



Indian Agent: Peter Ellis Bean in Mexican Texas (Canseco-Keck History Series)

Jack Jackson

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How can the life of one relatively unknown man change our understanding of Texas history and the American West? Peter Ellis Bean, a fairly minor but fascinating character, casts unexpected light on conflicts, famous characters, and events from the time of Mexican rule through the years of the Republic.

Bean's role in Mexico's revolution against Spain and his service as an agent of the Mexican government, especially as Indian agent in eastern Texas, provide an unusually vivid picture of Mexican Texas, as well as new information about the Indians in his region. More explosively, Jackson's research on Bean's career as Indian agent casts doubt on the traditional characterization of Sam Houston as a friend to the Texas Indians. Bean's career shows Houston as a rival for the loyalty of the Indians during Texas' rebellion against Mexico, a rival who made false promises for military and political gain.

After Texas independence, Bean acquired vast lands in Texas, at one point holding more than 100,000 acres. A good citizen and a good businessman, involved with real estate, sawmills, salt works, agriculture, and stock raising, he was also a bigamist.

Meticulously researched, dramatically written, and embodying a unique understanding of Mexican Texas, Jack Jackson's chronicle of Peter Ellis Bean not only rescues him from relative obscurity but also corrects key aspects of the history in which he was involved and brings to life an era more often consigned to myth.

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