



Last Stand of the Texas Cherokees: Chief Bowles and the 1839 Cherokee War in Texas

Stephen Moore

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On July 16, 1839, more than 700 Texas Cherokees and allies from a dozen other Indian tribes made their final stand against a force of more than 900 Texas Rangers, Texas Army soldiers and Texas Militia volunteers. The Battle of the Neches was the largest conflict ever fought between Native Americans and Texans. The Cherokees were led by 83-year-old Chief Bowles, who had tried in vain to secure clear land title rights for his people in East Texas from both the Mexican and Texas governments. Author Stephen L. Moore traces the history of the Cherokees' migration across the United States, their entry into Mexican Texas and the subsequent difficulties they encountered with the Republic of Texas. Drawing on archival documents and participant accounts, *The Last Stand of the Texas Cherokees* relates the inevitable showdown between Chief Bowles and the Texas frontiersmen he challenged during the so-called Cherokee War of 1839. Armed with sophisticated Garrett metal detectors, search teams return to the Neches battlegrounds 170 years later and successfully recover dozens of artifacts which helped pinpoint the key areas of combat. These relics have since been put on display with the American Indian Cultural Society and with the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum so that future generations can appreciate the significance of the largest battle involving Indians and Rangers ever fought in the Lone Star State.

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