

Chapter 18

The Archives War

On March 28, 1843, several indigenous tribes still abiding within the borders of Texas, despite President Lamar's costly efforts to drive them out, sent negotiators to a peace council at Tehuacana Creek near the Torrey Brothers' Trading Post a hundred or so miles north of Austin. I was not present myself. What I know of these goings-on I learned first from the newspapers. Then, sometime after the event, Jesse Chisholm, who was one of several official translators, filled me in on details that were not included in the newspaper article. So important were these peace talks that the United States sent observers.

Chief of the Shawnees at that time was called *Linney* and to him was addressed a letter from Sam Houston, who had reclaimed the presidency in 1841. This peace initiative was, in fact, Houston's idea. The letter, read aloud in council and translated for all in attendance to hear in their own tongues, is tiresomely long, but here, at least, is how it starts:

My Brothers,

The business on which we have met together is of great importance to all of us, and to our people. With some of you, we have long been at War. Our business is to remove all causes of War, and establish Peace between us. The path between us has long been red with the blood of the White and the Red Man. The bones of our brothers and kindred have been strewed along the path we have traveled. Clouds and darkness have rested upon it. This we believe is wrong and should no longer exist. The bow has been strung and the rifle kept loaded too long. The

*White and the Red Man all belong to the same Great Family;
therefore we should all live together in Peace and Friendship.*

Eventually, a comprehensive agreement was settled upon, and on October 9, 1844, after several gatherings, a Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Commerce was signed by leaders of the Lipan Apaches, Delawares, Shawnees, Tehuacanas, Wichitas, Huecos, Ionis [Hainais], Kichais, and Nadacos [Anadarkos]. Even the chiefs of a small Cherokee band that had somehow avoided expulsion signed, as did the chiefs of at least one Comanche band. Jesse Chisholm stated firmly that Buffalo Hump was one of those. Biloxis, Chickasaws, and other tribes had some months earlier signed a Treaty of Peace at Fort Bird. I can only hope that the Texas Senate will ratify both of these treaties. If so, then a lasting peace may have arrived in Texas much sooner than I ever expected.