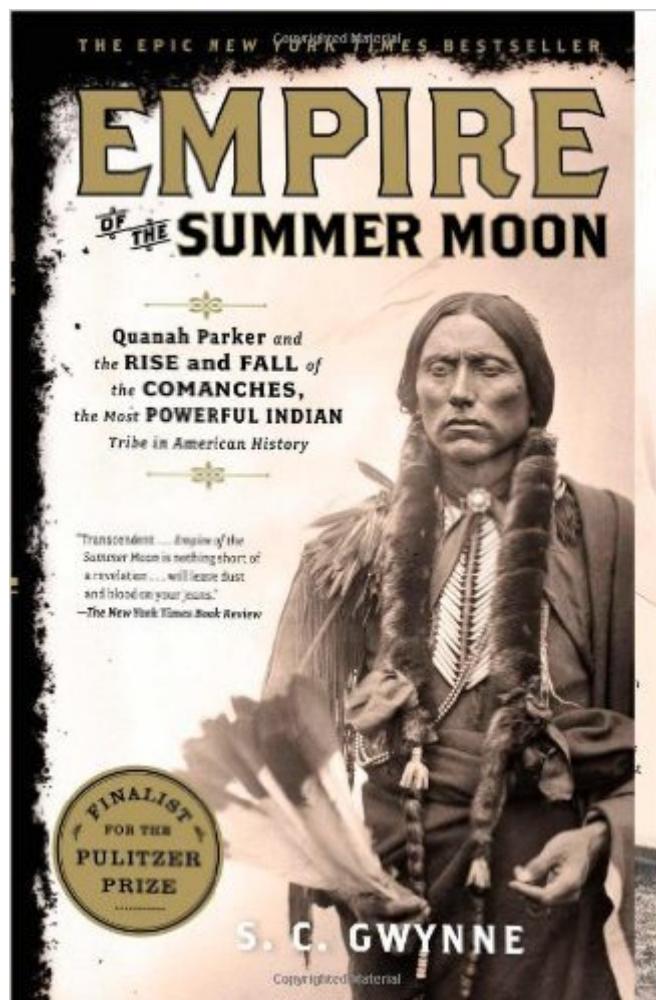


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Empire Of The Summer Moon: Quanah Parker And The Rise And Fall Of The Comanches, The Most Powerful Indian Tribe In American History





Synopsis

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

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, the Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History by S. C. Gwynne is an eye opening account of an often overlooked era of this country's history. S. C. Gwynne is a consummate researcher and storyteller displaying the love of his topic. Gwynne manages to tell this multilevel, multifaceted story in a riveting manner. Relating history is a difficult task to do well. Very few authors seem to have the ability to relate history in a manner that makes it interesting and then manages to hit all the high spots. The late Barbara Tuchman did it well as did Stephen Ambrose and David G. McCullough. High praise for Gwynne? Yes, and well deserved. Empire of the Moon examines the forty year battle waged by the Comanche nation against the constant encroachment of pioneers from the young United States. They had fought off the Spanish, French, and Mexican invaders, rolled back the Apache Nation and did a pretty good job in forestalling the American invasion. But the relentless push of westward settlement eventually won out. It is the attention to details and the development of the principle characters that makes Gwynne's book unique. This is especially true in how he deals with the young Cynthia Parker, the white girl taken captive and raised as a Comanche. She disappeared after this but eventually adopted the Comanche way of life, married a chief and became the mother of Quanah Parker, the center for Gwynne's book. Gwynne must have had access to new resources since he presents new details to the reader (new to me, anyway). At the risk of being obvious, the story of Cynthia Parker makes the purchase and reading of this book worthwhile by itself.

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