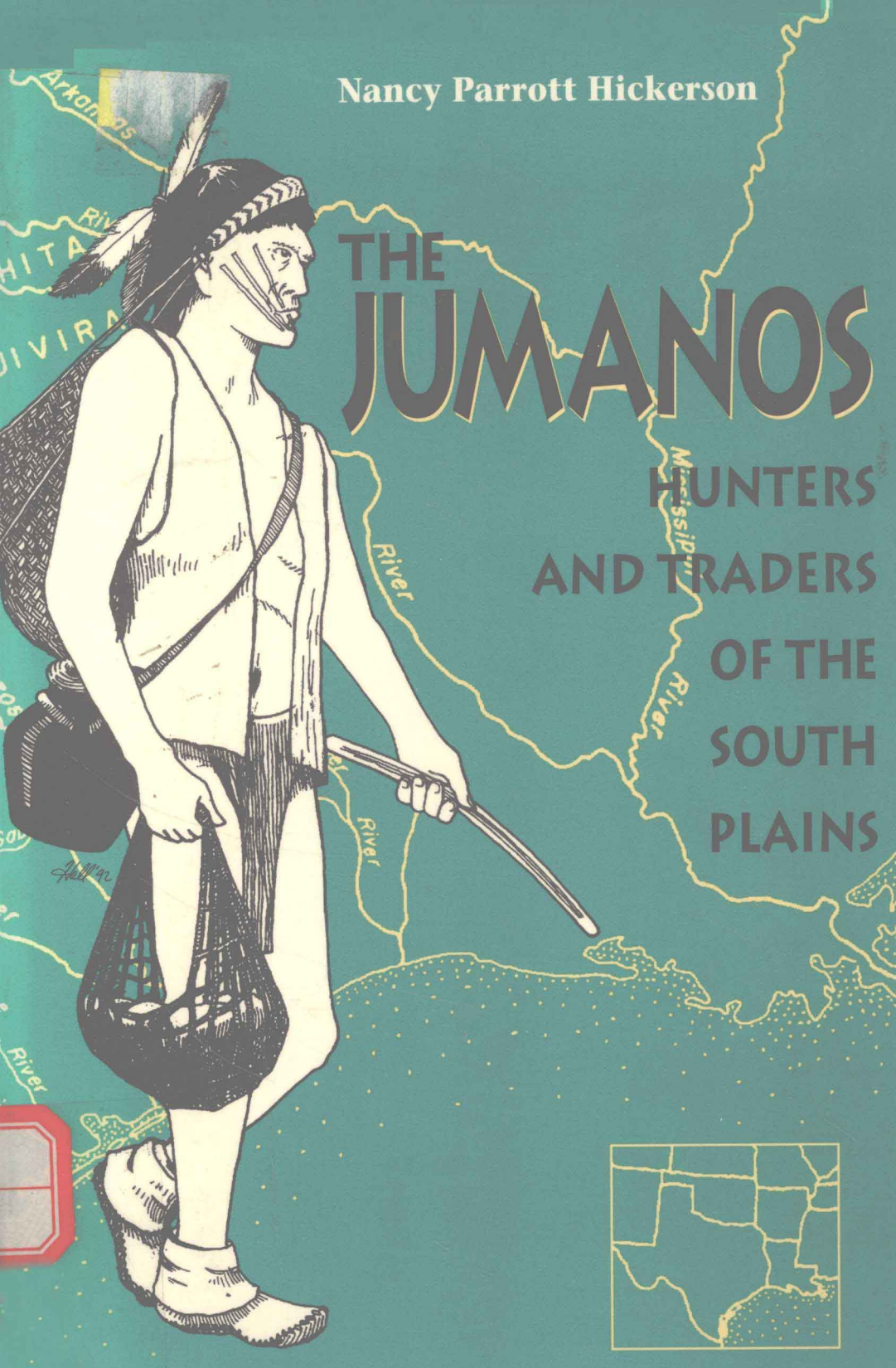


Nancy Parrott Hickerson

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HUNTERS  
AND TRADERS  
OF THE  
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## ***To the spirit of Juan Sabeata***

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# THE JUMANOS

## PREFACE

My interest in the Jumanos, an early historic Plains people, began more than a decade ago during a symposium sponsored by the Texas Tech University Museum. The subject of the symposium was the culture and history of a later Plains people, the Kiowas. Archaeologist Robert Campbell presented a paper dealing with possible Kiowa origins; in it he proposed a link to the prehistoric Jornada culture of the South Plains; he also indicated a Jornada connection for the little-known, and long extinct, Jumanos and Sumas.<sup>1</sup> Although I am not professionally involved in archaeology, I found Campbell's ideas interesting, since my own paper, on linguistics, also pointed to a southwestern connection for Kiowa. The Jumanos, located in the South Plains, looked like a possible missing link between the Kiowas and the Jornada culture. However, this idea got little support from the other symposium participants. The identity of the Jumanos' language appeared to be crucial. Kiowa is a Tanoan language, and the Tanoan family is well represented in the eastern Pueblos, bordering the Rio Grande. It seemed likely that the language of the prehistoric Jornada people could also have been Tanoan. But Jumano was deemed to have been part of another family, the Uto-Aztecan; if this were the case, it could not be directly related to Kiowa.

My reaction to this impasse was to begin a fresh investigation of Jumano linguistic affiliation. I was surprised to find that the problem had a long history. Over more than a century, half a dozen different suggestions had been made by as many different scholars. The earliest of these, Mexican linguist Francisco Pimentel, published maps which indicated that Suma was linked to Piro, the extinct language of the southern Pueblos.<sup>2</sup> Since Pimentel's time, Piro has been recognized as part of the Tanoan family; the implication is, therefore, that Suma and Jumano are included in that grouping. Although Pimentel's opinion was accepted by J. P. Harrington,<sup>3</sup> an

expert on North American Indian languages, it was evidently ignored by later researchers, whose suggestions reflect a variety of theories about regional cultural dynamics.

When I began to read firsthand accounts of Spanish encounters with the Jumanos, dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, I found myself in agreement with Pimentel and Harrington. Even though the hard data of texts and word lists in the Jumanos' language were lacking, there were statements about intelligibility and other indications of communication between groups which led me to believe that the Jumanos and the closely related Sumas were Tanoan-speakers. I concluded that in the early historical period the geographical distribution of this group of languages was greater than in recent times. It extended east of the Rio Grande into the South Plains, and south of New Mexico as far as La Junta de los Rios. The Jumanos were part of this Tanoan bloc.<sup>4</sup>

While I was preoccupied with the rather convoluted problem of Jumano linguistic identity, I gradually became aware that it is just one part of a larger mystery. Who were the Jumanos? What was their cultural situation? What had become of them? Early in the twentieth century, certain historical researchers had attempted to answer these questions. However, it appeared that virtually no progress had been made since 1940 when the convention was adopted that *Jumano*, as used in the Spanish colonial documents, was a general term and did not refer to any specific ethnic group or tribe. This convention virtually terminated inquiry into the so-called Jumano problem.<sup>5</sup> I was convinced, however, that it was an oversimplification, and that the problem was still unresolved. (The history of modern Jumano research is briefly recapitulated in the first section of this work.)

About five years ago, I put other interests aside and became committed to a full-scale ethnohistorical study. I no longer cared whether the Jumanos had anything to do with the Kiowas. My preliminary studies had already convinced me that they were a unique and fascinating people in their own right. They were mentioned prominently and frequently at the time of Spanish entry into the greater Southwest. Later, they appeared less and less frequently and eventually disappeared from the historical record. I determined to collect as much information as possible, hoping to put together a coherent picture of the Jumanos and, if possible, to answer the nagging questions about their place in history and their decline.

In the course of this study, I have been excited to discover a people who were not only real, in every sense of the word, but also important. I am convinced that a new recognition of the Jumanos,

as a significant presence in western North America, will eventually lead to other reassessments of Native American history. This book can be read simply as a chronological account of the Jumanos' decline and fall—their loss of territory, the breakdown of a regional economic and political system in which they played a vital part, and their eventual displacement from the South Plains. Beyond this, however, I hope to convey something of a Jumano perspective on several major cultural changes or transitions which this people witnessed. Among these are the Spanish conquest of the western borderlands, the Apachean invasion of the South Plains, the introduction of horses and the evolution of a Native American equestrian culture, and the intrusion of European power rivalries into North America. The impact of these events on the Jumanos reflects a period of cultural revolution of continental proportions.

I have followed the Jumanos' story through the seventeenth century, the point at which they disappear from Spanish colonial accounts. The questions which still remain are, directly or indirectly, germane to my original interest in Kiowa ethnogenesis, which I now see as exemplifying a later stage in the transformation of Native American society. I hope that I will eventually be able to trace specific ties linking these two peoples, and to document the steps through which remnant Jumano bands formed a new identity as the nucleus of the Kiowa nation.<sup>6</sup> However, that is beyond the scope of this study; it is the prospectus for a sequel, with much of the work remaining to be done.

My Jumano research began in earnest during a developmental leave granted by Texas Tech University in the spring of 1987, and was completed during a second leave in 1993. I am grateful for short-term grants and fellowships from the Newberry Library, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the American Philosophical Society. I appreciate the interest and encouragement of a number of my colleagues, including Bob Campbell, Dan Flores, Eileen Johnson, Helen Tanner, John Moore, and Carroll Riley. I thank Andrew Hall for the illustrations. My son, Daniel Hickerson, assisted me with the notes, references, and index; and my daughter, Megan Hickerson, has read and critiqued my writing. I thank both for their amiability and unflagging encouragement.

# INTRODUCTION

## The Mysterious Jumanos

Anyone who peruses the firsthand accounts of Spanish exploration and colonization of New Mexico, Texas, and adjacent regions of northern Mexico soon becomes aware of the presence throughout this large area of people called *Jumanos*. In the late sixteenth century, this name was applied to some of the first Native Americans encountered by explorers who ascended the Rio del Norte (the upper Rio Grande) to enter the lands north of Mexico. It appears that Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions—the first Europeans to travel into the interior of North America—also sojourned with the Jumanos even earlier as they made their way toward the Rio Grande and proceeded north along its course.

There are many references to encounters with Jumanos over the next two centuries, in the records of the Spanish colonies in Nuevo Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, Coahuila, and Texas. The Spaniards in New Mexico knew the Jumanos as a Pueblo people with villages in the eastern provinces of the colony. In the regions of eastern New Mexico, they also had dealings with Jumanos who were nomads. These Indians were plainsmen par excellence—buffalo-hunters who migrated seasonally between their scattered camps and Indian farming communities along the major rivers, both east and west.

Spanish exploration of the Plains was facilitated by contacts with the Jumanos, who were quick to offer their services as guides. Spanish settlers in New Mexico and Nueva Vizcaya (later Chihuahua) traded with the Jumanos, who soon began operating as middlemen between the Spanish colonies and distant Indian groups. Among these were the large Caddoan-speaking tribes and confederacies located far to the east of New Mexico, which the Spaniards originally named *Quivira* and which they later called collectively the *Nations of the North*.





Figure 1. A Jumano trader, circa 1580 (illustration by Andrew Hall)

It would appear that the known sphere of Jumano provenance expanded as the Spanish conquerors extended their sphere of influence, as the Spaniards recorded encounters with Jumanos in virtually every region they entered after the founding of New Mexico. As exploring and missionizing extended east of the Pecos, Jumano camps, or *rancherías*, were found located in the High Plains of western Texas and on eastward-flowing rivers such as the Rio de las Nueces (a stream which is generally identified today with the Rio Colorado of Texas).

Around 1670 missionary and military parties from another border region of New Spain, Coahuila, crossed the Rio Bravo (the lower Rio Grande) and reached the vicinity of San Antonio. These explorers, as they made their way through southern Texas, also encountered Jumanos. A decade later, expeditions out of New Mexico and Nueva Vizcaya dealt with the Jumanos as leaders of a growing pan-tribal movement in Texas. At about the same time, members of the French colony founded by the Marquis de La Salle at Espiritu Santo (Matagorda) Bay on the Gulf Coast of Texas had dealings with the Jumanos in the territory of the Ceni (Hasinai), a Caddoan confederacy. Both Spanish and French accounts indicate that in the last decades of the seventeenth century the Jumanos were extremely active, both as traders and as political leaders. At this time they were evidently conducting a busy long-distance traffic between Spanish settlements along the Rio del Norte and the Indians of eastern and southern Texas (of whom the Caddoans were the most numerous and politically important).

It is not known whether the Jumano presence was aboriginal through all parts of their vast area of distribution. It is tempting to believe that they may have advanced eastward as the Spanish sphere of influence expanded. It seems certain that they had a role in native trade dating from aboriginal times; however, it also seems likely that some of their movements were the result of an expansion of this role, vis-à-vis the Spanish colonies.

By or shortly after 1700, the Jumanos lost territory and were no longer a substantial or influential presence in the Southwest and South Plains. At some time during a brief period of Spanish withdrawal from Texas, between 1693 and 1716, they apparently ceased their frontier trading activities and were thereafter rarely seen. After this, there are only a few scattered references to the Jumanos. Some remnant populations remained clustered around La Junta de los Rios. The name was still applied to individuals and groups who became gradually incorporated during the next century into the Apache bands which were dominant in that region. As a distinct

people, the Jumanos were soon virtually extinct throughout their earlier heartland.

Modern ethnographic maps of native North America rarely indicate the presence of the Jumanos, although in the past, to judge by the contemporary accounts, they could be encountered almost anywhere in the Southwest or South Plains. Historians, anthropologists, and linguists have disagreed, and continue to disagree, about the identity of the Jumanos and the nature of their culture. Their place on the map, the language they spoke, and their role in history have remained a mystery, despite their obvious importance to their Native American and European neighbors and trade partners.

Efforts to piece together the outlines of Jumano history encounter difficulties which stem, directly or indirectly, from the scattered, mobile, and ephemeral nature of their presence in the greater Southwest and in historical records. For early historic times the only written records were produced by European observers. Sedentary or localized tribes—the Pueblo peoples, for example—sometimes had enduring relationships with resident missionaries or traders, many of whom kept journals and continual records of events. In such cases, a search of the official records of a particular mission or colonial district may prove a prolific source of cultural and historical information, a running account of events in the life of a single village or tribe.

By contrast, the Jumanos were widely dispersed; as their leader Juan Sabeata put it, they were an “extended” nation. Individuals and groups moved frequently. Their record is, of necessity, a pastiche of scattered information drawn from several different political units (New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, Texas, Coahuila), brief glimpses drawn from Spanish, French, and American sources, with little or no continuity. Catholic priests from time to time worked among Jumano groups, and Spanish settlers dealt with them—often illegally—for many years, but none of these left large bodies of documentation. There was apparently no observer of the Jumanos who provided more than passing comment on the life and times of these people.

Any attempt to write a comprehensive account of the Jumanos must therefore rely on a bare skeleton of chronological events, a few recorded cultural details, and a large amount of inference. These are the circumstances which render the Jumanos mysterious, and which have permitted specialists in regional studies of the Southwest to overlook or ignore the very existence of this fascinating and important people. They are circumstances which have led scholars to develop widely differing interpretations of the nature of

Jumano culture and of the place of the Jumanos in history. Each of these interpretations has its theoretical bias—as, admittedly, does this interpretation. Each relies on certain assumptions and an interpretive framework, and each must, of necessity, make creative use of cultural analogy in interpreting the available facts about the Jumanos.

### A Century of Jumano Studies

Anthropologists and historians often refer to the Jumanos as a “mystery,” or a “problem.” A part of the mystery is the evident cultural variety subsumed under this name. The term *Jumano*<sup>1</sup> has been applied, at various times, to people living both in fertile river valleys and in arid desert lands; to some residing in substantial masonry houses and others in skin tents; to people described as “clothed” and others called “naked”; to farmers and hunters; to pedestrian nomads and men on horseback. The mystery also rests on the wide geographical distribution of Jumanos in time and space.

Between the first recorded use of the designation in 1581 and the last, an oral history recorded in 1888,<sup>2</sup> Jumano groups were found at locales from northern New Mexico to Coahuila; and from the vicinity of Flagstaff, Arizona, at the northwestern extreme, to Parral, Chihuahua, at the southwest, to the Trinity River of Texas, at the eastern extreme. The total area could encompass at least 500,000 square miles; in no part of it, however, is there a tract of land which can be defined with certainty as a territory of permanent and exclusive Jumano occupancy.

There has been a long history of scholarly efforts to solve the “Jumano problem”—to find a rationale in the scattered appearances of this name in the historical record, and to identify the group (or groups) in terms of known ethnic and linguistic classifications. These efforts began roughly a century ago with the awakening of a scholarly interest in the native peoples of North America and with the beginning of archival research into the relations of these peoples with the European colonial powers.

### *Adolph Bandelier*

Modern awareness of the Jumanos begins with the work of Adolph Bandelier, a late nineteenth-century Swiss scholar who made North America his home and the subject of his research. Bandelier's studies of prehistoric sites and his research in colonial-period archives in Spain and Mexico mark the beginnings of serious scholarship on

the cultures and the prehistory of the southwestern United States. He collected and made available for study many of the basic documentary sources on Spanish colonial history.

Apparently intrigued by references to the Jumanos, Bandelier noted the wide geographical range over which they were encountered, and remarked on their apparent involvement in trade. His published reports include comments on the Jumanos in Mexico and New Mexico and speculations about their history and their relations with other groups such as the Julimes of La Junta de los Rios. He remarked that the Jumanos were not as prominent in Chihuahua as they were in New Mexico, and suggested that they may have "lost . . . their individuality" in the "whirlpool" of Apache warfare.<sup>3</sup>

Bandelier also observed that, while the Jumanos at La Junta de los Rios were a farming people, those further to the north "subsisted on the buffalo almost exclusively." In nineteenth-century anthropology, farming was considered a more highly evolved way of life than hunting; therefore, Bandelier believed that the buffalo hunters had taken a backward step. They had become "accustomed to the life which the following of the buffalo required, [and] discarded permanence of abode, exchanging it for vagrancy with its consequences."<sup>4</sup> He seems to suggest that this "vagrancy"—the lack of a permanent place of residence—could account for the virtual disappearance of the Jumanos from the historical record after 1700. His writings give no suggestion that he had any doubt about the existence of the Jumanos as a distinctive people—indeed, he apparently considered them to be an exciting and interesting people, although something of a mystery. Certainly they were for him an integral part of the complex fabric of southwestern history.

*Frederick W. Hodge*

F. W. Hodge was the editor of the monumental *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, published in 1910 by the Bureau of American Ethnology. He himself wrote several of the entries on southwestern peoples, including one on the Jumanos. Because of the influence of the *Handbook*, Hodge can be credited with establishing *Jumano* as the standard form of the name for twentieth-century scholars. However, the real baseline for subsequent Jumano research may be Hodge's longer historical essay, published in 1911.<sup>5</sup>

Pursuing issues raised by Bandelier, Hodge attempted to piece together a more coherent Jumano history. For him, the most intriguing part of the mystery concerned their "ultimate fate": why had

they rapidly and completely disappeared? His attempt to answer this question was inspired in part by entries which the historian Herbert Bolton submitted for inclusion in the *Handbook*. From Bolton, Hodge learned that the Taovayas (or Tawehash), a division of the Wichita tribe, had been known to the French in the mid-eighteenth century as "Panipiquets . . . alias Jumanes . . ." <sup>6</sup> On the basis of the similarity in names, Hodge attempted to apply a technique which ethnohistorians call "upstreaming." He projected the later identification back in time to the La Junta Jumanos of the sixteenth century. With the link which he assumed existed between the two, Hodge believed he had found a solution to the mystery of Jumano disappearance from the lower Rio Grande—migration. He suggested that the Jumanos encountered at La Junta by the Espejo *entrada* of 1581 (see Chapter 3) had migrated to New Mexico by 1598, where they were found living in the southeastern Pueblos. When missionaries visited a Jumano encampment in the High Plains, some 250 miles to the east of New Mexico, Hodge reasoned that the Jumanos had moved again.

Thus, Hodge interpreted a few scattered references to the Jumanos as evidence of the constant, erratic migrations of a single group, who then followed the priests back to New Mexico to live, once more, in or near the pueblos. There, he reasoned, the Jumanos would not have been found in any "village other than their own." Therefore he speculated that the "great pueblo of the Xumanas," mentioned by early writers in New Mexico, must have been "an aggregation of dwellings of . . . [a] more or less temporary kind . . ." From this location, they would have shifted again to where they were found a few years later in the plains east of New Mexico. Missionary visits were once more made, "apparently for the purpose of bringing them back." <sup>7</sup>

Hodge made rather free interpretation of the locales and distances given in his sources, suggesting that the settlements in the plains were located in the vicinity of El Cuartelejo, an area in western Kansas, even though the original sources indicate locations east or southeast of New Mexico. His interpretation was evidently influenced by his efforts to establish a link between the early Jumanos and the later Wichita tribes of Kansas and Oklahoma. After 1650, he believed that the Jumano tribe divided, some of them locating in Texas and others remaining in the north to become allies of the Pawnees and French. He related these movements to changes in nomenclature: the term "Jumano . . . originated in Chihuahua and New Mexico, passed into Texas, but seems to have been gradually replaced by the name 'Tawahash,' which in turn was superseded

by 'Wichita.'" Thus, according to Hodge, the Jumanos did not actually disappear from history—it was simply a matter of changing nomenclature.<sup>8</sup>

It is with Hodge's work that the issue of language identity became part of the "Jumano problem." Wichita, to which he linked the Jumanos, is part of the Caddoan family of languages. This grouping is associated with the Plains rather than the Southwest, and may be distantly related to the Siouan and Iroquoian families. Thus, Hodge's interpretation suggests historical connections for the Jumanos which are prevailingly eastern.

*Herbert Bolton*

Bolton was a renowned historian whose field of interest was the Spanish borderlands region, including northern Mexico and the southwestern United States. As noted, it was Bolton's contribution to the *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* which fueled Hodge's interpretations of Jumano history. However, Bolton disagreed with Hodge's conclusions. In 1911, after further researches in the archives of Mexico, he responded to Hodge with an article in which he, too, focused his attention on the mystery of Jumano identity and on their whereabouts at and after the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>9</sup>

Bolton disputed Hodge's identification of the Rio de las Nueces, where the Jumano were situated in 1632 and 1650, with the Arkansas River. He carefully analyzed the itineraries of several Spanish expeditions to this river and identified it as the Concho, a tributary of the Colorado of Texas. Bolton also contradicted Hodge's assertion that the Jumanos had vanished from the southern part of their range by the beginning of the eighteenth century. He cited manuscript sources which indicated the presence, decades later, of Jumanos together with Tobosos near La Junta, and allied with Apaches near San Antonio, Texas.

For Bolton, an important part of the Jumano mystery was an evident shift in loyalties. Until Spanish missionaries left Texas in 1693, the Jumanos were allies of Spain and enemies of the Apaches; however, when Spain reclaimed the territory in 1716, the former enemies had become reconciled. After this date, Spanish sources began to refer to "Apaches Jumanes," indicating that some observers considered the Jumanos a division of the Apaches. As a result, when the Wichita and Apaches were at war in 1771, according to Bolton, there could have been "people called Jumano" on both

sides of the conflict.<sup>10</sup> This observation led him to conclude that, at least in those later years, the name did not apply to a unitary group of bands or tribes.

Bolton expressed no opinion about linguistic affiliation; however, his exposition would render Hodge's position untenable. It appeared very unlikely that the Rio Grande Jumanos of 1581 were direct ancestors of the nineteenth-century Wichita.

*Carl Sauer*

Sauer, perhaps the most famous of American geographers, mentioned the Jumanos in a 1934 survey of the aboriginal tribes and languages of northwestern Mexico.<sup>11</sup> The area includes the southern fringes of Jumano distribution, along the Rio del Norte near La Junta. Sauer presented evidence which indicated a cultural and linguistic continuity between Jumano and Suma, a people with wide distribution through northern Chihuahua and Sonora. The Sumas were almost as widely dispersed as the Jumanos, ranging west into Sonora and as far north as Casas Grandes.

On the basis of life-style and location, Sauer tentatively assigned the Suma-Jumanos and their neighbors the Julimes to different divisions of the great Uto-Aztecan language stock. The Julimes were aligned with the western Pima and Opata, while the Suma-Jumano were set apart as "the northeasternmost lot of the North Mexican Uto-Aztecan peoples."<sup>12</sup> Over the years Sauer's suggestion has been the most generally accepted of several conflicting opinions on the linguistic identification of Jumano.

*France V. Scholes and the "Jumano Problem"*

In 1940 historian France V. Scholes and archaeologist H. P. Mera combined their perspectives in an important publication on the "Jumano problem."<sup>13</sup> Scholes' contribution falls into three sections. In the first, he reviewed the discussion of the problem of Jumano identity up to that date, and proposed a unique solution. Observing that in certain early seventeenth-century documents, the name *Jumano* was applied to people who were also described as *rayados*, Scholes suggested that "in the early colonial period the name Jumanos was used . . . to designate all *indios rayados*."<sup>14</sup>

As Scholes himself indicated, use of the term in this sense would have made it indiscriminately applicable to a large number of tribes, since decoration of the face and/or body with *rayas* (stripes or lines)



was a widespread practice. If this were the case, a question would still remain regarding the origin of the name; Scholes left open the possibility that a specific group of "true" Jumanos could be identified, whose name had come to be used more widely. His suggestion was well received, and has been the point of departure for most subsequent discussion.

In retrospect, the wide acceptance given to Scholes' position is remarkable. It appears to have been based on very limited evidence, and the argument from that evidence is not strong. In historical sources, *Jumano* was not broadly applied to any and all painted or tattooed peoples, as Scholes appears to indicate. For example, it is not known to have been applied to the Conchos, who were known as *rayados*; or to the Tejas or other Caddo groups; or to the Apaches (only some of whom were painted). The use of the term *Jumano* was actually much more selective than is suggested by Scholes' remarks; and the possibility remained that some or all of the groups so called were linked by other historical connections.

A longer and more informative section of Scholes' essay deals with the Jumano pueblos in the Tompiro region of New Mexico, between the first Spanish *entradas* and the abandonment of the region circa 1672. Scholes made use of his own research in New Mexican church history and was able to fill in some of the gaps in Hodge's characterization of the Tompiros. Hodge had earlier argued that the Jumanos were only present in eastern New Mexico as temporary, nomadic visitors. Scholes demonstrated that they formed a substantial element in the population of southeastern New Mexico; they were distinguished, as *rayados*, from the large Tompiro group (*gente sin rayas*—people without stripes). The Jumanos were the dominant element in three or four pueblos; at least one of these (the Great Pueblo) was a town of several thousand people.<sup>15</sup>

Although Scholes did not attempt to resolve the question of Jumano linguistic affiliation, the final section of his paper makes a contribution toward that end. He cited sources to confirm Sauer's linkage of Jumano with Suma, but was wary of including Suma-Jumano in the Uto-Aztecan family. For the Tompiro region, he presented accounts which indicated mutual intelligibility between Piro (or Tompiro) and Jumano elements in the population. Since Piro was part of the Tanoan family of languages, this could be evidence for a Tanoan affiliation of Jumano as well. Indeed, Scholes suggested that "the linguistic phase of the problem should . . . be carefully explored, especially with reference to current speculation about the wider connections of Tanoan."<sup>16</sup>