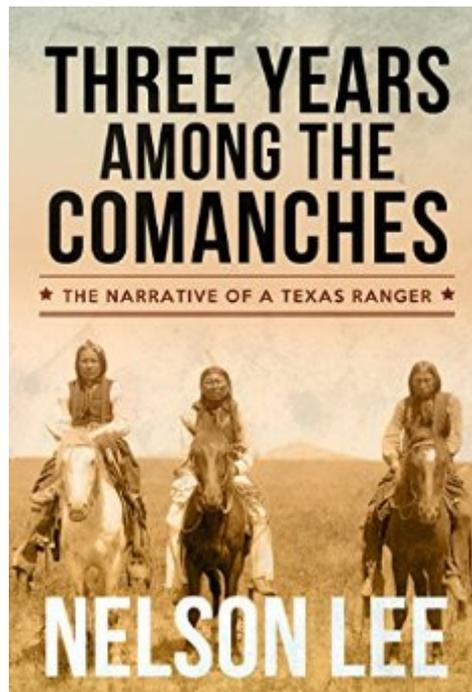


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Three Years Among The Comanches: The Narrative Of Nelson Lee, Texas Ranger



Synopsis

"Half a dozen Indians sprung upon me, some holding down my arms, others my legs, another astride my body with his hand upon my throat." Only Nelson Lee and three of his cowboy companions survived the brutal assault that had come upon them during the night. Their fate was not to be killed instantly but instead to go through the process of being tortured to death in tribal rituals at a later date. But Nelson Lee did not die. Instead he survived his ordeal and went on to spend three years with the Comanches, being sold as a slave between various Comanche warriors, from Big Wolf to Spotted Leopard and finally to Rolling Thunder who he was eventually able to escape from. His record of that time provides a fascinating insight into life with the Comanche tribe in the mid-19th century. Prior to being captured Nelson Lee had been a Texas Ranger who had served under John Hays and had fought against Native Americans during the Indian Wars, but never before had he come in such close contact with how they lived and their customs. Walter Prescott Webb stated that "there is no better description of the life of the Texas Rangers than that of Nelson Lee." Another scholar stated "His experiences in captivity are of vivid interest, and afford a most minute and detailed account of the manners and customs of the tribe." Other historians have been less convinced about the validity of some of Lee's claims, but even if some of the tales told within the memoir are rather tall it remains a captivating book of life on the Texan frontier amongst the Comanches. Nelson Lee's book *Three Years Among the Comanches* was published in New York in 1859 after Lee had escaped captivity.

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Customer Reviews

I have been reading books of late about the Texas Rangers. They are varied. This one is remarkable. Half the book is about his adventures as a Ranger. The second half is about being captured and living with the Comanches. It is an amazing story. Not great literature and bit dated in its prose, but I thought a wonderful read.

At times I wasn't certain about what I was reading. The author seemed to have an unusual flair for the English language. I wondered how it was that a sailor/horse wrangler/ranger could obtain this flair, that maybe I was reading a fantastic fictional account. But I put this suspicions aside, falling into the grasp of the author's details of his tribulations. This is an excellent, exciting story that should capture the reader's interest. It covers the Texas problems with Mexico as well as some of the frightening experiences captives were subjected.

A narrative detailing the exploits of the Texas Rangers throughout the West when Indians and white settlers engaged in battles for the land. Captured by Comanches, Nelson Lee recounts the suffering of the other captives and his own. He managed to survive because he possessed a trinket that the Indians considered sacred. He saw the suffering of the white women captives, and on his eventual escape, he determined to make their rescue his life's work.

This historic story portrays the unfathomable horrors experienced by whites captured by the Indians. Only through cunning and good fortune did any captives survive. Rarely did women and children ever return to the white community. Many women and without question children adopted the Indian life without desire to return to their former lives, e.g. Cynthia Parker whose story I also highly recommend

Nelson Lee's straightforward account of his life as a Texas Ranger and then an Indian captive is enthralling. He also offers a valid critique of how the US govt was misguided in their approach to the Indian problem. Moreover, he pleads for the govt. to do something about those still in captivity. Fewer people might have gone West had they known what was really going on and the dangers

ahead. This first-hand account is highly recommended.

I wanted to love this book, but as I was reading it I realized it was rather slow and plodding. I think it might have been because it is a real story written by a Texas Ranger, and he didn't know how to really make it wonderful.

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There is a lot of good history in this book, the cruelty of the Indians is unbelievable, I know we took this country away from them and I wonder what would have happened if we had not taken it? I read that this story was rewritten and I wish I could have read the original, I don't believe this man could have used such a high degree of language at his time in some places it became very confusing. All in all its a very interesting story.

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