

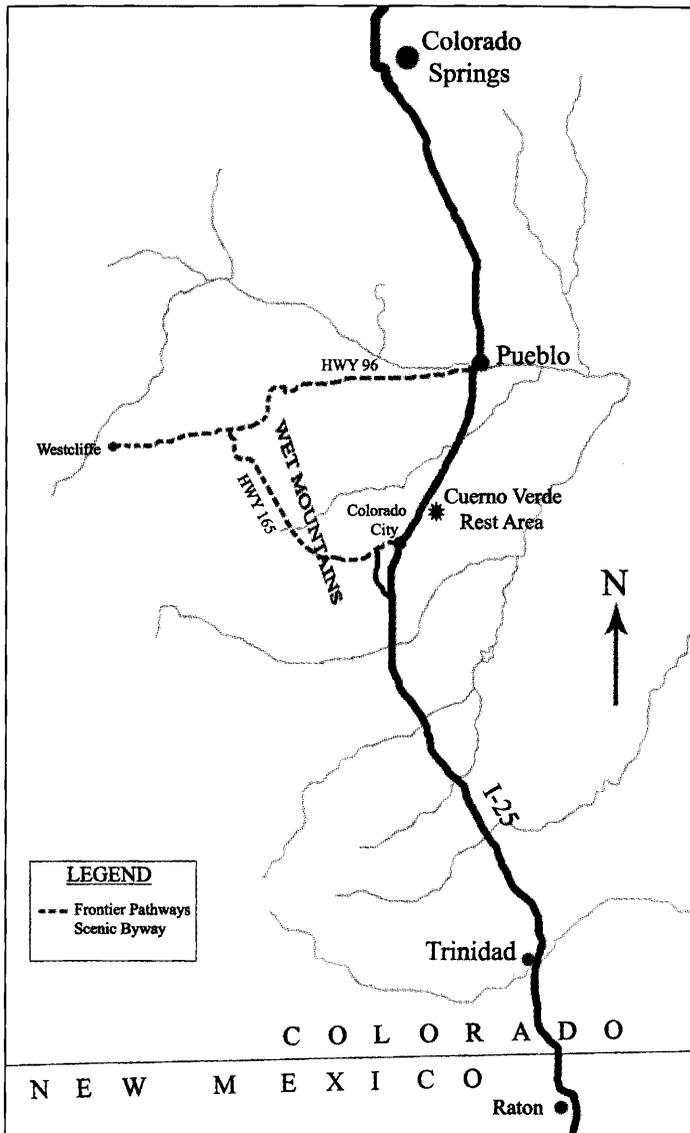
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Constructing Comanche Pasts: Public
Memory and the Cuerno Verde Rest
Area, Colorado City, Colorado

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MAP OF CUERNO VERDE REST AREA FACILITY AND SURROUNDING AREA
(Map by Sarah R. Payne)

Constructing Comanche Pasts

PUBLIC MEMORY AND THE CUERNO VERDE REST AREA,
COLORADO CITY, COLORADO

Douglas Seefeldt

Twenty-five miles south of Pueblo, Colorado, where the southern plains meet the foothills, sits the community of Colorado City. Situated in the shadow of the southern Rockies' Wet Mountains, the Greater Greenhorn Valley is currently home to five thousand people, fifteen hundred of whom live in Colorado City proper. Here, at exit seventy-four on Interstate 25, stands the pride of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the \$2.7 million dollar Cuerno Verde Rest Area. The design and landscaping of this rest area set it apart from other such facilities; for example, the Plains Indian-inspired design elements that the architects incorporated into the facility, and the flag proclaiming "Comanche Nation Lords of the Southern Plains" that accompanies the Colorado State flag and the Stars and Stripes.

What at first might seem to be merely an odd combination of appropriated history and modern convenience, upon closer study reveals a sterling manifestation of public memory making in the late-twentieth-century American West. During the planning phase, the rest area's visual design and its

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historical markers became the topic of fierce debate between historians, designers, and highway officials. The complex negotiation between these groups is represented in the final draft of the facility's historical markers and serves as a cautionary tale of the pitfalls inherent in interpreting the past for the public. Although local interests, like those of the Greenhorn Valley Chamber of Commerce, are often the primary impetus behind the development of public memory activities, public officials and designers in control of the memory-making process usually look to historians and other experts to validate their perspective on the past. Ultimately, the Cuerno Verde Rest Area is more than just a place to pull off the highway to use the restroom or stretch your legs. Those involved in designing, constructing, and dedicating the facility shaped public memory by weaving fluid moments from the region's past, present, and future into a static new story told in concrete, fiberglass, and steel.

Diverse populations of humans have created distinct places throughout the vast southern Plains landscape. Prior to the arrival of Spaniards, and even before the appearance of various Apache groups in the early sixteenth century, the people who paused while passing through the region were predominantly hunter-gatherers and limited agriculturalists.¹ During the era of Spanish rule in this region (1598–1680 and 1693–1821), colonial officials considered the Province of *Nuevo México* a buffer zone between the *Indios Bárbaros*—the multitude of hostile Apache, Navajo, Ute, and Comanche bands who roamed the far northern frontier—and the larger Spanish population centers and mining districts of northern New Spain. Over the course of the past two decades, scholarship on the Comanches, or the *Nʉmʉnʉʉ* (the Comanche word for “the People”), has grown in sophistication and substance.² While academics still disagree as to the timing of the split, the most recent works agree that the Comanches broke off from the western basin and range Shoshonean populations and began to occupy the southern Plains area by at least the late seventeenth century.³ Moving rapidly over the southern Plains, the Comanches reached northern New Spain and entered the Spanish historical record by 1706, and eventually controlled an area known to the Spanish colonials as the *Comanchería*. The *Comanchería* stretched from the Arkansas River Valley in present-day Colorado and Kansas, through northern New Mexico and western Oklahoma, down through the Staked Plains of present-day eastern New Mexico and Texas's panhandle, and all the way down through the Texas Rolling Plains and Hill Country to the South Texas Plains. For over one hundred years, from the mid-eighteenth

century to the late nineteenth century, the Comanche people controlled this vast region, shaping its landscape and its history. While occupying this territory, Comanches came into increasing contact with Spaniards, and, consequently, emerge in Spanish reports and literature.

Between 1768 and 1779 a series of Comanche leaders called Cuerno Verde, or Green Horn, appeared in reports of several eighteenth-century skirmishes in northern New Mexico. The first occurred on 30 August 1768 at Ojo Caliente, where “one who wore as a device a green horn on his forehead, fixed in a headdress or on a tanned leather headpiece” was killed by townspeople defending their plaza.⁴ The second clash, led by Don Carlos Fernández, occurred in 1777, and the third battle, led by Lt.-Col. Juan Bautista de Anza, took place in 1779.⁵ The final event proved to be the end of the mortal Cuerno Verde figure and the beginning of an enduring legacy that lives on to this day throughout the region. The Spanish-speaking villagers of what is now northern New Mexico and southern Colorado almost immediately canonized the legendary Cuerno Verde’s demise in drama. From between 1779 and 1800 to the present, the 515 octosyllabic verses of *Los Comanches* have been regularly performed by actors on horseback at Taos and elsewhere throughout the far northern region of what was New Spain. From the Old World tradition of *Los Moros*, with its mounted reenactments of the jousts between Moors and Christians performed frequently in Spain and its colonies, came a New World variation: Moors were replaced with Comanches and Christians with an army of soldiers, settlers, and Indian allies.⁶ In the years immediately following the demise of the last Cuerno Verde, Spaniards and Comanches developed improved trading relations that led to a peace treaty and pledge of allegiance in 1786. During this period, these former adversaries came together to defend sedentary Comanches and New Mexican settlers against marauding Apaches, and even collaborated to construct a permanent village settlement for the Jupe band along the Arkansas River.⁷

During the last three decades of Spanish control and the end of the era of Mexican rule in the region (1821–1846), the area where Colorado City stands today had yet to be permanently settled by significant numbers of U.S. citizens. But that did not mean that it was uninhabited. In 1843, New Mexico governor Manuel Armijo granted some four million acres, in what became known as the Las Animas Grant, to Taos justice of the peace Cornelio Vigil and Ceran St. Vrain, trapper and trading partner of Charles Bent. The first attempts at homesteading on this grant failed, but, as evidenced by the

multitude of Spanish place names, Hispanos had also settled in the area, preempting land on the Vigil–St. Vrain grant.

More than a century later, the 4,100-acre community of Colorado City became the latest in the 7,000-year-old legacy of place-making in the area. The city is an example of how history, myth, and culture are readily written into planned communities and commodified to sell that product; further, Colorado City is an important phase in the construction of public memory in the region.⁹ In 1962, journalist and local historian Ralph Taylor announced that “the new Colorado City, 25 miles south of Pueblo, will perpetuate the historic name but will not necessarily make an attempt to assemble the lore of the Western pioneers.” In fact, contrary to Taylor’s statement, western imagery would become central to the identity of Colorado City. Part of the “lore of the western pioneers” had already been assembled when the developers revived the century-old name of the first capitol of the Colorado Territory, and Taylor and other town boosters played key roles in shaping both the town’s landscape and its identity. In January 1963, when president of the development company, N. K. Mendelsohn, shared his intentions for Colorado City with the press, he too spoke of the past: “This whole region has lived for a long time. Its history predates Colorado by a long time. What we will do is change the country as little as possible, but to let [it] go on living for 10,000 families who enjoy the abundance of Colorado’s natural assets.”¹⁰ By 1973, the community had more than doubled in size to an area of 9,931 acres, with a population of 890 residents. Despite a great deal of favorable publicity, Colorado City was not the success its developers had hoped it would be. Rather than local industry, which never thrived, it was Interstate 25 that allowed this bedroom community to exist.¹¹

Today the interstate serves as a lifeline for tourists as well as the area’s bedroom community commuters. First proposed in 1981, the new Cuerno Verde Rest Area at the interchange of Interstate 25 and Colorado State Highway 165 at Colorado City was intended to replace the old 1950s Brantzell median rest area with “a unique modern facility that portrays Colorado’s historical and cultural heritage.” By 1993 the local Chamber of Commerce and a committee of residents recommended the name for the rest area, and a facility was designed that would contain interpretive markers, hiking trails, picnic areas, and an information booth staffed by volunteers. CDOT professed most ambitiously that the Cuerno Verde Rest Area would play an important role in promoting a positive image of Colorado to the state’s visitors.¹²



VIEW OF CUERNO VERDE REST AREA

(Photograph by Gregg Gargan courtesy Colorado Department of Transportation, Denver)

Recent Colorado City brochures and Greenhorn Valley Chamber of Commerce promotional materials prominently feature recreation, the Comanche leader Cuerno Verde, and the slogan, “the way Colorado *used* to be.” Each of these themes are present in the larger purpose behind the rest area project: to serve as a gateway to the region’s scenic attractions. Located at the intersection of two highways, the facility serves as a link to the greater Greenhorn Valley and the mountain communities situated to the west of this busy modern migration route. The Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway, dedicated in February 1996, uses the Cuerno Verde Rest Area as its southern gateway. This Byway is a 103-mile highway tour through the high plains and mountain valleys, connecting Pueblo on the north, Westcliffe to the west, and Colorado City to the south. Designed to increase tourism by promoting regional history and natural features, Scenic Byways have been created throughout the country since the program’s inception in 1988. Following the lead of the very successful National Forest Service Scenic Byways Program and the National Park Service Scenic Byways Program, Colorado’s

program was one of the first in the nation, and according to one recent report, is seen as a model program by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).¹³

Although the byways program requires that local byway partnership groups work closely with several federal and state agencies—including the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, and Colorado Division of Wildlife—CDOT serves as the lead administrative agency, coordinating the grant program and tracking the project's progress.¹⁴ The Colorado Historical Society (CHS) is also a key partner in the Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Program. In describing the Colorado City section of the route as one would encounter it from the west, a Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway brochure written by the historical society contributed to the development of the area's historical identity by featuring romantic landscape imagery and explicit references to the historical Cuerno Verde and the new rest area:

Descending from Lake Isabel on [Highway] 165, you catch beautiful views of the high plains stretching endlessly to the east, little changed from the days when buffalo and the Arapaho, Comanche and Apache made this area their home. As you enter the Greenhorn Valley and the end of the tour (or, conversely, the beginning), you pass Greenhorn Peak, site of the famous 1779 battle between Comanche Chief Greenhorn and Spanish Governor de Anza. Byway information, as well as information about the region and Colorado, will be available at the new Cuerno Verde Rest Stop at the junction of 165 and interstate 25 at Colorado City.¹⁵

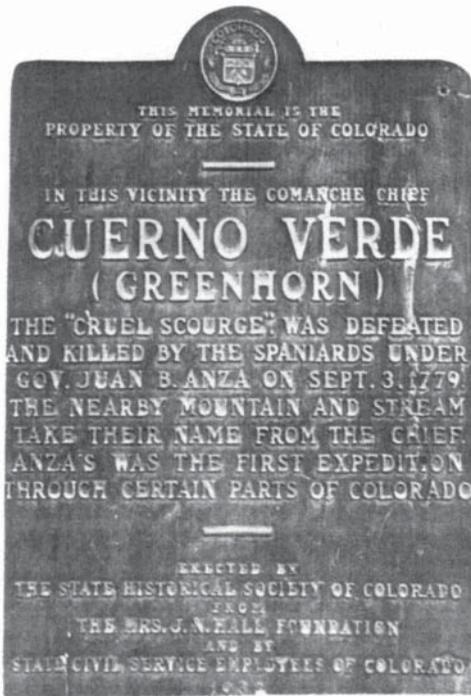
In 1993, the Parsons Transportation Group design firm of Denver, Colorado, won the design contract for the rest area project. In their proposal, the designers explained that “the interpretive markers included in this design are intended to give the rest area visitor a better understanding of the regional history and natural features of the site.” Further, they contended the markers were, excellent opportunities “to educate the traveling public about Colorado’s diverse history.” To achieve this educational goal, the architects proposed six interpretive markers on the following topics: “Mountain Views” depicted prominent mountain views, “Prairie” detailed the native prairie landscape and regional ecosystem, “Santa Fe Trail” gave the history of the Santa Fe and Taos Trails, “Cuerno Verde” introduced the Comanche leader and his tribe, “Where You Are Walking” explained the Indian-inspired tipi

and buffalo paving designs that would make up part of the rest area's walkway, and "Civil War Conflict in Colorado" sketched the history of the Civil War in the state.¹⁶ The fourth and fifth markers are directly related to the rest area's namesake and made the most obvious contribution to the overall design scheme. The "Cuerno Verde" and "Where You Are Walking" markers also became the focus of contention between the designer, landscape architect Paul Nikolai, and Dr. David F. Halaas, Chief Historian for the Colorado Historical Society. Ultimately, the tumultuous relationship that developed between these groups delayed the project to such an extent that the plaques were not completed in time for the dedication of the facility.

From the beginning of the interpretive marker project, the design team sought advice from the CHS as to the historical content of the marker text.¹⁷ Designers, CDOT, and the CHS wanted the marker texts to attract the attention of the millions of travelers who were projected to pause to use the facility. This was no easy task, for travelers, as Halaas cautioned, "are a hard sell" because, "[t]hey are a highly sophisticated lot conditioned by years of watching high-tech TV ads. We have only seconds to grab their attention. If we don't, they will never stop at another marker."¹⁸

The lengthy discussions between designers, architects, and historians began in 1994. In a design meeting held on 7 March, the CDOT and CHS representatives suggested that the designers consult subject matter experts for help with the marker text. It was at this time that the design team contacted the Comanche Nation and other Colorado state agency interpretive planners to ask them to serve as consultants.¹⁹ In the meantime, the designers presented their first draft of the text and graphics for the six interpretive markers to CDOT representatives.

The difficult year-and-a-half negotiation of the text and imagery to be depicted on these plaques can be seen as a lesson in how artistic license and history can conflict in the interpretation of the past. Nikolai's initial draft of the "Cuerno Verde" marker text contained an account of the August 1779 battle between Governor Anza and the Comanche leader, a general description of Comanche lifestyle, and a biographical sketch of the rest area's namesake. This text made reference to "Chief" Greenhorn's "monstrous headdress;" it related Anza's characterization of him as "the cruel scourge of this Kingdom," and pronounced Cuerno Verde as "the most notorious Comanche raider of his time."²⁰ This passage, and the rude sketch of Cuerno Verde and his infamous helmet that accompanied it, combined to present little more than the kind of stereotypical violent "savage" figure that bedevils much of popular Indian history.



1932 STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF COLORADO CUERNO VERDE (GREENHORN) PLAQUE, GREENHORN MEADOWS PARK, COLORADO CITY, COLORADO
(*Photograph by author*)

The minutes for this meeting suggest that although the drafts of all the marker texts were too long and some contained factual and stylistic errors, CDOT and CHS representatives concluded that “the text was good and didn’t require much editing.” However, Dianna Litvak, the CHS official present at all of the interpretive marker planning meetings, recommended adding Indian history experts, including a representative of the Comanche tribe, to the designers’ brief list of reviewers. This meeting also contained the first reference to the idea of adding a flagpole that would fly the Comanche flag in front of the facility.²¹

The text of the interpretive markers was the topic of a follow-up meeting held on 31 March 1994 between the design team and the CHS representatives, which this time included Chief Historian Halaas. Here Halaas “stressed the importance of

review by reputable historians with experience in the proposed topics.” He suggested many factual changes, presented a Forest Service Santa Fe Trail interpretive marker project as a model, offered a list of other books to consult, and suggested experts to contact. Halaas’s primary objections to the “Cuerno Verde” marker text concerned reference to the Comanche’s “unmatched horsemanship,” and the draft’s claim that they were considered “the best light calvary [*sic*] in the world.” According to Halaas, “many of the Plains Indian tribes were excellent horsemen.” He also suggested that the text better develop the Spanish era in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico to provide context for the marker’s treatment of the confrontation between Governor Anza and Cuerno Verde.²²

The design team followed up on those suggestions and sent out a set of letters to subject matter experts including Comanche Tribal Chairman

Wallace Coffey; John Kessell, editor of the Vargas Project for the Museum of New Mexico; and Merrill Mattes, retired Chief of Historic Preservation for the National Park Service. The CHS contacted Jay Reed, Interpretive Planner for the Colorado Department of Natural Areas. Each of the designers' letters contained similarly worded requests for advice. For example, one letter read, "Unfortunately, we are not historians or experts on the Comanche; that is why your help in reviewing this text is so valuable." The designers' goal was clearly stated in these letters through language such as, "The Comanche were a large part of the history of this region. It is our hope that through the design of this facility and the interpretive markers, a realistic image of the culture and history of the Comanche—and all Plains Indians—can be achieved."²³

By mid-May 1994, the designers had submitted a second draft of the marker text to CDOT representatives. This version included revisions made by approximately half of the subject matter experts consulted in April. The designers compiled these comments, both written and oral, into a memorandum. Comanche Nation representative Edward Tahhahwah asked if it would be possible for the marker to depict a two-horned war bonnet rather than the one-horned version that adorned the drawing of the Cuerno Verde figure. To this the designers replied that "there was probably not room for that, and the single-horned bonnet was shown to give the visitor as accurate a depiction of Cuerno Verde's war bonnet as possible." Tahhahwah was also concerned that the Comanches be portrayed as more than just the Plains Indians who drove the Apaches from the region, and that their cooperative relationships with other tribes who lived in Comanche territory be highlighted as well. John L. Kessell, then associate professor of history at the University of New Mexico, pointed out some factual errors on the Cuerno Verde marker text, such as the reference to Anza as "Territorial Governor" and the improper use of *de Anza* as a shortened reference, rather than *Anza*. Halaas suggested revision of the tipi and buffalo symbols marker, "The Story Beneath Your Feet," to include the adaptation of the tipi and travois to the Plains Indian lifestyle and to better explain the horse economy of the period.²⁴

As the interpretive marker text and graphic designs were being revised, the Pueblo County Historical Society entered into the conversation to add yet another vision for the project. On 11 April 1994, the president of the society, George R. Williams, sent a letter to CDOT Regional Transportation Director Kenneth Conyers noting that he had recently attended a meeting of the Pueblo Chamber of Commerce in which the merits of day trips

to historical sites located between Pueblo and the Colorado City area were discussed as a means to enhance tourism. He also requested information about the new historical markers planned for the rest area project and any CDOT plans for relocating the existing “Colorado and the Civil War” marker that stood at the old Brantzell rest area. Williams also informed Conyers that the Pueblo County Historical Society was in the process of compiling an inventory of the nearly two hundred historical markers and memorials in the county and that he wanted to be sure the changes caused by the Cuerno Verde Rest Area were reflected in their soon-to-be published directory. Conyers informed Williams that the rest area would have six new interpretive markers and that the old Civil War marker would not be relocated, but left at the site of the old rest area. He also pledged to send copies of the marker texts to the Pueblo County Historical Society as soon as they were approved.²⁵

Perhaps in an attempt to correct an unintentional oversight, the design team quickly contacted the Pueblo County Historical Society and asked the organization to participate in the review of the proposed marker texts and graphics. One week later, Williams replied to the designers with a letter listing errors. He also attached the comments of retired anthropology professor William Buckles of the University of Southern Colorado, who Williams had asked to look at the marker text. Even though the society had only recently become part of the review process, Williams urged the designers to “utilize the attached comments and corrections and improve the credibility and content of the final product. An adjustment to the project time line would be much better than installing incorrect information and/or maps.”²⁶

Buckles’s detailed comments for each proposed marker contained both subjective and objective criticism; the former tending toward stylistic choices and the latter concerning points of fact. Regarding the “Cuerno Verde” marker text, Buckles contributed additional specific demographic information for Comanches and other Plains Indians in the region, but he also objected to the tone of some of the language used by the designers writing; “uses of words such as ‘notorious,’ ‘monstrous,’ ‘looting,’ etc. for Greenhorn and the Comanche [*sic*] are not very good choices of names, and may be insults to the Comanche. Perhaps ‘famous,’ ‘raiding,’ etc. are better choices of words.” Buckles also contested the depiction of Anza’s route on the proposed map and the number of Comanches involved in the battle, citing Buckles’s own work on Anza’s account as evidence for these inaccuracies. The anthropologist criticized “The Story Beneath Your Feet” marker text as generic in its descriptions of the buffalo and tipi symbols, which did not refer

specifically to Comanches. He also took exception to the tone of the text, recommending “toning down these romantic statements and emphasizing instead the importances [*sic*] of bison in the economies, annual rounds of activities (fall and spring hunts), etc.”²⁷

In hindsight, it is clear that as the list of constituents in the creation of public memory at the Cuerno Verde Rest Area continued to grow, the questions over the interpretive markers escalated and the debate only became more contentious. The second interpretive marker review meeting between the design team and the CHS representatives in early June 1994 was, according to one disgruntled participant, “a marathon meeting of over three hours” that left both sides frustrated. The meeting began with the designers and the CHS exhibits curator discussing the potential marker materials and graphic design features. The discussion then shifted to the specifics of marker text and graphics. Everyone was concerned with focusing the text more clearly and cutting the length. New information from the Colorado Division of Wildlife expert was presented for the “Mountain Views” and “Short-grass Prairie” markers. Chief Historian Halaas suggested replacing the last paragraph on the geology of the ancestral Rocky Mountains, which eroded some sixty million years ago, on the basis that the passage would not be useful to visitors who did not care about the first Rocky Mountains. On the other hand, Nikolai argued, “Not everyone visiting the rest area would solely be interested in history and many might enjoy knowing the bigger picture of how this site and the mountains that draw people to Colorado were formed.”²⁸

The most contentious topics, however, were still “The Story Beneath Your Feet” and the “Cuerno Verde” markers. Everything about the markers received attention, from the mundane details, such as how to spell “tipi,” to larger interpretive concerns, such as how the travois was not “a clever hunting tool” but rather a significant mode of transportation for these Plains peoples. The minutes of the meeting record how the CHS representatives walked the designers “through the importance and process of Plains Indians [*sic*] drawing and artwork. Pointing out that the decorations weren’t typically symbols, but recollections and stories of a warrior’s life and events.” The main objection to the “Cuerno Verde” marker was Halaas’s recommendation not to put a face with the Greenhorn headdress image to avoid depicting a facial expression that might offend a rest area patron. Halaas corrected the designer’s use of singular tribal names—it is more appropriate to use plurals (i.e., Comanches rather than Comanche). He also asked that words such as “most notorious,” “monstrous,” and “looting” be replaced by less prejudicial terms such as “most well known,” “distinctive,” and “raiding.”²⁹

Not surprisingly, CDOT, the designers, and the historians each had different sets of standards for textual content, standards that contributed to the ongoing misunderstandings. To the CDOT officials, the new rest area was more than simply an improvement over the portable toilets that made up the old Brantzell median rest area originally built in the 1950s with the Interstate Highway. CDOT intended that the new multi-million dollar facility's landscaping, picnic areas, and hiking trails would serve both as a destination for the residents of Colorado City and as a gateway for the millions of tourists who pass through each year.³⁰ To Paul Nikolai and the design team, the interpretive markers were intended to convey a sense or feeling of appreciation for the region's history and landscape in a way that allowed visitors to take home "more than just a postcard." To Halaas and the CHS, the objective was more pedantic. The actual degree of difference became clear a week later when Halaas sent a letter to the design team cataloging, in five pages, his "objections" to their proposed marker texts. The tenor of the letter is generally constructive, even if Halaas's frustration is evident at times. For the historian, the texts were too long, contained too much information, and suffered from too many grammatical errors. Not surprisingly, the chief historian insisted that "all texts must be historically accurate—and checked again and again to be sure. Dates, numbers, specific U.S. army units, the names of Indian peoples, etc.—all must be checked for accuracy and spelling."³¹

Halaas recommended that the marker text, particularly in the "Cuerno Verde" and "The Story Beneath Your Feet" markers, be rewritten. In reference to the second, he pointed out factual errors and questioned the very premise behind this marker. Halaas argued, "The drawing labeled 'buffalo Symbol' is a symbol only to the designers or non-Indian interpreters. There was no uniformity about Plains Indian paintings other than certain stylistic characteristics." Concerning the tipi section of the marker, he argued that the phrase "clever wind deflector" in the draft "sounds patronizing. The tipi was in fact an invention perfectly adapted to the plains environment." Ultimately, he summed up his problems with these two markers in the following statement: "Again, the copy reads as if all Indians were the same, lived the same, came from the same place, and spoke the same language. In fact, Indian peoples came from different backgrounds, spoke different languages, and practiced different cultures."³²

The differing concerns of the designers and historians can perhaps be explained simply as differences in disciplines—each spoke their own language and found it difficult to understand the other's concerns. But the

debates around the markers at Cuerno Verde rest area can also be seen as two perspectives fighting for control of the past. Halaas noted that his position was that of the “official” voice in this process, and that the “CHS and CDOT are embarking on a new highway interpretive program, one that we hope will serve as a national model.” The Cuerno Verde marker project was the forerunner of a new collaborative highway interpretive program between the CHS and CDOT. With state and federal transportation officials involved in oversight, the project had high stakes. However, the Cuerno Verde Rest Area project was not technically part of this new program; in fact, as the CHS chief historian later confessed, “This project kind of fell through the cracks.”³³ Halaas’s frustration, in part, was due to the failed collaboration of CHS and CDOT, but his objections stemmed from the fact that the designers who were contracted to create the marker text and graphics did not produce the kind of content that a trained historian would. He conveyed as much in the conclusion of his letter to the design team, in which he pointed out that a vast literature on the subjects takes time to master and stated rather condescendingly, “I’m not at all blaming you for making some basic mistakes or for not fully understanding the nuances of western history. And the topics presented here, particularly the Comanches and Plains Indians, require enormous research. We are interpreting cultures very different from our own. We cannot assume anything about Indian people.” Halaas concluded this communication by offering to “take a more active role in the writing” of the marker texts. But the fact is that at this point, in mid-June 1994, the interpretive marker portion of the project came to an abrupt halt.³⁴

Not until one year later does the paper trail resume. In early June 1995, the designers resubmitted revised marker texts to the CDOT project manager, which included corrections recommended by Halaas and Buckles the previous fall. By this time, it was possible that the markers would not be ready for the rest area’s grand opening, but the designers were still optimistic that with a quick approval, the markers would be manufactured in time for installation on 21 August 1995, some two weeks before the scheduled dedication on Labor Day.³⁵

The deadline, however, was not met. By mid-July 1995, CHS representatives continued to object to the revised marker texts. Halaas was frustrated by the designers’ failure to address each of his comments in the revised marker text. Halaas received a revision from the designers at the eleventh hour on the same day his own comments were due, which further frustrated him. After spending some time on the telephone with the chief historian discussing his



EMPTY MARKER FRAMES AT CUERNO VERDE REST AREA DEDICATION
(*Photograph by author*)

problems with the revised draft, the designers ultimately submitted the text for fabrication without incorporating Halaas's revisions. The design team believed that it had accommodated all of Halaas's concerns and was perplexed by his continuing unhappiness with the marker drafts after four reviews. CDOT staff historian Sally Pearce's solution was to scrap the marker text drafts and begin anew. "At this point it seems like the markers just need to be re-written from scratch," she recommended. After the Parsons Transportation Group designers and the CHS staff failed to present CDOT with a set of marker texts that satisfied everyone, Pearce concluded that hiring an outside historian to re-write the marker texts around the approved graphics was the only solution at this late date. According to Pearce, this person ought to be paid to "simply take the information and the graphics and write up the text for these signs." Ultimately, the design team capitulated and agreed to hire an outside historian—albeit someone approved by the CHS chief historian—to rewrite the interpretive marker text for \$250 per plaque.³⁶

A little more than one month later, on 18 August 1995, a meeting took place between the design team leader and the contracted historian, Dr. Jay

Fell, to work out the scope of the work and to set deadlines for completion. Fell, a western historian located in the Denver area, had prepared interpretive markers for the CHS in the past, specifically a series of markers on the large gateway displays on the main highways that enter the state. Fell and the designers agreed that he would rewrite the marker text to the approval of the CHS chief historian and the CDOT representatives, and that this would be accomplished by 15 September 1995.³⁷

Fell provided the re-written interpretive marker text to the CDOT representatives, the CHS, the Chairman of the Comanche Nation, and the Parsons, DeLeuw and Company design team on the deadline. His changes in the texts produced markers that were more concise and historically accurate, as far as the documentary record is concerned. For example, a passage in the second draft of “The Story Beneath Your Feet” marker had read, “The buffalo symbol, displayed in the walkways to this plaza, represents a way of life and primary source of food, tools and shelter for Plains Indians.” Fell revised the passage to read, “The buffalo symbol, displayed in the walkways to this plaza, has been developed to symbolize the great importance that this animal had in many Plains Indian cultures.” The revised text clearly distinguishes the buffalo symbol as a creation of the designers rather than as a reproduction of an authentic Plains Indian symbol. Likewise, the revised “Cuerno Verde” marker text removed anecdotal statements and presented in their place additional historical information in more precise language.³⁸

Fell and design team representative Diane Yates met shortly thereafter to review the written comments on his final draft of the marker texts that had come in from everyone except Wallace Coffey, Comanche Chairman. Yates chose to defer to the comments from the other participants, but did suggest that “CDOT request written approval of this text from the Colorado Historical Society and Comanche Nation before fabricating the markers,” in effect, protecting herself from sole accountability for the final product.³⁹ A final interpretive marker text review meeting was held on 24 October 1995, two-and-a-half years after the design team first proposed the markers to CDOT, and nineteen months after the first marker text meeting between the designers and the CHS representatives. The comments recorded from this final meeting are primarily concerned with more mundane stylistic issues, such as word choice, punctuation, and text layout. The design team at last received authorization to make these minor changes and send the camera-ready markers to the manufacturer by the end of October, with installation of the markers planned for late December 1995, some four months after the dedication ceremony.⁴⁰

While the restrooms and landscaping were completed and opened to the public at the 1 September 1995 dedication ceremony, the historical content was conspicuously absent for some time. CDOT's accommodation of the designers' and CHS's visions for what the interpretive markers should present to the rest area's visitors certainly contributed to the delay of the facility's completion. Had the cooperative agreement regarding the interpretive markers between CDOT and the CHS been in place from the beginning, this marker text project may have been accomplished more efficiently without contributions from the design team. Ultimately, the final drafts of the marker texts and images reflect the unified historical vision of the CHS chief historian, with key contributions by select experts identified by his office, rather than the creative vision of the designers. The markers do not represent real collaboration. In any process where public memory is negotiated there are often many voices, but ultimately only one message will be carved in stone or, in this case, embedded in fiberglass.

While some efforts were certainly made to include representatives of the Comanche Nation in the interpretive marker planning process, the end result fell short of a true partnership between CDOT, the CHS, the Colorado



COMANCHE CEREMONY AT REST AREA DEDICATION

Tom Wahnee, Elrod Monoessy, and Thomas Blackstar

(Photograph by Gregg Gargan courtesy Colorado Department of Transportation, Denver)

City community, and Comanches. In fact, given that Edward Tahhahwah's recommendations did not result in any changes to the Cuerno Verde marker text or image, Comanches only significant participation in the project was at the dedication ceremony. CDOT Project Engineer John Aguilar had the idea to invite a Comanche delegation from Lawton, Oklahoma, for the occasion, and he arranged for a twenty-minute spot at the end of the program for the tribal representatives to present anything they wished. Additionally, he arranged for pre-paid overnight accommodations at the Greenhorn Inn in Colorado City for all four participants, reimbursements for mileage and meals, and two \$50 honorariums, one for each of the medicine men.⁴¹

The Cuerno Verde Rest Area project was formally dedicated in a public ceremony on Friday, 1 September 1995. Several local, regional, and national officials participated in the dedication, including the President of the Greenhorn Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Regional Director of the Federal Highway Administration, the State Transportation Commissioner, and a Colorado State Senator. The "Indian Ceremonial Rites," conducted by the Comanche Nation representatives, capped the event. State and local officials planned a dedication event that was much more than a simple ribbon cutting. Their invitation to the Comanche delegation suggests that the rest area dedication ceremony served not only to inaugurate its restroom and information facilities, but also to validate its monumental qualities. Of this unique event the *Greenhorn Valley News* noted, "the highlight of the morning dedication was definitely the Comanche Indian ceremonial rites." The newspaper added that Chairman Coffey presented a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Comanche Tribe to CDOT. After setting the scene, the journalist then described the ceremony in terms that demonstrated the enduring legacy of the stereotypical "mystical Indian" in late twentieth-century American culture by making references to the "mystical powers" that the Comanches still hold over the area, evident in his account of Chairman Coffey's comment, "When we leave, it will rain," which it did.⁴² Having the Comanches take part in the dedication ceremonies for a facility that bears the name of one of their heroes makes a great deal of sense from a CDOT promotional standpoint. But why did the Comanche tribal chairman agree to participate?

Cultural Anthropologist Daniel Gelo's studies of Comanche geography are of particular interest to the question of how the new Cuerno Verde Rest Area fits into the Comanche cultural landscape. Gelo seeks to reconstruct the Comanche geographical imagination through his examination and analysis of historical sources, oral history interviews, and Comanche place names

in five physiographic regions in Texas.⁴³ He points to, among other things, the Comanche legendary hero named *Sokeweki*, or Land Searcher, as evidence of Comanches' "abiding interest in the landscape, navigation, topography, and spatial relations." In the end, he is optimistic that "[a]s the last purported physical traces of Comanche presence in Texas fade away, there is a renewed appreciation of the Comanche legacy in Texas among scholars and modern tribe members." Gelo attributes this resurgence in interest among the Comanches to three factors that tie in well with the Cuerno Verde Rest Area example: first, "the potential for economic cooperation between the tribal government and local businesses in Texas, toward the development of tourism and education enterprises"; second, "a desire among many tribe members to see firsthand the hills, springs, camp grounds, and pictographs that their elders have spoken of"; and finally, "a nostalgic interest in Texas, most often expressed as love of the beauty of the landscape."⁴⁴

Interviews with former Comanche Nation Tribal Chairman Wallace Coffey and medicine man Thomas Blackstar—both of whom participated in the Cuerno Verde Rest Area dedication ceremony in 1995—confirm these three themes. Gelo's first point regarding cooperation between the tribe and local interests to further tourism and education, is in the Comanche Nation's presentation of a certificate of appreciation to CDOT that acknowledges such cooperation.⁴⁵ While Wallace Coffey believed that "the local community had some spiritual significance to that territory," he admitted that he was initially "amazed that Colorado was willing to look at something like this"—naming their new rest area for a Comanche historical figure. He was quite aware of the educational opportunities the honor of naming the rest area for a Comanche historical figure presented to the Comanche Nation. It is unfortunate, he said, "That we have to use a coat and tie in today's modern world, and that's our weapons of today. So from that proclamation you can tell that education is the new weapon. And it's different from the bow and arrow, what he [Cuerno Verde] had, but it's still utilized in a way that can bring an element of pride." The naming of the facility, Coffey believed, was a "tribute to the culture of our people."⁴⁶ Thomas Blackstar, however, is less optimistic that the educational component of the rest area, or any other cultural marker for that matter, will have any effect on the young Comanche people living today: "Yeah, it would help, but these young boys, people nowadays . . . I'm saying about ninety percent of the young Indians in today, they're not interested in what has happened about our Comanche people."⁴⁷

Coffey indicated that he participated in the rest area design phase by making recommendations for the representation of the Plains Indian symbols, such as his suggestion that the tipi serve as a place to give prayers and receive guidance. Coffey described how he and the rest of the Comanche delegation did just that during the dedication ceremony: "My brothers they burnt cedar. When they burn cedar the smoke goes up and we ask God to watch over this place and that people will be comforted and that they will receive some rest and that they will get, you know, a chance to look at the panorama but also that when they really go on another, wherever their journey is, they will receive some comfort knowing that they will make their journey." In his dedication remarks, Coffey remembered mentioning that he and his delegation had traveled a great distance from Oklahoma to be there that day, "but the distance we traveled was nothing compared to the years of travel that he [Cuerno Verde] went through, and he traveled many years in the history of our people." To Coffey, Cuerno Verde the culture hero and Cuerno Verde the notorious figure from Southwestern history were both represented in this interstate highway facility.⁴

Both Coffey and Blackstar repeatedly refer to concepts that are Gelo's second and third points: the desires of Comanche people to visit historical places and to a nostalgic interest in their former territory. Coffey, speaking specifically of the region around Colorado City, notes, "You can see when you go to that area why there was so much love for it. Because of the beauty, but not only beauty because of the terrain, the protection it provided, the woods, the water, the animals. Back then, you know, it was very pure." Blackstar also related a personal story of how he became interested in researching his tribe's past and visiting culturally significant places firsthand:

I guess what got me started was curiosity, and I set there on Sundays, my grandfather and great grandfather they had a brush arbor, and a lot of them old men they lived around them, they'd come up to my grandfather's house on Sunday afternoon under that brush arbor they'd sit there and tell stories about their experiences and I'd just lay there and listen to them. After they're all gone curiosity got to me. So I went, I went to digging around on what the old people were talking about.

He recalled visiting Medicine Mound east of Quanah, Texas, on two different occasions: once with his sick mother when he was eighteen years old, and again in the mid-1990s with a small party that included Wallace Coffey and

another medicine man. Throughout the interview, he mentioned several places in Texas that hold cultural significance to the Comanche people: Fredericksburg, the site of the signing of the 1847 treaty between the Comanches and the Germans giving the latter the rights to settle in Comanche territory; and Painted Rock and Big Spring, places where the Comanches used to winter their herds. And he related the difficulty he has encountered in his attempts to locate some other sites, due in large part to the legacy of the region's imperial history and the succession of languages used to name places and make maps. Wallace Coffey also mentioned several places important to the Comanche people, including Palo Duro Canyon and Adobe Walls, where an 1874 battle between several Southern Plains tribes against buffalo hunters began the Red River War and ultimately ended with the surrender of the Comanches, Kiowas, and southern Cheyennes to the U.S. Army. He points out that sites like these still hold significance for today's Comanche people because they are "sites where our ancestors have lived up to their expectations as well as provided a road for us." To Coffey, Palo Duro Canyon and Adobe Walls are both places and events, moments wherein brave men and women fulfilled the promise of Comanche warriorhood.⁴⁹

As the statements of Coffey and Blackstar indicate, these sites are part of a process of cultural memory that adapts the past for present purposes. These are sites that are significant both individually to Comanche history, and collectively as the foundation of the tribe's cultural landscape. Most of today's anthropologists consider tradition to be something alive and part of the present, not simply a collection of archaic customs. And, as some scholars concede—and the journalist's version of the Cuerno Verde Rest Area dedication ceremony seems to demonstrate—"perhaps it is still difficult to admit that native peoples, like everyone else, adapt their cultural repertoires to the present."⁵⁰ The Cuerno Verde Rest Area project and dedication suggest that today's Comanches most certainly *do* adapt their traditions to the present. Their important places, and the traditions that they are a part of, are not simply static antiquities frozen in a timeless state. Instead, they are part of a vital new past, shaped by conscious decisions made in the present.

As revealed in the story of the contest for control of the past among those involved in the Cuerno Verde Rest Area interpretive markers project, individuals negotiate within their groups as well as with other groups to determine the shape or form of public memory on local, regional, and national scales. From the beginning of the rest area project, CDOT turned to locals to help name the facility and conceive of its utility to the community. Mem-

bers of the Greenhorn Valley Chamber of Commerce chose the name of the legendary Comanche leader, further cementing the image of the region's romantic western past. Likewise, those in charge of the facility turned to experts for advice and approval, using an historian, a biologist, a local reporter, a planner, and the Comanche tribal chairman as consultants on the content of the interpretive marker text and other design elements. And finally, to top off the public dedication ceremony, CDOT arranged for Comanche tribal representatives to travel from Lawton, Oklahoma, to offer blessings for the new facility bearing both the flag of the Comanche Nation and the name of their cultural hero.

Power is a key concept in the process of public memory negotiation. Those who wield power influence the official construction of the past by the very stories they choose to tell and the perspectives they thereby validate. Southeastern Colorado has been the setting for many different attempts to create culturally specific pasts and establish them publicly. Acting from a position of authority derived from land ownership, Ralph Taylor and N. K. Mendelsohn articulated their romantic western visions for Colorado City in the early 1960s. As the developers of Colorado City, Mendelsohn and his organization had nearly absolute control over the construction of a public memory for the new town. From the Old West-inspired street names to the very name of the community itself, Mendelsohn and Taylor utilized the entire palate of western imagery to render their vision of the New West in broad strokes on the land and in the minds of residents and potential buyers. In the mid-1990s, other groups built upon those foundations. The Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Commission created the Frontier Pathways Scenic Byway and the Colorado Department of Transportation, working with the Colorado Historical Society's Chief Historian, landscape architects, and the Comanche Nation in Oklahoma, designed, developed, and dedicated the Cuerno Verde Rest Area. By invoking a tacit authority not yet officially granted by the Department of Transportation, the Colorado Historical Society influenced the negotiation of the interpretive marker design and text by calling on its network of recognized experts and holding the designers and architects to certain historical standards.

But in the case of memories of the past, power is not always found among those in "official" positions. Those with close personal ties to the event or object enjoy a position of authority, and are likely to be consulted to lend credence to a project, as was the case with the Comanche tribal representatives. In the end, when all the rhetorical wrangling and design changes

were complete, the Colorado public officials deferred to the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma, literally seeking its blessing for the Cuerno Verde Rest Area and creating what is perhaps the most interesting byproduct of this project. Wallace Coffey and Thomas Blackstar not only participated in the negotiation of public memory in Colorado City, but also, regardless of the “official” agenda pursued by the Colorado participants, these tribal leaders seized the opportunity to add that place to their own modern cultural landscape—a landscape comprised of the numerous constructed pasts making up an important part of a living tradition.

Notes

1. Human movement and settlement in the Arkansas River Valley of southeastern Colorado is reflected generically in the constant process of ecosystem succession, and specifically in the procession of nomadic, migratory, and resident human populations of the region, which used this river and other drainage systems as roadmaps, highways, and rest areas. See W. Raymond Wood, ed., *Archaeology on the Great Plains* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998); Michael G. Davis, *Ecology, Sociopolitical Organization, and Cultural Change on the Southern Plains: A Critical Treatise in the Sociocultural Anthropology of Native North America* (Kirksville, Mo.: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1996); Karl H. Schlesier, ed., *Plains Indians, A.D. 500–1500: The Archaeological Past of Historic Groups* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994); Jack L. Hofman, et. al., *From Clovis to Comanchero: Archeological Overview of the Southern Great Plains*, Arkansas Archeological Survey Research Series, no. 35 (Fayetteville: Arkansas Archeological Survey, 1989); Douglas B. Bamforth, *Ecology and Human Organization on the Great Plains* (New York: Plenum Press, 1988); James H. Gunnerson, *Archaeology of the High Plains*, Cultural Resource Series, no. 19 (Denver, Colo.: Bureau of Land Management, 1987); Waldo R. Wedel, *Prehistoric Man on the Great Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961); and George E. Hyde, *Indians of the High Plains: From the Prehistoric Period to the Coming of Europeans* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959).
2. See, for example, Daniel J. Gelo, “The Comanches as Aboriginal Skeptics,” *American Indian Quarterly* 17 (Winter 1993): 69–82; Morris W. Foster, *Being Comanche: A Social History of an American Indian Community* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991); Stanley Noyes, *Los Comanches: The Horse People, 1751–1845* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993); Thomas W. Kavanagh, *The Comanches: A History, 1706–1875* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996); Gerald Betty, *Comanche Society: Before the Reservation* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002); and several dissertations, including Betty’s, “Comanche Society, 1706–1850” (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 1999); Thomas W. Kavanagh, “Political Power and Political Organization: Comanche Poli-

- tics, 1786–1875” (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 1986); and Daniel J. Gelo, “Comanche Belief and Ritual” (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1986). The studies listed above supplement, and in some cases, replace, works such as: Ernest Wallace and E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Comanches: Lords of the South Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952); and Rupert N. Richardson, *The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark, 1933).
3. James H. Gunnerson and Dolores A. Gunnerson, *Ethnohistory of the High Plains*. Cultural Resource Series, no. 26 (Denver, Colo.: Bureau of Land Management, 1988), 1–7; Dolores A. Gunnerson, *The Jicarilla Apaches: A Study in Survival* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 166–234; and Veronica Velarde Tiller, *The Jicarilla Apache Tribe: A History*, rev. ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 6. Waldo R. Wedel argues that, in addition to pressure from other Indian groups, the climate and soil exhaustion may have contributed to Apache relocation, see Wedel, “Some Early Euro-American Percepts on the Great Plains and Their Influence on Anthropological Thinking,” in *Images of the Plains: The Role of Human Nature in Settlement*, ed. Brian W. Blouet and Merlin P. Lawson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 13–20.
 4. Alfred B. Thomas, *The Plains Indians and New Mexico, 1751–1778: A Collection of Documents Illustrative of the History of the Eastern Frontier of New Mexico*, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540–1940, vol. XI, ed. George P. Hammond (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), 166–67. Thomas contends that “Chief Greenhorn was not killed on this occasion. He met his death at the hands of Governor Anza in 1779” (p. 166–67). Elizabeth A. H. John, however, concludes that “the fallen chief left a son who dedicated his own life and those of his followers to vengeance for his father.” John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men’s Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540–1795* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), 469. Recent scholarship accepts John’s interpretation. See, Kavanagh, *The Comanches: A History*, 79, 92; and Noyes, *Los Comanches*, 62, 323 n. 2.
 5. Alfred B. Thomas, *Forgotten Frontiers: A Study of the Spanish Indian Policy of Don Juan Bautista de Anza, Governor of New Mexico, 1777–1787* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), 66–71.
 6. The action of the play is based largely upon Don Fernández’s 1777 engagement of the Comanches on the Staked Plains near *Las Orejas del Conejo*. The only variation is the death of the second Cuerno Verde, who reportedly survived the 1777 battle only to succumb to Governor Anza two years later in the mountains of southern Colorado. See the recent study by Enrique R. Lamadrid, *Hermanitos Comanchitos: Indo-Hispano Rituals of Captivity and Redemption* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003); and Aurelio M. Espinosa, *The Folklore of Spain in the American Southwest: Traditional Spanish Folk Literature in Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado*, ed. J. Manuel Espinosa (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 219. See also Aurelio M. Espinosa, *Los Comanches: A Spanish Heroic Play of the Year Seventeen Hundred and Eighty*, Bulletin of the University of New Mexico, no. 45, Language Series, vol. 1 (Albuquerque: University of New

- Mexico Press, 1907); Gilberto Espinosa, trans., "Los Comanches," *New Mexico Quarterly* 2 (May 1931): 133–46; and Arthur L. Campa, *Los Comanches: A New Mexican Folk Drama*, Bulletin of the University of New Mexico, no. 376, Modern Language Series, vol. 7 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1942).
7. A Comanche leader named Paruanarimuco came to Gov. Juan Bautista de Anza in July 1787 to ask for his help constructing a village settlement along the Arkansas River for the Jupe band of Comanches. Anza provided thirty laborers and by October they had constructed nineteen houses and were at work on several more. Anza stocked the Comanche village, named San Carlos de los Jupes, with livestock, feed, and seeds. The Comanches abandoned San Carlos in January 1788 after the death of a woman close to Paruanarimuco, effectively ending Spanish attempts to encourage their Comanche allies to become sedentary horticulturalists. See Alfred B. Thomas, "San Carlos: A Comanche Pueblo on the Arkansas River, 1787," *The Colorado Magazine*, May 1929, pp. 82–84. A recent pamphlet published by the Pueblo Historical Society places the Comanche settlement south of the Arkansas River at the mouth of the St. Charles River, eight miles east of Fountain Creek, Colorado. See Arla Aschermann, *Wind in the Cornfields: Pueblo County, Colorado Ghost Towns and Settlements, 1787–1872*, 3d ed. (Pueblo, Colo.: Pueblo Historical Society, 1994), 3.
 8. Many U.S. citizens filed homestead claims by the early 1870s when the U.S. Congress adjusted the grant from 4,096,000 acres claimed to 97,514.53 acres patented. This decision effectively transferred much of the Arkansas Valley into the public domain, and, therefore, made it open to private ownership under the terms of the Homestead Act of 1862. Frederic J. Athearn, *Land of Contrast: A History of Southeast Colorado*, Cultural Resource Series, no. 17 (Denver, Colo.: Bureau of Land Management, 1985); Janet Lecompte, *Pueblo, Hardscrabble, Greenhorn: The Upper Arkansas, 1832–1856* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978), 227–36; Richard Nostrand, *The Hispano Homeland* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 86–87; and Marianne L. Stoller, "Grants of Desperation, Lands of Speculation": Mexican Period Land Grants in Colorado," *Journal of the West* 19 (July 1980), 26, 29, 34. On southern Colorado's Spanish place names, and their inevitable Anglo mispronunciations, see Eleanor L. Richie, "Spanish Place Names in Colorado," *American Speech* 10 (April 1935): 88–92; and George L. Trager, "Some Spanish Place Names of Colorado," *American Speech* 10 (October 1935): 203–7.
 9. Douglas Seefeldt, "Constructing Western Pasts: Place and Public Memory in the Twentieth-Century American West" (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2001).
 10. "Colorado City Being Reborn On The Greenhorn," *Pueblo (Colo.) Star-Journal and Sunday Chieftain*, Sunday, 2 December 1962, p. 4 C. As a vice president of the group developing Colorado City, Taylor worked hard to sell both the identity of Colorado City and its housing lots. As a journalist, Taylor was news director for the *Pueblo Star-Journal and Sunday Chieftain*, and he also wrote many volumes of local history, most notably, *Colorado: South of the Border* (Denver, Colo.: Sage Books, 1963), published at the same time that the plans for Colorado City were unveiled. "Colorado City Expected To Make Lucrative Impact On Area Economy," *Pueblo Chieftain*, 24 January 1963.

11. Information Booklet, *Colorado City: One of the Great Western Cities* (Denver: Colorado City Development Co., July, 1973), in Colorado City, Colorado clip-pings file, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado; and "Colorado City Strives for Self-Support," *Denver Post*, 11 June 1973, p. 25.
12. "Cuerno Verde Rest Area," n.d., media release, Cuerno Verde Rest Area project files, Public Information Office, Colorado Department of Transportation, Denver, Colorado [hereafter, CDOT-PIO]. Local volunteer Dolores Jandt suggested the name *Cuerno Verde* be used for the new rest area. Shortly thereafter she was made an honorary member of the Greenhorn Valley Chamber of Commerce. Dolores Jandt, telephone conversation with author, 9 April 1996; confirmed by Marvin Brown, President of the Greenhorn Valley Chamber of Commerce, tele- phone conversation with author, 9 April 1996.
13. "Colorado City," n.d., promotional brochure, in author's possession; "Greenhorn Valley Chamber of Commerce Map," n.d., copies in the possession of the author; Stephen P. Walker, Sally Pearce, and John Sem, "Status Report of Colorado Scenic and Historic Byways Program, 1989 to 1996," *Transportation Research Record* no. 1599, pp. 104–110.
14. Walker, Pearce, and Sem, "Status Report," 105.
15. This Scenic Byway passes near a marker that in 1932 the Colorado Historical Society dedicated to the Greenhorn Valley's namesake, Cuerno Verde. "Frontier Path- ways Scenic Byway," brochure, n.d., copy in the possession of the author.
16. Diane Yates to Sally Pearce, 26 October 1993, Cuerno Verde Rest Area proposal, "Section IV—Interpretive Markers (Optional)," Cuerno Verde Rest Area project files, Office of Environmental Services, Colorado Department of Transportation, Denver, Colorado [hereafter, CDOT-OES].
17. Paul Nikolai to Dianna Litvak, 29 November 1993, Cuerno Verde Rest Area pro- posal, "Section IV—Interpretive Markers (Optional)," Cuerno Verde Rest Area project files, Parsons Transportation Group, Denver, Colorado [hereafter, PTG]. In the cover letter, Nikolai states: "As I said earlier, the Historical Society's help in critiquing the markers would be invaluable to me and greatly appreciated."
18. Halaas to Diane Yates and Paul Nikolai, 14 June 1994, memorandum, PTG.
19. Diane Yates to File, 18 March 1994, "Meeting Minutes for Cuerno Verde Rest Area, 03/07/94; 10:30 a.m.," CDOT-OES.
20. DeLeuw, Cather and Company [part of the Parsons Transportation Group], "Cuerno Verde Interpretive Markers Conceptual Design," 25 March 1994, CDOT-OES.
21. In a document dated 25 March 1994, the following list of experts on regional cul- tural and natural history were identified as possible reviewers for the markers: Wallace Coffey, Comanche Tribal Chairman; Phil Carson, *Pueblo Chieftain* re- porter; Bill Buckles, University of Southern Colorado professor emeritus; Jim Von Loh, Colorado Department of Natural Areas biologist; and Jay Reed, Colorado Department of Natural Areas interpretive planner, CDOT-OES. De Leuw, Cather and Company, "Cuerno Verde Interpretive Markers Conceptual Design," CDOT- OES; and Diane Yates to File, 29 March 1994, "Cuerno Verde Rest Area Interpre- tive Markers Meeting Minutes: 03/25/94," CDOT-OES.

22. Diane Yates to File, 5 April 1994, "Cuerno Verde Rest Area Interpretive Markers Meeting Minutes: 03/31/94," CDOT-OES.
23. Paul Nikolai to Coffey, 1 April 1994, PTG. Nikolai also sent similar letters to John L. Kessell, and Merrill Mades [sic]. David F. Halaas, State Historian, and Dianna Litvak, Colorado Historical Society, contacted Jay Reed, of the Colorado Division of Wildlife, see Jay Reed to Dianna Litvak, 31 March 1994, memorandum, CDOT-OES.
24. In addition to the experts noted above, a "Contact List for Historical Research," dated 18 May 1994, also includes: Phil Carson, reporter, *Pueblo Chieftain*; Russel Ellis, Director of Research and Development, Comanche Nation; Edward Tahhahwah Jr., Comanche Language Director, Comanche Nation; Stanley Noyes, author; and Fran Levine, anthropologist. Diane Yates to Dave Poling, 18 May 1994, memorandum, PTG; Paul Nikolai to File, 26 May 1994, memorandum, "Summary of Comments on First Draft of Interpretive Markers for Cuerno Verde Rest Area," CDOT-OES.
25. Williams to Conyers, 11 April 1994, CDOT-OES; and Conyers to Williams, 2 May 1994, CDOT-OES.
26. George R. Williams to Diane Yates, 1 June 1994, with attached memorandum, "Cuerno Verde Rest Area Interpretation," from Bill Buckles to George Williams, 31 May 1994, CDOT-OES.
27. Ibid.
28. Paul Nikolai to File, 8 June 1994, memorandum, "Cuerno Verde Interpretive Markers Text and Graphics Comments," CDOT-OES.
29. Paul Nikolai to File, 8 June 1994, CDOT-OES.
30. CDOT, "Colorado's Newest Rest Area—Cuerno Verde," *Milestones* (September/October 1995): 1–2.
31. Halaas to Diane Yates and Paul Nikolai, 14 June 1994, PTG; Paul Nikolai to File, 8 June 1994, CDOT-OES; and Yates to Pearce, 26 October 1993, CDOT-OES.
32. Halaas to Diane Yates and Paul Nikolai, 14 June 1994, PTG.
33. Halaas to Sally Pearce, 25 August 1995, memorandum, "Cuerno Verde Rest Area Historical Signage," CDOT-OES.
34. Halaas to Diane Yates and Paul Nikolai, 14 June 1994, PTG.
35. Diane Yates to Dave Poling, 7 June 1995, memorandum, CDOT-OES.
36. Pearce to Dick Annaud, 14 July 1995, memorandum, "Cuerno Verde Rest Area Markers," CDOT-OES; Halaas to Pearce, 25 August 1995, CDOT-OES; and Diane Yates to Distribution list, 21 August 1995, memorandum, "Meeting Minutes: 8/18/95 Cuerno Verde Rest Area," CDOT-OES.
37. Diane Yates to Distribution list, 21 August 1995, CDOT-OES.
38. Diane Yates to Dave Poling, 7 June 1995, CDOT-OES; and Fell to Sally Pearce, 15 September 1995, CDOT-OES.
39. Yates to File, 29 September 1995, memorandum, "Interpretive Marker Design Cuerno Verde Rest Area," CDOT-OES.
40. Yates to File, 26 October 1995, memorandum, "Interpretive Markers for Cuerno Verde Rest Area, Minutes of Meeting: October 24, 1995, 2:00 pm," PTG.
41. Aguilar to Wallace Coffey, 22 August 1995, copy in the possession of the author.

42. The reporter concluded his piece with the following passage: "At the end of the ceremony and lunch, the crowds thinned and the dedication was now history. Early in the afternoon, at 1:37 p.m. to be exact, a large, dark cloud formed over Colorado City and the new Cuerno Verde rest area. It rained for approximately five minutes, just as Coffey had said it would." *Colorado City (Colo.) Greenhorn Valley News*, 7 September 1995, p. 3. The rain was confirmed by Marvin Brown, telephone conversation with author, 9 April 1996; and Wallace Coffey, interview with author, tape recording, Santa Fe, 15 March 2000.
43. The term *geographical imagination* in this case refers to the sense that a group has about a past landscape and how they relate to it. This is perpetuated through oral traditions, place names, and quasi-political claims to specific locales or territories. For a study of this concept, see Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996). Daniel J. Gelo, "'Comanche Land and Ever Has Been': A Native Geography of the Nineteenth-Century *Comanchería*," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 103 (January 2000): 272–307; and Gelo, "Recalling the Past in Creating the Present: Topographic References in Comanche Narrative," *Western Folklore* 53 (October 1994): 295–312.
44. Gelo, "'Comanche Land and Ever Has Been,'" 273, 307.
45. "Comanche Proclamation," certificate, 1 September 1995, CDOT-PIO.
46. Wallace Coffey, interview by author.
47. Thomas Blackstar, interview by author, tape recording, Lawton, Okla., 8 June 2000.
48. Wallace Coffey, interview by author.
49. Wallace Coffey, interview by author; Thomas Blackstar, interview by author.
50. Marie Mauzé, ed., *Present is Past: Some Uses of Tradition in Native Societies* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1997), 6, 7.