braunfels, Prince Carl Of," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed November 28, 2022, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/solms-braunfels-prince-carl-of.

[10] King, 5, 15-16, 45, 52, 56-57; Geue and Geue, 11; Cornelia Marschall Smith and Otto W. Tetzlaff, "Meusebach, John O.," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed November 27, 2022, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/meusebach-john-o.

[11] Hoerig, 427; Geue and Geue, 5.

[12] King, 102-103, 14-15; Biesele, 122; Hoerig, 424; Anonymous, "Roemer, Ferdinand von," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed November 28, 2022, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/roemer-ferdinand-von.

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[19] Roemer, 246-47; Morgenthaler, 74.

[20] "Meusebach's Expedition" in Penniger and Wisseman, 40-41.

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