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TORREY, THOMAS STEBBINS (1819-1843). Thomas Stebbins **Torrey**, Indian agent and trader, son of Jacob N. and Laura (Kilburn) **Torrey**, was born in Ashford, Connecticut, on July 27, 1819. His father was a captain in the Connecticut militia. Thomas **Torrey** traveled to Texas in 1840 to join his **brothers**, David K. and John F. **Torrey**.^{qv} There he helped set up trading posts for the **Torrey** Company. He left for Santa Fe from Brushy Creek on June 21, 1841, with the Texan Santa Fe expedition,^{qv} planning to establish a regular business between the United States and Santa Fe. He also served as a buffalo hunter for the group. **Torrey** was eventually arrested by Mexican forces, along with other members of the expedition, and placed in Perote Prison.^{qv} He was released on April 23, 1842, and sailed from Mexico to New Orleans in May 1842 aboard the United States warship *Woodbury*. **Torrey** accepted an appointment as Indian agent for the Republic of Texas^{qv} the next year and went on a mission to locate the Comanches and persuade them to participate in a treaty council scheduled for August 10, 1843, at Bird's Fort, twenty two miles west of the site of present-day Dallas. He was accompanied by Hamilton P. Bee,^{qv} John F. **Torrey**, and the commissioner of Indian affairs, Joseph C. Eldridge.^{qv} Other members of the party included Acoquash, a friendly Waco chief, two female Waco prisoners, a Comanche boy called William Hockley, a Comanche girl called María, and some Delawares who served as guides. To demonstrate their good intentions to the Comanches the Texans were to return the child María, who had been taken prisoner at the Council House Fight.^{qv} On May 12, 1843, Eldridge met Thomas **Torrey** and the rest of the party at the old council ground on Tehuacuana Creek, and three days later the group set out.

They spent a few days at an Anadarko village west of the Trinity River, where they met with the head chief of the Wacos, Nah-ish-to-wa, as well as representatives of other groups, including Caddos, Kichais, Delawares, Bidais, and Biloxis. On June 3 the party continued its mission along the trail of the Santa Fe expedition. They approached Tawakoni and Waco villages, from where the chiefs sent out runners in search of the Comanches. Eventually the Comanches were located 500 miles northwest of the white-settlement boundary. The commissioners met with Pahayuca, the head chief, and conveyed Sam Houston's^{qv} invitation to the treaty council, which the

Comanches declined. However, the Comanches did enter into a temporary peace treaty with the Texans. Thomas **Torrey** witnessed the treaty, which was signed by Pahayuca and Eldridge. After it was signed, María and William Hockley were returned to the Comanches. In a further gesture of good will the commissioners distributed gifts among the Comanches. On the return trip Eldridge and Bee went directly to Bird's Fort. **Torrey**, accompanied by Jim Shaw^{qv} and John Connor, collected the various Indian delegations and escorted them to the treaty council. Soon after completing that journey **Torrey**, accompanied by George Barnard,^{qv} set out from Bird's Fort in search of a suitable location to establish a trading post. During the return trip along the Brazos River **Torrey** contracted a fatal illness. He died on September 28, 1843.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Henry C. Armbruster, *The **Torreys** of Texas* (Buda, Texas: Citizen Press, 1968). **Torrey** Papers, Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Henry C. Armbruster

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